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A Blow at Bribers. Recent investigations disclosed there having existed a widespread conspiracy amongst the members of the House of Delegates, St. Louis, the object of which was the enrichment of the gang by blackmailing companies who sought incorporation, or the legislation required for conducting their business. Two classes of criminals were thus created, those who gave and those who accepted bribes. Eighteen members of the legislature are now under indictment for this offence, two have been convicted of perjury, several have fled to escape justice, and five are in jail being unable to find bail. On the 5th inst. R. M. Snyder, a millionaire financier, was found guilty at St. Louis, of having placed \$150,000 in the hands of members of the Assembly to secure the passage of a bill he was promoting in connection with a traction company. He was sentenced to five years in the penitentiary, where he will find some of the conspirators and others of their associates. There is no new feature in this scandal except the thoroughness of its exposure. Washington is quite familiar with bribery rings, the members of which work into each others hands and divide the spoil on an established system. The administrators of justice at St. Louis, Missouri, have done the State distinguished service by discovering this revolting conspiracy and bringing the criminals to justice.

Unclaimed Balances in Banks. The Government return of unclaimed balances in Chartered Banks for five years and upwards to Dec. 31, 1901, gives the total as \$438,692 as against \$404,336 at same date in 1900. The City and District has the largest amount, \$94,893; the Bank of Montreal, \$80,244; Eastern Township, \$36,692; Merchants of Canada, \$29,433; Canadian Bank of Commerce, \$28,608; British North America, 28,360; Hamilton, \$19,716; Royal, \$14,570; Nova Scotia, \$11,004; Molsons, \$10,393. All the others are under

\$10,000. Many of these deposits have been left undisturbed for many years. Amongst the City and District deposits are a number which have remained without any transaction for fifty years. A large number in the Bank of Montreal have had an equally long rest. We do not see that practical service is rendered by publishing these details in a Blue book, as these official documents are seen by few persons, and by none who are likely to have an unclaimed balance remaining in a chartered bank. The deposits which have remained without any transaction for 5 years and over number about 28,000, the bulk of them being small sums. The average is under \$5.00. On the 1st page of the report we note a balance of 8 cents, on the next page one of 5 cents and another of 7 cents. Retaining such trifling balances is a nuisance.

The Birth-Rate Problem.

A Dr. Neymarch, a French sociologist of repute, has published his views on the decreasing birth-rate problem. He considers this phenomenon to be a natural result of the conditions now prevalent in countries where the sphere for female labour has been so extended as to have brought hosts of women into the field as competitors with men. Owing to this the average child-bearing age has been materially shortened and the proportion of married persons has been reduced. These two causes are regarded as amply sufficient to account for the reduced birth-rate in Germany, France, and England, and, doubtless, they go far to explain the same decline in Ontario which has been attributed to less rational and innocent forms of life. The population features in modern times are correlated, there is a reduction in the birth rate, that is, there are fewer born in proportion to population in most civilized countries, but those who are born live much longer than when the birth-rate was higher. Looked at philosophically the greater longevity of modern days is a set-off to the smaller number of births.