

EXPENSES IN THE INTEREST OF THE PUBLIC.

One feature of the expense question which must not be overlooked in any investigation by the states is the growing proportion of the cost of the insurance business chargeable to prevention of loss. In the steam boiler branch, for instance, the loss ratio for 1914 was 8.7 per cent. while the expense ratio was 82 per cent. If the fire insurance expense ratio of 40 per cent. is regarded as excessive it is easy to imagine the amount of cheap but effective indignation which could be manufactured over an expense ratio more than double that figure. Sixty of the 82 per cent., however, was due to the cost of inspection, which is what the average man takes out steam boiler insurance for. He is glad to pay the experts of the insurance companies to examine his plant periodically and prevent explosions, and pays his money for service rather than indemnity.

In the increased expense ratio of fire insurance this matter of service is also to be reckoned with. The fire insurance companies are showing steadily increasing expenses in various forms of service intended to prevent fires, and having only an indirect connection with indemnity therefor. The companies as a whole maintain laboratories and fire prevention bureaus, and individually employ experts whose chief work is to reduce the fire waste—and incidentally reduce rates in an even greater proportion—while the time of many field men is given up to inspection work, under the direction of state fire prevention bureaus, to the end that hazards may be reduced and losses prevented. The companies also maintain experts who advise municipalities and large insurers as to their electrical and engineering hazards, go over plans for automatic sprinklers and other fire prevention devices, and co-operate with municipalities in the enactment of improved electrical inspection and building ordinances. All these features are directly in the interest of the public, as well as of the insurance companies, operate to reduce the fire waste, which is one of the greatest evils of the country, and their cost should be credited as a notable example of public spirit on the part of the companies.—*Insurance Post.*

AN OPEN CONFESSION.

As at present constructed an accident insurance policy is about as unscientific a product as one can imagine. We cannot hope to receive the commendation of thoughtful business men, nor of the Courts of the country, so long as we offer contracts that are so inconsistent in their benefits and which contain such "freak" propositions as are now included in the average accident insurance policy. Until we come to a realizing sense that the business in which we are engaged is one in which our best endeavors should be devoted to providing the greatest good to the greatest number; distributing the payments we make so that they shall as uniformly and to the greatest extent possible offset the losses suffered by the persons contributing the premiums, or their dependents, we shall not have done our full duty nor justified our assumption of responsibility for the administration of the funds paid to us for that purpose.—*Walter C. Faxon, vice-president Aetna Life.*

The Home Bank has opened a new branch at Tantallon, Sask.

PERSONALS.

Mr. W. E. Baldwin, Agency Superintendent for Canada of the Continental Fire Insurance Company, New York, spent a few days in Montreal this week.

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Mr. James H. Brewster, United States manager of the Scottish Union and National, who recently underwent a serious operation at Hartford, is now reported to be convalescing

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Mr. Haley Fiske, vice-president of the Metropolitan Life, is well known as a prominent churchman in New York. One of his nephews, Dr. Charles Fiske, has just been elected coadjutor Bishop of the Central Diocese of New York.

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Col. W. C. Macdonald, managing director of the Confederation Life, and Mr. J. Tower Boyd, general superintendent of agencies, are spending some weeks in the West, enquiring into conditions of business and inspecting the Association's extensive Western investments.

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Mr. Randall Davidson, manager for Canada, North British & Mercantile, has returned from the Lower Provinces where he spent a few days visiting important agencies of his company. Mr. Davidson states that there is a general tone of prosperity prevailing in such cities as Halifax and Charlottetown, P.E.I.

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Mr. L. Goldman, first vice-president and managing director of the North American Life, has returned to Toronto after a long trip in the American and Canadian West. On his return journey, Mr. Goldman motored some hundreds of miles through the grain-growing provinces and expresses himself as much impressed with both the quality and the quantity of the harvest.

PRESENTATION TO MR. J. M. MORRIS.

On Wednesday morning, Mr. J. M. Morris, the popular general agent at Montreal of Lloyds Plate Glass Insurance Company, was presented by the members of the Province of Quebec Glass Underwriters' Association with appropriate tokens of esteem upon the occasion of his marriage. The gifts took the form of a cut glass pitcher, a dozen cut glass tumblers and a mirror, the presentation on behalf of the Association being made by Mr. Paul Boring (Fidelity and Casualty Company), president of the Association, while the regard of the Association's members for Mr. Morris, who was its first president and had much to do with its organisation, and their congratulations upon the occasion of the present gathering were also voiced in brief speeches by Messrs. J. E. Clement (Mount Royal), vice-president; A. James (Ocean), C. E. Sword (London & Lancashire Guarantee & Accident), E. M. Roberts (Dominion of Canada Guarantee), and G. K. Martin (Imperial Guarantee & Accident). Those also present at the gathering included Messrs. John MacEwen (Norwich Union), E. E. Kenyon (Guardian Accident & Guarantee), F. D. Knowles (U. S. Fidelity & Guarantee), G. W. Pacaud (N. Y. Plate Glass), M. Lacroix (Canada Accident), J. H. Lussier (Provident), G. L. Lebeau (N. Y. Plate Glass), and Robert Wilson (secretary of the Association)