

### Mutual Life Insurance.

The Chicago *Argus*, an insurance journal, publishes an article on the working of co-operative life insurance associations in the state of Ohio, the figures which are taken from the Ohio State-Insurance Report of 1882. The report is certainly not a favorable one for the forty-eight companies of that class doing business in the Buckeye state, but the *Argus*, which is a strong stock company advocate, claims that the following evils are all they have accomplished:

"That they have been organized at the solicitation of evil disposed persons, who afterwards assume control and operate them for profit to themselves, and not for the benefit of the members.

That they have been perverted from their lawful purpose of affording relief, to that of profit.

That they have persistently and unlawfully appropriated a portion of the money realized from the assessments made to meet death losses to the payment of exorbitant salaries to officers.

That they have accepted forged applications, and issued certificates upon the lives of persons who had no knowledge whatever that they were being insured.

That they have issued certificates upon the lives of very aged, feeble and dying persons; in some cases the inmates of infirmaries, for the benefit of persons who had no interest whatever in the lives of such persons; and in some cases knowingly permitted the certificates to be sold to the highest bidder, thus creating an incentive to murder.

That they have appropriated moneys paid on assessments, by members to secure re-insatement, to the use of the association instead of paying the same to the beneficiaries to whom it rightfully belonged.

These are a few of the long list of charges which superintendent Moore has found to characterize the co-operative mode of action and in the many numerous citations from official sources that is the most scathing in its utterance of the truth.

### Too Much Credit.

There is no doubt that the universal prosperity which has existed in Manitoba and the North-west for the last year or so has made many of the retail dealers reckless, owing to the freedom they experience in securing credit. It has got into the minds of many eastern wholesale dealers and manufacturers that every retail dealer in this country is on the fair way to wealth and fortune, if he only gives a reasonable amount of attention to his business. That usually shrewd individual, the commercial man, is often misled by outside appearances, and concludes that in a country where success is so general, the orders of the retailer should be both heavy and safe to book. This accepted opinion on the part of wholesale representatives is in many cases the cause of real injury to struggling merchants in the North-west. Retailers in this country are made up to a great extent of men who have not had a regular mercantile training, and who with unlimited credit at their disposal, are too apt to get into

deep water. In the few cases of failure which have occurred during the past six months this fact has been made painfully evident, and in most cases the reckless and ill-judged purchase of goods in an endeavor to carry on an extensive business upon a small capital has been the cause of misfortune. There can be no doubt but a new country like the North-west affords many opportunities for commercial success upon a small capital; but it is also a fact to secure this success, business ability of no mean order is necessary, and that is not always to be found among those, who for want of some settled occupation in which to permanently embark, enter into a small retail business in some staple line, with the hope of something better turning up; and it must be acknowledged that a great many who arrive here with a little spare cash follow such a course. To such unlimited credit is a curse, and to get out of the difficulties which their recklessness brings them into, people of that class are too apt to commence a system of cutting prices, which, while ruining their own commercial prospects, inflicts injury upon the judicious trader who has to compete with them. About every third emigrant who arrives in the North-west with a few hundred dollars in his pocket has it fixed in his mind that if something does not turn up to exactly suit him, he can start a small grocery store or some such staple business. It should be known by such that commercial tact is required as much if not more in the North-west than in older countries, and without it unlimited credit, instead of being a help, is a drawback to the business man of limited means.

### Disallowance.

The *Monetary Times* of the 17th has an article on this subject which in the point of provincial rights says:—The right of the province to charter railways intended to run to the United States' frontier was not taken away by the Pacific Railway charter: that right never existed. But the Dominion could have relaxed its rights, or what would have come to the same thing, it could have met the reasonable wishes of the province by granting charters itself. The bargain with the Pacific Railway Company tied its hands, in this respect; it could not now, if it would, charter other roads to run from the interior of Manitoba to the United States Frontier, or permit the Provincial Legislature to do so. The Pacific Railway Company obtained a monopoly of the carrying trade across the frontier, for a term of twenty years. This monopoly grant was extremely objectionable, from the first, and it will continue to be more and more so as time rolls on. Good faith with the railway company must be kept; but it will be impossible to enforce the exclusion for twenty years. In one form or another, a release from this yoke will have to be obtained; but this must be done with due respect to existing interests. It is wild talk to say that we must repudiate the obnoxious parts of the bargain with the railway company. The first and the last thing for the national government to do is to keep its honor unstained. To find some honorable means of escape from a galling restriction is the problem

which our public men are called upon to solve; and the sooner they set about the task, the better it will be for the future welfare of Manitoba and the North-west.

### The Railway War.

The war of the lines running between St. Paul and Minneapolis and Chicago and Milwaukee has had many new features during the past week, and although many prophecies of an amicable settlement have been made, the war seems as bitter as ever. Passenger rates to Chicago are about down to a basis of free travel, 35c. from St. Paul to Chicago being the lowest quotations reached. The passenger traffic, however, is considered but a small matter by the belligerents, and freight rates have been cut and slashed mercilessly, not only to Chicago and Milwaukee, but to Omaha, Sioux City and other far western points.

A favorite theory for a coming cessation of hostilities was put forth early in the week to the effect, that once the stock of the C. St. P. M. & O. company was beared sufficiently for the Rock Island people to secure a controlling interest in the line on reasonable terms, the war would be speedily settled. It is now admitted on all sides that they have secured this for several days past, and the war has only waxed in fierceness, and it is evident, as before stated in THE COMMERCIAL, that the struggle is one between a powerful railway combination endeavoring to hold a monopoly long possessed, and another equally powerful and determined to break that monopoly and secure a full share of the traffic to and from the North-west. The agreements between the Rock Island, B. C. R. & N. and M. & St. L. of Sept. 20, and the C. St. P. M. & O. and M. & St. L. of Sept. 25. were filed on Thursday with the Register of Deeds at St. Paul, and the securing of a controlling interest in the C. St. P. M. & O. by the Rock Island puts these agreements beyond the molestation of opponents in the fight. These agreements secure for the Albert Lea route an entrance to St. Paul, and completes their system between Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Omaha, Sioux City and other points of the far west, so that they are now in a position to meet battle at every point. It is evident that this combination has gained decided advantages; and that ere long their opponents will be compelled to admit them to a pool of rates on equal terms.

It would seem also that the C. M. & St. P. folks have been using the war to fix up the differences known to exist between themselves and the Minneapolis Miller's Association. A few weeks ago this company were threatening to establish a system of elevators in Northern Minnesota and Dakota to divert the wheat of these districts from Minneapolis to Chicago and Milwaukee, as a return for the Miller's patronizing the Albert Lea Route. On Wednesday last this policy was completely changed, and millers had the advantage of badly cut rates for their products, while no cut was allowed on wheat shipments. This effort to hold the wheat in Minneapolis was doubtless a bait for the millers to swallow, but it has raised a storm of indignation among grain shippers, who now sympathise