

CANADIAN FRATERNAL INSURANCE STILL GOING DOWNHILL.

The complete returns for the year 1914 recently published by the Dominion Insurance Department indicate that fraternal insurance was still on the toboggan slide last year in the matter of membership. The following is the record of business new and terminated during last year of the four organisations of this character reporting to the Dominion department:—

	New Certificates or Policies issued.	Terminated by Death, Maturity, etc.	Lapse, Surrender, etc.	Total terminated.
Catholic Mutual Benefit Association	\$1,058,000	\$426,000	\$1,188,000	\$1,614,000
Commercial Travellers' Mutual Benefit Society	202,000	39,000	240,000	279,000
Independent Order of Foresters	15,235,944	3,674,285	32,882,965	36,557,250
Woodmen of the World	528,500	107,000	7,871,794	7,978,794
Totals, 1914	\$17,024,444	\$4,246,285	\$42,182,759	\$46,429,044
Totals, 1913	\$22,485,610	\$4,046,159	\$49,395,215	\$53,441,374

In brief, whereas the new business of these four organisations during 1913 and 1914 was under \$40,000,000, their lapses etc., were over \$90,000,000 and total terminations nearly \$100,000,000. The steps taken by these various organisations to place themselves in a position of actuarial solvency are probably the main reason for the enormous secessions. What has been done by the I. O. F. in recent years is well known. In the case of the Catholic Mutual Benefit Association, a revised schedule of rates came into effect on July 1st last, and a year earlier, on July 1st, 1914, the Woodmen of the World put into force a re-adjustment of rates and benefits with the object of transacting business thereafter on an actuarial basis and maintaining an adequate reserve. Hence, doubtless, the remarkable lapsation record of this Order during 1914, in comparison with new business.

LOSS TO MEMBERS

Some idea of the amount of bitter disappointment and loss to members for which the past unscientific management of fraternal concerns is responsible may be gauged from the figures here given. It is the fashion among those at the head of this sort of organisation, now that financial re-arrangements has become an obvious necessity, to infer that the old member who jibs at the new assessment and lapses his protection is unreasonable and blame-worthy. Considering the way in which many of these organisations have consistently misled their members for years, it can hardly be considered a matter for surprise, if an old member who knows nothing about mathematics, but has simply relied on the assurances previously given him, is not inclined to absorb readily the arguments for re-arrangement that are put before him and prefers to cut away altogether even if, as is frequently not the case, he is in a position to pay the enhanced assessment.

Thanks to past refusal to face mathematical facts, and consequent bitter disappointment to thousands of their members, fraternal orders have lost the public confidence which they undeservedly enjoyed, and it will take long years of plodding along the straight and narrow path of good management before they get back that confidence in any degree. Meantime, they appear to be making rapid progress backwards, so far as membership is concerned.

LIFTING AND LOSS OF SIGHT.

A peculiar point in accident insurance has been taken by the Montreal Court of Review *en delibere*. A workman, Henri Tessier, when engaged in lifting a heavy beam suffered such a strain that, he claims, displacement of the retina of one eye took place with a consequent loss of the sight of that eye. The company in which he was insured, La Prevoyance, declined to pay an indemnity on the grounds that the mishap was not an accident and that anyway it was physically impossible for an accident to happen in the manner mentioned. It points out that the victim was short-sighted and that the injury must have been the effect of some pre-existing disease of the eye. The Judge in the court of first instance upheld plaintiff's suit and condemned the company to pay the full amount of the policy dealing with that sort of injury. The appeal of the Company from this judgment now awaits decision.

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