

cient to discredit the enterprise. One of the oldest British fire offices is, "The Union Assurance Society," which was founded nearly 200 years ago. To take the title of this company and add to it the word "British" is apparently an attempt to acquire business under misleading circumstances. The old "Union Assurance Society" is, of course, the British Union Assurance Society, the word "British" being always understood when speaking of that company.

The circular declares, that this new company has "an authorized capital of 250,000 pounds, and its assets amount to over \$140,000"—a capital of \$1,250,000 and assets of only \$140,000. The assets are given in detail, as "amount paid in, \$40,000; subscribed in addition, \$50,000, and accumulated funds, \$50,000, so that, according to the Society's own statement, the actual assets are only \$90,000, the rest being merely what has been "subscribed."

This company has no legal authority to solicit and write insurance risks in Canada, and we cannot but express regret that such an organization should have been launched whose title is so close a copy of that of a company of high standing as to be misleading.

THE PILOTAGE QUESTION.—The pilotage system of the St. Lawrence is in need of radical reform. As a system it has outlived its usefulness. The conditions of the river and of the vessels passing along its channel have been so changed by improvements in recent years as to demand changes in accordance with these new conditions in the pilotage system. The steamers are now so much larger than in years gone by as to require far greater skill to navigate than in the past. There are now so many more vessels in the course, and their speed is so much greater, as to demand a higher degree of skill in navigating the magnificent ocean steamers than in former days. Has anything been done to train pilots for their enhanced responsibilities?

The pilots, as a rule, are farmers, who, when navigation is closed, are occupied in agricultural pursuits. Whether this duality is conducive to their progressive skill as navigators is a question.

The Hon. Mr. Prefontaine is to be congratulated on having taken a stand on this question, which will, we trust, lead to some decisive reforms being carried out in the pilotage system of the St. Lawrence. Having had experience on the Harbour Board, the writer is only too familiar with the difficulties of this question, but they are likely to disappear before the decision and energy of the Minister of Marine.

THE MONTREAL 7 PER CENT. LOAN was referred to in a recent issue in which a suggestion was made that it should be repurchased as opportunities offered. It will be gratifying to get rid of this relie

of brilliant financing. The amount was not large, nor was the interest excessive at that time, but a lamentable error in judgment was made when this 7 per cent. loan was issued as a permanent one.

We were glad to see the matter taken up by the Finance Committee who will make arrangements to get this loan off the market when opportunities arise.

COMMISSION ON STOCK EXCHANGE TRANSACTIONS.—The movement for a reduction of the commission rate is gaining ground and it is likely that the rate for 100 share lots at least will be reduced to $\frac{3}{8}$ of 1 p.c. A large and conservative portion of the members of the Montreal Stock Exchange consider the present rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 p.c. warranted and are against change, but are willing to make the reduction on large orders of 100 shares or over. The "unlisted list" idea is also receiving favourable consideration.

JAPAN IS IN NO HURRY FOR FUNDS.—It is understood in financial circles that the Japanese Government is in no hurry to acquire money by a loan. Japan has large amounts to its credit in Europe, and it is probable that the new loan proposed will not be negotiated while so much uncertainty exists as to Russia. If the Russian loan is abandoned the monetary situation will be materially changed, but, if it is merely suspended, other matters will have to be put aside until something definite is decided.

The idea of Japan is the conversion of her 6 Per Cents, which would involve the payment of a bonus. These 6 Per Cents have some months yet to run, so they may be allowed to mature if the terms for conversion are not as favourable as desired.

THE REVENUE FOR PROTECTING JAPANESE LOANS.—The two last loans to Japan are protected by the revenue from the tobacco monopoly held by the Government. The Japanese Minister of Finance has recently stated that the charges for interest on the loans are \$13,500,000 for this and next year, and the revenue "ear-marked" for the interest will be \$16,250,000, with a prospect of increase for some years. These revenue estimates are, of course, sanguine, but they are given out very confidently.

Taking everything into consideration, we do not think that investors will be greatly fascinated by either Japanese or Russian bonds at present. The latter 4 per cents., have dropped to 84 under the revolutionary conditions prevailing.

RUSSIAN IN A PITIABLE PLIGHT.—The condition of Russia is pitiable. By what means the people are to be reduced to a state of order is a question that might baffle the astutest statesman.

It is evident that a much stronger hand is needed at the helm of this storm-tossed ship than any one