

and owes more than when the legal proceedings began. This surely is a case of hardship. It is only one of a thousand, perhaps, but its circumstances and especially its date make it more than usually poignant. The machinery of the law is clumsy and unequal when four times the amount of a debt is incurred in its attempted collection. The suggestion of the reverend gentlemen that lawyers' as well as bailiffs' fees should be abolished in cases of small debts does not seem to us practical. Such functionaries are entitled to be paid for their services. But the limiting of costs to some reasonable proportion to the amount of a debt may well attract the efforts of Quebec legislators.

INSURANCE MATTERS.

The many friends of Mr. Horace W. Davison, nephew of Dr. J. L. Davison, of Toronto, and formerly of the Manufacturers' Life Insurance Co., will be pleased to hear of his progress with his actuarial studies. At the present time he is engaged in the office of the eminent actuary and author, Mr. George King, of London, Eng.

A New England journal prints the following terse approval of a benign business: "Clothes a man can do without—in some climates; body and soul he can make hang together on some few pence per day; knowledge he can leave to the professors and still get on if he is industrious and has common sense; but 'accident insurance' he cannot do without—that is, if he cares for his own welfare and loves his family."

To say "God Bless our Home" is something of a mockery if there are no life insurance policies among its furniture. This we find on one of the pages of the pocket diary presented by the North American Life Company, and a very suggestive remark it is. Another striking passage we select from the same source: "Money is said to be all-powerful, but it cannot buy life insurance when some insidious disease creeps in."

An Austrian actuary, Herr Loewenberg, refers to industrial life insurance as he found it being done in "America" and Canada. On this subject he says: "Life insurance among the middle classes is already an institution of great social value, and much more so is the bequest of a policy to the lower classes, who live from hand to mouth. In such a case life insurance works a veritable salvation. It is a power of human and ethical significance. Mankind should not build monuments to politicians and poets alone."

The Knights of the Maccabees of the World (beautiful title) thought they had guaranteed themselves against the payment of accident claims when they inserted in their beneficiary certificates a clause providing that if the insured, while either sane or insane, committed suicide, the insurance should be forfeited. But they forgot to reckon with juries. Paul Steinsland was a Maccabee. He hanged himself on the knob of his kitchen door. The Maccabees refused to pay the insurance. But a jury promptly found that Steinsland did not commit suicide!

Because his father was sick and the tenement was fireless and fuelless, and he saw other boys hooking coal from a railroad car, little Dick Jackson, of East St. Louis, hooked a few lumps, too—and was caught at it. Judge Beach fined him \$5, and then—with tears in his eyes—paid the fine himself. That was a good-hearted judge, comments the Insurance Age, and we will bet a silver dollar against a plugged nickel that his life is insured for the benefit of his children. Here's to the Beach family.

After much persuasion, a Leeds man was induced to assure his life for £500, says an exchange. The first premium was paid and the policy handed over. About an hour afterwards, he was passing close to some buildings in the course of erection, when a portion of the scaffolding fell upon him, causing fatal injuries. A doctor in attendance pronounced the case hopeless. "No chance for me, is there, doctor?" "None, I am sorry to say." To the astonishment of the medico, the dying man broke into a feeble chuckle. "I can't help laughing, doctor," he gasped. "It's the funniest thing on earth! Such a jolly sell—for the—assurance company!"

In the opinion of Hon. John F. Dryden all the business that is written by the industrial insurance companies and the ordinary insurance companies put together does not keep pace with the increase in population of the country. Therefore the field is not exhausted.

According to the report of Chief Benoit, of the Montreal Fire Department, the number of fires last year in Montreal was 858, as compared with 648 during 1902. The losses however, were not in proportion, for they were lighter than during any year since the department was organized. Five lives were lost, but none of the firemen suffered serious injury. The number of false alarms was 150, about the same as in 1902. The decrease in the losses bears out the Chief's contentions that improvements in the protective apparatus and equipment would bear good results. The Chief declares that the fire losses of Montreal in 1903 were the lightest for any year since the present brigade was organized.

Wheat sheaves and clover blossoms are the accompaniments, and properly the emblems, of a pastoral life. One hardly expects, therefore, to find things so dainty and so placid as these used in any way to illustrate so exciting a subject as fire waste or fire insurance. It must be because that excellent gentleman, the vice-president, lives in the country, amid such tranquil surroundings as field and orchard afford, that he has chosen the glories of the fields as his inspiration for a 1904 calendar for the Western. It is a very pretty calendar—well-colored, natural, unstrained, the effect much heightened by its being embossed. If one wished to be imaginative, he might contrast the fire red of the title with the delicate pink and maize color of the clover and the wheat against which it is relieved. But in anything connected with fire insurance there seems no room left for imagination, especially after the way fires have begun in Canada this present January.

Rebating by life insurance agents is not being practised on quite so extensive a scale as is usual at this time of the year or else the rebater is becoming more wary, perhaps both. The exposure at Detroit has had a certain influence on agents in other Michigan cities, for Commissioner Barry is known to be a man of his word, and though he does not object to the rebating of fire insurance premiums, he has expressed his intention of making things interesting for the life insurance rebater. In Wisconsin the commissioner is at present investigating charges made against rebaters and will prosecute if he is able to collect evidence sufficient to convict, while Commissioner Cutting, of Massachusetts, has caused the arrest of an agent on similar charges. The Massachusetts case is likely to settle the mooted point as to the constitutionality of anti-rebate laws, for it is understood that the case will be fought to a finish. In Chicago there is not so much talk of rebating as usual. A Chicago life insurance man, who is in the habit of taking a flier at this time of the year, had not had an offer up to a few days since. The Wayne case has also probably had some effect. Then the public is being informed that it is within the power of any one of a company's policy holders to bring suit to restrain it from paying a claim where the premium has been rebated. This also has had some effect. Altogether, the season for rebaters appears to be duller than usual.—Chicago Investigator.

INDICATORS OF TRADE.

It is well for the commercial observer to have his mind open to suggestions from any quarter. We may think, at first glance, that a playwright is hardly the person to advise as to matters of commerce. But a man in whatever business, who travels much and keeps eyes and ears open, may give pointers worth observing. The views, as expressed in the *World* of Saturday last, of Mr. W. A. Brady, who is manager of some ten theatrical companies in the United States and Canada, may have a lesson for merchants and manufacturers. He has evidently watched the effect of commercial and financial conditions in a country upon the social habits of the people. And he declares that the amusement business is the first barometer of trade. He describes it as being a public pulse that is as