

WARNING AS TO CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS.

By way of practical suggestions, we submit the following as to the dangers of the Christmas tree, all of which are easily followed:

- Don't leave an illuminated tree unwatched.
- Don't use festoons of tissue paper or cotton batting on a tree.
- Don't use any ornaments of celluloid.
- Don't let the children touch the tree.
- Don't permit a draught of air to sway the branches of a tree while it is illuminated.
- Don't put cotton beneath a tree to make the carpet look like snow-covered ground.
- Don't remove a thing from the tree until the candles on it are blown out.

If the appearance of snow is desired for any purpose, use "mineral wool," or asbestos. It will not burn and gives a better effect than cotton.

Finally, let the safety of your children and your property be your first consideration, and Christmas will then be a season of happiness, undisturbed by accident.

EXTRAVAGANCE OF LIFE INSURANCE TAXATION.

(Darwin P. Kingsley, *President New York Life*.)

Let us review concretely some facts with regard to the processes by which life insurance is now taxed: The legal reserve life insurance companies of the United States paid in 1912, in addition to taxes on real estate, nearly \$13,000,000 on a total premium income of over \$666,000,000. That is to say, for every \$1,000 of capital which the insured paid in 1912 for the protection of their families through life insurance, the State took, in one form or another, about \$20. This is a heavier tax than the property tax in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Boston or San Francisco. Every dollar's worth of property upon the security of which the companies had invested their funds paid taxes where it was situated; but, in addition to that, for the mere privilege of existing and doing business, the States first and last took this fearful toll.

This is not only taxation of capital but excessive taxation from any point of view. It can perhaps be made more impressive if, for purposes of illustration, we apply the burden to some other phases of the business.

The ultimate purpose of life insurance, of course, is protection, and that finds expression in the money that is finally paid to the insured or to their beneficiaries.

If now we assume that the policyholder was taxed upon what he received rather than upon what he paid, we find that for every \$1,000 paid to policyholders in 1912 the State exacted in taxes almost \$29.

Again, if we assume that the chief benefit of life insurance is the amount paid in death claims, then we find that for every \$1,000 so paid the State exacted death duties to the amount of over \$63.

If it be said that expenses of life insurance are too high, managements may very well retort that the item of State taxes in every \$1,000 expenses amounts to \$72, and unlike ordinary expenses is a factor entirely beyond their control.

If people complain that dividends are too small, that condition is in part at least explained by taxes, because for every \$1,000 paid in dividends in 1912 the companies were obliged to pay in taxes \$140; in other

words, dividends on the average would have been 14 per cent. higher, but for the moneys taken by the States for the privilege of doing business.

CONDITIONS IN THE SURETY BUSINESS.

It is apparent from recent developments that conditions in the field of surety bonding are not conducive to the establishment of new companies for the transaction of that class of business. Companies engaged in that line must possess ample financial strength, and such strength cannot be maintained where operations are conducted at a high rate of commission, large expenses and low rates. During the past few years a number of new surety companies have been organized, mainly through the efforts of promoters who have dwelt upon the large profits which would accrue to the investors in the stock. Some of these organizations have entered the field only to find that the surety business is one of many complications and one which requires the services of the most expert underwriters. As these expert are comparatively few in number, the new companies have speedily become involved in trouble under their bonds, and the hopes of the stockholders for large dividends have gone a glimmering. It is stated that the underwriting of contract bonds has been one of the main sources of trouble with some of the younger surety companies, owing to the liberal construction of such bonds by the courts and the fact that many contractors make false financial statements when they are seeking bonds. The successful companies in the surety field are those which have been built up slowly and have paid the most attention to the maintenance of parity between their underwriting and their financial strength.—*N. Y. Spectator*.

DIGEST OF WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION LAWS.

The Workmen's Compensation Publicity Bureau (F. Robertson Jones, secretary-treasurer, 80 Maiden Lane, New York City), has just compiled and published an extremely valuable "Digest" of workmen's compensation insurance laws in the United States. This "Digest" covers the twenty-four compensation laws of the twenty-two states that have now enacted legislation of that character.

It was an exceedingly difficult mechanical task involving numerous printing difficulties to arrange this "Digest" in pamphlet form of a size convenient for inserting in a coat pocket. These difficulties have been ingeniously overcome and the "Digest" presents, in a convenient and attractive form for quick reference, an analysis under twenty-seven different headings of all the workmen's compensation laws of the various states.

The "Digest" is unique in that it is the only complete work of its kind now upon the market covering the compensation laws of all the states.

Its comprehensive analysis in chart form and its clever and ingenious arrangement will make it an exceedingly valuable document for comparative reference by Industrial Accident Boards, Workmen's Compensation Commissions, State Labor Bureaus, Legislators, College Professors, Lawyers, Employers and Employees of Labor, Social Workers, Publicists, Casualty Insurance Managers, and Liability Insurance Agents and Brokers.

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