

# Those unsettling insurance claims

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SEVERAL times, I have written about the way people claiming against insurance companies have had great difficulty about getting their claims settled.

Always, the reasons have been that the insurance company concerned has had to further investigate the circumstances.

And they investigate, and investigate and investigate.

And many times, the people concerned have finally settled because they are so tired of waiting for anything that they feel is an assessment.

And I hear that there is no shadow of doubt that insurance premiums must rise in the next 12 months because of an increase in claims.

I can well understand then, why they are taking such pains to "investigate".

On the other hand, people making real claims are the people who are suffering.

Well, folks, I have to tell you the cause is not lost.

I have a letter from a group of solicitors, Cannon and Augustinus, who say they are having the same problems trying to settle their clients' briefs.

They have written to the Attorney-General saying: "There are instances where a denial of liability by an insurance company is clearly justifiable.

"The sophistication of insurance companies has got to a point where they actually attempt to gauge in some instances the effect of their delay tactics upon the fibre of the insured to keep going in the fight at all to regain any part of the claim and then they

measure off ... what the economic situation of the claimant will stand in terms of a diminished offer to settle often when the delay has pushed the insured to the edge of desperation."

The writer then says: "We believe that a special court should be set up for insurance claims with a minimum of delay in hearing dates an initial pre-trial system to evaluate the virtues or demerits of the claimant and subject to that test only, be put into a very short list for immediate hearing."

The letter also tells of a case where the insurer of a factory was different from the insurer of the contents and how the man leasing the factory was taken to the wall by the delay of the contents insurer in settling the claim.

The letter goes on that the factory operator faced irrelevant and time consuming inquiries trying to get his claim settled, which, when answered, immediately led to another set of queries designed to delay and exhaust the man.

"He will go out of business because the insurance company would actually prefer him to issue proceedings and then rely upon court delay to have him financially completely exhausted, and giving them the hand as to whether to offer anything at all."

I can say no more.

