

THE LIFE COMPANIES AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

One of the addresses at the annual meeting of the Association of Life Insurance Presidents held in New York at the end of last week was delivered by Dr. Charles Hastings, Toronto's Medical Officer of Health, in his capacity as President of the American Public Health Association. Dr. Hastings made a strong plea for the co-operation of the life companies in public health education. He stated that as a result of the war and the sacrifice of the best man-power of the nations, that the next generation would not constitute first-class insurance risks and will require much greater protection against the invisible foes of the race. "Some one may ask," said Dr. Hastings, "why should life insurance companies enter the war against disease in the prevention of death and the lengthening of life. You are the trustees for nearly thirty billions of the people's money. That is why you should be in it. It has been estimated that from forty to fifty per cent. of the deaths in this country are preventable or postponable. Your companies last year paid out in claims approximately \$200,000,000. How much of this was paid out for preventable deaths? If the death rate for 1900 had obtained in 1916 you would have paid out \$25,000,000 more. It must be apparent to all of us that every life saved or death postponed means an addition to the dividends of the policyholder and consequently a decrease in the cost of insurance.

"It has for years been inconceivable to me why life insurance companies have not interested themselves in the prevention of disease and the extension of life as a business proposition. Actuaries have estimated that a reduction of one-third of the mortality would mean a reduction of fifteen per cent. in the premium. An investment, say, of one-tenth of one per cent. of the amount paid annually in death claims for the prevention of disease, and prolonging of human life would return to your policyholders dividends ten-fold greater than from any other investment. Furthermore, the moral effect on the 35 to 40 millions of policyholders and their friends of the knowledge that public health is of sufficient importance to engage the active co-operation of all the insurance companies on this continent would, in itself, be of inestimable value. This would give these 35 to 40 million policyholders a direct monetary interest in public health."

COMMISSIONERS AFTER THE FRATERNALS.

The Insurance Commissioners at their recent meeting in New York passed a strong resolution that the solvency requirements of the Mobile bill and New York Conference amendment must be fully met by the Fraternals in 1920. This resolution was called forth by the fact that some of the fraternals are not making proper progress towards solvency. Superintendent Phillips, of New York, mentioned that of fifty-five fraternals authorised in his State, according to their statements of December 31, 1916, only sixteen showed 100 per cent. actual solvency under the requirements of the Mobile bill; twenty-four were less than 80 per cent. solvent, and not a few showed less than 50 per cent. solvency.

Total assets of the American life companies approach six billions, of which approximately one and a half billions are railroad securities—an eighth of the total of American railroad securities.

INJURED WORKMEN MAY SUE FOR CAPITAL.

An important ruling has been given in a judgment rendered by Mr. Justice Duclos in the Montreal Superior Court, in that it holds that a plaintiff in an action under the Quebec Workmen's Compensation Act, as amended, may sue for either the annual rent or the capital, and even if he elects to sue for the annual rent he may at any time, even after judgment, make option for and recover the capital representing such rent.

The question whether a plaintiff ought to first ask for the rent to which he may be entitled, and, this having been determined, then make option for the capital, is one that has been earnestly argued before the courts in a number of actions under the Workmen's Compensation Act, and the jurisprudence is contradictory.

In the present instance, Justice Duclos awarded the plaintiff, Abraham Freeman, the capital sum he asked for, and condemned his employers, the Montreal Locomotive Works Company, Limited, to pay him \$108 compensation to the date of the action, and a sum of \$1,500, representing the capital of the rent to which plaintiff was entitled under the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act.

PARAGRAPHS.

The Insurance Press reports the insurance force for the last three or four years of thirty-five fraternals reporting to the N. Y. Insurance Department. Without exception, all show a steady decline in membership.

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Society is almost incalculably indebted to the insurance companies, not because they have piled up accumulations that are measured in the hundreds of millions, but because they have contributed a lesson in teaching personal thrift.—Frank A. Vanderlip.

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Toronto City Council has decided, regarding the City's insurance of soldiers, that in future insurance shall be paid only (1) to parents and persons acting as parents, in loco parentis, who resided in Toronto at the date of the enlistment of the soldier; (2) to widows and children no matter where resident.

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The Germania Fire of New York, which transacted business in Canada at one time, recently voted that formal application be made to change the name of the company to the National Liberty Insurance Company of America. The Germania is not in any way connected with German interests.

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This is the time for everyone to store up resources against the day of readjustment. This is the time for everybody to work hard, to save, to prepare, to conserve in every direction. As insurance men it is our special job to point out that need and to practise it ourselves.—Canada Life.

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On the technical point that the law does not specially prohibit it, the Supreme Court of Arkansas has ruled that an owner of property who deliberately burns it cannot be prosecuted for arson. A New York insurance journal remarks unkindly that this is just what might be expected from Arkansas laws