

out to be, technically, a successful cement maker; but if the stock issues are out of all relation to actual construction cost, the returns on the investment will be small or entirely lacking, while if the company is loaded with excessive fixed charges the entire investment may be lost."

Regarding present and forthcoming cement company promotions in Canada, this advice holds good. As to the companies at present operating a large number are doing so with success. That of others must depend largely upon the adaptation of their plants to the changing conditions. The natural cement made way for Portland cement manufactured by the wet process. The dry process seems now to be ousting the wet method, as is shown by the fact that most of the cement plants in Canada which closed down last year were working with the wet process, although some companies, advantageously located, are successful with that process.

As to the future success of the industry there appears to be little doubt. But where the investor is concerned, it is a matter more than is usual for careful consideration of facts rather than of fancies.

### BRITISH BANKING SUGGESTIONS.

Greater publicity in banking is urged in the report of the committee appointed last fall by the Association of Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom to consider "the restrictive laws relating to currency and banking" in the British Isles. The committee advocate monthly statements by all the banks, giving fuller details and showing the averages of the daily balances. Bankers have always differed as to what particulars should be furnished in the bank statement, but it is generally thought that monthly statements should be made universal. At present only a few of the British banks publish their figures monthly. Another suggestion is that the average amount of the deposits and of the cash in hand and at the bank should be shown.

The gold question is dealt with, the fact being noted that the Bank of England, in contrast with all other European banks of issue, did not strengthen its stock of gold during last year. The gold reserves of the Bank of England have been the subject of much criticism by eminent bankers. Attention is drawn to the comparatively small stock of gold held in England and to the fact that the bank rates there fluctuate more than elsewhere. This is injurious to trade, and no measures can do more than minimize the fluctuations. But in proportion as the stock of gold available is increased the necessity for these fluctuations will be lessened.

There are made two somewhat radical suggestions, which will probably cause the conservative governors of the Bank of England some reflection. They are that the Bank should multiply branches and extend its business, and that it should, from time to time, diminish its fiduciary note issue. The latter suggestion is complicated by the fact that the Government shares in the profits of the fiduciary issue. The proposal would thus involve a rearrangement of the relations between the Bank of England and its chief customer.

Other proposals include a cash reserve to be held by the trustee and post-office savings banks, an issue by the bank of £1 notes, and the separate statement in the bank return of the bankers' balances, temporary advances, and bills discounted. The separation of the bankers' balances from the rest of the other deposits might have curious results, it is thought, if enforced. The Bank would likely be less inclined to loan as freely as it does now at the end of the half years, were the result of its lending published in the form of bankers' balances enlarged to a figure bigger than that of its reserve.

The committee also suggest that, after the gold reserves have been increased, the bank should be em-

powered, on the recommendation of a committee representing the State, the bank, and the banks, to increase its fiduciary issue in times of emergency; and that a committee should be appointed to consider the rearrangement of the relations between the bank and the Government, for which an opportunity will arise in March, 1911.

### FIRE COMMISSIONERS, A NECESSITY.

In the last two and a half years, the number of convictions for incendiarism in Ohio has exceeded that for the hundred years preceding the creation of the Fire Commissioner's department. While many States have had in operation for several years the office of fire commissioner, only one province in Canada—Manitoba—is served by such an official. The necessity for the appointment of fire commissioners in Canada is just as great, if not greater, as in the United States. New towns are being built every day. The Commissioner's watchful eye over methods of construction, his useful co-operation with underwriters' associations, insurance companies and municipal authorities, is an apparent desirability.

Incendiarism in Canada is increasing. Day after day accounts come to hand of deliberate attempts to burn property. Many arson trials have been held here this year, and in only a few instances have convictions been obtained. The difficulty of gathering evidence of value in such cases is enormous, though greatly minimized when a department exists which can nail the incendiary to his lie. The annual report of the fire commissioner of the State of Ohio shows that the number of incendiary fires there in 1901 was 292; in 1902, 222; in 1903, 190; in 1904, 168; in 1905, 97; in 1906, 134; in 1907, 126, and in 1908, 109. Mr. Rogers, Ohio's official, points out that until the creation of a special force of detectives in connection with his department, perjury aside, incendiarism was the crime in which trial was most likely to result in acquittal, because evidence in most cases is entirely circumstantial, making it difficult to remove all reasonable doubt. In states having state fire marshal departments, with detectives trained in the work, incendiarism is more likely to be followed by conviction than burglary, although in burglary the fact that a crime has been committed almost invariably is manifest. In arson there is difficulty in establishing the fact that a crime has been committed. The burglar must gain admittance by force and often has tools, which may be found in the place, or on his person, and used as evidence, while the owner who burns has an easy means of access to the premises, and the instruments of his crime go up in smoke. The burglar in many cases has a criminal record and a picture in some rogue's gallery, by which he can be identified. On the other hand, the incendiary is, in the majority of instances, a man with a record clean of crime. The burglar has incomplete knowledge of his surroundings and circumstances; but the man who burns his own, as a "business transaction" with an insurance company, can select a safe place and a propitious moment for his venture.

The burglar usually has an accomplice in securing, and again in disposing of, the goods; the incendiary needs none. To prove an alibi the burglar must suborn perjury; but the incendiary can time the starting of a destroying fire so that he can prove an alibi by true testimony. All fire marshal laws provide that the "cause, origin and circumstance" of every fire which damages property, occurring in the state, shall be investigated by a municipal or township officer and reported to the state fire marshal, who is given all the power of a court. The most important duty of a state fire marshal is the securing of evidence necessary to the conviction of those guilty of incendiarism and placing it in the hands of the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the crime was committed. At the trial, officers of the department who gathered the facts are always present with the wit-