

would have to be reserved, and what they were able to make as profits would all be carried to their credit for the bonuses which were divided at their usual quinquennial periods. They had during the year appointed a large number of new agents, and had extended the colonial branch of their business. *He should not be doing justice to the meeting or to the directors if he did not say they had established what they believed would be an excellent agency in Canada. They had a gentleman recommended to them who had had great experience, who had worked for other offices, and who held the highest testimonials. He was well acquainted with those who occupied the best positions both in the mercantile and political world, and they concluded an arrangement with him. The directors had every reason to be abundantly satisfied with the success of his efforts. He had brought good business to them, and the assurers had been carefully examined. He was a man of great integrity, and he (the chairman) had every reason to believe that he would get a business for them in Canada, of which they would have every reason to be proud, and upon the acquirement of which he should eventually have reason to congratulate them. With regard to Canada he might further say they had had no difficulty in finding good healthy lives, and the experience of the past two years had proved to the directors that the greatest uprightness existed among those who conducted the business. He fully believed that in the future there was no branch of their business which would be more beneficial to them than that to which he had alluded. He concluded by moving the adoption of the report.*

Mr. Brown said that one of the points to which the chairman had alluded was of great importance at the present time, and that was the position the Society had achieved in spite of the present feeling of distrust which existed with regard to life assurances. He had no reason to suppose that this feeling of distrust would last for any length of time. He felt, when the failure was announced of that large company, it was a case so exceptional in itself, and so utterly different to other societies, that he was sure when the panic which naturally followed died away, Life Assurance would become as popular as ever. Nothing, to his mind, at least no interference of the legislature, was necessary to get rid of that distrust and that doubtful feeling which had prevailed. The only thing which would bring about that result was for the various companies to be able to present full accounts and give information to every one, so that all might know the position of the Society in which they were assured, and feel confidence in it. (Hear.) This he was sure would be brought about quite independent of legislation. The natural result of the panic was, that those offices which had through a series of years concealed their affairs, were bound to present them as fully and completely as the public required. Many who had reposed upon the name they had acquired for stability, had been forced to come forward and give that information to the public which they had a right to demand. He was sure that Government interference never made a commercial company safe and never would. As regards their own society they were told that the claims were £700 in excess of the actuary's expectations; but they could not consider that there was any ground for complaint, or that the future profits of the Society were likely to be seriously affected. With regard to the short duration of the assurances, that was unavoidable in young societies; but as they went on they would find the average duration of lives would increase, and the Society would be correspondingly better off. Their expenses for the year had been very heavy, but it had been laid out in extending their business, and the ultimate result would be that they would do more and at a less average outlay. So far the expenses had been carefully and judiciously laid out, and they were preparing the foundation for a large and increasing business. Of course to do this there must be temporary charges, but ultimately they would all reap the benefit. He should be pleased

to reply to any questions which might be put as to the state of the Society.

The report was put and unanimously adopted. The directors who retired were unanimously re-appointed, and Mr. Phelps was chosen auditor, there being no opposition.

Mr. Gepp moved a vote of thanks to the chairman of the board and the directors, for their efforts on behalf of the Society. He would also thank Mr. Brown for the able report he had presented, supplemented as it had that day been by some very interesting and valuable remarks. (Applause.) The report was carried by acclamation.

Mr. Parker moved a vote of thanks to the secretary, the assistant secretary, and the medical and legal officers, who, he said, all deserved their consideration for the extreme zeal and care with which their separate and arduous duties had been performed. The motion was carried.

The Secretary, in reply said that the Society was never in a position to look forward to its future prospects with a greater degree of confidence than it was at the present moment. As to the money charged as commission to agents, they had been told that they ought to do their business without paying agents. Those who said so, however, could not understand the question. If the system of agencies was discontinued, and, consequently, the payment of commissions, they would not effect a quarter of the number of policies they did now. The same would apply to every office, and there would be a general falling off.

Mr. Waters proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Brown, which was seconded and carried.

Mr. Brown, replied, and said the great object of insurance was security—security was implied in the very word—and the only way to obtain it was to look closely into their affairs, and to let the public know what they were doing.

INTERNATIONAL COINAGE.

The history of the Paris conference and the record of its sittings show pretty clearly that it was simply an attempt on the part of France to extend her own coinage system outside of the Latin league of nations now employing it. But the attempt has resulted in attracting to the French system a critical attention which it was not able to bear; and it now stands condemned before the world, for the following defects:

1. It still recognizes the false notion of a double standard of value; and in fact the gold franc-coins, to which we have been asked to assimilate our own, have only been maintained at their present weight by the desperate expedient of debasing the silver coins, in the vain attempt to make both gold and silver a legal tender for all amounts, in defiance of the laws of trade. Had France increased the weight of her gold coins (after the discovery of California and Australia), instead of reducing the fineness of her silver, the discrepancy which we are now asked to remove by sacrificing our better system, would not exist. In that case France would now be in harmony with us, and her blunder of the double standard is the cause of the difference.

2. The weights of the French gold coins are not expressible in exact and simple ratios according to any system. In the metrical nomenclature, the new twenty-five franc piece proposed by France as an international unit would weigh 8.064516 grammes.

3. The coins actually produced by the Mint of France are shown by careful assays at the Mint of the United States to be invariably short in the amount of fine gold required by the French law, the average fineness of the coins being 899.2 instead of 900. The error is always made in favor of the mint, and the profit from it in 1863, on a coinage of 210,000,000 francs, was 164,380 francs, according to the "compte-generale des administrations des finances." The difference be-

tween France and other nations in this respect is shown by the fact that while the French mint falls below its normal standard by about one one-thousandth, the deviation in England is only one two-millionth, and in Prussia about one one-millionth. Baron Nothomb, in his essay on the subject, says truly—"There are no legal napoleons of full weight in existence." The French gold coinage, then, is quite out of the question as a standard for anybody, even in France. It must be re-coined before it can be called honest.

This disposes of one troublesome part of the subject, and leaves us free to inquire, what basis of international unity would be most feasible, most universally beneficial, and most in harmony with simple ratios of weight and value, and convenience of domestic use. We do not wish to have international agreement upon a bad plan. As we have often said in the columns of the *Engineering and Mining Journal*, to secure the practical benefits of international coinage, only the following things are necessary:

1. Uniform fineness of gold coins, honestly maintained by the mints of the different nations, and attested by annual international assays.

4. The weight of gold coins stamped on their face, in terms of a cosmopolitan nomenclature, or, in other words, simple metrical weights of coins, and these indicated on the coins in grammes.

3. International treaties, making these gold coins legal tender in all the contracting nations in the full ratio of their weight.

These are the fundamental conditions, and might be adopted by all nations without inconvenience. We think they would bring about, without further negotiation, a gradual assimilation, of the coins themselves, or else they would lead to the use of "grammes of money," meaning grammes of standard gold, instead of the local coin names. For moneys of account, at all events, an entirely new unit, the gramme of money, might co-exist without disturbance among all the national units.

But some nations—especially England—and a good many private political economists, do not adopt the almost universal ratio of nine to one between fine gold and alloy in coinage. The English fineness is eleven-twelfths; and some continental theorists even demand pure gold for coins. Scientific evidence is divided; but on the one hand from the too great softness and liability to mechanical abrasion of the fine gold; and, on the other hand, from the too great baseness and liability to corrosion of the copper of the nine-tenth fineness. This question we would not discuss at present. There is no doubt that the alloy nine-tenths fine wears very well. Our gold coins have never been complained of in this respect; and the simplicity and convenience of the relation is a great argument in its favor. Should other nations refuse to adopt, however, a fineness which we do not wish to surrender, what is to be done? In that case the amount of pure gold in a coin must be taken as the measure of its value, and should be printed upon it. But we could not consent to an assimilation based on this feature only. The true end to be aimed at is, undoubtedly, a uniform fineness and commensurable weight or common unit of coinage. We hope England may yield, as there are some signs that she will, if some really simple and scientific system is offered her. But meanwhile it is highly fortunate that the values proposed for the American metrical coinage bear simple relations to the weight of fine gold, as well as to the gross weight of the coins.

Mr. Kelly's bill provides that each dollar of denominational value shall contain 1.6 grammes of fine gold, and that the coins shall be nine-tenths fine. The weight of the dollar would then be one and two-third grammes. Three dollars would contain five grammes of standard gold, two dollars would contain three grammes of fine gold. These simple relations reconcile the opposing schools, and make it possible for the United States, while adopting the units and the values most convenient to herself, to preserve at the