

UNAUTHORIZED INSURANCE BUSINESS.

(Hon. James R. Young, President, National Convention of Insurance Commissioners).

To admit the necessity of a proper supervision and regulation of the insurance business in all its branches is but another way to say that the transaction of unauthorized insurance should be stopped. If it is necessary for the better classes of insurance companies to be regulated, when they are managed certainly by men of the highest business character and qualifications of any in the business, surely those of a doubtful reputation and standing need to be strictly looked after for the protection of the people. I have always maintained that the company whose officials were willing to withhold from the State license fees and taxes legally due her would when an opportunity afforded not hesitate to rob her citizens. The question of unauthorized insurance is a vexing problem and calls for our most earnest consideration. It must be solved by the national as well as the State governments. Some have insisted that the national Government should prohibit the use of its mails to a company in a territory where it is not licensed. While it is insisted that this would be contrary to the Constitution, at least might not the Government, as a condition of the use of the mails, place upon such companies the burden of showing that they are safe and solvent, rather than place on the citizens of the State in which they are striving to operate illegally the responsibility of showing that these companies are not safe and solvent before forbidding them to use the mails? This would be a proper change of the burden of proof.

PROTECTING AUTHORIZED COMPANIES.

Again, it is insisted as a remedy that the States properly supervise and look after their own companies and brokers, and pass such legislation as will prevent domestic and foreign companies or agents or brokers chartered or licensed under the laws of that State from soliciting or writing insurance on persons or property in States in which they are not licensed. Is not that a law reasonable and proper and in keeping with comity between the States? It would protect local agents from overhead writing, and protect companies which do a legitimate business from bushwackers, making taxation equitable, which legitimate concerns now bear and illegitimate concerns escape, and securing revenue to the State on business which the illegitimate concerns now do. The matter is not necessarily one of the collection of taxes, but to demand a license fee or tax is the first step toward regulation and forcibly calling the matter to the attention of even your own citizens.

IN LIEU OF TAXES.

It has been suggested, and in my opinion would prove of great benefit in stopping unauthorized insurance, that a uniform law be formulated by our committee on unauthorized insurance, and enacted in even a majority of the States requiring that any citizen using an unlicensed company should retain from the premiums a certain per cent., say 5 per cent., and remit the same to the Insurance Department, or whoever is required by the law of the State to collect the taxes from insurance companies, in lieu of the tax unpaid by the company. This would not be a hardship upon the company or citizen,

as the company otherwise is escaping not only the tax due the State, but the commissions paid by licensed companies to agents operating in the State. If this course is pursued, then practically all of the companies who could be licensed in the State as being safe and sound would take out a license, while it would be forcibly brought home to the citizens of our States that it is unsafe to trust their protection needed in the way of insurance to unlicensed companies. These and other suggestions are well worth the attention of our committee on unauthorized insurance. Nothing is settled until it is settled right, and some way can and should be found to settle this matter right, and protect our people from these pirates.

ROYAL INSURANCE COMPANY, LTD.

There has just been placed in position an important piece of sculpture to complete the imposing block of buildings recently erected in Lombard street, London, for the Royal Insurance Company.

It consists of a colossal group of three figures, in bronze, and is fixed over the granite hood of the main doorway in Lombard street.

The figures symbolize to some extent the main activities of the company—viz., life, fire, and marine interests, but, subservient to its symbolism, the prime object has been kept in view of making the group an appropriate and harmonious portion of the fine architectural design as a whole. The central figure is a winged sphinx seated upright, with its forepaws upon a globe. The face is inscrutable in expression and the strong feline form immobile in pose.

This figure gives the keynote to the symbolism of the group and suggests the mysteries and uncertainties of the unknown to-morrow and the desirability, as far as in human power lies, of guarding the various interests of life against the working of fate or chance or circumstance.

There are two subsidiary semi-draped female figures on either side of the sphinx: on the right is a strong figure, alert in attitude and pose with flying hair and turbulent drapery, grasping in the left hand a flaming torch, suggesting the latent power and energy of fire.

The figure on the left represents a sea nymph, or syren, with a dolphin entwined anchor. The right hand holds the wand of Mercury as suggesting sovereignty over space and the safeguarding of commerce. The figure as a whole is intended to symbolise the mighty power of the sea for good or ill over our wide maritime interests.

The group, which is in bronze, is both in size and artistic merit one of the most important pieces of architectural sculpture in London and has been designed and sculptured by Mr. Francis Doyle-Jones, of Chelsea, acting under the instructions of Messrs. Gordon and Gunton, of Bloomfield-street, the architects of the building.—*Insurance Observer*.

CANADIAN PATRIOTIC FUND.

Have you paid your insurance premium—your premium against national distress? Your country is already on the risk, and claims will soon be pouring in.