per cent. to 4 per cent., and ultimately to 3½ per cent. But what happened? The ink of the new legislation was scarcely dry when, largely due to the development of the west and partly to the increased industrial development and the opening up of other avenues for the employment of capital hitherto closed, an advance in the interest rate became apparent and has continued practically to the present day, but there is a feeling that the crest of the wave has been reached, and it is possible that the future will see a retrogression. It is, of course, a matter of speculation what the effect of the European war on the interest rate in Canada will be. Is the tide of capital, which has been flowing towards Canada during the last decade to swell in the future or to ebb as a result? On the answer to this question will largely depend the dividends of the future and no one can with any certainty give the answer. In the absence of certainty, or even of reasonable probability, the only safe attitude for both insurance companies and insurance agents to take is the frankly agnostic one. Let them give results if they will, but let them impress and re-impress their prospects with the fact that of the future no one knows.

MANITOBA'S AMENDED MORATORIUM.

The main provisions of Manitoba's amended moratorium bill, as amended by the law amendments committee of the legislature, are as follows:—

All mortgages and agreements of sale are affected by its provisions.

No proceedings can be taken in the case of a mortgage or an agreement of sale unless some portion of the interest, taxes or insurance is in arrears for one year.

Proceedings cannot be taken within one year in the case of the principal being in arrears.

In the case of taxes, interest or insurance being in arrears, however, the vendor or mortgagee will have the right to sue to the amount of the rental value of the property. That is, if the rental value of a house is, say, $30, whether or not it is occupied by the owner or a tenant, the vendor or mortgagee can collect to that amount.

It is further provided that the vendor or mortgagee may notify the tenant or tenants of any property to pay rent direct to him instead of to the landlord to the extent of the amount due for taxes, insurance and interest (that is to the rental value of the property).

Proceedings may be taken to secure the taxes, interest and insurance after they have been in arrears for one year, as if the moratorium bill had never been passed.

In such proceedings after one year they will take the form usual prior to the war.

BANK OF VANCOUVER.

Apparently, the efforts which have been made to save the Bank of Vancouver by raising the necessary funds to take care of the depositors have been without avail. On the expiration of the sixty days' grace allowed by the Bank Act, the Bank did not re-open its doors and four petitions have been presented for its winding up.

OPTIMISM IN FIRE INSURANCE.

The unusually numerous small and medium-sized fire losses of the past year made it an especially trying one for the smaller fire companies. In a year like 1914, prudent, conservative underwriting counts, as it always does, but cannot stave off a high loss ratio for the small company, though its big competitors, with a large volume of business well distributed throughout the country, may be able to show some underwriting profit. Some of them made an underwriting profit last year. But no company with a business distributed largely over an area of heavy fire loss can possibly make a profit. Fortunately history repeats itself, even in the fire insurance business, or there would be fewer fire companies than there are, says an American journal. Losses have a habit of coming in waves and in the intervals between the waves the smaller company has a chance to recoup itself for the losses of the last wave and to extend its business over a wider area and thus reap the benefit of a wider average when the next wave comes. In this way most of the giant companies have been built up into their present conflagration-proof condition. Some have been obliged to call upon their stockholders to replace capital wiped out by losses sustained in disastrous conflagrations, but the public confidence they thus gained materially contributed to their later success. All of the large fire companies have gone through trying experiences in their early days, but the courage of the men behind them converted misfortune into success. And no better instance of the recuperative power of a fire insurance company with a large volume of business and a well-won reputation for honorable dealing can be found than that of the Fireman's Fund which, under the management of less able and courageous men, would have been wiped out of existence by its San Francisco losses, but is to-day, in every way, in a far more flourishing condition than at any previous period in its history. Last year was a bad one for the small companies but better days are coming. The country is growing every day, and the supply of reliable fire insurance is not equal to the demand. Prosperity to the young company that weathers the storms of infancy is assured.

BANKS' SEED GRAIN LOANS.

By an amendment to the Bank Act introduced into Parliament by Hon. W. T. White, Minister of Finance, the banks will be authorized temporarily to loan money for the purchase of seed grain. The security of the grain purchased, of the subsequent crop, and the grain threshed from the crop will be deemed legally sufficient. The amendment is deemed to have come into force on March 15th and continues in force until August 1st next.

This legislation is permissive and not compulsory; the banks may avail themselves of the authority to lend on the security above mentioned but they are not compelled to do so. It has been stated by the Minister of Finance that the new provision will apply to the owner, tenant or occupier of land. While the general credit of the buyer will still be the controlling consideration in loans by the banks, the Minister believes the new privilege will be of value to the borrower.