

insurance is an educator, commencing with primary lessons in the great school of life insurance.

WE NOTICE THAT some of our exchanges are printing an elaborate "opinion," procured by Mr. John I. D. Bristol, the New York manager of the Northwestern Mutual Life, from an "eminent law firm" in that city, to the effect that a life policy, upon which a rebate has been given in violation of the law of the State of New York, for instance, is absolutely void. What particular value such an opinion may have except to the said law firm, which gets some valuable free advertising, we do not see at this distance. An equally "eminent law firm" might be hired, we presume, to give a contrary opinion, and in neither case would the opinion be worth a farthing to anybody. The voiding of a life policy is a somewhat serious matter: and whether or not the act of an agent in giving to the assured, unknown to the company, perhaps, a portion of his commission would void the policy we prefer to learn from the regularly constituted courts. We are well known advocates of anti-rebate laws, but we don't care to assist in setting up any illegitimate scare-crows.

WE BELIEVE THAT the thoroughly bad practice, on this side of the water at least, of constituting bank employees, cashiers of large mercantile or manufacturing establishments, and sundry others engaged in business, "agents" by fire insurance companies is on the wane. It certainly ought to be a practice known only to the past. An "agency" of such character usually simply means a method by which the insured may get a rebate on his insurance premium under the name of "commission." According to the *Policyholder*, Liverpool must be the chief of sinners in this respect, or else the business in England is generally in a very demoralized condition on the agency question. Our contemporary says, that "it is stated that the practice (of rebate) has become so general that the premium is nearly always taken for granted by the mercantile public to be the list premium less 15 per cent., or at least some percentage according to what it has been ascertained may be obtained;" and in another paragraph says that "it looks as though the term 'agent' were susceptible in Liverpool of the lightest and most ethereal kind of definition." A complaint of the same nature also comes from the Pacific coast.

WOULD A BUREAU of adjustments be a good thing for the fire insurance companies? is a question discussed the other day by the managers and others at Chicago. Mr. P. A. Montgomery, the Western manager of the Lancashire, argued strongly that it would, and stated that in the territory covered by the Western Union it now costs two per cent. of the premiums to adjust the losses. Mr. Montgomery claims that a carefully organized adjustment bureau, in charge of a first class adjuster, and used for the adjustment of losses above a certain amount by all the companies at a stipulated price, would save them fully one and a half per cent., or, in other words, that one-half of one per cent.

of the premiums ought to pay for competent adjustments on this plan. The subject was deemed of sufficient importance to justify the appointment of a special committee to consider the proposition and report hereafter. The theory, which is not new, is all right, but there are several stubborn *ifs* standing between the theory and actual practice. Perhaps they can be eliminated. We shall see.

ACCORDING TO GENERAL expectation, the famous Iron Hall, assessment endowment order, has been placed in the hands of a receiver by the court at Indianapolis before which the case came. It was clearly shown that the funds have been diverted from their legitimate use by the chief officers in various ways, the most flagrant instance being the actual gift a few months ago to keep it from failing of \$170,000 to a banking concern in Philadelphia, started by these officers, and of which "Supreme Justice" Somerby was the vice-president. Large sums had also been deposited with this bank, so that in all about \$720,000 of the money of the Iron Hall was held by it. Since the proceedings against the Iron Hall were begun the bank has failed. It has been shown that money belonging to the order has been used freely for private speculation, that a good deal went to influence favorable legislation in Massachusetts and elsewhere, and that "big money" has been paid Somerby as salary and for travelling expenses. This concern, the originator of the assessment endowment plan, has been in the field some ten years, and has been pointed to as a shining example of its class. Now comes the end, and with it the wail of the army of dupes, who expected to get rich quick at the expense of somebody else.

THE GROWTH OF THE INSURANCE IDEA.

The present may not, *par excellence*, be an era of speculative thought or abstruse theorizing such as some past periods have been, but it is an era of achievement in practical life such as the world has never before seen. It is a day of electrical energy applied to the every day problems of life. In nothing is this fact more strikingly demonstrated than in the development of the insurance idea and in its ready application to the diversified conditions of society. Not only has the growth of life insurance in the leading countries of the world been marvelous as to volume, but it has undergone very marked improvement in its scope and forms of application to the various conditions of modern life. A comparison of the forms of the ordinary policy and the conditions attached now with twenty five or even a dozen years ago will reveal the progress made in safely adapting life insurance to the practical needs of the average man. As additional millions have each year been paid over to beneficiaries of those who have died, or as endowments added to the estates of those who have lived, conviction has grown apace that the system affords both protection and accumulation benefit with absolute certainty such as no prudent man can afford to ignore.

The need of protection for dependent ones has been more and more recognized by the masses, and insurance in some form has been confidently accepted as the