COST OF WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

Views of Chairman of Employers' Liability Assurance Corporation of Much Interest—Steady Rise in Cost of Claims.

Interested attention has been evoked on this side by some passages in his annual address delivered at the recent meeting of shareholders by Lord Claud Hamilton, chairman of The Employers' Liability Assurance Corporation, Limited, referring to the rising cost of workmen's compensation claims and the probable course of events on this side the Atlantic, Lord Claud Hamilton said in part:—

"For some years I have given you statistics as to the growth of the cost of workmen's compensation claims. This growth has, as you may suppose, caused us considerable anxiety and has necessitated a continuous rise in rates. I think I may say that as far as this corporation's experience goes we have now nearly arrived at a level of cost and that there is a tendency to show that the average cost of settlement per claim is pretty well known to us. Bearing in mind that the cost of settled claims was, up to the end of 1908, £7 16s per case and has now increased to £10 2s, the fact becomes of great interest to us in connection with our business in America, where workmen's compensation acts have come, and are coming, into operation in many States. There is no reason why American human nature should be different from British, and therefore we may look in that Continent for a steady rise in the cost of claims (whether the State or the insurance companies insure the employers) and equally for a steady rise in rates."

A New York commentator upon these remarks observes that there is no doubt in the opinion of experienced underwriters on this side, that Lord Claud Hamilton is right. The course of workmen's compensation in the United States it is claimed will not be different from the course in the British Empire or elsewhere, and it is agreed that a steady rise in in the cost of claims may be looked for, whether the State or the insurance companies insure the employers, and equally for a steady rise in rates. As for the latter, however, some fear that the eyesight will fail before that steady rise will materialize in the United States.

The point in an important one also in Canada, particularly at the present time in view of the experimental character of the workmen's compensation legislation which is now before the provincial legislature of Ontario. We refer elsewhere in this issue to this matter more fully. It is not to be supposed that the experience in this connection of a Government scheme is likely to be any different from the general experience elsewhere, and if there are any who anticipate that through a scheme of the kind contemplated they will be emancipated from that general experience, they are likely to find themselves sadly disillusioned by the stern teaching of the actual operation of the scheme.

THE BURDEN OF TAXATION.

A good illustration of the sort of thing with which the insurance companies have to put up with from the tax-raising authorities of all kinds is furnished by the six New England states, the expenses of whose insurance departments are only 5½ per cent. of the amount of annual taxes and fees collected from the insurance companies. Last year, there was collected in these six states in taxes and fees $2,561,781, while the expenses of the insurance departments only came to $142,889. In Connecticut only 4 per cent. of the amount collected is disbursed in supervision.

THE BANK CLERK'S STATUS.

In the course of an address on "Improvidence," delivered before the Aesculapian Club, Mr. D. R. Wilkie, president and general manager of the Imperial Bank of Canada, made an interesting comparison between the status of a medical student and a bank clerk.

"Compare for one moment the medical profession with the banking profession with which I am familiar," said Mr. Wilkie. "I trust that you will pardon the expression and the comparison. Let me place before you the emoluments of the two professions from the age of sixteen when the medical career is selected by the one youth and the banking career by the other.

"From sixteen years of age until he is probably twenty-three, the medical student is under constant expense, which I should suppose will amount in aggregate to not less than $600 per annum or in all $4,200 at the very least for the seven years of study. His capital upon obtaining his degrees consists of his education, obtained in nine cases out of ten at the expense of his parents."

THE BANK CLERK'S CASE.

"During that same period the bank clerk, from a salary of $250 or $300 per annum, is advancing year by year in his remuneration, until at twenty-three his education is, or should be, complete, and he is in receipt of a salary of at least $1,000 per annum, very often more. He has received a training without expense to himself or his parents which fits him for higher responsibilities and ensures for him considerably higher remuneration. He has received during those years of probation no less a sum than $4,000 as against the outlay by the medical student of $4,200, a difference of $8,200 in favor of the bank clerk. The course of affairs later on in life does not compare disadvantageously to the bank clerk; if he has half the ability of a successful medical practitioner he goes from strength to strength and ends up his business career at an age when golf and other exercises are still congenial, in the enjoyment of a pension of from $2,000 to $5,000 per annum, and yet we hear of bank clerks forming unions and being prepared to follow the Red Flag and join hands with men who themselves, rightly or wrongly, are struggling for the very conditions that these silly and in many cases over-paid employes enjoy but fail to appreciate."

HOW THE FIRE WASTE GROWS.

During last month, some eighteen small fires at Saskatoon occurred, involving a total loss of $9,375, most of which was covered by insurance. It is a notable fact that with one or two exceptions, all of these fires were due to rank neglect or some other form of gross carelessness.—*News Item.*

Mr. Charles E. Goad has returned from a visit to England.

* * *

Mr. Harold Hampson (Robert Hampson & Son), has returned from St. John, N.B., where he paid a short visit to the important agency of his Company in that city.