business can be commenced as soon as the sum of $10,000 is paid up. The charter has 99 years to run. To manage this tiny affair there will be no less than eleven Directors, which gives each of them the sum of $909.09 of Capital to look after, or, if all becomes paid up, the large sum of $2,272. Out of 40 subscribing shareholders, eleven hold one share of $100, eight have two shares, and the balance is held in lots of three, four, five, and ten shares. If this institution fails, the newspapers will have an item headed, "Failure of a Bank in the United States," with a consequent reflection upon all the banking institutions of the country. Still, we trust this financial dwarf will thrive, and be a comfort to those who are advocates of small banks.

A Choice Bit of Buncombe.

As choice a bit of buncombe foolishness as we have ever seen in a serious document is a statement made in a circular issued by a prominent assessment association. It calls the attention of managers, agents and members to the very able circular letters published by Presidents McCall, Greene and others, in which they show how seriously the assets of the life insurance companies would be affected by the adoption of the free coinage of silver scheme. The assessment circular points out how superior is a system which leaves an insurance company without reserve assets. Of course, a company without reserve funds stands in no danger of having such reserves depreciated. The position of safety claimed for such associations is parallel to that of the man who boasted about the great satisfaction he had in not having suffered like his neighbors had done by the failure of a local bank. On being asked how he had managed to escape, he explained that it was owing to his being too poor to have any money on deposit! There is a classic saying to the effect that the purseless traveller can whistle over the dangers from highwaymen. We believe the general opinion will be that it is better to own money accompanied by risks of possession, than to be absolutely impecunious.

Insurance of Nuns.

A SOUTHERN contemporary informs its readers that the nuns in a St. Louis convent have had their lives insured for the purpose of paying off the debt on the institution. The idea having been suggested to the Mother Superior, she consulted Archbishop Kain, who gave the plan his entire approval. This suggests there being a very wide field for extending life assurance business in this Province,—indeed, all through Canada. Our contemporary speaks of the monastic life being conducive to longevity, the lives therefore of dwellers in a cloister being especially good risks, in his judgment. No doubt the temperate living, absence of care, quietude, and non-exposure to extremes of weather, are in themselves conducive to health. But there is, we fear, and as indeed we know from an eminent physician, another side to this story, which is that, close confinement, monotony, absence of exercise are highly deleterious to health. What, however, was done at St. Louis might be done in Canada. The prize of this new business is worth an effort to secure.

MR. BEDDALL ON FIRE INSURANCE.

The eminent position attained by Mr. Beddall as United States Manager of the Royal Insurance Company is an assurance that comments made by him on the business in which he has secured so high a reputation are of more than ephemeral interest and value.

On the recent anniversary of the New York State Association of Supervising and Adjusting Agents, he delivered an address relating to the duties of the members. He commenced by expressing surprise at the Association having reached its twenty fourth year, for such organizations "like good children generally die young." He had found the explanation to be in their "inculcating principles they did not necessarily practice and formulating rules which they could not, or would not, enforce." He facetiously compared them to the old parson who used to say "Boys, don't do as I do, but do what I say." Mr. Beddall might have compared them to the old cross road sign posts which point the way, but themselves remain stationary. The special agents duties are threefold the first is the making and revising of tariffs of rates; second, supervising and inspecting risks the agents have written; third, the adjustment of losses Experience however profound, and ability however pronounced, will be ineffective in extracting profits from fire insurance business unless the average rate "is sufficient to cover the losses and expenses incident to its being carried on," to which we suggest should be added a margin over and above such losses and expenses for profits How small is the margin of profit was shown by Mr. Beddall, who pointed out that for the thirty-six years ending 1895, the average premium throughout the United States was 85 4 10 cents on $100, while losses and expenses were 81 8 10 cents, showing a margin of only a little more 3½ cents on every $100 written, no account being taken of the difference between the liability for unearned premiums at the commencement of the term and that which had accrued at its close. These figures indicate the enormous effect of an increase or reduction of even 5 cents in the rate of premiums when applied over the whole country. Agents, therefore, who increase a rate from 75 cents to $1, or reduce it from $1 to 75 cents, forget that the difference represents nearly eight times the ratio of profit the entire business has yielded in the last 36 years. Speaking from the experience of his own company, Mr. Beddall said, that for the first half of 1896, compared with same period 1895, the average rate of premium had fallen 5 cents, which he assumed to be ascribable to the revision of rates recently concluded, and, he hoped, the application of the schedule system of rating under which improvements in the risks treated have been secured, fully commensurate with the reduction in rate conceded If this be so, the effect may not be prejudicial, but if not, he said, "then I fear that we shall find ourselves where we were before the advance was made, and our business just as unprofitable, since this 5 cents average advance in rates, now apparently lost, represents substantially all the profits realized during the past three years."