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IN OUR LAST issue we presented in an analytical table a classification of the character of the securities in which the life companies of Canada and the United States have their assets invested, and called attention to the large percentage of railway and kindred fluctuating securities held especially by the latter. Our comments on the questionable character of such investments, where extensive, by insurance companies have been strongly emphasized during the few days past in the rulings of the stock markets in New York and London. The American railways, on the 15th ultimo, marked a decline in stock quotations, as compared with the highest quotations of the year, of from 7 to 28 per cent., only four out of twenty roads having a decline of less than 10 per cent., the others ranging from 17 to 28 per cent. decline. The decline in the stocks of the Canadian railways is well known, while even those of Great Britain, proverbially strong, mark a decline since May last of from 5 to 14 per cent., the average being somewhere about 9 per cent. These facts carry their own comment.

COMMENDABLE STEPS HAVE been taken by the wholesale dry goods section of the Toronto Board of Trade, to protect its members from loss through failures among a class of their customers. This class of retailers is made up of those who neglect to insure adequately or not at all, and who, when loss comes, are clamorous for a compromise with their creditors. The wholesale dealers have agreed upon and sent out a

circular notifying the retailers that, in consequence of the serious losses sustained because of fires, they will not hereafter "accept any compromise from their customers, when it is found that the failure has been caused through insufficient insurance." In furtherance of this object, the notification states that the minimum amount of insurance on the stock and buildings must be at least sixty per cent. of their value. Some complaint is made against this action as arbitrary and oppressive, but we opine that the complainants are mainly those whose custom the wholesale dealers can best do without. A prudent and honest retailer, who is obliged to ask for credit, will not neglect ample insurance, both for his own sake and that of his creditors.

THE HABIT OF looking upon all fire insurance companies as legitimate subjects for plundering by legal enactment, as well as the political demagogery which is at the bottom of much of the adverse legislation from which the business suffers, is well illustrated in the new law of the State of Missouri doubling the tax on premium receipts. The *St. Louis Republic*, a partisan daily, congratulates the party in power on this great achievement, by which some \$50,000 are added to the revenues of the State, and says that these results sustain its oft-repeated declaration that "our party" is the friend of the people and the foe of corporations. With the fact before them that during last year fire insurance premiums in the United States and Canada, taken as a whole, yielded scarcely two per cent. above losses and expenses, the people who cry out against all aggregations of capital, except their own, as a monopoly, and egged on by demagogue politicians, delight in crippling the only efficient means for protecting their property from dead loss because the companies are "corporations." They will learn of their folly some time.

IN FIRE UNDERWRITING management long credit is a well known but not easily corrected evil. Much has been written and said about the necessity for its correction, and various methods have from time to time been suggested. On the Pacific Coast the credit evil had assumed such proportions that it was felt some weeks ago that something must be done, and at once,