

## THE COUNTRY AGENT AND HIS LOCAL PAPER.

Do insurance men, particularly those in the small towns and country districts, appreciate the possibilities contained in their local paper? Do they realise the importance of publicity through it? Are they on such friendly terms with the owner that he will always oblige them by sticking in a "par"? If not, they are missing opportunities.

The advantage of the local newspaper in this connection is that it is not only read, but read thoroughly. The average metropolitan daily may have a hundred times the circulation, but it is merely glanced at—a busy man's eye doesn't get beyond the head lines. But the local paper in its own circle is read, marked and inwardly digested from its title on the front page to the last line of advertisements on the back. What the local paper says sticks—which is the one aim and end of all publicity.

Now the country insurance agent may or may not be running an advertisement in his local journal. But if he is wise, he will. It doesn't cost very much, and it constantly associates him with insurance in the minds of every reader of the journal. But running an advertisement is merely the A.B.C. of the insurance agent's publicity in the local paper. What he has to do is to get into the news columns as frequently as the owner will let him.

### PUBLICITY THROUGH NEWS.

"Free publicity" is a sore point with newspaper publishers, and usually very rightly so. *THE CHRONICLE* has some experience in the matter of favours asked (mostly by people who have no sort of claim to them), and it has no wish now to bring down upon its head vials of wrath poured out by all the country editors between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Still there are legitimate kinds of "free publicity." "News" is one of them. The wide-awake country agent will not neglect any opportunity to have in his local paper, paragraphs concerning developments in his business that can possibly be brought within the definition of "news." They may be about settlements for a fire, local death claims or endowments paid (the names usually suppressed as incautiously worded paragraphs frequently mean material for gold brick artists), war claims paid, business written showing prosperous condition of the district, local investments by agent's company, etc. The exercise of a very little thought and ingenuity will make items such as these into "news" that the local editor will be glad to have on their merits, apart from any question of friendship or favours asked. And they all mean desirable publicity in his community for the agent.

Another class of matter which the insurance agent can use profitably from time to time in his local journal is general items referring to insurance, fire prevention, life extension or some analogous topic. Wide-awake agents frequently ask *THE CHRONICLE* for permission to have reprinted in their local paper some particular matter which has appeared in our columns. When applications of this kind are made, *THE CHRONICLE* is always pleased to accede to them, on the understanding that *THE CHRONICLE* is credited when reproduction is made. Practically in every issue of *THE CHRONICLE*, there are some paragraphs or short articles which an agent could easily secure reprinting of in his local paper, to the direct benefit of his own

business in some cases, to the benefit of the business of insurance as a whole in others.

The active-minded country agent, seized with the importance of local publicity will quickly find other ways and means to make it of service to him. But enough has been said here to demonstrate the possibilities to the country agent contained in the proper use of his local paper.

### LONDON LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY.

The annual statement of the London Life Insurance Company, which transacts an important industrial business in addition to ordinary, shows that this Company benefited substantially last year from the increased capacity of a considerable section of the wage-earning classes to purchase new life insurance and maintain it in force. Record new business and a substantial gain in business in force were combined with a lower loss ratio, while a lower expense rate indicated that the extension of the business was coincident with due regard to economy.

The new business issued totalled \$13,035,945 a gain of \$1,975,434 in comparison with 1913, business in force being increased to \$41,715,317, an advance during the year of \$6,894,989. Premium income at \$1,571,636 compares with \$1,322,329 in 1915, and interest income of \$402,144 is practically \$60,000 larger than in the preceding year. In the matter of death claims, the Company reports a favourable experience. War losses amounted to over \$100,000, but apart from these, the mortality was very light, and the total death rate during 1916 was only 64.2 per cent. of the expectation. Total payments to policyholders or their heirs were \$507,584 in 1916, against \$435,295 in the preceding year.

Practically 85 per cent. of the Company's business is now valued on a 3 per cent. basis, the reserve on policies having been increased last year by \$835,000 to \$6,294,974. The total assets now amount to \$6,975,764, surplus on policyholders' account, after providing for all liabilities on a conservative basis, being \$301,405. On the Government standard, the surplus is \$834,643.

It is stated in the Actuary's report that the increased scale of profits which took effect in 1916 resulted in the actual distribution for that year exceeding the estimates under present rates by approximately 40 per cent. It has been found possible to maintain this same scale of profits, notwithstanding the strain of the War Claims, and the actual results under five-year distribution policies, during 1917, will be approximately 45 per cent. in excess of the original estimates.

Mr. John G. Richter, F.A.S., the London Life's manager and secretary, is to be congratulated upon the exceedingly satisfactory showing made by his Company in its 1916 statement.

### NOT AN UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIAL.

The following "testimonial" is not a joke, but is seriously put forward for the edification of the public by a small insurance company, which has lost a sense of humour in the endeavor to impress people with its importance:—

Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of payment in settlement of damage sustained by fire on my delivery van, which occurred on November 15th, 1916. The payment was made promptly, and without any trouble whatever on my part.

(Sgd.) MARTIN O'TOOLE.

How much was the settlement, Mr O'Toole—fifty cents or a dollar?