

POLICY LOAN REPAYMENTS.

The suggestion recently made by Mr. W. J. Vale, deputy insurance superintendent for Ontario, before a Toronto meeting of insurance agents, for legislation to enforce the repayment within a certain period of loans on policies, is scarcely practical or even desirable. A law of this kind, which allows nothing for the differences in policyholders' circumstances and capacities, could not be accepted as a reasonable solution of the policy loan problem. Moreover, it is extremely improbable whether in these days any legislation could be got through restricting noticeably policyholders' privileges in the matter of borrowing upon their policies, although those privileges are grossly abused in many cases, to the policyholders' detriment. The policy loan problem is, however, much more complicated than is sometimes suggested. At present the Canadian companies have the right to defer making a loan for a period not exceeding three months. But this privilege is, in practise, a dead letter, through the force of competition—for which competition the policyholder is scarcely to blame. Again, it is frequently suggested that legislation should be secured to restrict loans solely to the purpose of premium payments. This argument fails to take into account the fact that in these days insurance is used for a great many more objects than the protection of dependents. There is no reason why the borrowing privileges under endowment or business insurance policies should not be availed of, to take advantage of legitimate business opportunities, and even in the case of family policies for the protection of wife and children, borrowing upon the policy may be the only means of paying, say, a doctor's exceptionally large account, incurred through sheer misfortune. In such circumstances, is the debt to be unpaid because paying it would mean "robbing the widow and children"?

EDUCATION NOT LEGISLATION.

The fact is that legislation to restrict policy-loans that would not act unfairly upon deserving policyholders is almost impossible. The solution of this problem will have to come through education, not through legislation. It is the unnecessary borrowing to buy automobiles, mining shares and the like which needs checking; legitimate borrowing *per se* would probably cause the companies no anxiety in regard to its amount or effects. As regards methods of checking unnecessary borrowing, Mr. Finlayson, the Dominion Superintendent of Insurance, admirably summarised the situation in an address delivered a year or two ago. "The remedy for this state of affairs would appear to be," he said, "the education of the insuring public, and here the scope of influence of the field man is incalculable. It rests with him very largely to determine what the conception of insurance formed by the policyholder is to be, and whether the beneficiaries are to have the full protection apparently granted them by the policy, or a measure of protection largely impaired by the amount of loans often unnecessarily obtained."

Application is to be made to Parliament for an Act to incorporate "the British Crown Assurance Corporation of Canada" for the transaction of fire, automobile, sprinkler leakage, weather and hail insurance, with head office at Regina, Sask.

UNDERWRITERS COMPLAIN OF VANCOUVER'S FIRE DEPARTMENT.

A delegation from the Mainland Fire Underwriters' Association recently waited upon the Vancouver City Council in regard to the matter of handling fires in that city. Complaint was made that the New England Fish Company's warehouse fire was not properly handled, and the necessity of the city having a fire boat, which would have enabled the fire to have been fought properly, was urged. As regards the Wood, Vallance & Leggatt fire in January, complaint was made that the handling of the fire showed lack of organisation and lack of discipline. If the fire had been properly handled, said the underwriters' spokesman, it should have been extinguished, and the loss on stock should not have amounted to more than \$4,000, with a few hundred dollars loss on the building. Instead of a fire damage of not more than about \$5,000, the loss extended to about \$400,000. The underwriters asked for a thorough reorganisation of the fire brigade and a thorough enquiry into this fire.

The English courts have now sanctioned the arrangement for the taking over of the Reliance Marine Insurance Company by the Guardian.

The new business of the United States Life in January was the largest amount written by the Company in that month for any year since 1906 and nearly 100 per cent. more than for January, 1916.

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