

## POPULISM AND INSURANCE.

The legislatures in the Western States controlled by the Populist party will soon convene, and the law-making machinery will at once be put into operation. The news comes from Missouri, Kansas and Colorado that radical measures in regard to insurance are to be adopted. In Nebraska the situation, it is said, is different. Governor Holcomb, of that State, has announced that no radical legislation of any kind will be urged or attempted. It is claimed that populism is not in the saddle in that State. For the well-being of the good people of Nebraska we hope that is true. Missouri, however, is not so fortunately situated. There the pool and combination law, originally passed in 1891, does not apply to cities having 100,000 inhabitants, which exempts St. Louis and Kansas City. This is not satisfactory to the powers that be, and the law is to be amended so as to apply to these, while at the same time it is to be more stringent. The insurance business is to have special attention. Colorado, too, proposes to square itself with the insurance companies for the part they are supposed to have taken in the Presidential campaign. But Kansas, the haven of the socialistic cranks and the home of "sockless" Simpson, Peffer, and erstwhile of Mrs. Lease, would not be happy if it did not have the insurance companies to regulate. A telegram sent out from Topeka says:

"The Populists will attempt to secure the passage of a law of some character which, as they assert, will open up the business of insurance to competition, in the matter of rates charged for premiums. Under the present system insurance companies solicit business upon the basis of advisory rates, which are prepared by one man, and accepted by all the companies as reasonable. These rates are made after a careful view of the property is taken, and the work being done by one man lessens the expense to the companies. The Kansas rates are prepared by a man whom the Populists allege is not employed by any insurance company, and they have declared their intention of getting at him in some manner."

The Populists of Kansas have regulated about everything, except themselves, until they have driven out a large part of its thrifty and enterprising inhabitants, as so graphically told by one of its own denizens, Mr. William Allen White, editor of the *Emporia Gazette*, in his now famous article of August 15 last, in which he asked and so cleverly described "What's Wrong with Kansas?" The State has lost its prosperous people, all of the foreign capital once invested there, and business is an unknown quantity. A few of the insurance companies have not yet withdrawn, hoping that a change might come some time, and these are now to be further disciplined. It is not unlikely if further legislation of the insurance business is attempted, it will be the last straw which will break the camel's back, and the insurance companies will do what other interests have done—quit the State.—*The Investigator*.

## CREDIT MEN'S ASSOCIATIONS.

At the meeting held in Chicago for the organization of an Illinois branch of the National Credit Men's Association, J. B. Forgan, vice-president of the First National Bank, was selected as temporary chairman. W. H. Preston, of Sioux City, the president of the National Association, was introduced, and in his remarks he clearly outlined the object of the movement, and said something of the methods by which it is hoped to accomplish much good.

"I come to talk with you concerning our great and common interests. I say our common interests, for it is a very common occurrence when my house is interested in a failure to find the Chicago houses most royally interested with me; in fact, I think it most uncommon to find a failure in which you are not interested. Such is the generosity and competition of Chicago's credit men. I find that you are misled by the same imperfect and incorrect mercantile agency service that I employ. I find you groping blindly about and running up against the same laws favorable to the dishonest debtor, and a menace to the tenure of office of the credit men. I notice your customers sell out their stocks and settle upon their own terms just the same as mine; once in a while I shut you out in a preference; again I am shivering out in the cold while you stand inside. You receive the same percentage

of dividend from the debtor's friendly assignee as I do, and I judge use just about the same, or perhaps more, forcible words of blessing. And what is true in comparison with Sioux City and Chicago is true over the entire country. We have a common interest.

"New York organized the first separate local association. Following this, one was completed at New Orleans. Then came the Toledo convention, the preparation for that bringing into existence associations in Cincinnati, Kansas City, St. Joseph, St. Louis and Minneapolis. We now have eighteen or twenty local associations. We have a legislative committee with twenty members, from twenty States; an executive committee, which controls all the other committees; a committee upon mercantile agency service; a committee upon investigation; a membership committee, and a committee upon business literature; also, a committee upon credit department methods. The local associations join the National, as a body, upon the payment of \$2 per member, but up to the number of fifteen we receive individual membership at \$10 per member, and I am pleased to report that Chicago was the first city to reach the limit of individual memberships. We desire that the local associations have their committees conform in name and nature to those of the National body, adding, however, such as you desire for your local needs.

"Now I know you are asking, what do we expect to accomplish? What have we accomplished? The New Orleans Association has been instrumental in enacting three laws in the State of Louisiana—one making it a penal offence to give out incorrect figures for the purpose of obtaining credit; one requiring the purchaser of a stock of goods to exact an affidavit that such stock of goods is paid for (failure to exact such affidavit being prima facie evidence of fraud and collusion), and failure of the vendor to pay to his creditors the proceeds of such sale, proportionate to their claims, is a penal offence. I find the credit man himself the greatest obstacle to the success of his work, and to say to you very forcibly that the only reason why we have not better business legislation is because the business men of the country have not asked for it. Are you satisfied with existing conditions and present laws? If you are, God help you; but if you are not satisfied, why not help yourselves? Referring further to legislative work, I would state that at my suggestion a conference was held with President Woolworth, of the American Bar Association, and President Bartlett, of the Commercial Law League, and through correspondence with President Brewster, of the Commission on Uniform State Laws, we have decided to unite in an effort for better legislation. We now have before us an Act on Negotiable Instruments, drafted after the English Act of 1882. It gives the whole law of negotiable paper, now contained in a three-volume law book, and settles many mooted questions. It abolishes all days of grace, and has many commendable features.

The great mercantile agencies have given us kindly recognition, and wherever we have formed local associations their managers come into our meetings, and, with a desire to be helpful to us, discuss their service and adopt our best suggestions.—*Bankers' Monthly*.

## THE BUSINESS OUTLOOK.

The president of the Canadian Pacific Railway is no pessimist; indeed those who remember his prediction about wheat call him an optimist. However, he has been giving his views of the coming time to a New York reporter. Sir William Van Horne said:

"The railway situation at the present time, both in Canada and the United States, seems to be improving, with strong indications of greater and more rapid improvement during the next twelve months. The elections in the United States, of course, affected Canadian affairs, because of our close relationship, but I am satisfied now that the business stagnation and depression incidental to that condition are rapidly passing away, and I am looking for general business improvement. While it is true that the business depression has for some time existed, I believe that in the United States the era of prosperity was at hand at the time of the Venezuelan controversy, but the unexpected developments incidental to that affair stopped the business revival, with the result that a decided setback came. Then the Presidential election had the tendency of further unsettling

business, but now that the questions have been solved business must necessarily pick up."

President Van Horne further stated that the Canadian Pacific Railway has not been carrying as much grain as reported. The relations between this company and the American roads, he said, are most friendly, and he emphatically denied the report of friction.

"The parties who denounce us and suggest the withdrawal of bonding privileges," he continued, "are certainly not American railroad officials. Those people say we are a British military line, and harp on that score. A greater farce never was perpetrated, for the reason that if the British Government wanted a military line it would certainly not build so close to the American border. We are denounced as a pirate on American commerce, but we maintain close and pleasant relations with the lines of the United States, and our interests are neutral."

## DRUNKEN HENS.

The necessity for a Blue Ribbon Society amongst animals, or else a prohibition statute in the animal kingdom, is clearly shown by the proceedings last month in the sheriff's court at Oban, Scotland, in an interesting case, where John Turner Laggan claimed £50 damages, restricted to £12, against a local distillery company for injury done to his hens "by the said company having allowed intoxicating material to flow into the Laggan burn." This material, it was said, caused drunkenness amongst the pursuer's poultry, and consequently rendered them of little, if any, value to him. Mr. Laggan stated that for some years past he had been making a considerable income from keeping poultry, but since the starting of the distillery he had made little or nothing. His hens and ducks would not eat. They were, he might say, almost always more or less under the influence of drink, except on Sunday, when the distillery was not working. Mondays were their worst days, for then the hens drank excessively, fell into the burn frequently, and lately he had to keep a boy to look after them on Monday mornings. He produced a hen in court plainly under the influence of liquor. Decision was reserved.

## A BIG COUNTERFEITING PLANT.

A counterfeiting plant with tools, moulds, chemicals, etc., was discovered in a small rough cabin in the foothills about four miles from Bakersfield, Cal. The cabin was occupied by a man named John W. Garner, who has been arrested, but claims to be innocent of any wrong doing. The cabin was found to be filled with such chemicals as imitators of coin use. There were also moulds for coins and \$2,500 in the finished product under the house. The method was to mould composition twenties, tens and fives, and treat them to a gold bath by the electro-plating process. This business is supposed to have been carried on for several years, as drug bills dated 1890 were found. The fact that letters from distant parts were found acknowledging receipts of "goods" and containing compliments on the appearance of the same, indicates that the plan was to send the spurious coins away for other persons to dispose of. Garner was supposed to be a sheep herder.—*B. and M. Journal*.

—Chicago is just settling down to the understanding that its big sewer, the Chicago drainage canal, is to cost \$50,000,000, instead of \$30,000,000, which was the first estimate. This is not surprising. The estimated cost of the Manchester canal, recently completed, and which is a commercial failure, was \$28,750,000, but before the work was completed the expenditures had reached a total of \$80,000,000. The estimated cost of the Suez canal was \$40,000,000, but the actual cost was \$94,500,000, without counting the work, valued at \$20,000,000, which Egypt did gratuitously.

—Erastus Wiman, Chauncey Dutton and Alex. R. Smith are names associated with the "gigantic" canal boat combination, which is to take advantage of Erie canal improvements, and which is "just ready to be floated," with steam canal boats, storage warehouses, Niagara electric power, etc. These names, as well as others referred to as promoters of this scheme, have been heard of before in connection with big enterprises, but only in newspapers.—*Marine Review, Cleveland*.