

life companies—in arranging for the expenditures of 1870, have announced their intention to withdraw their cards from several of the so-called insurance papers hereabouts. The companies complain that there are too many of this class of publications, most of which are useless. Several companies, in combination, have resolved to confine their patronage to four of the principal ones, and which shall be the lucky ones, is where the laugh comes in.

Among the class journals which devote a liberal share of their columns to insurance subjects, and which has obtained a firm footing during the past year, is the *National Review*. With the new year it appears much enlarged, and with a cover engraved in the highest style of the lithographic art. M. A. C.

FIRE RECORD.—Mount Forest, January 8.—The total loss at this fire, of which some particulars were given last week, was \$4,000 to \$4,500. There was an insurance in the Royal for \$500.

Egremont Township, Grey Co., Jan. 8.—Barn and stable of D. Currie, on the 7th concess. were destroyed; loss stated at 400. Insured in the Victoria Mutual.

Ottawa, January.—The Court House was destroyed by fire, a great portion of the books and public documents were saved. Insured in the North British and Mercantile for \$10,000.

Ingersoll, Jan. 17.—The barn and sheds belonging to Moses Tripp, bailiff, near this town, occupied by Peter Stuart, together with about \$600 worth of hay and grain and a threshing machine, owned by Messrs. Gamble, were destroyed by fire. Buildings covered by insurance. Mr. Stuart's stock insured for \$500. Supposed to be the work of an incendiary.

Quebec, January 17.—The steamer Lake St. Peter was nearly destroyed. She was owned by Mr. McNamara, and said to be insured for \$10,000.

FIRES IN ST. JOHN IN 1869.—From Jan. 1st '69 to Jan. 1st, '79, the number of fires were 59, or 25 less than reported for 1868. The losses sustained on buildings for the same time was \$45,900, or \$9,710 less than the losses from the same cause last year, and \$13,500 less than for 1867, the year before the Fire Alarm Telegraph was introduced. There has, in the whole city, been only one house rendered untenable during the year, a state of things very satisfactory indeed.—*St. John's Telegraph*.

FIRES IN HALIFAX IN 1869.—There were 36 actual fires in 1869. Of these 11 were in dwelling houses, 13 in barns and outbuildings; 6 in shops and stores; 4 in carpenter shops, and 2 in engine houses. There were 5 false alarms, and a like number occasioned by burning chimneys. There were also three alarms caused by fires outside the city limits. The greater number of fires and alarms occurred in the night.

FIRES IN THE UNITED STATES.—The fires which occurred in the United States during 1869, where the losses exceeded \$20,000, have caused a destruction of property amounting to \$40,684,000. The losses for each month were as follows:—January, \$3,294,000; February, 2,637,000; March, \$2,892,000; April, \$4,672,000; May, \$3,830,000; June, 1,900,000; July, 1,677,000; August, \$6,838,000; September, \$3,242,000; October, \$2,729,000; November, \$2,650,000; December, \$4,200,000.

ORIGIN OF FIRE INSURANCE COMPANIES.—It is amusing to trace the incidents which attended the introduction of fire insurance companies. The basis of a plan of this sort appears to have been suggested as early as two hundred and fifty years ago. At that time a person proposed to Count Anthony Gunthor von Oldenburg, that, as a new species of finance, he should insure houses of all his subjects against fire on their paying so much per cent. annually, according to their value; but the prospect of gain so tempting to most persons

could not induce the Count to adopt the plan. He thought it good if a Company was formed of individuals to insure each other's houses, but he doubted that it could by him be "honourably, justly and irreproachably instituted without tempting Providence—without incurring censure of ones neighbors, and without disgracing one's name and dignity," adding that God had, without such means, preserved and blessed for many centuries, the ancient house of Oldenburg. This plan appears not to have been again thought of until the great fire of 1661 had laid the city of London in ashes. Various proposals were accordingly submitted to the Court of Common Council of the city of London, between the years 1669 and 1680, for the mutual relief of such as might have their houses destroyed by fire. The most notable and acceptable of which was by one of the members of the Court of Common Council, Mr. Deputy Newbold. During the period between the first presentation of Mr. Newbold's proposal to the Lord Mayor and the final report of the committee to whom the matter was referred, by the Court of Common Council, several private individuals associated themselves together and submitted to the good citizens of London a "design for insuring houses from fire," and on the 16th September, 1681, a notice or advertisement was issued from their "Office on the back side of the Royal Exchange," offering to insure brick houses against fire for sixpence, and timber houses for twelve pence in the pound—being at the rate of £2 10s. per cent. for brick houses, and of £5 per cent. for timber. Subsequently, on the 13th October, 1618, the Court of Common Council did "agree and resolve to undertake insuring all houses within this city and liberties from fire, and execute ye same with all expedition" and therefore "resolved forthwith to engage a sufficient fund, and undoubted security by the Chamber of London, in lands and good ground rents, for the performance thereof."

ILLEGITIMATE BIRTH RATE IN EUROPE.—Mr. Maurice Black's work, entitled *L'Europe Politique et Sociale*, furnishes the figures for the following comments by the *Pall Mall Gazette*:—"Of all European countries, that in which by far the greatest relative number of natural children are born is Bavaria, a country of which two-thirds of the people are Roman Catholic, and excessively Catholic, and in which "the confessional" is more of a real institution than almost anywhere else. In Bavaria the illegitimate births amount to 20.7, or nearly 21 per centum of the whole. Next come Saxony and Wurtemberg; the first exclusively, and the second chiefly, Protestant. In these illegitimate births amount to 15 and 11.7 per centum, respectively. In Sweden and Norway (Protestant) they are 9.3 and 9.2, and in Austria (very Catholic), 8.7. Next to these comes a list of countries, comprising in fact, the greater part of Europe, in which the illegitimate birth-rate is singularly uniform; nowhere much below seven per cent., and no where attaining eight. These are—taken in order of immorality, beginning with the worst—Belgium, Russia, Italy, France, Prussia, England. Of Ireland there are, we believe, no trustworthy returns, but common opinion makes it rank very favorably in this respect. Below the countries thus enumerated, and therefore the least exceptionable of all, come Catholic Spain, with 5½ per cent, and, last, Protestant Holland, with only 4 per cent.; which thus attains the European prize for virtue." These diversities are very far from admitting of easy or, indeed, any explanation from such materials for knowledge as we possess. Something is due to legal institutions. For instance, the three German countries which rank worst on the list, all possess peculiarly restrictive codes of marriage laws, which restrict honorable matrimony and render irregular but durable connections—"wild marriages," as the Germans oddly but expressively call them, more common than they otherwise would be. And the same obstructive legislation prevails more or less in other continental countries.

But this has no relation to religious questions. And the simple conclusion which we wish to draw is, we conceive, undeniable, that it cannot be proved, or rendered probable, that the religion prevailing in any European country, taken apart from other causes, influences at all the number of illegitimate births.

DEPOSIT LAWS OF THE VARIOUS STATES.

A Boston paper commenting on the recent case of Commonwealth of Virginia vs. Paul, points out the necessity of establishing a national insurance bureau to supersede the State Departments, now in existence. To illustrate the necessity for such a measure it is stated that Ohio forces foreign companies to do about \$25,000 worth of newspaper printing annually, all in the interests of re-protection, not for the insured. New York makes foreign life companies deposit \$100,000 before commencing business. Pennsylvania makes the foreign companies pay \$600 license and a three per cent. tax upon their premiums. Virginia requires a \$50,000 deposit of foreign companies. Alabama makes each agent of a foreign company pay \$200 to her town fire department, and an extra \$200 to the Medical College of Mobile. Louisiana taxes each company \$1,000, makes an extra tax of \$2,000 for New Orleans, and taxes a certain per centage of the premiums for the bonds of the Opelousas Railroad. Tennessee requires a deposit of \$20,000 and an agency in Nashville and Memphis, requires about \$1,500 as entrance fee. Arkansas and Wisconsin require each company to purchase \$6,000 of their own State bonds, and deposit them with the Auditor. California requires a deposit of \$75,000 in gold. Missouri charges from \$40 to \$100 for each county license. Iowa and Ohio require a deposit of five per cent. of the premiums received, and so on through most of the States.

THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE NOTE SYSTEM.

The Premium Note plan has been so long a bone of contention between rival companies and their agents, as to endanger the best interests of Life Insurance, that it is not surprising that it should fall so much into disrepute as to be almost entirely abandoned by life companies.

Many reasons have combined to bring about this result. Financially considered the system was sound, otherwise it would not have the approval of such a man as Hon. Elizer Wright, its most able and persistent advocate. In theory it stood well among the various plans in use, but in practice, though at first it apparently benefitted the policy holder, in the long run it very materially lessened the value of the policy to the family of the insured. Its greatest drawback lies in the inability of the dividends (on the contribution plan) to cancel the notes. This may be considered a trifling and insufficient cause for the disfavor which is now extended to it, but a little explanation will place the matter in a light easily understood. The advantage claimed for the premium note is, that by its use a much larger amount of insurance can be obtained for a given amount of cash than by the all cash system. This is to a certain extent true, but the advantage is more apparent than real. If a note be given by an insurant, his policy is mortgaged to the extent of that note, and he is obliged to pay interest on it year after year. He is told by the agent who takes his proposal that the note will be surely offset by the dividends, which will cancel it, even at the end of the first year. Is this promise realized? Certainly not. If the dividend is declared on the percentage plan he will have to wait for three or four years before he gets a dividend on his first year's premium, and by the time his first note is cancelled there will be at least two or three other notes against the policy.