

fixed charges of \$15,646, so the increase of the surplus was \$3,761, the net amount being \$21,252. From October 1, to 1st March, the passenger earnings were \$1,153,056, as compared with \$1,014,435, the increase for the 5 months being \$143,621, thanks to an exceptionally mild and snowless winter.

Though the operating expenses since October, 1905, have been \$772,173, and fixed charges \$138,062, both much in excess of the same term 1904-5, there was a surplus left at the end of February amounting to \$250,880, which is more by \$30,350 than at same date last year.

PROMINENT TOPICS.

ELECTIONS OF MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANIES.—The Bill by which the elections for directors of the Mutual Life Insurance companies incorporated in New York State are postponed until the 15th November next, has become operative having received the Governor's signature on 2nd inst. By this Act the control of the New York Life, the Mutual of New York, the Mutual Reserve of New York and the Security Mutual of Binghamton is taken away from the present boards of directors.

Governor Higgins attached a memorandum to the Bill in which he expressed strong approval of the measure as, in his judgment, those who had been in control of these companies had been discredited by the poor account of their stewardship given to the investigating committee.

The Governor says in his memorandum:

"The policy-holders must now act with calmness and intelligence, lest their last condition be worse than their first, lest under the new *régime* an anxious and hungry horde of adventurers, of self-guaranteed integrity, obtain by loud assurances of good will, the misplaced confidence of those who blindly seek refuge from existing evils."

The Bill provides that no proxy executed before September 15, 1906, shall be valid.

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THE DIFFICULTIES in the way of securing a thoroughly independent, intelligent and wise selection and election of directors by the policy-holders of these companies are great and complicated. The vast mass of them must vote by proxy as they cannot vote in person in New York. Nor can the vast majority have any direct personal knowledge of the character and other qualifications and claims of those for whom their votes will be solicited.

They will be guided, largely, by the advice of the local agent of the company who is personally known to them, who, in his turn, will be liable to be influenced by those at headquarters with whom he has been hitherto associated, whose re-election may be to his interest.

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A GREAT EXPERIMENT.—The Bill calls for a great experiment to be tried in the administration of an extensive life insurance company, an experi-

ment not without danger. That the result will be the election of wise, and conservative and high minded directors we earnestly hope.

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AN ELASTIC GOVERNMENT.—The new Government of Great Britain is showing that strength is not necessarily given by a large majority. Indeed, when a majority is made up of discordant, non-homogeneous elements, having no common principle beyond the negative one of opposition to the other party, such majority may be embarrassing to the Government, as two recent incidents have shown. The more radical section of Sir Campbell-Bannerman's supporters induced the Minister for the Colonies to interfere with the Government of Natal in its administration of justice. By the Court of that Colony a number of malefactors had been condemned to death. Against this sentence the Colonial Secretary protested under the influence of a considerable portion of the Government's majority, and this official temporarily over-rode the natal authorities. This interference being resented the British Government backed down and the law took its course.

A second instance of instability was shown by the Government changing its policy in regard to the Trades' Union Act under pressure by the section known as "The Labour Party." The question turned upon, what portion of the funds of a Trade's Union should be available to pay any damages it was condemned to pay by a Court of law when sued.

The Government first favoured the entire funds of the Unions being liable, but, as the Labour members objected to this, and wished, practically, to have the great bulk of a Trades Union's funds to be exempt from liability, the Government again backed down and the Labour party won a great victory over the Government and the interests of capital.

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BUDGET SPEECH, MINISTER OF FINANCE, BRITISH COLUMBIA.—The Hon. R. G. Tatlow, Minister of Finance, delivered his third Budget Speech before the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

Like all new countries the necessity of constructing costly public works lays a heavy burden upon the public revenue and involves the creation of a public debt, as certain public works that are absolutely essential to the development of the country are too costly to be paid for out of current revenue.

There have been heavy outlays in British Columbia on bridges and other transportation facilities, on public buildings, on dyking, and other works, which have resulted in a net debt of \$11,218,298. This is being gradually reduced.

The revenue is expanding satisfactorily, in 1900 the amount having been \$1,544,108, 1901, \$1,605,920, 1902, \$1,807,925; 1903, \$2,044,630; 1904, \$2,638,260; 1905, \$2,920,461. There has been an increase of expenditure, but last year the Finance Minister announced a surplus of \$268,265. "This surplus he was in a position to show had been almost entirely due to improved industrial conditions and very healthy expansion, the increased amounts we have been able to realize upon actual increases in