

officer from each life insurance company, be appointed, empowered to make such contribution to a general fund as may be necessary to secure investigation and prosecution of offenders. He uses this significant language:—"If we could have on the part of the companies, who really desire to have these statutes respected, action so heroic as to impress the sincerity of the movement upon every life insurance agent, there is reason to believe that the desired end might be reached."

We regard this proposition, coming from such a source, as of much importance, as before stated, and for two principal reasons. In the first place, the movement, applied to Massachusetts, means a universal movement against rebating, effectually reaching the entire field, Canada included, because it enlists the corrective power residing at the fountain head—that of the company managers. Whenever there shall emanate from the headquarters of the companies a sincere edict that the anti-rebate laws must be obeyed and that rebating must cease, as we have more than once asserted, it will cease. In the second place, the plan proposed by Commissioner Merrill opens the way for unified effort to effectually inaugurate reform. As is very well known, heretofore the great hindrance to concerted action has been found in the unwillingness of three or four of the large companies, between whom a sharp rivalry has existed, to take the initiative, suspicious that the others might not follow in good faith, and thus the company committing itself to a restrictive policy be placed at a disadvantage in the quest for new business which has been the great desideratum. Almost without exception the individual, controlling officials of the companies in the United States and in Canada, both great and small, have definitely expressed themselves at one time or another as opposed to rebating, and if well-sounding professions could have put an end to the practice, it would have disappeared long ago. To the honor of some of the companies, be it said that profession and practice have agreed, and vigorous measures have been taken to discipline their own agents and to bring about a partial reform.

But while, we are glad to say, the extent of the evil has been lessened somewhat, rebating still exists on a pretty large scale, and it will continue to exist until the principal companies are brought to co-operate in all sincerity in its extinguishment. So long as a part of the companies, whatever their wordy utterances on the subject, connive at the practice, the others are, or think they are, compelled under present methods of business to "hold a candle to the devil" and keep step in the procession. This plan, therefore, proposed by the Massachusetts commissioner is a promising one, because no particular company is called upon to take the initiative in the much needed reform, and none of them will feel bound by its provisions until it is agreed to by all the rest.

A *combined* movement, made in good faith, is the great thing needed, and Commissioner Merrill has pointed out the way by which, through him, it may take practical form.

We have never been especially enthusiastic over the

efficiency of the plan for regulating the rebate evil by statute, and as a matter of fact the existence of stringent prohibitory laws in about twenty of the States and provinces has done as yet but little toward its extirpation. We have believed that it is a question with which the companies themselves should deal, courageously and effectively. But inasmuch as they have not and apparently will not come together to unite in the use of vigorous measures of their own motion, the legal phase of the question as a basis of unity may serve an excellent purpose. Some of the companies have, we notice, already responded favorably to Commissioner Merrill's invitation, and we shall await with interest the responses of those not yet heard from.

A CRITICISM OF GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY AFFAIRS.

Mr. Stapleton Caldecott, President of the Toronto Board of Trade, caused a mild sensation at the reception given by the Board to Sir Charles Rivers Wilson and his Grand Trunk colleagues.

It is doubtful whether the occasion was happily chosen for somewhat sharp criticisms of that Railway's affairs. Sir Charles is a pleasant and approachable man, who is here for the purpose of ascertaining the position of the Company in all its departments. Mr. Seargeant, the General Manager, we have always with us, who is ever ready to hear complaints, and, when needful, to submit them to the Directors. Criticisms and suggestions might well have been made to them when an opportunity was favorable for a discussion of the points raised in a manner not possible at a public ceremony. Although Sir Charles was taken suddenly by Mr. Caldecott's remarks, he made a very able reply, which showed he had already acquired considerable knowledge of Grand Trunk affairs. In regard to the question of the road being under the control of a Canadian Board, there is something to be said on both sides; but the difficulty of forming such a Board here is at present insuperable. Mr. Caldecott represented his case with force. He dwelt on the desirability of having complaints more promptly attended to, and of the patrons of the road being brought into more direct and prompt connection with the Directors. This sounds reasonable; but has there been any ground for complaint in regard to delays and of difficulty in getting decisions from the Board or management owing to the Directors being in London? Mr. Caldecott offered no evidence to support such a view, nor was any submitted to show its being a substantial grievance for the Board to be in London. Such questions as arise between individual patrons of the road and the management, which have to be referred to the Board, are extremely few. The General Manager here has plenary powers in such matters, and in counsel and in concert with his staff is able to adjust differences which arise with business-like celerity. Such affairs as have to be referred to the Board are too serious to be settled off-hand, they are never so urgent as to call for immediate settlement, and no grievance arises from whatever delay arises from the reference to London, especially considering that the cable service is available.