

HAVE YOU READ YOUR INSURANCE POLICIES.

The pertinent question,—have you read your insurance policies?—is being asked broadcast by one of the American Associations of Credit Men. The Association has sent out to business men the following circular which deserves reading and pondering by every business man:—

IF YOUR STORE SHOULD BURN UP TO-NIGHT WHERE WOULD YOUR BUSINESS BE?

"Your credit is what makes it possible for you to conduct a successful business. This is not a new fact—it is a common saying and a true saying.

"Your credit will be stronger and better in every market where you buy goods if your financial statements given to commercial agencies show that you have adequate fire insurance on your merchandise. It is presumed that you have some fire insurance, but here are some questions it will pay you to consider well, because there is always a chance that your place of business may burn up during the night and cause you a serious, if not fatal loss:

"1. Is your insurance equal to at least 80 per cent. of stock on hand? It should be.

"2. How do you know it is?

"3. Do you take inventory at least once each year? This is positively necessary.

"4. How do you determine value of stock on hand at any other time? With annual inventory at cost prices plus freight as a basis, it can be estimated, twelve or twenty-four times—even oftener each year. There is a simple way of doing this. Do you know how?

"5. If you have the co-insurance clause on your policies, do you know just what effect it has on your risk? Are you aware of the fact that in case of partial loss, you have to share your stipulated percentage and that the insurance company will not pay the full claim for damage unless you carry policies equal to or more than the stated per cent. mentioned in the co-insurance clause?

"6. Are your inventory records, your books of accounts and your invoices of purchases for at least a year back, kept in fireproof safe or vault? They certainly ought to be. The insurance companies are ready to be fair in adjusting a loss—but they must be shown what you claim the loss is.

"7. Do you realize that you can have your rate reduced if you will make certain important improvements in your premises—water barrels and buckets, hand extinguishers, metal trash cans and packing material boxes, electric wiring in conduits, windows without broken glass, elevator traps, sprinkler system—and perhaps even more important still if you never permit any rubbish, paper or old rags or kindling or paints or oils, to accumulate?

"8. Do you realize your insurance policies are definite contracts, and that you are bound thereby?

"These are pertinent questions and deserve your careful answers. It will pay you well to take these questions to your local insurance agent and discuss them with him. If he cannot satisfy you completely, the insurance department of this association will gladly furnish you the information. We will welcome any inquiries of this kind."

Every insurance official and adjuster knows that more controversies arise because the insured does not know what his insurance policy contains than from any other cause. This is sometimes the fault

of the agent, but more the fault of the business man. An insurance policy may be drier reading than a modern novel, but it contains considerably more sense and the reading of it is apt to be more profitable.

POINTS FOR THE LIFE AGENT.

Life solicitors should care more for the service they can render to the insuring public, by making them satisfied with the insurance they carry, said Mr. J. T. Lachance, the Manufacturers' Life veteran Quebec agent, in an address at the Life Underwriters' convention at Hamilton. This can be done by bestowing congratulations on those who are already insured, no matter where, whether it is on the level premium plan or on the assessment, as the man insured in any company or in a fraternal society and on any plan is far better off than the man who carries no insurance at all. Never say, "You should have taken some other plan of insurance," or, "This company cannot pay you the profits which we are paying." It is not the company who makes the agent, but it is the agent who makes the company. Never forget that. And it is always the agent who sells the policy and not the assured who select the plan.

Of course, you cannot sell the same plan to every one, to the young man of 20 years and to the man of 60. A man whose business is well established does not look upon life insurance as an investment. If he is young, he will require a long term Limited Payment; if old, he will not listen to anything but an Ordinary Life or possibly to a short term Endowment. If an employee, he requires the greatest amount of insurance for the least possible premium, consistent with safety and on the limited payment plans, if he is comparatively young.

The point is to know when loyal agents should cease competition. It is a difficult point to decide. The great qualities of the life insurance agent, his ability, his courage, make a great fighter of him, and one who will never admit defeat, a proof of his ability and of self-confidence. But there should be a point where competition should cease. I do not know where, but I do know that with the honest, loyal men of the profession that this point exists. In the early days some of the local associations had a clause in their by-laws, determining that when the application had been signed all other competitors should withdraw. But progress has been made since that time and we must try and arrive at a practical and not a theoretical decision.

WISDOM OF THE ANCIENTS.

In the days of Abraham, 2285-2242 B.C., Hamurabi, king of Babylon, promulgated a law that those guilty of arson or incendiarism should be thrown into the fire. In the 22d chapter of Exodus and 6th verse the great law-giver, Moses, caught hold of the same idea and wrote as follows: "If fire break out, and catch in thorns (dry grass, piles of refuse and rubbish) so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith, he that kindleth the fire (through carelessness or any other means) shall surely make restitution." Some clear ideas as to personal liability were evidently entertained by the ancient law-makers which their modern successors would do well to cultivate.