

'Hereafter' Risk Policy Lacking

THE old insurance slogan, "We insure everything but the hereafter," is turning into a reality and may become a necessity.

The risks of living now are so numerous and so great people can't afford to take them. So insurance policies are being offered to cover just about every hazard of life.

And, of course, the government is in the insurance business in a variety of ways. Latest one to receive attention is crime insurance offered in 21 states, not including Oklahoma. The Federal Insurance Administration is offering it to people who can't buy or who cannot afford it from private companies.

Crime insurance? Yes, lawlessness and our revolving door system for punishing offenders have made that a major form of risk coverage. Areas are zoned for crime danger, with businesses and homes rated for crime as they are for fire insurance.

In recent years, when terrorists were kidnapping business executives more frequently than at pres-

ent, corporations began buying kidnap policies on key people. Identities were kept secret, as companies didn't want to tempt anyone.

Doctors got considerable unwanted publicity regarding their malpractice insurance a while back, when juries awarded sums running into the millions to dissatisfied patients. This seemed to generate a plethora of lawsuits and generous awards.

Industries and businesses now are having similar costly experiences, forcing them to buy product liability insurance. An Oklahoma youth injured playing football sued the helmet manufacturer for \$14 million.

A factory worker lost part of his hand using a bench saw that had been built for the Navy 29 years before. The court held the manufacturer still was liable because the saw carried no warning that the safety guard should not be removed.

Homeowners sometimes have had sad awakenings when fire or other disaster struck. Unless they had

raised insured values of their homes periodically with inflation, they found their policies would not come close to covering replacement costs.

Automobile insurance has stayed up with inflation, because fender benders and major accidents are all too common. Rates have gone up as prices for parts and labor have risen.

There's insurance for just about everything, and you can even insure your life, although the settlement may be to pay for burying you and to benefit your survivors.

Occasionally, needed improvements come along. A "Plain English" auto insurance policy has been introduced in seven states. Reportedly it tells all about the coverage in 4,500 understandable words. More of this is needed.

Now that we have practically everything on earth covered by insurance, maybe we ought to take another look at insuring the hereafter, too.