FIRST DAY'S SESSION.

A good muster of life insurance men,—from the fellow who rides in his automobile to the more modest one who walks, as Mr. J. A. Tory later described them—gathered at the Canadian Arts Building, Toronto, on Wednesday morning. That was the first day of a successful three days' convention.

Rev Canon Cody opened the proceedings with a well worded and delivered invocation, after which Mr. Weston, the secretary, read a communication from Mr. J. K. Macdonald, who had been invited by the Association to address the delegates. Being away on vacation, he was unable to do this, and instead wrote the following letter, which was read at the Convention:—"May I, as president of the Canadian Life Insurance Officers' Association, offer a most hearty welcome to all the members of your Association, and express the hope that they will find their stay in the city pleasant in every respect, and that the sessions of the Conven ion will prove both profitable and helpful, with the result that a stimulus will be given to each to view with higher appreciation the great benevolent work in which they are engaged.

Faults With Both Agents and Offices.

"I do not think that I am saying too much when I affirm that there are some things entering into the practical working of life insurance which it would be well to eliminate, and, without doubt, it is in the power of the field men to largely help in their removal. I think it will be conceded that of all financial institutions none rests on a higher moral plane than that of life insurance. If that is so, should it not follow that the various phases of its operation should be marked by an equally high standard in character and dealings? I fear that none of us can claim that such is the case. It is not with the agents alone that exception may be taken, nor in regard to whom reform is needed. It is needed quite as much in the head offices. I may be wrong, but in my judgment agents are generally what their head offices make them. When, therefore, I venture a word to the agents gathered in the Convention in regard to the need for reform, I am not unmindful of an equal, or possibly greater, need higer up the stream, and assume my own share of the responsibility therefor.

"May I offer one suggestion that I think it is possible to improve the position of the life insurance agent by making it a profession rather than a "Cave of Adullam" as is too often the case now? I am sure that the introduction in larger measure of the professional etiquette, which is maintained by the legal profession, would raise the standard and lead to increased self respect in the agent, and would doubtless also gain a larger measure of respect on the part of the public. I am well aware that there are real difficulties in the way of realizing the ideal I have suggested, but the difficulties arise largely out of existing systems of remuneration. At present it is every man for himself, without regard to, or respect for, the interests of a fellow worker in the good cause who happens to represent another company, and when the bread and butter of himself and his family are at stake, there is not much room for wonder.

Low Rate as Last Resort.

"I wish it to be understood that I am speaking for myself alone, and not in any way as the mouthpiece of any organization or individual. I am without doubt heterodox, judged by the practice of companies generally, when I express the view that the agent, under the system in general operation at the present time, is not in the best position for carrying out the ideal of a professional standing. The worthy agent, in my view, should not have to feel that, having made an honest and intelligent presentation of his company's case, his family's bread and butter may suffer, unless, by the application of the principle "that a half loaf is better than no bread" he secures his risk, or by offering some "up the sleeve" low rate as the last resort, in which case he, himself, is said to be the chief loser. There are difficulties in the way, but in my judgment it is due to each honest and capable agent that he shall be in that position where he need not fear for himself nor his family should he fail to secure the risk he has honestly and faithfully worked for, nor be led to adopt a course to secure the risk, which, in all probability neither his sense of which is strictly right, nor his judgment, approves, and by which he is stealing the bread and butter of a fellow worker.

"It is quite likely that the changes which would make possible the professionalizing of the agency system would call for a weeding out to some extent, but that would not be an unmixed evil.

It Is Often Discouraging Work.

"I wish to say that I have no desire or intention to be revolutionary, but having been asked to address you by letter, I feel it due to myself in addressing a convention of agents, to state my views in regard to men engaged in the arduous, and often discouraging, work of canvassing for life insurance. I would like to see the men, on whom we so much depend, placed in a proper self-respecting position, and with a reasonable interest in the results of their work, so long as they continue to serve the company, with something for the day when the weary worker may reasonably claim his well earned rest.

"I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the members of the Life Underwriter' Association, on the good work done at Ottawa. The assistance rendered there during the past two sessions of Parliament, will, I am sure, have greatly helped in securing what may now be anticipated will be a good workable Insurance Act.

May Influence Administration.

"I am of the opinion that by intelligent and well considered measures, faithfully carried out, your Association may be a power for good, not only among yourselves, but by influences rightly brought to bear, you may even influence administration. However, you must be honest with yourselves and faithful to your findings. I cannot conceive any good reason why a life insurance agent should not possess, and be guided by a high standard of right and wrong, as the manager of his company.

"It is in your own power to make your profession something more than it has been in the past, and my object in making suggestions is that you may make it that. If that is to be done, you mut stand together and act up to the letter and spirit of your agreement with each other. Your social gatherings will do much to pare off the rough corners, and perhaps remove misunderstandings, but you must go farther if you are to reach the ideal and attain the greatest good."

Mr. J. A. Richter, Vice-President of the Life Officers' Association, then welcomed the delegates.

"For the past three and a half years" he said "the Canadian life managers have, in the main, been extremely busy both in their individual and associate capacities. A vast amount of information had to be supplied by the various Companies as a preliminary to the investigation of the Companies by the Royal Commission on Life Insurance" he stated "and in due time a Bill was represented to Parliament based in a large measure on the recommendations of that Commission.

Regarding the Insurance Bill.

"The Bill as then presented," he continued, "was not wholly satisfactory to the Companies, nor to the representatives of the Companies in the field. It was not such a measure as would have been in the best interest of the business of life insurance, whether viewed from the standpoint of the Companies, the agents, or the insuring public," he pointed out "and it was clearly the duty of the Canadian Life Insurance Officers to do all that lay in their power to bring about such modifications of the Bill as would make it a fairer and more workable measure. Many meetings of the Association he mentioned had necessarily to be held, and repeated visits to Ottawa made in the interval, all of which entailed a great deal of extra labor on the Executive Officers of the Asociation and especially so on the President and Secretary. He referred to the commencement of the Life Underwriters' Association and the spirit of pessimism which prevailed among many of the older men. This feeling of doubt as to the future of the new association he claimed was not held without a just cause. Ten years before, he said, a similar organization passed out of existence, as it had not only failed to justify its maintenance but had proved a drawback to the cause of insurance. Being one of the men who had not favored the advent of the new organization he was now glad to have the opportunity to express his praise of the manner in which it had progressed, and the good it had accomplished.

Another Greeting.

Mr. J. A. Tory, in his usual pleasing manner, then greeted the delegates.

"For some years" he said "this city has been recognized as the great insurance center of Canada. More Companies have their head offices here than in any other city. In fact more companies have their head offices in the city of Toronto than all other places combined. We have also all classes and conditions of insurance men. A few ride in their automobiles; a few ride in their carriages—but the greater majority of us walk, and we will be glad to have you walk with us, because there is a fellow feeling in the walking business.

"Mr. President and gentlemen, I want to congratulate you on this great organization of yours. It is one of which we should feel proud. We have watched with pride the work accomplished during the past year, but there never was a time in the history of life insurance when the field men