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Insurance In Foreign Countries

Department Circular
February 24,1905.

Two American companies are operating in Jerusalem and Palestine,both New York companies.Twelve foreign companies are operating here,one Russian,three French,two Austrian,three German, and three English and Canadian.There are no Government regulations,permits,fees,&c.,of any kind required.Natives of all sorts and Jews are accepted as patrons,but Mohammedans are as a rule excluded. The percentage of natives who allow their policies to lapse is not great. This is a semi-tropical country but the rates are the same as in America.The amounts insured vary from 2.000 francs to 20.000 francs,the highest known is one case of 100.000 francs. As far as can be ascertained about 100 policies are held in Jerusalem and in Palestine altogether about 300 policies.There are no domestic companies,no fraternal societies, and no insurance transacted by the government in this country. There are here no special forms of insurance.There is no discrimination between the companies on the part of natives or any body else,and the Government is indifferent to them all.

The foregoing report applies to Life Insurance.Fire insurance is almost unknown in Palestine. The houses have been ~~is~~ and are still built chiefly of stone and fires seldom occur. There is no motive for insuring houses or other property.

Life insurance is a very recent matter,-unknown until within a few years.The business at best will always be limited because of the general poverty of the inhabitants.A few years since I was asked to report on Life Insurance in this district and I did so adding two facts which I will here repeat,namely, the temptation on the part of candidates to misrepresent their ages(a large percentage of the inhabitants natives and Jews do not know how old they are),and secondly,the temptation of local agents to accept improper candidates " for the sake of doing business".Any deviation from strict integrity in these two matters would be an injustice to the bona fide policy holders of any respectable company.

Selah Merrill
Consul

Jerusalem,April 15,1905.