

ADJUSTMENTS AND SETTLEMENTS.

Complaint is made by a Western contemporary that in too many cases in the Pacific Coast field, losses are not "adjusted" but "settled." In support of this contention the confession is cited of a recently arrested practitioner of the gentle art of arson in that locality that he found the fire insurance companies "easy marks." In a confession of this kind, something must be allowed for professional braggadocio and the student of human nature will not take the confession too seriously. It would certainly be very undesirable that the various arson "gangs" and "trusts," or the unscrupulous individual hard up for cash and with an immovable stock on his hands should be allowed by successful practice to come to the conclusion that the fire insurance companies are, in any degree, "easy marks." Nothing could be more calculated to increase perceptibly "moral hazard" than the *sub-rosa* dissemination of an impression of this kind. Probably enough too the consistent following of a policy of "settlements" instead of "adjustments," however loudly the circumstances of a fire clamored for an investigation, would serve to create the impression. On the other hand, the known pursuit of a policy of careful adjustment is well calculated to make some would-be fire-bugs think twice. Not the professional kind perhaps, but the amateur, the man who wants a "fire and smoke sale," and incidentally cash from the insurance companies, and his kindred. In many cases, these dabblers in crime are in deadly funk lest they should be found out and punished, if only by their failure to acquire the cash they set out to get. The knowledge that the way of the transgressor in obtaining cash from a fire insurance company is exceedingly hard, would undoubtedly act as a strong deterrent to evil-doing on the part of this class of folk.

The companies which, through long years of honorable conduct towards their policyholders, have acquired a high reputation are naturally desirous that no action on their part in the settlement of losses, shall prejudice that reputation. But it should be possible to recognize actual conditions and to make a differentiation between claims which on the face of them are honest, and those which are immediately open to suspicion either through the circumstances of the fire or the financial condition of the claimant. It does not appear that the companies would be likely to prejudice their reputations among the great bulk of their policyholders, who are honest, if they adopted the policy of making it extremely difficult for the minority, who are not honest, to get any cash as a result of fires, the circumstances of which at all warranted suspicion of their origin. Such a policy of the punishment of evil-doers consistently adhered to, would undoubtedly result in a reduction of the claims upon the company following it

So far, too, from acting prejudicially upon a company's reputation, such a policy might indeed raise a company's prestige with the bulk of its policyholders, through the additional evidence of efficiency and straight forwardness of management that it would afford.

MR. ALEX. BISSETT ELECTED PRESIDENT OF CANADIAN LIFE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION.

At the annual meeting of the Canadian Life Officers' Association, held in Toronto on the 10th instant, Mr. Alex. Bissett, manager for Canada, London & Lancashire Life & General Assurance Association, was elected President in succession to Mr. T. B. Macaulay, the retiring president of the Association.

The other newly-elected officers are Col. W. C. Macdonald, Confederation Life Association, first vice-president; and Mr. H. C. Cox, Canada Life, second vice-president.

THE ROLL OF HONOUR.

MR. BRIAN HARDS.

The respectful sympathy of the Montreal insurance community is tendered to Mr. B. E. Hards, assistant manager for Canada of the Guardian Assurance Company, and a Lieutenant in the 58th Westmount Rifles, who received this week news of the death of his only son, Mr. Brian Hards. Born in England in 1897, Mr. Brian Hards, who was formerly in the service of the Bank of Montreal for some months, received his initial military training with the Westmount Rifles and subsequently enlisted in March last, in the 24th Battalion. With a most promising future before him, he chose eagerly the way that led to the supreme sacrifice in Flanders.

ENGLISH INSURANCE LOSSES.

Our English exchanges notify that the North British and Mercantile, the Norwich Union Fire, and the Guardian have had further additions made to their staff rolls of honour. Sergeant C. B. Allerton, of the 5th North Staffords, formerly an inspector of the North British, was killed in action on October 13. Lance-Corporal Percy Phipps, of the 4th Norfolks, killed in action in the Dardanelles, was a member of the head office staff, Norwich Union Fire, Accident branch. Trooper O. E. Shepherd, 1st Battalion, South Notts. Hussars, also killed at the Dardanelles, was a member of the Nottingham branch staff of the Guardian.

CONTINENTAL FIRE RE-ORGANISES CAPITAL.

An important capital re-organisation and extension is notified by the Continental Insurance Company of New York, which has been operating in the Canadian field since 1910, and is strongly represented throughout the Dominion. The Company's capital will be increased from \$2,000,000 to \$10,000,000, thus giving it a larger paid-up capital than any other American fire insurance company. Seven millions of this new capital will be provided by an allocation from the surplus, now amounting to nearly \$14,500,000, and the remaining million by stockholders' subscriptions. On the consummation of these arrangements, the Continental will have a paid-up capital of \$10,000,000 and a net surplus of between seven and eight millions.