

pulses. Present day conditions accentuate the unfavourable features in the lot of the less well-to-do classes. When class distinctions were so sharply drawn as to divide society into castes, there was more general contentment, suicides were very rare from any cause but pronounced lunacy of an acute type. In later years, there have been thousands of cases of men even in easy circumstances, some men of wealth indeed ending their lives, owing to morbid dissatisfaction with the extent of their fortunes. A wealthy jeweller in England, not long ago, shot himself and left a memorandum on which was written, "I cannot endure this any longer—after all these years," he was then fifty years of age, "I am only worth £20,000, when I ought to have double as much." In an earlier period he would have retired on this fortune in great contentment.

Mr. Hoffman gives a table of the suicide mortality in 50 American cities which shows these totals:

Total suicides 1894 to 1903, 10 years.....	21,491
Yearly average.....	2,149
Rate per 100,000 of population.....	16.8
Total suicides in 1904.....	2,927
Increase over average, 1894-1903.....	778
Rate per 100,000 of population.....	19.5
Increase of 1904 over 1894-1903.....	2.7

Hoboken heads the list with a ratio of 37.9 per 100,000 in 1904, St. Louis has 35.8, Orange 35.6, New York City 24.6. Several factory towns show a very low rate, less than half the average of large cities, which does not favour the theory that a life of hard work develops suicidal impulses.

How to protect itself from such frauds as are committed by criminals of this and other classes is one of the most difficult questions for life assurance companies to solve.

RETALIATION DEPRECATED.

A New York underwriter makes the following proposal in regard to the situation in Arkansas. It will be remembered that, according to the law of that State, any insurance company which participates in an agreement with other companies to fix rates is forbidden under penalties to operate in Arkansas. He says:

"The fire insurance companies have a grand opportunity to show the people of Arkansas that their work against the companies is dangerous as well as unwise. While we (the insurance companies) are forced to go without premiums, they should be made to go without insurance, at least on mercantile and special hazard risks. For a long while, they think, the mushroom concerns sprung up this year and the unexpired policies in real companies will give them cover, and so they put off worrying. What we should do is to make a crisis now by cancelling without delay or discrimination every mercantile and manufacturing risk policy. Then the

pressure would be felt where it would most hurt, and the demand for legislative action in repeal of the harsh and unreasonable law would be quick and loud. Unless we make this move it will not be long before other States will pass like laws and we shall see the business pass to newcomers, whose weakness will not be heeded while they pay losses somehow. So long as they last, so long we must wait. To do now what will count for something is our right course—to wait is to lose all."

The provocation is great, no doubt, and the proposed scheme of retaliation would be effectual, but, would it be a wise course for the strong fire companies to take? It seems to us that such a procedure would be unworthy the dignity of an insurance company of any repute, and would excite irritation which might be injurious to their future interests. The present situation is unlikely to last, it is a passing phase of prejudice against insurance companies which will disappear when the difficulties it has created are realized and when the unreasonableness is understood of penalizing insurance companies for acting in harmony. Retaliation is not wise and is not a sound business principle under existing circumstances in Arkansas.

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ACTUARIES.

Dr. Alfred Manes, general secretary of the organizing committee for the Fifth International Congress of Actuaries, has issued a circular relative to the Congress which will assemble September 10, 1906. The Hon-Secretary, Dr. Count, of Posadowsky, has consented to act as honorary president. Those entitled to membership in the Congress and subscribers to the volume of proceedings may remit the subscription price, \$4, to Israel C. Pierson, correspondent of the Congress for the United States and Canada, 141 Broadway, New York City.

The following programme has been drawn up, and papers are invited upon the several topics:

I. Industrial Insurance and in Particular the Insurance of Children.

II. Methods of Calculating and Determining Extra Premiums for Hazardous Risks.

III. Mortality Tables for Annuitants.

IV. (a) Methods of Insuring Abstainers; (b) Methods of Insuring Persons Whose Occupations Connect them with the Manufacture or Sale of Alcoholic Beverages.

V. Insurance on the Lives of Women.

VI. Question of Taxes Imposed Upon Insurance Companies.

VII. Limits Within Which Insurance is Possible

VIII. Methods of Conducting Mortality Investigations.

IX. Methods of Adjusting or Graduating Tables of Mortality.