

A PRACTICAL FIRE PREVENTION SCHEME.

A lecture last month before the Insurance Institute of Toronto, by Mr. M. M. Hawxhurst, secretary of the Michigan State Fire Prevention Society, gave some interesting particulars of a scheme of fire prevention which has the merit of being extremely practical, and appears well worthy of imitation elsewhere. The Michigan State Fire Prevention Association, Mr. Hawxhurst stated, was organized nearly seven years ago. Its active members are the State and Special Agents and Inspectors of the various fire insurance companies doing business in Michigan. It is provided that local agents, manufacturers, merchants, architects, contractors and others interested in fire prevention may become associate members of the organization. The expenses of the association were originally met by a flat assessment upon the various companies through their field men, but, after some experience, this was found to be unjust, and it was later determined to make the assessment a percentage of the premium income of the companies in the State. The expense of conducting the association has never run over \$1,000 a year, which included a salary of \$200 to the secretary-treasurer for his supervision of the work. This association has during its existence inspected all of the principal cities of Michigan, and some of the cities have been inspected two and even three times.

COMBINED INSPECTIONS.

When an inspection is called (at least once a month during the fall, winter and spring), all of the field men, who can possibly arrange to be present, meet at the designated city on the night before the inspection is to be made, and the city is divided into districts of one or more blocks, and to each one of these districts is assigned two men. These two men are supposed to inspect everything within the district, and the work is so laid out that this can be accomplished before noon the following morning. The association gets into touch with the chief of the fire department, the mayor of the city, and some of the influential citizens, and explains to them the object of making the inspection, and solicits their influence in seeing that corrections recommended by the association are made. A representative of the Fire Marshal's Department is also present at each one of these inspections, to take up any peculiarly dangerous condition which may be discovered.

When the inspection is completed, the reports on buildings where defects are found are turned in to the secretary and are tabulated by street and number, and a first notice is sent to the owner of the building requesting him to correct such hazardous conditions as the inspection disclosed. If this first notice does not produce the desired result within thirty days, a second notice is sent, which is much more peremptory in tone than was the first notice. In this second notice the property owner is notified that if the conditions before brought to his attention are not corrected within ten days, that his building will be brought to the notice of the Fire Marshal's Department. This generally has the result desired, but in a few cases where no action can be secured, the report is turned over to the Fire Marshal's Department and the Fire Marshal immediately has his inspectors visit the property owners and make an order under seal of the State for the correction designated. The law gives the Fire

Marshal authority to imprison those who do not comply with the order of his Department.

The information afforded on the inspection slips is printed in the form of a Confidential Bulletin, which is sent to each company-member of the association. This information is of great value to the companies in their underwriting operations.

Mr. Hawxhurst stated that, as a result of these activities, the number of fires in the State has shown a very great reduction.

DEMAND FOR EXPLOSION INSURANCE.

A notable revival of late in the demand for explosion insurance is reported in the United States. Practically all the concerns manufacturing munitions are carrying this form of protection, but since the Halifax disaster especially there has been a revival in the demand from manufacturing concerns having no connection with war material, wholesale establishments, department stores, etc. In some cases, lines of \$5,000,000 and \$10,000,000 are being asked for. The usual rate on a plant with several buildings is 35 cents, with reductions for co-insurance and additional charges for the inherent hazard.

The American banks, it is said, are helping the insurance companies to place large lines of explosion and use and occupancy insurance. When a concern gets a munitions order, it usually requires a loan from the bank to purchase its materials. As a rule, the banks are insisting upon full insurance protection on the property covered by the loan, including explosion insurance when the materials are in any way connected with the war.

DEVELOP SIDE LINES.

In this era of protection and preparation the insurance agent has a wonderful opportunity to develop many of the side lines of insurance now issued by a number of companies. There are constantly changing conditions in business, and the live agent should familiarize himself with the various forms of coverage which will be granted by the companies. The war has taught many people to be wary of uncertain events, and they are as a consequence much more willing to listen to any proposition which will tend to safeguard their property or interests.

The lines of insurance that have been developed in recent years, afford an excellent opportunity for the agent to make his way into enlarging his fire insurance clientele. They will be found to be very profitable to the agent himself and their development is urged by the companies.—*Spectator*.

The shrinking value of the dollar should be the life insurance agent's best argument. Protection for the family which was adequate a few years ago is far from sufficient now, when the cost of living is so much higher.—*Insurance Post*.

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An agent should know all about his policies, know all about the needs of every kind of people in the life insurance way, all about his company and all about other companies; know all about life insurance itself, its history, its social and economic aspects, its defects and its advantages. If an agent has knowledge, and if it has penetrated into his system, he will have no trouble whatever in selling life insurance.—*Rough Notes*.