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THE METROPOLITAN—A MOTHER'S CARE FOR THE MILLIONS THAT OWN IT

Address of Haley Fiske, President of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, at the Triennial Convention, Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles, California, November 21, 1927

HALEY FISKE, *President*

We are met here tonight to conclude what we call a convention. For a good many years I have been going around the country—for thirty years or more—holding at convenient points conventions of our men. This is the eighth convention I have held on this trip. Tonight you have before you a body of 262 agents; their names and localities I think are on the menu card; they are mostly from Los Angeles. Those 262 men bring here $109,000,000 of insurance in force; they represent 305,000 policies and 205,000 individuals insured. We have been busy all today holding conferences. They have been addressed by the Officers and have conferred with each other. To use the phrase of GROVER CLEVELAND in one of his addresses before our convention, they are here to receive reports from the Home Office. Mr. CLEVELAND said that the field men were entitled to see the Officers and get reports of their administration. But we have tonight several hundred guests, we are very glad to say, who we thought would be interested in a story which we love to hear, and which I love to give—the story of this Company.

The Assets and Their Investment

It is the largest insurance company in the world. It is the largest financial institution in the world, with assets of two and a quarter billions of dollars. And, of course, that money has to be invested. It used to be said in the West that New York companies had great piles of assets in Wall Street. I do not believe Wall Street has any assets at all. It is a place for distribution. At any rate, we haven't got any there. We have to invest this to meet our liabilities; the law requires it and fixes the minimum rate of interest. And our plan has been to invest this money in the places from which we receive premiums. Thus, in California we have invested $62,000,000, and the reserve on the policies in California is only $59,000,000, so that we have invested $3,000,000 more than the reserve. You want to know what reserve is. It is that sum of money which, improved at interest and taking into account future premiums, will pay the policies when they mature. That is supposed to be, therefore, our capital assets in California. The investment of this two and a quarter billions is, in Railroad Securities about $300,000,000; in Government, Federal, State, Municipal, County, and industrial companies, about $889,000,000; and then we have invested in Real Estate Mortgages just under a billion dollars, of which $200,000,000 are on farms; and we have loaned about $138,000,000 to policyholders to tide them over temporary difficulties. And in California we have invested twenty-eight and a half millions of dollars in bonds and mortgages, and of this sum sixteen and a half millions are for housing, of which I will speak later. That is the financial layout.

The Insurance in Force

Now, when we come to the insurance exhibit, we have in force thirteen and a half billions of insurance, and that is billions ahead of any other company. We have more than any company in the world, we write more every year than any company in the world, and we increase more every year than any company in the world. We have two general departments of life insurance. One is called Ordinary insurance, which is the insurance written in units usually of $1,000, where the premiums are paid annually, semi-annually, quarterly and monthly, just such policies as our friend the Pacific Mutual—a great and sound Western company here in Los Angeles—just such policies as they issue. Industrial insurance is just as scientific, but it begins, so to speak, at the other end. Instead of there being units of insurance and so much premium, there are units of premium and so much insurance. And these premiums are weekly premiums, and instead of the premiums being sent to the district offices, as in the case of the Ordinary, they are collected at the homes of the insured weekly. Lately, we have provided for monthly premiums. And this body of 262 men tonight is part of a larger body of some 22,000 men who serve in the United States and Canada in this collection of premiums. And the Industrial insurance agent, so far as I know, is the only man who has a contract right to knock at a door every Monday morning and walk in.

One-Fifth of the Population Members of a Mutual Company

The distribution of our insurance is very wide. There are forty millions of policies in force, and they insure twenty-four millions of individual lives; and a little mental calculation shows you that that is one-fifth of the entire population of the United States and Canada, so that you may say that every fifth man, woman and child in these two countries are members of this Company. I say members of this Company advisedly, because it is not a stock company. Nobody owns it except the policyholders, and nobody gets any money out of it except the policyholders. It is a mutual company without stock. And in California we have $615,000,000 of insurance in force. And I have told you what these men who are here tonight have brought here. We held a convention on Thursday night, and those two conventions comprise Southern California, and, together, they have 639,000 policies, whose holders number 248,000. And in the State of California we have got one and one-half million policies in force, and that represents a million lives. So, you may say that in the places in which we do business in California, every fourth man, woman and child is a member, and that is true of Los Angeles, where we have 248,000 individual lives insured, approximately one in every four. In other parts of the country, in the East, where we have been doing business longer and where the population is more congested, the figures are still more remarkable. In New York City every third man, woman and child is a member; in that great State of New York every third man, woman and child; in Memphis, it is every third man, woman and child; Montreal, every third man, woman and child; in Quebec, 110,000 people and 80,000 policies; Syracuse, every other man, woman and child; in St. Louis over fifty-six per cent. are policyholders. I suppose the star cities are the rather large cities of Troy and Cohoes, in the upper part of New York—manufacturing towns—and in each of these towns there are more Metropolitan policies in force than the total population. (Laughter and applause.) I mention these figures not at all in the way of boasting, but in the way of showing you how widespread is this insurance. Twenty millions of the working people members of the Company.

Distribution of Money

This Company was organized to do an insurance business—incorporated as such—and the insurance business consists in issuing policies and paying claims. Well, we do our duty in paying claims. We pay 1,758 claims every minute in an eight-hour day from the first of January to the 31st of December. That, indeed, shows you the extent of this insurance and of its benefactions. And we do our best to treat these policyholders in the Industrial Department, as well as in the Ordinary, with perfect justice and with generosity. We have paid $309,000,000 in dividends. This year we are paying $52,000,000; and then, we are cheapening their insurance. We have increased the benefits for the given premium.

Cheap Industrial Insurance

Lately, we have done a thing of which I am most proud; we have got out a new monthly Industrial policy, where the premiums are actually approximately the same as the premiums, say, of the New York Life Insurance Company for multimillionaires and well-to-do people, reduced to a monthly basis. (Applause.) Ten years ago that would have been thought to be madness. Five years ago it would have been thought to be an iridescent dream. It has been made possible by reduction of mortality and reduction of expense. And it is a marvelous thing in the economic welfare of the United States and Canada that now the working man can get his insurance, if he will pay monthly, just as cheap as the employer can. In fact, on one plan, the Twenty-Year Endowment, our premium is a little less. A marvelous thing. I think the significance may appear later.

What Industrial Insurance Is

I want you to know what an Industrial insurance company is. Just think of twenty millions of them being banded together in a great society, having votes for the Board of Directors; and just think what that society means. It means very often that a man will curtail his expenses and do away with his luxury for the purpose of protecting the family. It is a great society in which they contribute to a common fund, that fund being our treasury, to take care of those who die untimely. And often men do this not only in self-sacrifice, but against the objections of their families. No wife ever believes her husband is going to die, until he gets sick. And I suspect, in many cases, it is the tears that fall on the marble face in the coffin which brings to the wife the story of his self-sacrifice for her and the children. It is a very noble thing, this life insurance by working people.

The Company's Opportunity and Its Use

I have told you that these 22,000 agents of ours visit the homes of these working men every Monday morning, or through the week, and if you will think of that a moment, you will see that it means opportunity. And if you will think of opportunity for a moment you will begin to think of the word responsibility. Is it enough that this great mutual band of men should be content, with working people, merely to pay death claims or endowments? We thought not. Two or three years ago at a convention held in New York we invited that great Californian, than whom few, if any, greater men are in this country, Mr. HERBERT HOOVER. (Applause.) Of course, I was very proud about it, and I said so; and in introducing the Secretary of Commerce I pointed out that it was a very great honor to have him there, and that I felt under obligations to him, and then I introduced him, and he got up, and this is his first sentence; I want to read it to you: "I consider it a great honor to be a guest at the annual gathering of the greatest single institution dedicated to public welfare in America." And it is my task to justify that encomium.

Nursing the Working People

Consider who these working people are. Without any fault on their part they are ignorant. They know nothing about the prevention of sickness; and they don't know anything about taking care of sickness when it comes. And, moreover, the outgo of that family about equals its income, and the family budget provides for a roof and clothing and food, but it doesn't provide for sickness. And yet sickness comes. And when it comes, what then? Ah! you know, on my right and left, what comes to your family when there is sickness, and the doctor shakes his head and says: "It's a serious case; you'd better have a nurse." You send for a nurse, and she saves life often. I do not know what you pay here, but we pay eight dollars a day. Well, talk to a working man about paying a nurse eight dollars a day, and it's a joke—rather a rough joke—and so the first thing we did was to establish a nursing system by which every sick Industrial policyholder is entitled to the free services of a trained nurse. Our trained nurses go rather beyond yours. Yours are graduate nurses, and they are a very good class of people, and very efficient, but the art of public nursing is an art beyond bedside nursing. It is obvious that we could not give bedside nursing with twenty millions of people. Our Southern California nurses sit over there in the center of the room, a lot of good-looking girls in blue. They are our nurses. Angels, we call them. I have never heard the flapping of their wings, but they have got them. And as they go out at night and I meet them at the door I blow them up for walking; they ought to fly. Why angels? Go to the home of the working man. In the morning the head of the family tries to get up and can't. He falls back; tosses his arms around; groans; feverish. And there comes to his bedside the wife; she wrings her hands. Is he going to be sick? Where will be his wages? And how am I going to support these children around me? And oh, horror! Suppose he dies! And then she thinks of a card on the mantel which she can send to the district office or the office of the nurse. In she comes. She floats in. She goes to the bedside. She looks at the working man. Her cool hand passes over that fevered brow. She arranges the pillows. She straightens the bedclothes. She takes his hand. She gives a soothing draught; and perhaps, what is dearer than all, she has a word of sympathy and hope, which the poor fellow has had but little of. And if she makes up her mind it is a serious case, she says "Send for your doctor"; and thereafter she comes as often and stays as long as the doctor tells her. And it means saving lives. What is a nurse? She is the eye and arm of the doctor. That is her value. She keeps a record of the progress of the disease between the doctor's visits. She records what effect the medicine is having. The doctor knows when he comes again what has happened and what he ought not to do and what he can do. Precisely so with our girls; they keep this record. The doctor knows what has been going on and he is prepared for the future. Just as in your case, it means in our cases the difference between life and death. And if you could read the ill-written, scratchy and ill-spelled letters that come to us at the Home Office from husbands whose wives have been saved, and from wives whose husbands have been saved, and parents whose children have been saved, it would bring tears to your eyes. Oh! it is GOD's mercy. But, the duties of the nurse go further. When she enters the house it is her duty to look about her. What kind of rooms do these people live in? Are they dirty? Are the kitchen utensils clean? Is the baby properly clothed? It is her business to look and advise; to advise on clothing and diet, and advise mostly on cleanliness; hygienic conditions. She is a great instructor. Our nurses paid three million visits last year; that runs the total up in the last twelve or fifteen years to about twenty-seven millions. In the territory in Southern California represented by these two conventions they paid 71,000 visits last year. In this city of Los Angeles they paid last year over 32,000 visits. Consider these life savers; consider the home of the working man.

Health Literature

We follow this service up by literature. We have pieces of literature on every known disease. There are some sixty titles. We began with Consumption; "War on Consumption" it was called. We distributed millions and millions; it is a pamphlet which tells what Tuberculosis is, how it may be prevented and how cured. And it tells what it is not; it is not hereditary; not contagious. When I was a boy, Consumption was an act of GOD. If the mother had it, or the father had it, the children had to have it, and they all had to die. There was a story told by the President of a college up here in the North the other night. In his Parish he saw a whole family die, one after the other, from Tuberculosis. It is not an act of GOD. Bishop, how is it that when anything goes wrong it is an act of GOD, and when things go right GOD is never thought of? It is not an act of GOD. It is the act of a little bug, or germ. It can be driven out. It is driven out. People should be taught so. Then we have a pamphlet on "The Child." Over twenty per cent. of these visits of the nurses are maternity visits; they visit the mother before the child is born; they are present at the birth, and they stay with the mother while that dangerous period exists. They save, oftentimes, the child's eyes from blindness, or its ears from deafness, and give that instruction as to nursing and diet that carries them over the first ten days, which is the dangerous period in the early life of a child. We have pamphlets on every known disease, on epidemic diseases, on Scarlet Fever and Measles and Whooping Cough and all the rest of them. And then there is one on "The Health of the Worker"; on general diet, and first aid, and obscure diseases—on Hook Worm and Pellagra. These pamphlets are written by scientific men, who express themselves in language to be understood by the people. We distributed last year 40,000,000 of these pamphlets; that brings the total distribution up to 460,000,000. In this State we distributed 3,000,000; in Southern California 739,000; in the City of Los Angeles 325,000 of these pamphlets. They are distributed by Agents; and the Agents are instructed to take them with them when they call on the policyholders, and put into the family circle that particular pamphlet which by observation they find is needed. Then, we instruct by films. We have three films, one on Diphtheria, which you will see tonight, one on Smallpox and one on Periodic Medical Examination; and eight million people have seen that.

Health Campaigns

We are in communication with 800,000 school teachers. We attack the thing right at the start in the schools, and these teachers form Parent-Teachers' Associations, the object of which is that the mothers and the teachers get together and study how they can promote the health of the children. It teaches them; teaches them in preschool days, and we follow them into the schools. There are pamphlets for school children; the wonderful "Mother Goose"; when they read that they know they have got to clean their teeth and keep their hands washed; the first rules of health. We carry on campaigns. If there is a scourge anywhere, we're there. I remember Torrington, where we went into that town of Typhoid Fever and cleaned it up. We hold picnics—thousands of children—and distribute literature to them. We are at all County Fairs and Exhibits. We have a booth there with a nurse in attendance to take care of women and children who always manage to get sick on those occasions, and we distribute pamphlets, and they tell me that they are the only pamphlets that are carried away and not left on the ground. If there is any great disaster, we are there. At the Mississippi floods we were there. At San Francisco we were there; in the fire in San Francisco, before the flames were out we had a new office and were paying death claims. (Applause.) Our nurses go and cooperate with the Red Cross people. At the New England floods, we were there. Wherever there is an epidemic, we are there. It is this care of the working people that is on our consciences and on our hands and on our hearts, and these nurses cooperate, and these agents cooperate. There are beautiful stories told of these Mississippi floods as to what our Agents did there to save lives and to house people.

Immigration

We look after the immigrants. If there is any foreign-born family in this country that has a relative to come over, they may let us know. We save the newcomers from exploitation and put them on trains and send them on to the homes of the policyholders; and we follow this up. There are towns in which we gather together these foreign-born immigrants and make them take out first papers. We have issued 460,000 pamphlets on citizenship. In connection with the National Security League, we have got 38 States to pass laws compelling the teaching of the Constitution so many hours every week, and now the Security League is sending out lecturers to teach the teachers how to teach the Constitution—not an easy thing—following up. (Applause.) Of course, that reaches not only the foreign-born to make them good citizens, but it will reach our own domestic children and lead them to have more respect for law and authority.

Health Demonstrations

We try experiments. First on Tuberculosis. We advertised for a town to give itself over to us, and Framingham, Massachusetts, did it. We sent a Commission there that was there six years. The death rate was 120 per hundred thousand; a high rate. What did the Commission do? It went into the town and invited the people to be examined. About three-quarters were examined. The tuberculous were isolated. The Commission went down to the factories, got them to put trained nurses in the factories. A pure milk supply was insisted on. Infant welfare centers were established. And at the end of six or seven years the death rate was reduced to 38 per hundred thousand. (Applause.) It was an experiment to prove what can be done. It is teaching government. It is telling them that this idea of social insurance, to give people money when they are sick, is not the true way to benefit humanity, but it is to prevent sickness coming. I believe some years ago Congress appropriated fifty millions of dollars for the cure of hogs from Cholera, and not a dollar for human beings. I said this once down South, and the Health Officer got up to make a speech, and said: "True; too true; we had hog cholera here a year or two ago, and, my eye! what a row they made about it. They sent Inspectors from Washington, and they sent State Inspectors from the Capital, and they went in and they did an enormous amount of work and spent a lot of money. Ah, yes! But over there was a tuberculosis sanatorium, but there was no authority to care for that; ill-kept; no public interest. Hogs! But not human beings." It is quite open to any State or to any City to undertake just such work as this and stamp out Tuberculosis. It can be done, but they don't do it, up to date. It is our business to try to teach them.

We went up to Thetford Mines, a mining town up in Quebec, where there was a perfectly appalling rate of mortality of children under one year of age. Three hundred per thousand died before they reached a year of age. We sent our nurse in there with an assistant nurse. The first thing she had to do was to fight the doctors. They thought that this was an interference with their business. I do not know whether they thought they were not killing the children fast enough or not.

I do not know just what the idea was. We had to teach them, and the nurses had to teach the parents, and we had to hold clinics; but in a year and a half they had cut the mortality in two, and they stayed another year or two, and when they left that total had been reduced from 300 down to 98. (Applause.) That has been going on since, because I am told now that the rate is down to 79, which is a very respectable rate. That was an experiment in teaching; successful. The Provincial Legislature—the Prime Minister of Quebec is a Director of ours—passed an appropriation of half a million dollars just to continue our health work.

The great experiment in Tuberculosis is the Sanatorium at Mount McGregor. We have 40,000 people in our employ. Some 15 years ago we started to build a sanatorium. We shall never get through. We had to put up another building this year. It is the most beautiful place you ever saw. If any of our guests are near Saratoga and will telephone up to the Sanatorium and mention my name and tell them who you are, they will send down and take you up, and when you get up that 1,200 feet you will think you are in paradise. A perfectly beautiful place. Gardens cultivated by girls. Woods taken care of partly by the men. A big farm of several hundred acres, on which some work is done by the men. What we have done there is to discharge eighty-five per cent. of the total discharges as cured. (Applause). Now, I know very well that if there are any doctors present they will say: "He hasn't any business to say that." Did you ever know a doctor who said anybody was cured until he was dead? (Laughter and applause.) Oh! they use scientific terms. They say, "arrested," "quiescent," "improved." But when a layman talks about a cure, he means the man is back at work. Now, come to No. 1 Madison Avenue any time you are in New York, and we will show you three or four hundred graduates from the Sanatorium. We have got them all over the country. Down in Richmond once, while holding a convention it happened to occur to me during the speech, in telling some story like this, and I said: "I will bet we have got some graduates here." Six men stood up; they were the best-looking men in the place, and they were leaders. I remember one man. He was about seven feet high, a splendid-looking chap, and he was the leader. I knew about him. He was sent to the Sanatorium. The doctors shook their heads. "No business to send him here; he's next to the grave; can't cure him." But we couldn't send him away. He was there four years. And I say he was cured because he was back at work and leading the Richmond convention. Primarily, it was to take care of our own people. Charity begins at home. But Mt. McGregor is a demonstration. On Sunday last I had a nice experience. Our tubercular people on the West Coast here are 3,000 miles away from Mt. McGregor, and so we send them up to Belmont. I went out to spend an hour with them, and I had a lovely time. There were ten men and four girls there. I took the Director aside, and I said: "Are you going to lose any of these people?" "He was going to cure every one." He dropped that word "cured," you know; and then he said: "We will arrest it." There were three or four of them ready to go back to work. I say "cured." It is a teaching experiment, and I believe has taught other corporations. I believe other corporations are doing just such work. I know when I was down in Birmingham, Alabama, there was a wonderful hospital there. Some iron and steel works put up a wonderful sanatorium and hospital for the care of their own people, and it must have been a good one because Mr. GARY, Chairman of the Board, went down there to be treated years ago.

Pioneers we are. A teaching force we are. I remember some years ago holding a convention in Chicago, and Professor GRAHAM TAYLOR was there, who is very well known as a Sociologist all over the country, and he made a speech, and he pointed out this initiative of the Metropolitan by a rather striking analogy of a stairway. He said: "Take a step; then the riser, the Metropolitan; a step—the riser, the Metropolitan; a step—the riser, the Metropolitan." He went on to the ceiling. And then he said, every great work for the welfare of the American working people in the way of help has been initiated and started by the Metropolitan (applause), and they indicate progress by being copied by other people.

Investigations

We appoint Commissions. You will remember the Influenza in 1918. That year it cost us $24,000,000 over and above regular mortality to pay the death claims from Influenza. We have appointed a Commission of very learned gentlemen—Dr. WM. H. PARK, of New York City; Dr. MILTON J. ROSENAU, of Harvard University; Dr. EDWIN L. JORDAN, of the University of Chicago, and representatives of several other colleges and laboratories—who are engaged in research to find out what causes the disease. They do not know. They have never found the germ. They are after it. They hope to catch it, but they have not done it yet. So far as they have gone, such progress as has been made has been made along the lines of Pneumonia, and they have had about fifty per cent. success in inoculation against type one and two of Pneumonia after Influenza. We have a Commission on the Common Cold. We do not think much of colds, but perhaps they are the greatest source of discomfort and the greatest incentive to disease there is. Common colds; they annoy people; they keep them from work; but they lead to sickness—that is the main thing—first to Pneumonia or sometimes Consumption. No doctor has ever found the germ. Nobody today knows what causes the common cold. We have got the Commission looking into it.

A peculiar disease has turned up this last year or two. I suppose the disease had been going on, but the doctors did not know what it was. It is something like Typhoid Fever; fatal in some cases, but not so fatal as Typhoid is, and the doctors did not know what to call it, so they called it Paratyphoid. We have found out now at least what it is. It is a germ in the milk produced from cows that abort. In our research laboratory at Mt. McGregor, which is doing wonderful work cooperating with Cornell University, we are trying to get at the bottom of that and inoculate cows to prevent their aborting, and they have got herds of cattle in Central New York under observation and experiment.

Not only in disease, but the working man, we feel, has been a good deal exploited in the way of burials and the rather extravagant cost of funerals. We have got a commission on that. We made a survey all over the country to find out what ought to be the cost of a working man's funeral. And then we propose to try to get it standardized, and we are making progress. We have got the undertakers now thinking about it themselves. At first there was opposition, but now there has been a sort of sympathy with the idea. They have a good many good ideas of cooperation in bringing down the cost of burial. Then we cooperate with public authorities.

Years ago President WILSON got worried about unemployment, and the Commissioner of Labor came down to No. 1 Madison Avenue. Whenever anything is the matter all over the country now, they come to No. 1 Madison Avenue. It's the hub of the universe. It has displaced Boston. (Laughter.) Well, we sent our people out with him, and they surveyed fifty-four cities in the matter of unemployment; what caused it; how long was it; how much was from sickness; what were the occupational diseases; what was the extent of it. The survey was published by the Census Bureau, and the outcome was the unemployment bureaus all over the country, Federal and Municipal. It was the idea to mobilize labor and move it on and find jobs for the people.

When WILL HAYS was Postmaster General he got worried about the condition of the post offices throughout the country, and, of course, he came to No. 1 Madison Avenue. We sent Dr. FRANKEL out; he became a dollar-a-year man. He found a horrid state of affairs; very dirty; unclean; bad light; bad water; the lavatories filthy; no hygienic care at all taken of the postal clerks; and he made his report to Mr. HAYS and I believe he started remedial measures, and I have no doubt they have been carried on by his successor.

Then this American Public Health Association. That is a great association of the physicians in the country. One of our Officers was once President, and another is now Treasurer of that Association. They knew that many local health departments were not well conducted. They wanted a survey made. We gave them $50,000 to make a survey; how many were part-time men; how many were really physicians, or make-believe physicians; whether the office was political or was really a health office, and how the officers functioned. There was a survey made, and that was published by the Association. And we are following it up now by remedial measures. I believe we gave them $30,000 this year to start in a campaign to reform local health supervision and instruction.

The Gorgas Memorial

Instead of erecting a monument to the great Dr. GORGAS, they have got a memorial to teach the necessity of periodic medical examinations. We have got a film on that. I do not know whether you believe in it or not, but if you don't you ought to begin right now. If you are sick you go to a doctor. The time to go to the doctor is when you are well. The purpose is to find out your real condition; whether there is anything that is going to cause disease; whether there is any organ, of which you are unconscious, that does show signs of coming disease, and stop it to prevent being sick. We have established a lectureship

—I think it cost about $30,000—for the Gorgas Memorial Association, to send out men who will go to the principal cities, and the small towns, and make a general campaign, and gather the doctors together and teach them first. They need it. (Laughter.) It is not every doctor that can make a medical examination; he has not the instruments. They don't know how to take a blood test, some of them. Don't blame them. They have never been taught. It is scientific medicine. The lecturers are going to teach them. They are going to teach them how to take an apparently well man and see if there is anything the matter with him. Once a year go down to be examined. That practice is going to be spread all over the United States by this Gorgas Memorial. They are hard at work on it.

There is a college in Boston I think they call the Technical School of Applied Science. They have been making a survey on the lines of education, and they have found—and they show you with graphic charts which prove it—that the line of education is parallel to the line of wealth. As wealth increases that line goes along, and when one curve goes up the other curve goes up. And so they say the future of America depends on proper education. Now, how can we promote it? What is education? There are lots of schools and colleges. But are you under any illusion as to the purpose of the young man going to college? Do you think he is going there to be educated? Nothing, except in athletics. Read the papers. Four pages a day on athletics, and a column about once a month on education. (Laughter and applause.) And when he graduates what does he know? What is education as carried on? It is trying to fill that youthful mind with information which he forgets. No mind can hold it all. Education, surely, should be the leading forth of a mind to investigate, search and think for itself. The true education is to teach a man how to think and what to think about, and then let him find out the information that will help him. This college has a great notion that it can do a great deal to promote that sort of education. I suppose they would give up trying to reach the teachers. I suppose the University professors would not pay any attention to it; and so they are tackling the students; and what we are doing is furnishing literature and getting subscriptions from the graduates of normal schools and colleges. When they get out they are to take a bulletin. The bulletin is divided into seven different divisions, the purpose being to lead the boy's mind along the lines of his natural bent and desire. What is a fellow to do when he graduates from college out here? In New York they go into bond houses to sell investments, or they go into advertising to canvass for customers, and to sell the art of advertising, a very great art. The usual graduate is generally the most helpless fellow in the world. I have had two or three of them myself, and I know. (Laughter.) One of them I wanted to become a lawyer—my oldest boy—and I sent him, after he got out of Harvard, to law school. He stayed there six months. Just before he was graduated from the college he went down to a district office of the Metropolitan in Boston and said: "I want a job as Agent." Well, he scared the Superintendent to death, you know. "What is really back of this—the President's son coming in here and wanting to be an Agent." He said: "I am not coming as the son of the President; I am A. F. C. FISKE." I didn't know anything about it. You see, that was the bent of the boy's mind. I never have given him the least bit of help. He went all through the grades. He is Third Vice-President now. He is going around now holding conventions, because I am getting too old—so he says. (Laughter.) That was his bent, and he went along the lines of his own ideas and his own ambitions; and the trouble with parents is that they are doing what I tried to do, make a fellow do something that he is not fitted for and does not want to do. Now, these bulletins are to show him Theology, for instance, or Medicine, Law, Insurance, Civil Engineering, Electricity. Let him read these bulletins and find out what he wants to do. It is to bring up the young men of this country to be useful citizens and promote the wealth of the country.

Housing

There were no houses built during the war, and at the end of the war there was a great scarcity. What was to be done? They went to people who loan money out to build houses. "It doesn't pay." "Taxes too high." "Income tax—taxes on land; no money in it." But there was a bright lawyer in New York who said: "There's a lot of insurance company money around loose; let's make them build houses." They came to me, and, having taught doctors some medicine, we thought we would teach lawyers some law. And we said: "It's against the law; the Statute in New York forbids investment in real estate by insurance companies." He said he'd get that amended. "You never can." "Well, if we can, will you build houses?" I didn't know what to do. It was a new kind of business for us—to build a lot of tenement houses, and collect the rents, and fight the tenants, who may be policyholders. (Laughter.) I didn't like it. "Mr. FISKE, you have got one-third of the population of New York insured; and most of them are poor working men, and they have no decent places to live in. The tenement houses are filthy, and, because they are few they are high priced; is that right?" Well, that is an appeal that one could not withstand. I said I would think about it. That was enough for him. He hired halls; he went to churches; he went to synagogues, and he began to lecture on the necessity of housing and the duty of insurance companies to help. He aroused a great public enthusiasm for it, and then he went up to Albany and put in his Bill. Then they had a hearing. Well, of course, we had been thinking meanwhile. We sent up the Comptroller to explain to the Committee what could be done. We did not want to do it. The Legislature passed the Bill. Governor MILLER was Governor of the State; formerly Judge of the Court of Appeals. Well, we know you call him a kind of a hard-boiled man. That is nothing against him. He is simply a conservative lawyer, and he shook his head. The other insurance companies rather denounced the Metropolitan for even thinking about it. It was told the Governor that the Metropolitan was interested; then he signed the Bill. I suppose it was the greatest compliment ever paid to an insurance company by any Legislature. Neither Legislatures nor Congress usually give much show to the insurance companies. We spent seven millions in building model tenements in Long Island City and Astoria. Every room opens on the open air, and down between the lines of the buildings are great gardens filled with trees and shrubs and places for the children to play in. I do not know whether it will be a popular thing in this part of the country or not, but we have a big room down there for baby carriages. We wanted to promote the growth of population. (Laughter.) I do not know if I am striking a popular note. I have had a most amazing experience in this town. I have been driven through it miles and miles, and I never in my life saw such a big city, of streets and streets, and cross streets by the mile of bungalows, and I asked the real estate man who was taking me around: "How many rooms in these (laughter)—how many rooms in these bungalows?" "Well," he said, "a living room, and a kitchen, and what they call a dining room, and a bedroom." I said: "Heavens! where are the children going to sleep?" "Well," he said, "some of them have two bedrooms." They are apparently limiting the Los Angeles family to two children. What are you doing out here? (Laughter.) Is this a Lindsey city? Are you going to try trial marriages and temporary companionships? (Great laughter and applause.) Are you preaching the doctrine of birth control, which is murder? Well, I had baby carriages in my tenements. It has been a great success. (Laughter.) I do not know about the number of children, but there are rooms for them. I suppose we accommodate something over two thousand families—say ten thousand people. The law said that we should charge but $9.00 a month per room rent, and the ruling rate in New York is $15.00; and I believe these apartments have one room for only $6.00. It has been a great success. We are making nine per cent. on the investment, taking six and putting three aside for amortization, so that when the time comes we will reduce the rents. We had to fight everybody. The builders put their prices up. We sent to Holland for the brick. The lumber men put their price up; we sent out West and bought lumber. We could pay cash and give big orders, and, of course, we underbid these local dealers, and the result is that we got the cost down to $9.00 per room, and then make nine per cent. on it. That is an experiment, a demonstration. Rockefeller followed us. He put up great tenement houses for the working man in Bayonne. I think his rooms were $11.00; but he couldn't help that. Then he went up in the northern part of New York—the Bronx—and he built hundreds and hundreds of tenement houses for working people. And then the Needle Workers Trade Union got excited, and said: "Why shouldn't we build houses for ourselves?" And so they have got great rows of tenement houses; and, of course, they had to have the money; and, of course, they came to No. 1 Madison Avenue to let them have the money to put them up. (Applause.)

Our Service to Working Men

It is the purpose of this great public institution to serve the working men of America. For, who are they? They are the foundation of wealth. Take your great forests in the West; what good were they until labor cut them down and made lumber of them? These wonderful mines of gold and silver, and oil wells; what good were they lying in the earth until labor came along? Labor laid the rails. Labor built the cars and locomotives. Labor made this United States one nation.

They were a lot of segregated territories. Now you have joined the East and West. The West sends its agriculture East and the East sends its manufactures West. It binds this country into one great whole. It promotes civilization. The $300,000,000 that we loaned on Railroads have gone into rails, cars and locomotives. And Labor produces them. It produces commerce. We buy bonds of electric light companies and water companies. We furnish the necessities of life. The mere investment of money is a great help. Labor is another thing. It is the foundation of government. They cast the votes. If Labor ever really got together in this country they would do what they did in England, and get in power. They have been in power in England, and probably will be again. They elect Governments and Mayors and Judges. What better service can be rendered than this service to the foundation of wealth and the foundation of political power?

We have done all this work for fifteen years; and you are asking for the results? Fifteen years ago the mortality of the Industrial policyholders was twenty-four and one-eighth per cent. higher than that of the general population in the registration area. Why? Just stop to think a minute and you will know why. Of course, the mortality among our working people in factories and among unhygienic surroundings grew higher and higher day by day. Of course, men were exposed to disease—Tuberculosis. Of course, the mortality had to be higher. We took a survey in 1925, and today the mortality among our Industrial policyholders is one and one-third per cent. less than that of the general population. (Applause). It is a perfectly amazing thing, which is almost unbelievable, but it is a fact. We took another survey. During that period the average extension of life among our Industrial policyholders was eight and eight-tenths years. The average extension of life in the general population was five and one-tenth. In other words, our lengthening of life has been fifty per cent. in advance of the general population. Tuberculosis reduced by us fifty-four per cent.; reduced in the general population forty-five per cent. We have cut down Typhoid Fever eighty-nine per cent. We have cut down children's diseases fifty-six per cent. And you see the average extension of life and the prevention of death. Of course, there were people who doubted this work. We, ourselves, never entered into it on the theory that we would promote insurance. It was done in pursuance of that responsibility which came from opportunity; a desire to help the people who built us up; to take care of our own, our own dear children, members of this great corporation. But it pays. We have spent $64,000,000 in this welfare work.

Concrete Example of Success in Health Work

To the doubters I want to give just one instance. This Pacific Coast Territory is under the leadership of one of my dearest boys, one of my ablest boys, who has imbibed in his nature to as large an extent as anybody else, and to a larger, perhaps, the ideals of service. He wondered whether he could do anything to improve the health of the people on the Pacific Coast. He found that from 1916 to 1920 the mortality experience of the Company showed a reduction of fifteen per cent., and he found that on the Pacific Coast that reduction was three and nine-tenths per cent.; and so, beginning with 1920 he put in intensive work along welfare lines. Take the nursing. He found that the average of nursing was about thirty-two per thousand in the general Company. He ran it up to forty-four. He found that the distribution of literature was about thirty-three per man per week. He put his up to forty-six. Well, at the end of the five years the reduction of mortality in the general Company was eleven per cent. and his was fifteen per cent. (Applause.) And all along the Coast he found that while the general mortality had gone up, his had gone down. In San Francisco the rate used to be pretty high, and then it went down, and now our mortality is the lowest we ever had, only nine per thousand. He found that the general mortality in Southern Washington has been reduced thirty-five per cent. I do not know of any more concrete illustration of the immense benefit, and the direct, and the most direct, result of this intensive health work than the experiment tried by my dear boy, Mr. Wilkes. Do you want to know Wilkes? (Applause.) There's one way of describing him. He's the handsomest man in the room. Another way of describing him is, he is that tall, black-haired figure that promenaded up and down the aisles just before I started to speak. What was he doing? Driving the waiters out. We have got a Director up in San Francisco, Mr. Crocker, and he is a great friend of Mr. Wilkes; plays golf with him. He sat at the dinner the other night, and said: "What is Wilksie doing?" Well, he was trying to get quiet and peace so that I would have a chance to make a noise, and he succeeded. Well, that is Wilkes, and we're very proud of that work. We are very proud of such a demonstration of the value of this great work we are doing.

Service by Group Insurance

Now, ladies and gentlemen, have I not proved that this is a great public institution? But we are doing another thing which to my mind is one of the most valuable things we are doing, and which on the whole, perhaps, is dearest to my heart, and that is the prosecution of Group Insurance. Now, Group Insurance is insurance by the employer of all his employees, and ninety-five per cent. of the business is done by joint contributions. Take the Southern Pacific Railway. One stroke of the pen—the signature of the President upon the application—brought us in 110,000 men. One stroke of the pen on an application by the General Motors brought us in 260,000 men. There are several of these great corporations. Take the General Electric; that policy brought us in 50,000 men. We have got a million now insured in Group Insurance. A million working men brought in by the act of the employer with their cooperation. One million men to be nursed when they are sick; one million men to receive literature. And I think the Bureau in that Division of the Company dearest to my heart is the Policyholders Service Bureau. We reach the men direct. We insure them against death, sickness, accident, disability, and now we are beginning to insure them pensions. That is direct. But indirectly we are reaching them through the employer; and this Service Bureau, free of charge, gives to the employers advice as to how to carry on their business and how to take care of their men. There are several divisions of this Bureau;

they are presided over by University graduates; they are specialists. There is one on Hygiene, one on Safety Engineering, one on Personnel —how to treat the men. They get down to cafeterias, bookkeeping, costs, the value of advertising, advice as to how to carry on the business to a profit. You say: "How can we do that?" We get inquiries; we get hundreds of letters a month. We get an inquiry from some manufacturer who asks us a question. We put that question out to everybody else who is in that business, of course not mentioning names. We get the replies in, see what the ideas are and add the experts' ideas and send out a reply. In other words, serving the men direct, we are benefiting them indirectly through the care of the employer.

Binding Together Employer and Employee

That is a wonderful business, and I am very proud of it; but I want to call your attention to one thing you might not have thought of, and that is bringing together into direct relationship the employer and employee. Take note that a part of the premium paid on the employer's life insurance is paid by his men, and a part of the premium paid on the insurance of the men is paid by him, the employer. It is a partnership. They are getting together. And oh! don't they need to get together? Anybody who has read the history of Capital and Labor for the past 150 years would be shocked; beginning clear back in agricultural times, when the workers were serfs and slaves, described by one writer as crawling on the surface of the earth; and in manufacturing times no better; exploited; treated not as human beings, but as machinery to be used and scrapped. Years ago, many years ago, in a series of conventions like this, I told our men, "There is a calm surface, but beneath there is a surging and a boiling up, because of the coming consciousness of men that they are human beings and not machinery; that their souls are as dear to GOD as the souls of the millionaire employers; that they have their rights as human beings to be treated as such, to be paid as such, to be housed as such, to be fed as such." That surging did burst forth, and you had riots and incendiarism and murder. And I lament them as much as anybody. But it is human nature when rebellion comes that affects his soul. It is human nature to make that rebellion pointed. I am very glad to say that of late years there has been a great change on the part of employers. There are noteworthy signs—if I had time I could tell you some of them—that great employers now are realizing the dignity of manhood, the rights of the poor; their wages have improved; their employment has improved; and this last, perhaps, is the most touching instance, where they are being insured against death and sickness and disability and accident, and being pensioned. It is a great thing that this Company of ours is bringing together in the brotherhood of man; employer and employee; capital and labor. It is a great thing for the future to have this class war ended. It is a great thing for the wealth and benefit of America that this dissension should cease. It is a great thing to teach the men in the factory that their employer has a heart and cares for them. You and I do not know what the result may be. We teach the employers some of the benefits of profit sharing; of the selling of stock for the creation of funds. We do not favor any of them. We give the facts; we let them choose; we let them decide. What is going to be the future? You and I can only hope that in some way or other these two classes of people shall be brought together, and there shall be peace where there was war.

Mother Metropolitan

And that is the work of one, my men, whom I delight to call Mother Metropolitan. I wonder if ever you realize what Mother is, with her ample skirts, her benign, smiling countenance—Mother Metropolitan. And you have seen that she bends over the cradle when the baby is born. She cares for the mother. She follows the child as he grows older. She issues policies for his education. As he goes to work she follows him. When he goes to the factory she is with him. When he grows old she pensions him. When he dies, she buries him. From birth to death. The working men of America are the children of your Mother, my dear boys and men—Mother Metropolitan. (Great applause.)