

in sympathy with the spirit of the times, and with the improved educational status now secured in other professions, it was desirable that some encouragement and stimulus should be afforded, more especially to the younger members of the profession, in regard to the study of those subjects to which insurance business stands related, and that some opportunity of securing suitable recognition of merit should be placed within reach of those who are able to show a fair knowledge of such subjects. It had accordingly been arranged to hold periodical examinations in the centres where the federated institutes are located, the first to take place in April next, applications from intending candidates to be lodged not later than 15th February next. In commenting upon the advantages which such a scheme offered to members of the profession, Mr. Nicol drew attention to the marked feature in modern business enterprise—viz., "specialisation"—remarking that we have one controlling personality or corporate body with many skilled workers who, relieved of general administrative duties, which in a smaller concern would have fallen to them, are free to devote all their energies to development of their own special section, ever aiming at reducing cost of production, improvement of product, and introduction of every latest improvement. Greater subdivision of work and substitution of mechanical aids in lieu of costly clerical work are inevitable in the long run, and everyone entering upon an insurance career should so equip himself by a special knowledge of one or more of the many departments of the business for filling a position where skill is an absolute necessity. Intense competition, desire for big figures, and consequent cutting of rates render it more and more essential that rigid economy and careful adaptation of the most suitable instruments for the performance of the multifarious duties should rule throughout the whole office organization. The acute fall during the last five years in the rate of interest earned by life officers is an additional and powerful factor in directing a searching analysis to be made of the outgoings under the head of charges with a view of obtaining an offset in the shape of economy to the loss of interest. The remaining portion of Mr. Nicol's address was taken up with a description of some features of a life office valuation. It was explained that the striking of a balance which goes by the name of a periodical valuation when reduced to its simplest terms consists in placing on the one side of the accounts the funds in hand, and on the other side the liabilities. The excess, if any, of the former over the latter forms a surplus. Some of the operations peculiar to the ascertaining of the liabilities of a life office were explained, special reference being made to the questions of reserves, bonuses, rates of interest assumed in valuations, unequal incidence of premium income, rated up lives, and annuities. At the close of the meeting a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the president for his interesting and instructive address.

THE CHICAGO MANAGER of the New York Life, Geo. W. Riggs, has written a policy for \$100,000 on the life of a capitalist, said to be H. H. Porter, formerly of Chicago, now of New York. It is a 10 year endowment annual dividend policy, with a premium of \$84,000, which is claimed to be the largest single premium ever received by any life insurance company. Riggs's commission ranges from 2 1-2 to 5 per cent.—So says an Exchange.

### THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL FIRE INSURANCE AGENTS.

(A self-explanatory letter, and the President's statement regarding overhead writing.)

Copy of letter sent to all Agency Companies, Nov. 9th, 1898.

Buffalo, N. Y., Nov. 9th, 1898.

The reported action of the Western Union at its last meeting at Niagara, and the resolutions adopted by the companies at their New York meeting, September 20th, are gratifying evidences that both managers and companies are emphatically opposed to overhead writing. The plank suggested for the proposed organization or reorganization in New York, pledging its members to observe tariff rates on outside risks, is especially significant and important to local agents. When overhead writers adhere to tariff rates and quote tariff rules, overhead writing will cease.

The attitude of the National Association of Local Fire Insurance Agents toward overhead writing has been clearly expressed, and is well understood. For the purpose of exerting its influence against this practice in a systematic and effective way, the Association at its last meeting directed the preparing and publishing of an alphabetical list of those companies which are opposed to overhead writing in practice as well as in theory. When the list is issued every local agent in America will be urged by the Association to "advertise, recommend, support and favor in all honorable ways, and by all possible means, companies whose names appear thereon, and who have thus expressed their willingness to respect and protect the business of their local agents."

In accordance with the instructions of the Association the said list will include the names of the companies which advise the undersigned that hereafter they will not practice overhead writing either in the form of insurance written for property owners direct or in the form of reinsurance. It being understood that the writing of "railroad schedules which include rolling stock" is not classed as overhead writing by this Association.

Sincerely hoping that you will wish the name of your Company to appear on this roll of honor, and that you will authorize us to publish it there, we are

Respectfully yours,

C. H. WOODWORTH, President.

A. H. ROBINSON, Chm. Ex. Com.

R. S. BRANNEN, Secretary.

President Woodworth makes the following statement for the benefit of those who do not seem to understand the efforts and purposes of the association in this matter:—

What has been decided upon—Believing that local agents should lend a hand in the fight against overhead writing, and believing that the local agents of the United States prefer companies not addicted to this practice and that they will favor such companies