SOCIETY JOURNALISM AND THE ACCIDENT COMPANIES.

Let us refer again to the suggestion made by our friend the Toronto Insurance "Expert," that the accident companies withdraw from their policies the clause to the effect that they are not liable unless the premium has been paid prior to the occurrence of an accident.

Suppose the policies of the companies did not contain the clause regarding payment of premium and assumed liability every time a policy was written in their office:—a stranger steps up to the counter, requests a policy immediately to cover him on a trip to Europe and tenders a cheque in payment. He takes the policy away with him the same day, but the company find two days later that the cheque has been returned "no funds." In other words they find that they have been hoodwinked into issuing a policy to a person who had no intention of paying the premium (for the present at any rate). The policyholder in the meantime has covered the journey or other hazardous undertaking without meeting with any accident, his mind is now relieved and he meekly surrenders the policy to the company for cancellation. But if a fatal accident had occurred in the meantime, is the company to have no protection whatever, is the company to have no right to show that the policy was obtained from them by presentation of a cheque which had no funds to meet it and consequently was not a cash payment?

Accident companies are perfectly justified in having such clauses inserted in their policies to protect themselves against possible fraudulent claims.

NOTORIETY HUNTING.

From the tone of the articles written by the Insurance "Expert," it would appear that he is endeavoring to gain notoriety by shaking the confidence of the more or less inexperienced members of the community. His articles are written in such a way that they cannot appeal to any other class. In this respect he is very much misguided. If it is his desire to do real good instead of harm, he would be well advised instead of drawing pictures of blue ruin, to increase the popularity of accident insurance which has done so much in recent years to alleviate the dire results of the ever increasing hazard of ordinary life. It has recently been pointed out that the great fire waste of this continent is totally eclipsed by what we might describe as the accident waste. Every life that is lost, every limb, every eye, has a certain monetary value not only to the individual owner, but to the community at large as a part of the great industrial machine which builds cities, railroads and states. Every steel building erected in the modern city takes its toll of life and the same applies to the manufacture of everything down to the most commonplace food stuffs or domestic requisites. Notwithstanding the tremendous accident waste, it is estimated that not one-tenth of the loss is insured. The fire waste, if uninsured, leaves in its trail nothing worse, as a rule, than financial embarrassment. Accident waste leaves a sordid claim of misery, and the women and children are often the keenest sufferers.

STRONG COMPANIES HANDLING BUSINESS.

In this country, we are particularly fortunate in having a number of the strongest and most reliable companies handling this class of business; we are practically free from anything of the nature of speculative organizations, launched for the purpose of harrying the public. Competition has been so keen amongst these companies that no stone has been left unturned to give the public better service and more satisfactory benefits. However, few of those companies would be daring enough to issue a wide open policy free from the customary conditions which have been found necessary, not as a means of evading just claims, but as the bar to prevent swindlers from taking advantage of them. There is no protection whatever from the law courts excepting on grounds clearly reserved in the policy.

If a person goes to a tailor, hatter, or shoe dealer to make a purchase he usually exerts a little commonsense in the matter of the selection of size and pattern. If he gets a misfit, he does not declare in the public press that tailors or hat makers are swindlers and require to be standardized. He will either admit that he was wrong in not exercising a little more care in his choice or the tailor may have been wrong in not using the proper care in serving him. In the latter case, the remedy is to find a tailor who will give him what he wants.

Exactly the same conditions apply in accident insurance. Every facility is given to examine the goods.

RESTRICTIONS IN POLICYHOLDERS' INTERESTS.

So long as there are persons who are prepared to take advantage of the mutual good faith which is imposed on policyholder and company alike, it will be necessary in our opinion to place restrictions on the contract. It follows, that these restrictions are not for the purpose of beating an honest man, but actually to protect him or the security which is offered him by the companies' funds against the methods of the unscrupulous. Every policy contains a clause requiring the intimation of claims within specified time. It is a well known fact, however, that a claim not intimated within the time shown in the policy is always valid if a reasonable cause is shown. For example, if the policyholder were at a great distance from the place where the claim was to be intimated and he was rendered unconscious or was so disabled as to be unable to send the intimation. If no restrictions were made on the policy there would be nothing to prevent a claimant from asserting that at some considerable time in the past he suffered disability. If he were in a position to prove that he was telling the truth, we know of no company which would decline to pay, but if he had no proof to offer, the company are quite within their rights in having a printed clause in their policy which will protect them.

It will be understood that no company with any intention of remaining in business in the future will embark upon a system of harrying as described by the "Expert." It may reasonably be assumed, therefore, that if the company has acted on correct principles in the past, it will continue to do so in the future.