

**THE ROYAL CHECK** for \$80,000 paid in Nashville, Tenn., for a total loss on the Mannix block must have been an object lesson to the commissioner and his friends who are raising a rumpus over the increase of rates in that city. Perhaps they can do the same and ascertain how long it will take the Royal to collect the net sum of \$80,000 in Nashville premiums without further losses.—"Insurance Times."

**MUNICIPAL INSURANCE.**—The town-hall of Shoreditch, London, was insured for \$90,000 in the Municipal Mutual. After a fire the damage was assessed at \$40,930 by the Borough Council, the amount, however, actually recovered being only \$33,025. The "Observer" says:—"This is distinctly amusing, as one of the complaints made against the tariff companies was that they did not always pay sufficient to cover the cost of re-insatement."

**THE NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY** will be the first to be investigated by the Legislative Committee of New York State. Commissioner O'Brien, of Minnesota, after a conference with President McCall, decided to defer action until October. He says: "President McCall was especially desirous of a thorough investigation, and we left actuaries on the ground to prepare all arrangements. Our first work will be to determine the solvency of the company, though, of course, we have no doubt of the outcome. Following that we will look into the conduct of the company's finances, the distribution of earnings, and whether there is any undue extravagance of the use of the company's funds for the benefit of any particular clique or personal stockholder. One outcome of the investigation will be a standard life insurance policy."

**WINNIPEG'S BUILDING INSPECTOR** reported to the fire, water and light committee that up to 29th August, he had issued this year 2,441 permits for 3,078 buildings at an aggregate cost of \$8,868,500. Figures for the same period in the last six years are as follows:—

	Permits.	Buildings.	Cost.
1900	366	447	\$ 957,450
1901	481	624	1,433,950
1902	679	804	1,937,300
1903	855	1,113	4,055,750
1904	1,305	1,730	7,651,150
1905	2,441	3,078	8,868,500

**THE TRAVELERS INSURANCE Co.** will hold its Annual Convention at Hotel Frontenac, Thousand Islands, on 12th to 14th inst. A large attendance is expected.

**WOOD IGNITED BY STEAM PIPES.**—A writer in the Chicago "Record Herald" reports his experience with steam pipes and wood as follows:—"In a shop in which I worked not long ago an asbestos covered pipe carrying steam at 110 pounds and sometimes attaining a temperature of 625 degrees Fahrenheit, as shown by actual reading taken half-hourly, would invariably set fire to a block of wood whenever the temperature approached 600 degrees Fahrenheit. The block was to hold a pipe in place, and touched nothing except a brick wall. The asbestos was largely worn off at the point of contact. Either the steam pipe set fire to the wood or else the sunshine on the outside of the wall did it. There was no other possible cause. Furthermore, one of the best chemists on earth, Professor E. W. Morley, once said in my hearing that wood subjected frequently to a comparatively low temperature, such as might be applied by an ordinary steam pipe, would in the course of time be converted into a kind of charcoal which would ignite at a low temperature, perhaps even spontaneously."

**BARN FIRES** continue to be discussed at length, underwriters evidently regarding this a very important question. Mr. Robert R. Tuttle, a prominent underwriter of Syracuse, states his opinion on the question of farm barn fires as follows in the New York "Journal of Commerce":—

"Some one smarter than I am may know why it is that lightning almost invariably chooses to strike something inside of which is moisture—live trees, never dead ones; ice houses, barns with new hay, and, while disclaiming any extensive acquaintance with barkeepers, several of them have told me that when lightning strikes a hotel it goes straight for the dampest spot, viz: the barroom. It is a fact that the country hotel lightning losses experienced by this office have shown more damage to the barrooms than other portions of the building. Perhaps some scientists may evolve a means of counteracting the attraction of confined moisture for lightning. When a boy fifteen years old, curiosity led me to attend a lawsuit instituted by some fire insurance company against a farmer who was alleged to have set fire to his barn during a thunderstorm at night. The testimony of his hired man and the attorney for the insurance company made an impression on my mind that has never been eradicated, and every time I saw that farmer afterwards I had a mental picture of his stealing out to the barn after having waited several weeks for Divine Providence to send him his excuse in the shape of lightning. The jury, however did not share my impression. I have seen many houses in country villages having lightning rods, while the barns on the same premises had none. This might, to a slight extent, account for the preponderance of barn lightning losses over dwelling lightning losses. Dwellings are painted more frequently than barns, and at those times the lightning rod connections are repaired and kept in good condition, whereas the barn is neglected. The basis upon which co-operative and grange companies (commonly called mutuals) write is a reduction of 33 1-3 per cent. from the tariff rates. This class of companies has many of the better farm barns in this State, and the bulk of their premiums is derived from that class. I have recently seen a compilation of figures made by one of the leading co-operative companies, and it is my recollection that their losses on farm property were comparatively low. Co-operatives, doing business principally in their own and one or two adjoining countries, can more frequently inspect their risks than can stock companies. They are also in a position to be better informed as to the moral hazard. When a man expects a visitation from lightning or encourages the harboring of tramps, or does his threshing on the windward side of the barn, he sees to it that his policies are in big stock companies that advertise year in and year out on the calendar in his house how many millions of dollars they have paid in losses. If a barn owner is a careful man and makes his barn entrances secure against the admission of tramps, and prohibits his men from smoking in or around the barns, and is careful to have the safest make of lantern, he feels pretty safe from fire, and procures a small amount of insurance from co-operative companies at 66 per cent. of the tariff rate.

"Comparatively few stock companies are now writing farms, and those who are not writing this class do not feel inclined to commence. Agents having a farm writing company consider it a valuable asset, and such companies, therefore, have it well within their power to impose their own conditions on their agents. My suggestion would be to discontinue paying any direct commission on farm property and village barns, putting this class on a 25 per cent. profit contingent basis only. This would tend to increase the bump of caution of the agent, and might develop him into a good inspector and judge of moral hazard. In taking his Sunday drives he would put his spectacles on when passing the barns in which he had a contingent interest."