

agents who appreciate and will faithfully represent the company's merits and its proposed services to the public for a proper compensation, and will win personal success by patient diligence, energy and thrift; who do not think "the agent" is a self-existent, independent entity who owns the insuring public and holds it under lock and key until he has coolly bargained for "his" business with those who want it at the terms and by the methods he chooses, and then turns it over to the highest bidder.

And there are some who, regarding life insurance and striving to administer it as protection for the home, and regarding the contracts by which this is effected as the highest of trusts, to be dealt with in all prudence and soberness, do not think the premium, which is the foundation of the financial trust, should be or can be treated like the price of a chest of tea. They have fixed that premium upon reasons thoroughly grounded in science, experience and sound commercial morality: and they do not propose to cut anywhere near the bone.—Col. Jacob L. Greene, in the *Independent*.

"Whenever," says Mr. McCurdy, the "agents seriously desire it, rebate will cease." This is the deliberate judgment of an experienced official, whose opportunities for knowledge are probably unsurpassed, and yet it appears to be a wholly mistaken view. Not an honorable agent in the whole land but earnestly desires the abolition of rebate, and they will be disposed to regard this utterance as an imputation upon the integrity and good faith of thousands who, through their local associations, have not minced words in expressing their abhorrence of it. Does Mr. McCurdy count as nothing the declaration and appeal of the National Life Association which, in its request to the companies to exclude from their service such agents as practised rebate, very plainly intimates its belief where the evil originated and where the remedy is? Agents intelligent enough to perceive causes know they are powerless to effect a thorough reform without something more than the professed sympathy of the companies. Much they can do and much they have done, but they now stand between the devil of compulsory demand from these companies and the deep sea of broken faith with their neighbors and disobedience to law. What they need is the active, honest support of the companies expressed in acts, not words. Let presidents moderate their quest for new business, resolving to accept only that which may be brought to them under such terms as will enhance the prosperity of their existing memberships, and refrain from a mad race, in which no honor is to be won, but in which the rights of policy-holders have been ruthlessly sacrificed. When this is done, we will hear less of rebate; for the almost irresistible temptation thereto will have disappeared, and the intelligence of managers may be more successfully addressed to the yet difficult problem of making life insurance as cheap as it should be.—Henry C. Lippincott in the *Argus*.

Mr. McCurdy says, practically, that the companies might make such an agreement as the National Association wishes them to make, but that they would not keep it. Second, he considers the whole idea a humbug, and believes that discrimination is right and proper. And yet he does not seem to be serious even about this, because he says that it "cuts dangerously near the bone," and that the Mutual Life is pledged to "do its utmost to suppress this undeniable evil." But he does not see how the company can do anything, because it wants business. How does Mr. McCurdy know that the company wants business? The only public utterances through its trustees that we know anything about controvert this view. It is not many

years since the trustees solemnly resolved that they did not want business and that they were going to stop increasing it. Only a short time ago the Mutual placed a limit upon the new business it would write, and asserted that it had retired from competition. Now Mr. McCurdy says, virtually, we want the agents' business—we do not know how he gets it, and it is none of our business. The Kingdom of Heaven is not at hand, and competition is the life of trade, and even the neophyte knows better than to pay the advertised price for anything he wants to buy. But is that what Mr. McCurdy really means? Perhaps not, for if we read the last paragraph of his article by itself it leaves nothing to be desired. And so, after carefully re-reading his article, we should like to know what Mr. McCurdy really thinks about the rebate evil in life insurance.—*Weekly Underwriter*.

It is a bad practice, that of rebate,—an evil, Mr. McCurdy says, and should be abolished. It is prohibited by law and the law should be enforced. That his sympathies even are enlisted is evident, for he declares that the sentiment on the subject among officers and agents is practically unanimous. Thus it is seen that his feet are on solid ground, he has the right convictions, he wishes to do the proper thing. Probably, beyond anything we can imagine in waking hours or fancy in dreams, Mr. McCurdy is possessed of a mighty wish to throttle the demon of rebate. But he can't get at him. The offence is committed privately, "shrouded by cunning devices of evasion;" "there is no court of competent jurisdiction among companies' and agents' associations." To dismiss from company employ implies a trial, and the company cannot compel the attendance of witnesses; besides, nobody has time to attend to these affairs. And all the while one can't help but think it would not be so difficult a matter to get evidence against an agent engaged in giving rebates, and to apply such a penalty as kicking him out of company employ. On every hand is found the law-abiding agent, whose business has been stolen by the rebater, and who is boiling over full of evidence, who would not hesitate a moment in giving testimony; a man too, oftentimes, whose simple word is better than the other fellow's oath. What can't be done by process of law is one thing, and what can be done by the toe of the company boot, is another.—*Insurance*.

Thus far, Mr. McCurdy appears to be in the minority, and we are on record as being decidedly of the majority opinion that the companies have the power to put an end to rebates whenever they choose to exert it. If the Mutual Life the Equitable and the New York Life will join hands in good faith to prevent the agents of their companies giving rebates, the evil will be obliterated in thirty days. Let them agree to discharge any person in their employ found guilty of giving rebates, and refuse to employ any one who has been discharged from another company for this offence, and all the other companies would immediately fall into line and the thing would be done. Mr. McCurdy thinks there would be great difficulty in securing evidence on which to convict a rebater; the Northwestern Mutual gave an illustration a few days ago of how easy it is to catch a rebater when you want to, and made a summary example of the guilty agent.—*The Spectator*.

We dislike to disagree with the accomplished president of The Mutual Life insurance company, for whose views we have always entertained the highest consideration. We do not believe that the breaking up of the system of rebating lies wholly with the