

should throw away so much good money to pay "fat salaries" and build "palatial office buildings," and the like, when they can get protection at half the cost. Well, taking the 24 leading life companies of the United States, and we find that, although their members who have lived to be seventy-five or more pay no more for their assurance than when they entered at age 35, yet these companies have in the aggregate paid to members and their beneficiaries since organization, and now hold for them in trust for future distribution, a hundred and seventy-one and a half million dollars more than these members have paid in! Through the magic power of compound interest, joined to superior financial skill, this result has been reached. Briefly stated, the total payments to policyholders have been \$1,211,884,970, and the present invested assets are \$668,447,805, making a total of \$1,880,332,775, while the total premiums received have been \$1,708,807,412. Here is a colossal fact crushing to a jelly the assessment theory about "high cost" old-line assurance.

THE LIFE AND accident companies ought to, and we presume do, extend the right hand of fellowship to the steam-boiler insurance companies. That much loss of life is prevented by reason of the periodical and thorough inspection instituted by these companies on a large number of boilers is a gratifying fact. Excepting in the large cities, where a more or less—generally less—thorough inspection is required by municipal authority, government inspection practically amounts to just nothing. A few days ago a boiler exploded at Colchester, Ontario, by which three men were killed outright and several injured, and the intelligent coroner's jury brought in a verdict, stating that "the explosion was the result of a defective boiler, with no blame attached to any one." That is about the broadest exonerating from blame we remember ever to have seen. A "defective" boiler and nobody to blame! It was somebody's business to know that the boiler was defective. We need not say that this boiler was not on the list of any steam-boiler insurance company.

NOT MANY WEEKS ago a claimant, Catherine Wilcox by name, asked the court having jurisdiction in New York to compel the officers of the Owego Mutual Benefit Association of that State to levy an assessment on its members in order to pay her claim of \$1,149. The court issued the order, and in due time the president of the association reported to the court as directed, and this was the substance of his report: He had sent assessment notices to eleven hundred and eighty persons, who were members at the time the death occurred, out of which arose the above claim, at an expense for postage and sundries of \$18.25. In response he received payment from two members, amounting in all to \$5.70, or \$12.55 less than the expense of making the assessment! Most of the nearly twelve hundred, who were members when the death referred to occurred, had dropped out before the court proceedings were completed, and the above farce was the result. And yet,

sane people talk soberly about being *insured* because they hold a certificate, in imitation of a policy, which really promises no more than to do for them just what was done for Catherine Wilcox, with the chances in favor of a like result.

IT MAY NOT be generally understood that what is known as the McKinley Customs Administration Act, taking effect August 1, prohibits a rebate of duty on damaged goods of all kinds imported into the United States, and affects marine underwriters materially. The section governing the matter is as follows:—"No allowance for damage to goods, wares and merchandise imported into the United States shall hereafter be made in the estimation and liquidation of duties thereon; but the importer thereof may, within ten days after entry, abandon to the United States all or any portion of goods, wares and merchandise included in any invoice, and be relieved from the payment of the duties on the portion so abandoned; provided, that the portion so abandoned shall amount to ten per cent. or over of the total value or quantity of the invoice, and the property so abandoned shall be sold by public auction, or otherwise disposed of for the account and credit of the United States, under such regulations as the Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe." Just how insurers can best protect the interests of their patrons is a question now for due consideration.

WE FULLY AGREE with the *Insurance and Financial Gazette* that the heterogeneous returns of the officials of the British Board of Trade on insurance matters "consist of a medley of dates, most of which refer to ancient history." Not only are the published returns of the companies too ancient to be of any value as indications of present or recent transactions, but the forms in which they appear are neither uniform nor understandable. The only really conspicuous feature of these returns is their obscurity of statement. They are admirably adapted to conceal rather than to reveal the actual condition of the companies. While the Canadian and United States systems of insurance supervision involve conformity to fixed standards as to reserve liability, and require statements showing in detail all items pertaining to condition and management, giving net surplus, it is a notorious fact that no man can tell, in a majority of cases, by inspection of the statements made by the British companies, what the actual surplus of available assets is over all liabilities. The preliminary report of the Dominion insurance department, giving the business and condition of the companies here for 1889, appeared some months ago, while the reports of the various insurance departments of the several American States, complete, are quite as old, and yet, sending to London recently for a copy (marked 1890) of White's *Insurance Register*, we are served up with the statistics, for the most part, of the companies for 1888! It is about time for our friends across the water to wake up to the fact that this is the nineteenth century, and that King John has been dead a good while.