

The Chronicle

Insurance & Finance.

R. WILSON SMITH,
Proprietor.

ESTABLISHED JANUARY, 1881

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

VOL. XXII. No. 31.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, AUGUST 1, 1902.

SINGLE COPY - - .10
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION - \$2.00

Fireproof Wood again.

Mr. Edward Atkinson's announcement that he doubted whether wood could be made fire-proof would have been more worthy of attention if he had given his definition of "fire-proof" as applied to wood. It seems a mere truism to say that wood cannot be made fire-proof if it is meant that it cannot be made absolutely indestructible by heat, for with heat the Globe would become what some eminent scientists say it was in the days of chaos, viz., a mass of vapour. The tests in the United States navy yard have involved the use of more than 1,700 degrees of heat in wood that was the subject of experiments, and it withstood the flames perfectly. If Mr. Atkinson is about to test whether any absolutely incombustible substance exists he should postpone it until winter—it is too hot to think of such things.

Assessment Society lapses.

The number of lapses in assessment society business is amazing. The "Spectator" has issued a table showing the numbers and percentages of lapses and deaths in these societies for 1891, 1896, 1901, which are sufficient to account for the withdrawal and collapse of many of these ephemeral organizations. In one group of 12 companies, the number of policies written was 11,692, and the lapses, 11,727. In another group of 21 companies the number written was 130,027, lapses, 79,351, which is 61 per cent. In a third group of 18 companies, comprising, says the "Spectator," the two largest Orders in the United States, there were 210,689 written and 76,419 lapses, equal to 36 per cent. In a fourth group of 9 companies, 89,406 were written and the lapses were 48,797, or over 54 per cent. The novitiates seem to become disenchanted very rapidly after entering, and not even the fascination of a

bright collarette, or scarf, or belt, is sufficient to retain them as members when they have once had an inside view of the show. The ratios of death are equally remarkable. In 1891 22 companies had a loss ratio of 14.85 per 1,000, and in 1901, 22.04 per 1,000. In other groups we find such changes as a loss ratio in 1891 of 10.45, and in 1901, 33.56; of 6.57 in 1891, and 13.37 in 1901; 5.14 in 1891, and 9.40 in 1901. In a third group we get such advances in death ratios as 9.04 in 1891 to 26.96 in 1901, 11.76 to 26.43, 6.82 to 20.92, 2.08 to 9.57.

The returns can only be compared to the progress of some cancerous growth which is steadily eating up the healthy flesh and leaving a remnant of diseased structure in its place.

U.S. and Canadian Note Issues.

The marked superiority of the Canadian system of bank note issues over that of the United States has been graphically shown by the N.Y. "Commercial Bulletin." Our contemporary points out that our circulation of bank notes rose in October last by 21.5 per cent. over the amount in previous winter, then decreased automatically 20 per cent. down to January last, and since then increased 10 per cent., each change reflecting the demand for money. "In marked contrast with this is the movement of our National bank circulation. At the end of October it had not increased 3 per cent. since the end of June. At the end of January it was practically the same as at the end of October; there was a reduction of about half a million dollars. From February 1 to July 1 there was no increase at all, but a decrease of something more than \$3,000,000, nearly 1 per cent. Next fall there will be a great increase in the demand for money; if the circulation increases at all it will be