States some time ago when imports for construction and other purposes were yet being maintained at a fairly high level. Another explanation suggested as contributing towards the premium is the fact that Canadian subsidiaries of United States industrial corporations are now making large remittances to their parent companies owing to the piling up of their balances at the banks in consequence of the decreased industrial activity here. The two points are interesting as illustrating the intricate character of international financial relationships.

VIOLATING FIRST MORTGAGES.

(*Continued from front page.*)

and hard cash is not so plentiful in the West that he is likely to take it to the local post office merely to have in exchange for it the satisfaction of having cleared this prior lien off his land. He is more likely in a large number of cases to retain the cash in his pocket and allow the lien to run—particularly as it is a useful political handle. So that, whatever the intentions of the Canadian Government may be, there can be no doubt that in many cases, the new legislation will result in practically a permanent prior lien on lands.

Those concerned have suggested an alternative to this method of procedure which is reasonable and would be effective—that the repayment of the seed-grain loans should be in the form of a tax collectable in the same fashion as the ordinary municipal taxes, until the whole is repaid. This suggestion has been rejected, possibly for political reasons, and the intention seems to be to push through the legislation on the original lines proposed. Of the effect of it there is little doubt. We hear that already one of the largest lenders in the Western field has definitely decided, in view of this legislation, that it will lend no more funds there, and it is probable enough that this decision is the first of a number of its kind. This legislation may mean in its consequences the cutting off of immense funds from the West. But if the Canadian Government is in a position to violate first mortgages, on which millions of dollars have been lent, then it cannot be considered matter for surprise if capital declines to take risks.

Mr. George Wegenast, managing director of the Mutual Life of Canada, with Mrs. Wegenast, has left for the "Sunny South" to spend the spring months.

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Through the American Social Hygiene Association, the Metropolitan Life of New York is offering a prize of $1,000 to the author of the best original pamphlet on social hygiene for adolescents between the ages of twelve and sixteen years. Manuscripts will be passed upon by a committee to be selected by the Association. The Metropolitan Life desires to use the winning pamphlet among its industrial policyholders. Information regarding the competition may be obtained from the American Social Hygiene Association, 105 West 40th Street, New York City.

WESTERN ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The history of the Western Assurance Company, of Toronto, goes back to sixteen years before Confederation, and throughout its long career, in all the vicissitudes of the fire insurance business, it has gallantly upheld its position as the leading purely Canadian fire insurance company. Distinguished always for the promptness and liberality of its claim settlements, the Western has long maintained a peculiar popularity with its policyholders, a popularity which, it may be confidently expected, will be continuously upheld in the future. Last year, the net premiums in the fire department were $2,116,085, with losses of $1,416,027. The details of the business show that in Canada and the foreign field, outside the United States, the Company did on the whole fairly well, except for unsatisfactory results from the Eastern provinces and from railroad risks. In the United States, where the Company has large and important interests, the unfavorable experience which appears to have been the common lot of nearly all the leading fire insurance companies, was shared. Adverse conditions led to a great falling-off in the amount of insurance of the most desirable kind, from which usually large profits are derived, and this falling-off in business, owing to trade conditions, is naturally reflected in profits.

The Marine business last year, gave a very satisfactory profit, particularly at the English branch. While ordinary marine risks fell off considerably after war broke out, a great demand arose for war risk policies, to which class of business the profits in this branch are largely due. It was mentioned by Mr. W. R. Brock, the president, at the annual meeting, that the curtailment of the re-insurance market has forced most of the Marine companies to write smaller amounts on each vessel, and as there has been more business to be divided between the companies, the result has naturally been that rates are gradually being placed upon a more profitable basis.

The profits of the year amounted to $80,486, and total assets of the Company at December 31 last were $3,736,856. Unearned premiums and other liabilities at the same date aggregated $1,850,020, so that there is a surplus to policyholders of $1,886,836. The losses paid by the Company since its organisation, it is interesting to note, now aggregate over $61,000,000.

The Western continues under the management of Mr. W. B. Meikle, under whose direction a regime of economy in administration and conservatism in underwriting was inaugurated several years ago and systematically continued.

MAKING GOOD CANADIAN CITIZENS.

A German settler (now naturalised) to whom the Lethbridge Live Stock Guarantors gave assistance in getting live stock, remarked lately: "I like this country. I got 160 acres of land free. I don't want grubstake but I see my neighbors get grubstake and seed from Government to help them this year. I like Lethbridge; the Board of Trade give me cows for mein wife make the butter. They write from Germany, come to the war. I say to hell mit the war. I stay mit the country what stay mit me."

A sign of the times is a warning issued by the British Fire Prevention Committee conveying simple instructions as to what to do in case of fire arising from air raids.