

berately cut off from themselves the services of an earnest and energetic army of agents, who no longer find the game worth the candle, who discover that their offices no longer support them, and that business is taken quite out of their hands for the sake of a miserable twopence. So be it. Let the offices continue this policy:—the curse and anxiety of every branch manager now doing business. As we have said, the day of reckoning will come, and that shortly, and at that time the fable of the man sawing off the branch on which he sat will be barred out from all head offices. The public are not fools, and finding that discounts can be allowed, will take care that they are accepted. Then let the offices strike their balance, and find where the profit comes in!

#### SOME UNEXPECTED ANSWERS.

An exchange tells how a victimized member of the "Knights of Honor," living in Massachusetts, filled out the answers to questions on a circular sent out with a request for its return to the "Grand Dictator" at Boston. Here are the queries and answers:—

What will you do for the good of the Order?

Answer—I will expose at every opportunity the fallacy of the whole assessment scheme. I will tell them what I think of the easy social manners produced by "crowns and roks."

What information do you require to properly present facts relating to the Order?

Answer—I should like to know what's to prevent the Order from again getting where it was in May last—viz., \$900,000 in debt for death benefits, and \$2,600 in the Supreme Treasury.

How many petitions for Beneficial Membership shall I send you to be filled out by your individual effort?

Answer—If you make them of nice medicated paper and wire them I would take one million.

What assistance can I render you or your lodge?

Answer—Take your hand out of my pocket.

What are the chances of success of your lodge under the late offer of the "Supreme Dictator?"

Answer—The same chance that the "Supreme Dictator" would have if he should try to kick the earth out of its orbit.

The member is asked how the best interests of his lodge will be best served, and he answers:

"By suppressing all facts of a financial nature from members and the public—and by sending one large bottle of 'Renovia' to each member of the lodge."

### Financial and Statistical.

#### THE FARMERS' MISDIRECTED MOVEMENT.

It is not strange that, following the general tendency of the times, the farming community should seek to remedy real or fancied ills by some form of combination. The Grange, which had such a success for a time, was born of this idea; and the Farmers' Alliance, which sprang so suddenly and potently into being a year or so ago in several of the Western and some of the Southern States among our neighbors, was only the Grange idea in another form directed into a political channel by a few shrewd politicians. The Grange is a thing of the past, and the Alliance, as shown by the recent elections, is fast going to pieces. We now hear of considerable progress being made in Ontario, and perhaps in other provinces, of an organization among

the farmers known as the "Patrons of Industry." The principal object of the order seems to be to keep up the selling price of what the farmers have to sell and to reduce the price of what they have to buy.

This is all very natural perhaps, and a combination to secure these results an exercise of a right belonging to all classes of citizens, so long as the rights of others are not interfered with. The wisdom of the movement is, however, quite another thing. We very much fear that this organization, like many others of a similar nature, is based on a misconception of sound trade relations and on a perverted view of facts. These well-meaning people overlook the fundamental fact, that competition has always regulated and will continue to regulate prices in the commercial world, and that the men who make and the men who sell commodities in an open market make and sell them at the minimum of profit, because they are obliged to by stress of competition. The dealer who has a mowing machine to sell must do so at a moderate profit, for the simple reason that the dealer over the way is willing to sell at a living margin over cost. Monopoly is a much abused and hard-worked term, the real existence of which is so exceptional as to prove the opposite rule. The fact is, the farmer is greatly mistaken in supposing that the dealer who sells him his coffee and sugar, or the merchant who sells him a coat and his wife a dress, charges, as a rule, more than he finds necessary in order to live at his business; or that the man who buys his wheat and potatoes does not pay all he can in safety afford. Buying in an open market for cash will always give the buyer the benefit of bottom prices.

The real enemy of the farmer in Canada to-day is the *credit system*. That is the only monopoly he has to fear. To say nothing of the tendency to overbuy where the pay-day is only seen in the haze of the future, the price must necessarily be loaded by the merchant with the cost of carrying the account and with a percentage of bad debts. The farmer sells his products for cash, or may do so, and hence no class is better prepared to pay cash for what he needs. The true reform movement for the thrift of the farming class in Canada and elsewhere is one that makes war on credit and seeks to abolish debt. Combination among our agricultural friends, based on broadly intelligent grounds for mutual improvement of their interests, is all right, but getting out of debt and keeping out should be one of its prime objects.

#### THE LAND OF SMALL FAMILIES.

A comparison between the French race in Old France and the branch of it located in our midst brings out some striking contrasts. Let us glance, for example, at the social statistics. The population of France increases at a very slow rate, being in fact nearly stationary. The population of Paris alone is said to be actually decreasing. Moreover, it is generally supposed that what little advance there is in the country as a whole is due rather to the immigration of Germans and other foreigners than to the natural productiveness of the race itself. The problem has assumed such impor-