

SECURING AND DEVELOPING PROSPECTS.

(Franklin W. Ganse, at Boston.)

The securing of prospects is vital. The successful agent must either write a very large percentage of those whom he interviews, or he must have one or more good plans for adding good names to his list.

One of the hardest things about our profession is that clients or prospects are fewest when they are most needed—at the outset of one's career. In this it resembles other professions, more or less learned.

The general agent knows of a dozen classes of men of every community who for special reasons ought to be approached with a definite proposition at a definite time. He may not be able to supply each of his agents with the actual names. It is questionable whether it is best to do this in most agencies, while it has been done successfully in some notable agencies. But, speaking broadly, the work of digging out his own leads, upon lines which have proved successful, is the best first step in handling the names successfully. They become the agent's own from the start and he cannot know too much about them—who they are, where they come from, and why they are all selected.

If the new man at the business puts in one-third to one-half of his time working up a first-class preliminary list, until he has ten or fifteen names ahead for days or weeks to come, he is doing well, and nothing should give him greater assurance of success than the possession of such a stock of well-selected raw material. The men who have failed after intelligently working up and working out such a supply of names, would be hard to find. Most new men who fail get into a vicious circle; because they have not secured the names of enough well-chosen prospects, they do not see enough men to strike an average; because of this they get meagre results; they become discouraged, not because they have not had good average results, but because they have never really carried out the one certain plan for success for a new man—to see a large number of likely people, with confidence of success. How many failures do you know who really did that?

Some of the best classes of prospects are the following, in the order of their desirability as I see it:—

1. Those who in reply to letters or otherwise express a willingness to be interviewed.
2. Policyholders as indicated by their records.
3. Names furnished by recent applicants.
4. Parents of recent date.
5. Matrimonial prospects, both coming and going.
6. Changes of age.
7. Promotions and appointments.
8. Periodical salary increases.
9. Cooperative bank mortgagors.
10. Purchasers of houses on terms.

DEVELOPING PROSPECTS.

Important as it is to get prospects, it is more vital to lasting success to learn to develop them. This has several steps which too few of us follow to the end:—

1. Start by securing enough well-selected prospects to keep busy—and do keep busy.
2. Develop, as a matter of course, as many as possible into applicants and policyholders.

3. Develop every policyholder into a client and a source of prospects.

4. Develop in every prospect, policyholder and client a real respect for our profession and a real knowledge of its fourfold service, which no other institution affords.

It has been said that a profession involves "special knowledge applied to serving the welfare of others." We may well use the term "clients" of those whom we serve, because in the great cause of "Thrift vs. Improvidence," in the outcome of which they are all vitally interested, we are advocates for the plaintiff and we are winning verdicts every day. The function of counsel, trained and confidential, is perhaps oftenest exercised.

To return to the all-important understanding of the all-round scope of our service to our generation; do we not emphasize one or two phases, instead of the whole thing?

1. Safety—few clients know that the great averaging of life insurance investments gives such safety as cannot elsewhere be approached.

2. Protection—this function we do not generally overlook, and we should not.

3. Secured Incomes—in forms which cannot elsewhere be furnished, an additional protection against the too prevalent misinvestment of family funds.

4. Self-chosen compulsion, the greatest aid for much-needed thrift. To induce a client to save money he would otherwise spend, to return it to him in his old age, if he needs it; and all the while to offer him with absolute safety protection for his family against his premature death—this is a service too few of our clients have been made to comprehend and most men knew themselves well enough to welcome the chains of such compulsion.

BANK ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT.

There has been published by the Shaw Correspondence School, of Toronto, a series of lessons on Bank Organisation and Management, which have been written by Mr. H. M. P. Eckhardt. These lessons form part of the Associates' Course in the new educational scheme just approved by the Canadian Bankers' Association. On finishing this Associates' Course, the students who are qualified pass on up the Fellows' Course as provided by Queen's University.

At the end of each lesson from 8 to 10 questions are asked and the student is required to send in a paper on which the questions are answered. The paper is criticized, marked with a certain percentage, and returned to the student. In marking the papers, attention is given to the general knowledge of banking practice shown by the student—the object being to select the men who give evidence of practical efficiency as well as theoretical knowledge.

At present there are from 400 to 500 bank clerks taking the Associates' Course, most of them belonging to four of the large banks, some of which give liberal encouragement to the men taking the studies. The Fellows' Course will be in operation this fall, arrangements now being in progress.

The lessons appear eminently practical in character and the intelligent study of them should result decidedly in greater efficiency on the part of the younger ranks of the Canadian banking service.