LIFE ASSURANCE IN CANADA.

Year by year the aggregate of life policies in force in companies doing life assurance business in Canada increases. The fact is creditable to the country, both as a proof of appreciation of the scope and intent of life underwriting, and as an evidence of thrift in the community. Different years may show, and do occasionally show, decreases of new business written in a particular twelve-month compared with that preceding, this being a matter affected by the active or depressed condition of trade or finance, but the grand total of life insurance carried shows a steady increase from year to year. A comparison of figures will best show this:

Year.	No. of Policies.	Aggregate Insurance.
1880	56,540	$ 91,272,000
1885	90,417	149,962,000
1890	161,691	248,424,000
1894	237,182	302,541,000
1895	245,531	319,366,000
1896	261,259	327,730,000

The share of this business done by different classes of companies—we are dealing now with what are known as the Old Line companies, and not with those working on the assessment system—deserves notice. Out of 327 millions in force last year Canadian life companies did 59.59 per cent. of the business; American companies, 29.77 per cent., and British companies, 10.64 per cent. These proportions differ only fractionally from those of the year 1895. The sub-divisions of the aggregate in 1896 were as under:

	Policies in force.	Amount in force.
Canadian companies	150,148	$195,314,757
British companies	17,538	34,838,914
American companies	93,573	97,576,840
Grand total for 1896	261,259	$327,730,511
" " 1895	245,507	319,257,581
	15,752	8,472,930

An increase of 15,752 policies, covering $8,472,000, is here shown for 1896 over 1895. The total premiums last year were $10,597,076 as compared with $10,292,354 in the preceding twelve months. The claims paid during the year, including matured endowments, amounted to $1,748,421, which is slightly more than the claims of 1895.

EXPORTING CANADIAN BEANS.

The soil of Western Ontario is well suited to the growth of beans, and in this part of the province large quantities of the esculent are grown every year. Kent county is the largest producer of beans in the Dominion, and has for years maintained this position. In addition to the trade in the home market, shipments have been made to the various consuming centres of the United States, but the McKinley tariff of 1897 will make it very hard to keep up such shipments, so heavy is the American duty. In the past few years attempts have been made to export Ontario beans to the United Kingdom. The shipments have not given importers the best satisfaction, and every attempt should be made by growers and merchants to meet the requirements of the British trade. A Liverpool firm have written to the Dominion Government that "beans of 1895 crop gave satisfaction, and were mostly up to the mark, but last year's crop was delivered to us in a very disappointing manner. Evidently the latter beans had suffered from excessive rain, and contained no end of damaged grains. We cautioned the shippers beforehand to keep up the standard of prime quality, but the producers, either to save themselves the trouble of part picking or carelessness, sent off inferior quality, which has done a great deal of harm to the reputation of Canadian beans, we fancy, in the face of the splendid late deliveries of California and other American beans, which come reliably packed and free from damaged grains. We also found, in many cases, the small pea beans were mixed with a larger variety, called 'mediums,' which is a great disadvantage, and we should, therefore, suggest to the farmers to change their seed if they want to be successful in future years. If some care to go in for a little additional expense, we should like to persuade them to go in for growing also the larger varieties of beans, of which we hand you enclosed samples. viz., giant haricots, large flat haricots, Zealand beans."

OUR IMPORTS OF TEA IN 1896.

Canadian imports of tea in the last fiscal year were no less in quantity than 22,408,000 pounds, valued at $3,214,912. This was free of duty, but a small additional quantity, less than a tenth of this, from Britain and the States, was dutiable. Half the above stated import of free tea, namely, 11,256,437 pounds, was black tea from the producing countries, China, British India, Japan, and cost an average of 15¼ cents per pound. The other half was green and Japan tea, 11,152,202 pounds, at 13.4 cents the pound. Japan sent us 9,624,000 pounds of this; China, 1,119,000 pounds, Great Britain and the East Indies the rest. Ontario and Quebec imported almost all the green teas, but the black was distributed thus:

	Pounds.	Value.
Ontario	3,628,359	$560,185
Quebec	2,116,627	307,471
Nova Scotia	2,133,882	336,027
New Brunswick	1,537,045	244,054
Manitoba	946,032	137,125
British Columbia	559,287	69,512
P. E. Island	332,645	57,660
N. W. Territories	2,560	366
Total	11,256,437	$1,712,400

BUYING SUGAR.

Canadian sugar refiners are credited with having recently made considerable purchases of raw sugar in New York. Last week several large sales were reported to have been made in New York on Canadian account. On Monday, 15th inst., 3,000 bags centrifugal, 96 test, were sold for Canada, at 2⅝c. in bond, which represents the market quotation. A New York market authority says: "Canada is looking around the market here for offerings, and has secured two additional cargoes, with its interest prompted in part by actual wants, but as well from some talk there of an advance in the tariff, which, if made, comes hardly without notice." Last week's summary of the sugar statistical position, as made up by Willett & Gray, shows stocks in the United States and Cuba together of 348,754 tons, against 340,026 tons the previous week and 190,179 tons last year, a plus of 162,504 tons over last year. Stocks in Europe 2,652,000 tons, against 2,664,500 tons the previous week and 2,369,300 tons last year. Total stocks of Europe and America 3,000,754 tons, against 2,984,526 tons a week ago, and 2,555,550 tons last year at the same uneven dates. The excess of stock is now 445,204 tons, against an excess of 376,536 tons the previous week and a deficiency of 6,733 tons December 31st, 1896.

THE WOOL MARKET.

For some weeks Canadian markets have been practically bare of domestic fleece wool. The approaching imposition of a duty by the United States Government upon the importation of wool has caused buyers to search the country over for stocks of wool suited to the particular needs of American manufacturers. Within the past few weeks several shipments have been made from different Ontario points, and others are in course of preparation. The proposed tariff divides the wool into three classes, viz:—

Class one, including merino, mestiza, metz, or metis wools, or other wools of merino blood, immediate or remote, Down clothing wools, and wools of like character with any of the preceding, including Bagdad wool, China lambs' wool, Castle Branca, Adrianople skin wool, or butchers' wool, and such as have been heretofore usually imported into the United States from Buenos Ayres, New Zealand, Australia, Cape of Good Hope, Russia, Great Britain, Canada, Egypt, Morocco, and elsewhere, and also including all wools not hereinafter described or designated in classes two and three.

Class two, including Leicester, Cotswold, Lincolnshire, Down combing wools, Canada long wools, or other like combing wools of English blood, and usually known by the terms herein used, and also hair of the camel, Angora goat, alpaca, and other like animals.

Class three, consisting of Donskoi, native South American, Cordova, Valparaiso, native Smyrna, Russian camel's hair, and including all such wools of like character as have been heretofore usually imported into the United States from Turkey, Greece, Syria, and elsewhere, excepting improved wools hereinafter provided for.

Class three contains wool usually exported from Canada to the United States. The proposed duty on all wools and hair of the first class is eleven cents per pound, and upon all wools or hair of the second class is twelve cents per pound. On wools of the third class and on camel's hair of the third class, the value of which is thirteen cents or less per pound, including charges, and on common goat hair it is proposed to place a duty of thirty-two per centum ad valorem. The effect of this legislation upon the Canadian wool trade must be determined by the course of the markets. The coarse combing wools from the large Leicester, Cotswold, Lincolnshire, and other sheep of