

by many hundreds of householders with shovels and do the work evenly. There is nothing experimental about it. In Ottawa a trifling special tax averaging perhaps fifty or sixty cents per house, was found to be ample to pay all the cost of the city keeping the sidewalks in good condition all the winter. What aggravates the situation in Montreal just now is that it is practically impossible to get men to do the work on the sidewalks. Another serious aggravation of the difficulty is the slowness of the Road Department in opening the gullies. There seem to be no gullies open in the west end of the city. We dislike talking about east and west, but we understand that the Department managed to open some of the east end gullies before the thaw was over.

While there are rich men who scandalize society by the manner in which they squander money it is refreshing to read of some of the handsome contributions made by American millionnaires to philanthropic and public spirited enterprises. According to the "Chicago Tribune," no less than \$106,388,063 was given away last year in sums of over \$1,000. Andrew Carnegie is down for \$11,094,000, and John D. Rockefeller for \$7,085,000 including one recent gift of \$4,890,000 to the University of Chicago. Mr. Rockefeller's beneficence included McMaster University of Toronto and Acadia University, Wolfville, N.S., and Mr. Carnegie's generosity extended to Brandon College and Queen's University.

INSURANCE LESSONS AND OUTLOOK.

Doubtless the pessimist as well as the optimist can find features that accord with his own views in the insurance outlook for 1907, no less than in the retrospect of 1906. But the fact that, insurancewise, 1906 has been a year of undoing some things, and that 1907 will witness the learning to do them over again, does not in the long run lessen the importance of the real progress that is being made. Lessons are not always easy in the learning—nor pleasant—but their value may well be the greater on that account.

In the realm of fire insurance the year 1906 would have been unusually satisfactory but for San Francisco's disaster. And "but me no buts" may well be the fire underwriters' petition henceforth, for never in the world's history did a conflagration less bear so heavily upon insurance interests. And yet the results in days to come will have a large measure of lasting good if lessons so unprecedentedly emphasized are speedily and thoroughly learned and allowed their due course and effect. But hasty legislation concocted by

ill-informed if not unprincipled politicians is certainly not the way to bring good out of the evil suffered. Instead there will result confusion worse confounded if misdirected public zeal fanned by demagogic eloquence is allowed full sway. Led by frenzied California our neighbors in several of the States south of us are in danger of entangling themselves in legislative mazes from which deliverance will be difficult and long-delayed, if indeed, ever altogether possible. And the only way of escape from measures inimical to the companies—and to the public with them—is for insurance interests at once to take the initiative and put forward other measures so sane and well considered that they will appeal to the public as in the best interests of all concerned. But this appeal cannot be effective without educational activity—the matters at issue must be put so clearly to the public mind that even the way-faring man can read with understanding.

But companies no more than the public should lean upon the bending and often broken reed of legislative enactment. Internal strength not external proppings must be the main dependence. The cost of fire insurance should be determined with as much fairness and consistency as human calculation can attain, and the necessary tax upon the public must be so regulated, collected and administered that no unforeseen event—not even a conflagration in New York or London itself—would entail insolvency. The ever-present conflagration hazard must be more fully reckoned with than ever before. But in order that full provision may not involve rates unprecedentedly high, the scientific rating of fire hazards must make the most rapid possible progress. Gratifying advance in this respect has been made in Canadian cities during the past year. Rates and losses have both been lowered when this has been so, and the public is coming—if slowly—to realize that there is lasting satisfaction and gain in having buildings that measure up to a fair standard as to fire-resisting qualities. More than ever before—but not yet enough—is pressure being brought to bear upon municipalities in order that fire preventive and fire fighting conditions may be bettered.

More than one company doing a large business in the United States, but with head office elsewhere, has had bitter experience in connection with San Francisco losses through having tied up its resources in American securities that are not readily available for the paying of claims—thus entailing a seriously unfair drain upon home policyholders. Let our Canadian companies doing a foreign business look to it that such mistakes are guarded against for the years to come, and the conflagrations thereof.

In the matter of educating legislative and public opinion the Life Officers' Association of Canada