

much money is being diverted to utilization. A sixty-mile pipe-line is to be laid from the Indiana field to Chicago, and this enterprise has stimulated manufacturers of artificial fuel to furnish fuel gas as cheap as natural gas for manufacturing purposes. The extent of the supply of this gas is a natural question. One would not be disposed to rely much upon the prospect of its being large; but at the same time despite the geologists, we must admit that we do not yet know all that is worth knowing about the economics of Nature or in what nooks and crannies of the earth she stores supplies that may supplement, not to say supersede, her coal measures.

#### MANITOBA CREAMERIES AND CHEESE FACTORIES.

The report for July of the Manitoba Bureau of Agriculture is to hand. As its field reports are only up to the end of June, we can hardly yet assume the correctness of its conclusions as to crops, promising though they are. An interesting part of the report, however, is that relating to cheese factories and creameries. Replies have been received from eight cheese makers and three butter makers. The information gathered goes to show that in the case of the several buildings in which the work is carried on, all are of goodly proportions and well adapted for the work carried on. In the eight cheese factories, there are fifteen milk tanks, with a total capacity of 7,500 gallons, and to them 209 patrons send the milk of 1,120 cows. The daily receipt was 21,000 pounds. The average date when making began was May 29, and from that date to end of June 80,000 pounds was made. The average quantity of milk required for a pound of cheese was slightly over nine and a half pounds.

Centrifugal separators are used in each of the three creameries heard from. Rotary churns are used, their total capacity being 430 gallons. There are forty-seven patrons sending 4,575 pounds of milk daily. The average date when making began was May 14, and from that date to end June, 5,200 pounds was made. The average quantity of milk required for a pound of butter was about twenty-one and two-third pounds.

#### THE LEGAL POSITION OF ASSESSMENT INSURERS.

A well known lawyer of Illinois expressed himself the other day to a writer in the *Indianapolis Journal* in these pertinent terms, on the subject of assessment life insurance:—"The worst feature of this assessment life business is not that which stands out most prominently. It is bad enough to "chip in" money whenever called upon to do so by officers you know nothing about and to have no means of knowing how much of the general collection is turned over to the purpose for which it is paid. But a graver feature is this, when a man gets into one of these assessment concerns he is in for all time, no matter if a bar is put up against possible benefits that might accrue by failing to respond to assessments or if the concern itself "bursts up" for the courts have decided that on joining an association of this kind, 'the debt is then contracted, and not when the debt is payable, i.e. at the death of a member.'"

The *Journal* goes on to show that, only the other day, in the light of this common-sense decision, five hundred members of a California

association, the defunct Order of Mutual Aid, had judgments entered up against them in a suit brought by the heirs of one of the deceased members of the order. And in Minnesota, a suit is even now pending against the members of another assessment society which is considered sure to go the same way. This is a feature of the case which is not generally understood, but it ought to be. The prevalent impression is that members owe nothing in respect of their fellow members A. B. or C. unless A. B. or C. should die. Such a decision as that quoted above, must show to thinking persons how awkwardly they may be placed in certain contingencies.

#### GROWTH OF "MISCELLANEOUS" INSURANCE.

The magnitude of the insurance business in the United States is something enormous, and, considering its importance and the amount of money involved in it, is probably less comprehensible to the average business man than almost any other phase of commercial life. There are about 600 fire insurance companies and about 50 life companies now doing business in the United States, which disburse hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Their enormous transactions are, of course, more or less familiar to the insurance fraternity and to that portion of the press specially devoted to insurance matters, but to the general public they are still a comparative mystery. It is not strange, then, that if the more familiar phases of insurance, namely, fire and life, are little known and understood by the public at large its less familiar phases should be almost wholly unknown. And yet the growth of the business in such lines as accident, steam-boiler, plate-glass, real estate title guaranty, and fidelity insurance, even in the past few years, is something phenomenal.

Leaving out of account the assessment companies writing accident insurance, the regular companies doing this class of business have increased it enormously, and their entire business has been developed since the war. The company now doing the largest accident business did not inaugurate its accident department until 1864, and in 1886 issued over 100,000 accident policies, insuring to the amount of about \$250,000,000, and receiving in premiums a round \$2,000,000. To illustrate how the business has grown, it may be stated that eight years ago this company's premium receipts were only \$992,000; that is to say, its accident business has more than doubled in eight years. Another company, whose premium receipts in 1882 were \$114,000, received in 1886, \$450,000. Other companies make nearly as good a showing of increased business.

Steam-boiler insurance is another phase of the business that has developed wonderfully. The oldest company in the business was not organized until 1866; in 1882 its premium receipts were only \$271,500, while in 1886 they were a round \$450,000. Another company, organized in 1883, received in 1886 nearly \$150,000 in premiums. This branch of insurance is doing a double duty in that it is not only making money for its projectors, but by its rigid system of inspection is diminishing the great danger to life and property that attends the use of steam. It is also largely due to these companies that laws have been passed regulating the running of engines and boilers thus keeping their management out of the hands of persons not proved by examina-

tion or otherwise to be competent to do the work entrusted to them.

The insurance of plate glass is of comparatively recent origin, the oldest company in the business having been organized only thirteen years. Since 1884 the premium receipts of this company have doubled, being in 1886, a trifle over \$135,000. Another company has increased its receipts from \$21,700 in 1882 to a trifle over \$200,000 in 1886. It is the exception now-a-days that the owner of a store with a plate glass front does not have it insured, and the fact that it can be thus insured has led to an increased use of the article, thus making it possible to make a store more ornamental, and at the same time render more attractive the display of goods.

The risk that buyers of real estate have run from time immemorial from defective titles, with its attendant annoyance and litigation is very generally known, and hence the organization of companies for the purpose of investigating titles and insuring their correctness has very properly been hailed with delight by all real estate dealers as well as by the owners of real property. A Massachusetts company was the pioneer in this form of insurance. [It is worthy of note that it was founded upon the lines of a Canadian Company. Ed. M. T.] It has been in operation a little over a year, and at once leaped into favor from the public and profit from its projectors. Already companies for the same purpose have been formed in New York State, in Chicago, and in other sections of the country.

Still another form of insurance is known as guarantee or fidelity insurance, that is, the furnishing of bonds for the faithful performance of duty. Hitherto persons who, for any reason, were required to give bonds were obliged to call upon their friends for such services; now any one of several companies may be called upon to furnish such bonds, who hold themselves responsible for loss in case of default. The advantages of obtaining sureties by such means are many and obvious. A company of this sort is under no such embarrassment, as an individual may be, when asked to sign a bond, and in case of default, its opportunities for bringing a culprit to justice are vastly larger than an individual's would be, even if the latter were disposed to pursue him. Several striking cases of this have recently been brought to public attention.

All these phases of the insurance business serve to show its usefulness apart from fire and life. The popular notion that there is some great mystery about the business, incapable of being understood by the public at large, will some day be dispelled, and the "goods" which insurance companies have to sell will be the subject of every-day reports just as now the goods of other business houses are reported on, and held up to the public gaze for approval or disapproval, according as their quality is found to deserve the one or the other.—*New York Bulletin*.

—The move of the dry goods clerks of Chicago to start a large co-operative dry goods establishment will be watched with interest. Like every other novelty in the States, it will probably be run after at the start, but the difficulty of getting really competent men to head such an enterprise—which can alone make it successful—and the further difficulty of retaining the scores and hundreds of volatile "co-operators" who will only be willing to co-operate so long as the "boom" is on and prospects bright, lead us to doubt the lasting character of the scheme.