

panies being robbers and extortionists much the same as they would of usurers charging an outrageous rate of interest. They maintain the fire insurance companies have been rolling up and amassing an enormous amount of wealth from the pockets of the insurers. Our answer to unsupported statements of this kind is short and decisive; we refer to the table published recently in these columns, giving the results of fire insurance in Canada for the past 36 years, and showing the number of companies which have failed or been forced to retire from the field during that period. These figures will speak for themselves, and we are sure that there is no business man who would be content to work for the same number of years with such a miserable result. The underwriters desire to bring about a change so as to place fire insurance like banking upon a sound profitable basis, to which we believe specific rating is the correct road to travel.

THE SOVEREIGN BANK OF CANADA.

The half-year's statement of the Sovereign Bank of Canada, just issued, is accompanied by a letter from Mr. D. M. Stewart, general manager, pointing out the salient points in the statement and calling attention to the general position of the bank and its progress.

The statement cannot fail to be gratifying to the shareholders, who, and all who are associated with this institution, will be much interested in the information given by the general manager as regards various features in the business. The enlargement of the deposits of the Sovereign Bank has been remarkable. After having been in operation only three years and a half, the bank has acquired deposits to extent of \$10,134,209, of which close upon two millions have been received in the last half year. The increase in these funds since October, 1904, has been \$2,937,468.

In the same period the loans and discounts have risen from \$8,193,663 to \$11,144,944, an increase of \$2,951,281, so that the whole of the additional deposits have been utilized for active business.

The circulation on 31st October last was \$1,550,790, which came within \$59,688 of the amount of paid-up capital, which is the legal limit. Under such a condition the bank was obliged to use the notes of other banks during the later weeks in October, as was the case with a number of other banks who had reached their circulation limit long before the usual maximum period had arrived.

The new stock issued at a premium of 25 per cent. has been all taken up, and 95 per cent. of the total amount has been paid in advance.

The General Manager states that, "All of the Sovereign Bank's loans are in Canada," which, in his judgment, "is the safest and best country in the world for legitimate investment." This opinion

will be endorsed by those most familiar with the investment market.

The magnificent 10 storey building erected by the bank in this city is now completed and 70 out of the 72 rentable rooms are tenanted.

The shares are expected to be "called" on the Toronto and Montreal Stock Exchange this month. This plan of having sub-offices managed from a central office, of which class of branches the bank has 18, is reported to be working well, as it has been found to do in both Scotland and England. The rapid acquisition by the Sovereign Bank of a large business, which is reported to be in a satisfactory condition, is highly creditable to the management of Mr. Duncan M. Stewart, whose energy and enterprise are being well rewarded.

MONTREAL INSURANCE INSTITUTE.

The monthly meeting of the Montreal Insurance Institute was held on the evening of the 21st inst. Mr. Sargeant P. Stearns, president, was chairman. At a business session, 26 new members were elected unanimously. The prospects of the Institute were described as being very bright. The attendance was larger than usual. Amongst those present were:—Messrs. S. P. Stearns, president; A. R. Howell, secretary; C. R. G. Johnson, B. Hal Brown, David Burke, H. Timmis, George Lyman, W. B. Colley, A. H. Lavers, J. C. Alloway, — Gowan, — Ridout (Toronto), J. E. E. Dickson, T. F. Dobbin and H. C. Thomas.

A paper was read on "Some Phases of Capital and Labour," in the course of which a picture was given of the conditions of labour at various periods and of its gradual evolution from almost universal slavery to the present conditions when the absolute right of free contract prevailed. The difficulties attendant upon the adjustment of disputes between labour and capital as to the remuneration to be paid for services were dwelt upon and comments made regarding Councils of Conciliation, Wage Arbitrations, Profit-sharing and Co-operation, the latter being regarded as having the most hopeful elements.

Mr. C. R. Johnson moved a vote of thanks for the paper, which was seconded by Mr. Timmis, who, after some interesting criticisms of the paper, expressed confidence in a remedy for labour and other troubles being found in the taxation plan of the late Mr. George.

Regret was felt at the absence of music and the president urged the members to have this provided at future meetings.

The Institute reading-room is now open to members, where a supply of newspapers and magazines is provided. An effort, however, is desirable to extend the accommodation and attractions of the Institute rooms.