

appraiser that the goods were entered low, he demanded "post entries" to be made, and the payment of additional duties on an enhanced valuation, ranging from 25 to 50 per cent. on the various packages. Compliance with this demand was promptly refused, and after representations made by the Council of the Board of Trade, and the Messrs. O. & Co. to the Minister of Customs, that refusal was sustained, and the goods handed over. The whole difficulty may be ascribed to ignorance on the part of the appraiser, of the fact that the goods were not of the newest styles, and that therefore their value was not greater than that stated in the invoice. But such an explanation does not dispose of the general questions to which this case directs attention.

The law requiring these "post entries" is doubtless framed for the prevention of fraud; and if such is its object, the powers confirmed by it should not have been exercised unless it was suspected or believed that fraud was intended. Not the slightest intimation of such a suspicion is given in justification in the present case. The British exporters of the goods, and the Canadian importers, are spoken of as alike beyond the reach of suspicion. Mr. James Johnston, a Montreal merchant, who became mixed up with the affair, and who has published an attack on the Messrs. O. & Co., as lacking in judgment as it is ridiculous in composition, says, "I have no doubt whatever of the genuineness of the invoices in the present case." In the absence, then, of any suspicion of dishonesty, the officials were not justified in the course they adopted. That goods were bought cheaply is no offence, but deserving rather of encouragement than reprisal.

The plan of rewarding appraisers by a share in the spoils in case of confiscation, or a fine, which goes into the pockets of the Customs officials, in such a case as the one under notice, is open to grave objection. And were it not for the existence of such a spur to official zeal the packages might have passed unquestioned. It would be unfair to assume that appraisers would not be honest if there were no hope of plunder in cases requiring their interference. A reward for honesty or vigilance in the discharge of one's own proper duties should not be necessary; it is wrong in principle, and often most vexatious in practice. Cases of confiscation by appraisers have come to our knowledge which looked exceedingly harsh and without sufficient justification. If competent and honest men are placed in these positions, their zeal and honesty should be reckoned upon as a matter of conscience, and not as the price of prospective rewards.

It does seem absurd to place them in the attitude of informers and spies by giving them a moiety of the fines for trapping the unwary. If vigilance can only be secured by the prospect of pecuniary reward, might not the same purchasable virtue relax if the case should be reversed and the inducements become greater to shut than to open their eyes? Merchants of reputation are sufficiently careful to avoid difficulty with the revenue officers; the notoriety acquired is too costly and dangerous to admit of any risk being run for the sake of slight and occasional advantages. Any interference with their operations, unless there is a plain case, seems as unnecessary as it is unpleasant and offensive.

There are other matters suggested by this case which will demand consideration hereafter.

MUTUAL LIFE ASSOCIATION.

Reference was recently made in these columns to the fact that the organization of a Life Insurance Company entitled as above, and having its headquarters in the city of Toronto, was completed. The issue of policies has commenced; agents are being appointed in the towns and cities of Ontario, and the Association is now fairly in the field. The strictly mutual plan has been adopted, a guarantee fund having been raised by the directors for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the Insurance Act temporarily, but withdrawable upon certain conditions after its object has been served. We understand that nearly all the original subscribers to the project have shown their confidence in the Company's plans and prospects by making application for policies, in many cases larger in amount than stipulated in the first place. The rates are sufficiently high, although a little below those of many foreign mutuals. In selecting a life insurance office special regard should be had to two important considerations: first, will the funds be safely and sacredly kept for their intended use, by the practice of economy in expenditure and by judicious investments; and, second, do the management possess the necessary skill and knowledge to so apply the well-established principles of life insurance as to bring out correct results, and deal equitably with their constituency of policy-holders? It will not be denied that the list of directors, which comprises some most substantial and reliable citizens, and the professional ability secured satisfy both of these conditions, and give this Association just claims upon the public confidence and patronage.

The Quebec Legislature meets on the 7th November.

RAILWAY CONNECTION WITH HALIFAX.—On Tuesday the formal opening of the European & North American Railway took place. The gentlemen associated with that undertaking have shown that they appreciate the importance of the event by bringing together the President of the United States, the Governor General of the Dominion, and other public men of both countries to participate in the celebration. The line just opened supplies a most important link, and brings Halifax into direct communication with the West when a section of the Intercolonial between Amherst and Truro is finished. At the present time the rails are laid down on about 24 miles of the line, from Amherst to River Philip, and this section may be in working order before the close of the year. This leaves only 51 miles of staging from Bangor to Halifax, a distance of 478 miles. When this route is extended to St. John's, Newfoundland, Chicago will be brought within eight days of Queenstown, or one day less than it can now be made from New York.

PRESS ERRORS.—It is natural that in an insurance panic the companies should be sensitive about the statements regarding them in the public journals. Some very absurd errors in the press dispatches have occurred, which might have done mischief. For instance, a City Daily stated the losses of the North British and Mercantile by the Chicago fire at \$7,000,000! a statement so absurd as scarcely to require correction. Another daily—*The Leader*—announced the Hartford as having succumbed under its losses. This was another "typographical error," but a rather inexcusable one, since it was the Connecticut Fire that was meant. It is almost needless to say that, though the Hartford loses heavily, it pays handsomely, and has a good surplus, besides all its capital, still remaining.

GRAND TRUNK.—The weekly traffic returns show a steady increase, which cannot but be gratifying to all who are solicitous about the success of our great railway. During the week ended 16th September, the earnings were the largest ever realized in one week: the two following weeks could scarcely fail to show a similarly favorable result, as the line was overwhelmed with local traffic in connection with the Provincial Exhibition at Kingston. The traffic earnings compare thus:

	£	Miles.
This week ending Sept. 1871,	36,500	1,377
" " 1870,	33,600	1,377
" " 1869,	32,100	1,377
" " 1868,	32,100	1,377
" " 1867,	30,800	1,377
" " 1866,	16,500	1,090

We have to add that great efforts are being made to substitute steel for the existing iron rails wherever it has become necessary to relay the track, and from present indications we judge that a large additional section of the line will have been thus renewed before the close of the year.