

MR. MCGARRY'S BIG STICK.

The Hon. T. W. McGarry, provincial treasurer of Ontario, appears to have lost his temper with the Canadian life insurance companies which have dared to impugn the powers of the province in the matter of taxation upon their gross premiums. He has now introduced a bill into the legislature imposing a flat tax of \$25,000 annually on all life companies transacting business in the province. But when filing an annual return a company may make application for a reduction of its taxes to a point not lower than an amount equivalent to 1/4 per cent. of the gross premiums.

The honorable gentleman's idea apparently is to place himself in a position of "heads I win, tails you lose," in regard to the test case now being fought by the life companies. If the Privy Council eventually decides that the Province has the powers it claims in the legislation which is the subject of the present litigation, well and good. If on the other hand, the Privy Council decides that that legislation was *ultra vires* as the companies contend, the statesmanlike acumen of the Provincial Treasurer has provided a way for continuing the taxation.

Either way the plundering of policyholders goes on, and Mr. McGarry seems pretty confident that if the Privy Council decides that one way is not legal, well then, the other way is.

OBJECTIONS TO STATE MONOPOLY.

Those who advocate the making of workmen's compensation insurance a state monopoly and the barring of stock liability companies from the transactions of the business would be less likely to do so, writes an American journal, if they were aware of the advanced position these companies have taken in the past on the subject of workmen's compensation, the pioneer work they have accomplished in the prevention of industrial accidents, and the effective machinery they have devised and put into operation for the carrying out of the purposes of workmen's compensation laws effectively, as regards both the employer and the employe, and at the lowest possible cost. Many who are advocates of state monopoly, unfortunately know the liability companies only as the insurers of the employer against claims under the old liability laws, for which the companies were in no wise responsible and the liberalization of which they advocated. They are evidently unaware that the liability companies were ready and eager to furnish workmen's compensation insurance long before any workmen's compensation law was thought of, and in fact did furnish such insurance to employers who took the same advanced view of their responsibilities. That such employers were few in number is again no fault of the liability companies.

Prince Edward Island's legislature is tightening up the local companies' legislation with the idea of stopping over-capitalisation, stock-watering, issue of misleading prospectuses and providing that shareholders may recover from directors where losses have been caused by misrepresentation. P. E. I. evidently means to profit by the lessons of the black fox boom and the Dominion Trust failure.

IMMIGRATION AND PRODUCTION.

If, as expected, there is a revival of the immigration movement on completion of the war, it probably will be more of a farmer's than of a laboring movement, writes a correspondent. A feature of the immigration in recent years has been the considerable number of well-to-do farmers, with capital ranging from \$5,000 to \$40,000, taking up land in the Canadian West. The drafts, currency, and letters of credit supplied by these wealthy settlers contributed most importantly to build up the Canadian balances in New York and London. Perhaps the settlers secured by Canada in the years immediately following 1915 will not be so largely of this wealthy class. Nevertheless, if they go on the land and devote themselves to the work of increasing production they will be of great value to the country.

This prospective increase of immigration belongs, however, to the more distant future. The financial and business situation is influenced more largely by the prospects of an increased agricultural yield in 1915, preparations for which were made in the fall of 1914. The estimates as to the percentage of increase in wheat area are premature as yet. Much will depend on the weather in April and May. However, with reasonably favorable climatic conditions it would not be at all surprising if the Western provinces in 1915 produced well in excess of 200,000,000 bushels. It is taken for granted that prices will be very satisfactory indeed; and if it appears during the summer of this year that the cash return from the crops will be abnormally large the whole business situation of the country will be brighter and more active.

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