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PROOF OF AGE IN LIFE INSURANCE

The amendment to the Ontario Insurance Act, proposed by Mr. C. R. McKeown, would, if it became law, raise serious obstacles to the conduct of the business, disadvantageous both to companies and to policyholders. If an agent has demonstrated the advantages of life insurance and then tells the applicant that before he can be accepted proof of age must be furnished, the applicant will hesitate and may be lost to the company, at the same time losing life insurance protection. As one manager puts it, "If the business must be held up until the information in this connection comes to hand, the delay will, in not a few instances, prove annoying to the applicants and seriously interfere with the prompt dispatch of the business on the part of the companies."

The Ontario Act already provides that where the age has been given erroneously, but in good faith, the policy shall not be voided on that account, but the sum payable shall bear the same proportion to the sum assured, as the premium for the assumed age bears to the premium for the proven age. The same principle applies in the Dominion Insurance Act and in the legislation of most of the States of the neighboring republic. When an error in age is discovered in the lifetime of the assured, the adjustment takes the form of receiving or refunding the difference in premiums according to whether the age was over or under stated. The policyholder, therefore, is well protected under the law as it stands.

Should Mr. McKeown's suggestion become legalized, it would place the onus of proof of age upon the companies. In that connection, another manager points out that dishonest persons might, and many probably would, take advantage of the opportunity to obtain in-

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insurance at a low rate by understating their age. It would be difficult for the companies—in nearly all cases impossible—to prove fraud. The honest policyholder would be the ultimate victim, as the loss to the company would fall upon him.

A point Mr. McKeown does not seem to have considered is that supposing the companies attempted to obtain proof of age within the year and the policyholder declined to furnish it, or stated ignorance of his date of birth, what would be the remedy?

The object of the bill is apparently to bring more prominently to the notice of the policyholder the desirability of having evidence of age submitted to the company as early as possible. That object could easily be attained by making it obligatory upon all companies doing business in Ontario, to furnish a printed form to prove age and to deliver a copy of this form, with any instructions necessary, with the policy to the policyholder. That would seem to prevent the blocking of life insurance business and give even further protection to the policyholder. With proper and reasonable protection for the policyholder, there is certainly no need to make it harder to write life insurance. That is quite difficult enough now.

AS TO THRIFT

The penny banks for school children in Canada are excellent footpaths to thrift. The earlier a child is taught the virtue and advantages of thrift, the better for the child as it grows into youth and man or womanhood. In a few cases the education may fail but thrift, once firmly rooted, is likely to flourish. Miss Annie Gray, of the York Street School, Toronto, has thrown interesting sidelights on the patronage of the children's bank. Almost all the nationalities of Europe are