

Another and convincing argument for the adoption of the amendment in question is found in the results of actual experiment. In the leading States over the border, anti-rebate laws have been enacted,—some very recently and some two or three years ago, and the universal verdict is that they have worked well. If they have not exterminated the rebate evil, they have materially lessened it and put it in the power of law-abiding agents to punish the offenders, and in several instances that power has been exercised. The best evidence of the effective operation of anti-rebate legislation is found in the fact that, through the efforts of the agents and managers, several States have, during the just closed or pending sessions of the legislatures, followed the lead of New York, Massachusetts and Michigan, and passed similar laws, with very great unanimity.

The argument is sometimes used against anti-rebate laws, that they are unnecessary, on the ground that rebating, together with other bad practices in life assurance, should be corrected by mutual pledges of the managers and agents in an associated capacity. Unfortunately, in this world, the thing that ought to be is seldom the thing that actually is, and this entirely correct theory is found to utterly break down in practice. If all the workers in the life assurance field were honorable and high-minded gentlemen, with as fine a sense of honor as we believe a majority of them to have, the voluntary agreement plan would be a sufficient remedy; but there are everywhere always a percentage of these workers with easy consciences, who regard a pledge of this kind as a shrewd device with which to bind the practice of others, while they go on rebating as usual by cunning underground methods. We can scarcely claim to be much wiser or better than our neighbors over the border, and they in several instances thoroughly tried the voluntary pledge system with the uniform result of failure, which led to the adoption of the present laws. A good law is no hardship to an honest man, but it is a most serviceable bar in the way of a dishonest one. Let us by all means put all life agents on an equality in their work, by means of a law which makes discrimination and broken pledges impossible.

WHY AND WHERE INSURANCE GROWS.

Insurance in its various forms is conspicuously a product of our higher civilization. Wherever we find the highest development and the widest diffusion of the intellectual and moral, we find insurance in the most thriving condition. Those communities where thought is least fettered by superstition and unbound by tradition are the communities which see most clearly and put to practical use most generally the principles underlying the protective forms of our social economy which we call insurance. On the insurance chart, Hindostan, and China, and Persia are conspicuous for their absence, and they are quite as conspicuous for their absence from the chart of civilization and intellectual progress. Confessedly the highest attainments of the human race, intellectually and morally, are found where the Anglo-Saxon holds sway, and when

the statistical historian looks for figures with which to measure the business of insurance, he unhesitatingly turns first of all to the English-speaking countries. We would not overlook either the intellectual attainments or the insurance progress of Germany and France, but it is a historic fact beyond controversy that to Great Britain and to America, mainly, insurance owes its development under the most perfect forms.

The system of life assurance, with its record of already distributed millions, and the tangible guarantee of future perpetual distribution in its still other invested millions, is a gigantic object lesson of the provident care of the stronger for the weaker. The mair-spring of the system is found in the recognition by the assured of an obligation to provide for and protect those dependent upon him, and is distinctively the fruit of a Christian civilization. Life assurance is also a recognized factor in securing the safety and stability of the social fabric, and while it is an individual protector it is a public benefactor. A million dollars secured to the widow and children of the no longer living provider means not simply personal comfort and educational advantages to the beneficiaries, but it means as well less prison cells, less brothels, and less poor-houses.

Of the commercial value of fire insurance we took occasion recently to speak in these columns, pointing out its mission as an equalizer of the strain caused by fire loss, and by its distributive facilities causing the restoration of the factory with its hum of machinery, the store with its replenished shelves, and the home with its vanished belongings. In re-creating burned towns and in saving influential firms from bankruptcy, fire insurance is as indispensable to the commercial world as are railways or telegraphs or banking institutions in their way. But fire insurance has something more than a commercial value, great as we concede that value to be. In saving a large factory or a mercantile establishment from ruin, it also protects the *family*; not alone the family of the owner, who in a multitude of cases would be absolutely ruined after a destructive fire, but the families of the men and women who find employment in these stores and factories. Whatever saves men and women from want saves them from the worst forms of temptation to crime; and it is time that fire insurance as a conservator of good society, in its capacity as a promoter of prosperity, received the recognition which is its due.

It is because the insurance idea is fundamentally correct and its application a practical beneficence, that it has reached the present degree of development. Plants and trees grow only where their roots find congenial soil and atmosphere, and institutions are governed by the same conditions of growth. The best evidence of the legitimacy of insurance is found in its greatness. Taking this continent alone for our observations, and we know how each year the business adds largely to its already great proportions, though so familiar have we become with insurance in its various forms, and so much a part of us has it become, that it is only when we pause to take an inventory of past results that we realize their magnitude. Taking the brief period of