

new business. We are told by some insurance agents that the evil cannot be abated by a simple compact among companies, managers, and agents, that experience has repeatedly shown that such a plan will not work. The "mutual agreement" plan has been tried again and again in New York, Chicago, Boston and other places where excessive competition has developed the evil into leviathan proportions, and in every case we are assured there was utter failure, for the simple reason that the moment that pledges were violated by one or two members the compact became useless. That among a large army of agents there will always be found a few dishonorable men, adepts at promise-breaking where a supposed advantage is to be gained, is not surprising. With the existing sharp competition for business, it is perhaps useless to expect to secure that rigid obedience to the rules governing a mutual compact which alone can make it useful in preventing such an evil as rebating. It was for these and other reasons that the better class of agents, supported by their companies, sought and secured the stringent anti-rebate laws existing in the United States, and experience has shown that the law works fairly well. Would a similar statute be a good thing for the Dominion of Canada? It is obvious that such a legal enactment as would place all agents upon an equal footing would enable those who loyally obeyed its provisions to protect themselves against such as sought to evade or violate it. When reflecting upon the failure of the previous attempt to secure an amendment to the present Insurance Act, which would have prohibited the granting of rebates, and also have provided that no agent should be authorized to transact the business of life assurance, unless licensed by the Superintendent of Insurance upon the recommendation of the manager of the company he is to represent, we hesitate to again advocate a new effort to obtain this concession from Parliament.

Yet the business of life insurance is one of sufficient magnitude and beneficence to make its purity and equitable dealing with the public a matter of paramount importance. The men chosen to represent insurance companies are engaged in a most honorable calling, and both their reputations and the character of the companies for fair dealing may, if this scandalous practice of iniquitous discrimination cannot be prevented in any other way, demand the protection afforded by legislation such as was at one time contemplated.

It must be obvious to all intelligent men that the discrimination inseparable from the practice of rebating is a subversion of the fundamental principle of mutuality inherent in all true life insurance. Absolute equity toward all its members is essential to the stability and success of every company. It seems a pity then that the companies should require a well-defined law to compel fair dealing and honest practice. Yet legislation may be necessary to enable the

companies to protect their good names; it may be necessary to enable agents to protect themselves from unfair competition; and it will certainly be desired by every citizen who believes in promoting square dealing between man and man.

What a surprise it would be to companies granting rebates, if policy-holders who have not been made the recipients of say one-half or more of the first year's premium paid by them now made a demand for the same treatment accorded to others. It is quite in keeping with the principle of mutuality that the life companies practicing rebating would be found legally liable for such discrimination against their earlier policy-holders.

MOVEMENTS OF SPECIE THIS YEAR.

Although the movements of specie have been somewhat remarkable, the net results do not show such displacements as might have been anticipated from the influences which have prevailed tending to heavy transfers of gold from one market to another. The following shows the holdings of specie by the great banks of Europe at the opening of this year, and on 1st December, also the amount held in the United States' Treasury at same dates:—

	January, 1, 1898.		December, 1, 1898.	
	Gold.	Silver.	Gold.	Silver.
	\$	\$	\$	\$
England.....	159,216,000		155,946,000	
France.....	390,570,000	241,150,000	366,294,000	243,349,000
Germany.....	146,575,000	75,500,000	128,775,000	66,335,000
Austria.....	182,370,000	61,660,000	177,910,000	62,340,000
Spain.....	47,150,000	51,450,000	55,300,000	32,280,000
Netherlands.....	13,140,000	34,090,000	21,570,000	33,465,000
Belgium.....	14,115,000	7,050,000	14,650,000	7,325,000
Total Europ. B.	944,136,000	470,906,000	920,445,000	445,075,000
W. S. Treasury				
Coin and Bullion.....	197,469,000	507,291,000	276,943,000	504,291,000
Coin in U. S. in 1898.....	68,493,900	19,758,000		

The total decrease in specie held by the great banks of Europe this year was \$49,522,000, of which 27 millions was drawn away from Germany. Strangely enough, Spain only lost specie this year to extent of \$11,020,000, during which her war outlays were enormous. England, that is the Bank of England, now has more gold on hand than a year ago. The United States Treasury has \$13,468,630 less gold coin than at close of 1897, and \$92,943,500 more in bullion, a large portion of which, \$75,000,000, came from native mines. So far as the holding of specie gives strength, the United States Treasury and banks were never in a stronger position, and, whatever may have been the effect on the money market in Europe of the drain of gold from certain centres, the dying away of war rumours will soon bring matters into a more healthy condition in this, as in other financial respects.