

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AGENT

In a certain section where both Canadian and United States companies are doing business, a life insurance agent made a false step. He was in touch with a group of prospects, simple and confiding. Taking advantage of their lack of business knowledge, he sold them unsuitable policies and that was not the worst of his actions. The result was that the business of life insurance was harmed in that community and as the agent chanced to represent a United States company, all companies of that country were boycotted. Even Canadian companies found serious obstacles to writing business there because misgivings existed in regard to any kind of life insurance, a condition created by the action of that one agent.

It is an illustration of the responsibility of the life insurance agent for the safekeeping of the good name of life insurance. It means that he must not misrepresent the policy he is selling or another company's policy. It means that he must sell the policy suited to the prospect or the one the prospect desires and not particularly the policy which he has set his mind on selling. He must talk life insurance generally as well as his company particularly. He must remember that the young man who buys a \$1,000 policy to-day, may easily become the business man who will purchase a \$50,000 policy fifteen years hence. An irresponsible life insurance agent is a nuisance to himself, to the insuring public and to the business of insurance.

LIFE UNDERWRITERS' ASSOCIATION

At Hamilton this week life insurance salesmen from all parts of Canada will gather to discuss their business problems. How to minimize the loan evil, how to train agents, how to keep business on the books, and how to advertise will have attention. A Hamilton manufacturer will explain the business man's viewpoint of insurance. Ways and means of selling life insurance will be discussed, the tricks of the trade analyzed and improvements suggested. The convention is being held under the auspices of the Dominion Life Underwriters' Association, an organization of life insurance salesmen. When it was initiated ten years ago the life insurance business in Canada was only beginning to get away from the conviction that every agent was an enemy of his fellow agent and every company an enemy of other companies. Those who have been in the business many years tell amusing stories of the atmosphere of tragic suspicion in which insurance agents and head office officials used to carry on their business. The Dominion Life Underwriters' Association was brought into existence to stop that sort of thing among life insurance agents, to remedy several evils and to teach the agent to know that every man who sells a good life insurance contract, is doing a good turn for the business generally.

The first result of the movement was the creation of what the office boy would call "a state of mush." The change from daggers drawn to brotherly love, peace and good-will was too remarkable to achieve business results. But with a tremendous amount of energy and gas thrown into what was dubbed "the association movement," the affecting condition continued for several years. Then the members of the association began to ask themselves whether the Association was not missing the point. They came to the conclusion that a little mush goes a long way,

that it neither sells life insurance nor butters the agent's bread. This was recognized by those at the head of affairs and at the conventions following, business problems were discussed instead of poets quoted and a general love feast held. Last year's convention at Toronto was probably the most businesslike of the nine held to that date. The Hamilton delegation introduced the subject of a rebate case which had been discovered and proved in their district. They wanted action taken and asked bluntly what good was the Dominion Life Underwriters' Association to salesmen if the Association intended only to preach and not to practise. That incident gave the finishing touch to the transformation of the Association to an organization which is really helping the life insurance salesmen and the life insurance business. This year's convention at Hamilton is likely to be the best of the ten from that point of view. There will be in attendance there many men who are going solely to learn how to write more business and perhaps to discover where to write it.

MUST HAVE INSURANCE SALESMEN

The experiment of State life insurance has not proved a success in the neighboring republic. In Wisconsin, a conspicuous example, it has proved a complete failure. In operation three years, the State had on January 1st last only \$289,600 of business in force, an amount which a number of individual agents on this continent would consider a fair half year's business. A large block of the amount which the State was able to write is represented by 100 policyholders who were students in the State University and all insured at one time for the benefit of a class memorial. Last year the new business issued was \$70,500 only. The average member of the Dominion Life Underwriters' Association could make a better record than that.

Wisconsin's experience proves again that the agent is indispensable in the life insurance business. The public will not buy life insurance, even although it is a necessity, as they will buy goods in the store, and which are frequently luxuries. Life insurance has to be sold by an expert selling organization. The requirements of each prospective purchaser must be studied. The one best argument, of a hundred good ones, which will appeal to the prospect, must be found. That is a work which no one can do more efficiently, to the benefit of all concerned, than the life insurance agent.

CARRIED LARGE LIFE INSURANCE

The late Andrew J. Graham, the Chicago banker who died recently, carried nearly \$800,000 of life insurance. The largest policy was a term policy for \$300,000 in the Mutual Life of New York, taken out about five years ago to protect a business venture. In addition he had a policy for \$52,000 in the Metropolitan Life and policies for \$50,000 each in the New England Mutual, the Northwestern Mutual and the Prudential. Some of these \$50,000 policies were made payable to his sons. Mr. Graham also had \$20,000 in the National Life of Chicago, \$12,000 in the Home Life, and a number of smaller policies, many of them taken out a number of years ago. Mr. Graham was a leading Democratic politician, running for the Democratic nomination for mayor of Chicago a few years ago, and for this reason belonging to as many fraternal insurance orders as possible. It is estimated that he had between \$60,000 and \$70,000 of insurance in those organizations.