

Some Changes Proposed by Underwriters.

1. All the clauses of the Act relating to the license, deposit by the companies, the administration of securities, annual statement, cancellation of license and other sections relating to details, be retained.
2. That the clause relating to the inspection of insurance companies be retained.
3. That the Act should also provide for an official investigation of fire losses by an officer to be appointed by the government.
4. That insurers in British Columbia be permitted to insure freely in unlicensed companies.
5. That all unlicensed companies be prohibited from appointing representatives in British Columbia, and soliciting directly or indirectly for business in the province.
6. That insurers give returns to the government as to the amount of insurance carried by them in unlicensed companies, and that such insurers shall be liable for a percentage tax to be fixed by the government on the premium of all such insurance.
7. That there should be no provision for the appointment of licensed brokers.
8. That municipal taxation on insurance companies be abolished.

As Mr. A. W. Ross, secretary of the Mainland Board of Fire Underwriters, stated clearly to the Commission, the Board simply contended that outside companies ought to be given no undue advantage over companies licensed and operating in British Columbia.

Investigation into Fires Recommended.

Mr. R. H. Duke, manager of the Pacific Coast Fire Insurance Company in the course of his evidence advocated protection of British Columbia capital, abolition of the municipal license tax on insurance companies, the appointment of a provincial fire inspector, and careful investigations of the causes of all fires.

Mr. Duke thought it only fair that companies coming into British Columbia to do business should make a deposit with the provincial government (unless they had already made a federal deposit at Ottawa), and that the insurers who went outside for their insurance, a concession granted by the bill, should pay a tax to the Government on the premiums.

In strongly favouring government inspection and investigation into causes of fires, Mr. Duke said:

"In the case of our own company, our experience is that during the past eight years in 45 per cent. of the fires the cause of the fire has not been ascertained. I do not suggest that they were of incendiary origin, but I think it would have been a good thing had these fires been investigated by a provincial officer appointed for that purpose."

Mr. Duke said that Manitoba has such an inspector, whose work had been highly endorsed by a resolution of the Western Canadian Fire Underwriters' association, which he read.

THE CANADIAN CONSOLIDATED FELT COMPANY with capitalization of \$2,000,000 has received Dominion incorporation.

From Across the Line.**NEW YORK INSURANCE LETTER.****Fire Insurance Investigation by State Authorities
—Legislation Affecting Industrial Companies.**

The investigation of fire insurance happenings now going on in the Insurance Department in this state, and conducted chiefly at the office of the Department in this city, has created not a little interest, and yet it is not news to the initiated, nor are the developments at all surprising when it is considered how corrupt the legislature of the state has been for many years. The expenditures of money by the companies, almost without exception, has been for the purpose of preventing the passage of so-called "strike" bills, that is, bills which were introduced and intended for the detriment of the fire companies, and which it was absolutely necessary to stop. Among these may be named particularly the valued policy bill, and the anti-compact bill, either one of which, if passed, would have inflicted untold damage upon the companies, and eventually, upon the people. Of course, the question of ethics comes strongly to the front, and it may be argued that the companies in paying out this money for "legal" expenses have merely followed the line of least resistance, and that they would have done better to resist the strikers. However, it must be remembered that human nature is pretty much the same the world over, and it seemed necessary that these bills should be killed. While the reception of funds has not been actually fastened upon any legislator, there is no doubt that a good deal of the half million or so expended some eight or ten years ago found its way into the pockets of the members of the legislature. While we do not unqualifiedly justify the expenditure of this money, still it was thought expedient at the time, and had the bills threatened been passed, they would simply have added to the cost of fire insurance in the state. The investigation is still being pushed, and very likely the destination of the money expended will sooner or later be discovered.

More New York Legislation.

An interesting situation is found in the bill recently introduced in New York Legislature, which takes out of the \$150,000,000 provision those companies which write industrial insurance. Should this bill pass, the Metropolitan Life and the Prudential, both of which greatly exceeded that sum in 1909, would be obliged to curtail their activities. Naturally, these companies are opposing the bill, while the New York Life, the only one now affected by it, is favouring it, with the idea that the ridiculous character of such legislation may all the sooner be put in evidence.

Notes and Items.

It is understood that the trustees of the Mutual Life have obtained possession of the stock of the New York Bank of Commerce. Under the law of 1906, however, it will be obliged to dispose of this stock, unless the law forbidding life companies to invest in stock is repealed before the five years have expired.