

CLOVER AS A FERTILIZER.—Cultivators of land should secure a copy of a pamphlet just issued by the Department of Agriculture on "Clover as a fertilizer," from which they will learn that one of the most effective means of enriching soil is to plough under a crop of clover. The record of experiments made on the Central Farm, by Dr. Saunders and Mr. Frank T. Shutt, is highly interesting; they prove that clover is a powerful fertilizer.

WHAT IS THE BOARD RATE?—A humorous incident occurred recently in a small town in Georgia, in connection with a new agent who was making out his first report, says the "Spectator." Among the questions asked was: "What is the board rate?" to which he replied: "From \$15 to \$20 a month," adding a foot note to the effect: "I don't know what you want the board rate for, unless you are coming down here to live."

PROPHECIES A RATE WAR.—Vice-President Evans, of the Continental, speaking of the attitude of the Home Insurance Company in Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska, said: "I rather expect a rate war over the entire West, including the Pacific Coast, for the reason that bad faith is rampant and the only thing that will bring about proper conditions again probably is such a fight as we had here in New York a few years since. The Continental is not seeking trouble, but it is expected in this office, and we are fully prepared in case it comes to be in the thick of the fight."

BANK OFFICIAL CHANGES.—The Canadian Bank of Commerce has announced the managers of its new western branches as follows:—Medicine Hat, F. L. Crawford; Calgary, C. W. Rowley; Edmonton, T. M. Turnbull; Carman, E. C. Complin; Neepawa, G. M. Gibbs; Moosomin, E. M. Saunders.

The Imperial Bank has placed H. H. Morgan in charge of its branch at Weiaskiwin, N.W.T., and J. S. Gibb, at Victoria, B.C.; E. C. Bowker will manage a new Dominion Bank branch at Brandon, and F. W. Young, at Boissevain.

QUARTERLY PAYMENTS.—Writing of a class of agents who habitually make premiums payable quarterly, a contemporary characterizes the result as giving the assured opportunity to lapse four times a year, remarks, "this is bad all-round, expensive, troublesome and unprofitable to company, agent and policyholder. We are inclined to believe that agents who are victims of this habit lack courage and confidence. Discourage all premium payments under once a year; point out the advantages and disadvantages and be firm and unyielding in what you know is best for all in this matter. Agents will find that it isn't as hard as they think to write annual premiums."

Those who spend the least complain the loudest about the intolerable expense of maintaining the insurance journals. To such we have only one argument. Let them consider what the situation of the business would be were insurance journalism wiped out. With legislatures and insurance departments unchecked by the watchfulness of a trained and alert press; with the ignorant comments of the daily newspapers unchallenged; without any attempt at an intelligent presentation of the current news of the greatest business of the world, and without any systematized interchange of methods and experience, the insurance business would in a short time be in a muddle which could only be straightened out at a cost of millions. Let those companies which grumble at having to spend one or two cents out of every hundred dollars' income towards the maintenance of insurance journalism give a little honest thought to this matter.—"Insurance Record."

KEEP OFF THE TRACK.—The clause in an accident policy that the company should not be responsible in the case of an accident which happens to the insured "while walking on any railroad bridge or roadbed, except at established crossings of such roads with public highways," was sustained by the Massachusetts Supreme Court in a suit brought against the Aetna.

CO-INSURANCE CLAUSE IN MISSISSIPPI.—Recent investigation discloses the fact that many of the compresses, oil mills and sawmill plants in Mississippi have taken advantage of the valued policy law and insured their plants for nominal amounts where it could be safely done. The co-insurance clause has been declared an invalid condition of the policy, and its presence on the form will not help companies in event of loss. It is now proposed to require specific insurance in every case, and this seems the only safeguard against the iniquities of the law in question. Some companies acting independently have already saved themselves loss, while those credulous enough to believe the assured will abide by the contract and not invoke the statute need only be reminded of the Vicksburg cotton losses last year, and the Hattiesburg lumber loss on which we recently commented.—N. Y. "Bulletin."

FIRE WASTE CONDITIONS.—Mr. Edw. Atkinson, in his address before the Manufacturers' Association, Chicago, said: "The only persons who can prevent loss by fire are the owners and occupants of the property in which the danger exists. Underwriters cannot prevent loss; they can only give advice, and can distribute the loss upon the community at a heavy cost. The fire tax of this country, running at the rate of \$150,000,000 a year on the average, is not only a very great burden upon the country, but it is to the utter discredit of those who belong to the most intelligent class in the community—the owners, occupants and managers of the largest works and establishments in which more than three-quarters of this annual loss is incurred. The great number of small fires annually extinguished with small loss each constitute not over 25 per cent. of the total annual loss; the other 75 per cent. of loss incurred in a relatively very small number of establishments is due in about even proportions to ignorance in construction, neglect to apply safeguards and carelessness or criminal negligence among occupants.

While owners and occupants must be held mainly responsible for the great ashheap, the responsibility is shared by architects and builders, who are not masters of their professions or who have not sufficient influence to induce owners to adopt their methods. In fact, the apparent cheapness with which contracts of indemnity against loss by fire have been supplied at low rates of premium has, I think, led to an increase in the hazard and in the losses. But that system of betting under the form of a policy of insurance that bad risks will not burn has culminated in the last five years.

The losses of the fire insurance companies during the last five years on their fire business have been nearly \$300,000,000, leading to the bankruptcy or winding up of a large number, and making way for those which have survived to advance the rate of premiums and to put on new conditions. There have been many complaints of this action of the underwriters, of injustice, of embarrassing the community, etc.; yet in justice to them I can bear testimony to the fact that they have not yet put on all the conditions that they will be obliged to put on, and that they have not yet advanced the rate of premium as much as they ought, in order to maintain themselves in a safe condition and be competent to give you any kind of a contract of indemnity at any price whatever."