THE TRADE REVIEW

AND

Intercolonial Journal of Commerce.

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From private advices recently received from London, it would appear that the Hon. Joseph Howe has not prospered *in his attempt to obtain permission for* Nova Scotia to retire from the Union. The Duke of Buckingham, Colonial Secretary, after hearing Mr. Howe at length, quietly replied that the Union was at present the policy of the Empire, and that the Government could not, upon the representations submitted by Mr. Howe or the other Anti-Union delegates whom he understood to be in London, undertake to stultify itself at this early day, by reversing the deliberate and well considered course arrived at, when it advised the Queen to sanction the British America Act last year. It is also understood that the Duke referred to the unconstitutional course adopted by the Repealers, inasmuch as the resolutions passed by the Nova Scotia Assembly, while purporting to be the expressions of the Nova Scotia people, had not received, or been submitted for, the concurrence of the Legislative Council and Lieut. Governor of Nova Sotia.

THE INSURANCE BILL.

TO the many who have given little or no thought to the subject, the Bill which Mr. Rose has introduced appears to give, what he claims it does give, some sort of security and protection to the future Canadian policy holders of Insurance Companies doing business within the Dominion. To many, this security, namely, the deposit with our Government of $50,000 or $100,000, seems ample as being a pledge of good faith on the part of the Insurance Company, and as being a tangible asset, which, in case of insolvency of the Company, could be used to re-insure its policy holders.

We are well aware that there has been a feeling amongst many of the middle and lower classes that they should in some way or other receive by legislation a guarantee that none but good companies be allowed to transact business in Canada, and the readiest way to obtain this guarantee seemed to them to be that which the Minister of Finance has selected. Many a hard working, industrious man, with a large family, earning little more than a subsistence, puts that little into the shape of a Life Insurance, to be to a greater or less extent a provision for his family in case death should at any time cut him off. It would be a killing blow were such a man, after years of investment, to find his policy worthless through the insolvency or fraud of the Insurance Company, and it can easily be seen how very popular the measure of Mr. Rose will be with the majority of those for whose protection it is pretended to be framed.

Let us see whether it deserves this popularity, or whether it is not a delusion and a snare, a plausible scheme whereby the public may be gratified and the Minister of Finance secure the sale of a million or more of Government bonds, and a relief from pressing claims for which otherwise his financial ability would be severely taxed to provide.

In the first place, the deposit of $100,000 with Government is no guarantee of good faith on the part of the Company making such a deposit. It might even be made by a Company for the purpose of swindling unfortunate policy holders out of their hard earned savings. An English or American Company might make the necessary deposit and obtain a license to do business in Canada. This Company might then, on the strength of the deposit, demand and receive a full share of public patronage, especially from the ignorant and credulous. In five years, the Company would have received for premiums an amount perhaps three, four, or five times greater than the sum deposited, and it could then quietly withdraw, leaving its policy holders to make what they could out of the $100,000 deposited. The measure, as it stands, affords to fraudulent associations an excellent means, ready to their hands, of imposing on the credulity of those for whose protection the bill is intended to be passed.

In the second place, the amount of the deposit is comparatively no security to the policy holders of a Company doing a large Canadian business. Suppose the yearly premiums on life policies received by such a Company to be only $50,000, and the average duration of policies to be only 15 years (which we believe is under the mark considerably) it will not take a very accomplished arithmetician to calculate to what extent $100,000, invested at 6 per cent., would re-insure its policy holders, leaving out of the calculation altogether the increasing cost of re-insurance by reason of their advancing years. The larger the business done, of course the more utterly inadequate to its proposed end does the deposit become.

What we have written applies only to Life Insurance. Fire policies terminate in one year, or less, from the time the policy issues, and a large majority of those interested might not be losers to the extent of a single dollar, even if a Company became insolvent,