

consideration of the Legislature, and, in referring to the position of the savings' banks, and the difficulty of finding investment for the ever-increasing deposits, says: "They have already reduced their rates of interest, and it is far better that they should reduce them again than that they should incur any measurable risk in using the funds entrusted to them.

"Many, perhaps all, of the railroads whose bonds it is proposed that savings banks shall be allowed to invest in are as little exposed to danger as any property of that sort can be. The railroads which have been named as the chief beneficiaries of the proposed legislation are profitable, their business and their management give them very high credit, and there is every reason to suppose that they will become more valuable rather than less so in the future. But can we be sure that the terms of the pending bill do not include other roads, not conspicuously mentioned in this connection, and of which as much cannot be said? The whole matter is one that calls for the fullest possible examination and explanation. Let there be no doubt before the bill is acted on that the Legislature and the public thoroughly understand all there is in it.

"The bill is of the greatest importance to the savings banks and their depositors. If it came from either of these sources there would be less disposition to eye it with suspicion. Some of the savings bank presidents are opposed to it; others are in favor of it with qualifications, but few or none of them strongly desire it. There is no indication that the bill was introduced at the instance of the savings banks of the State, and would confer upon their officers a liberty which they are soliciting. There is still less evidence that the depositors, dissatisfied with the rate of interest now paid, and the possibilities of a still lower rate, have asked the Legislature to enlarge the field of investment open to the men to whom they have entrusted their money.

"On the other hand, it is reported that the railroads whose bonds would be available to the savings banks if the bill should become a law are the parties most active in pushing the bill. Besides this, there are suspicions that political influences, thoroughly selfish and not in the least likely to be moved by considerations for the welfare of the depositors, are being exerted for the promotion of this bill. These circumstances are not fatal to it; it may be a measure really in the interest of the savings banks and their depositors. The rate of interest is low, and its further reduction ought to be averted if that can be done without exposing the principal to risk. The bill may be sufficiently guarded to protect every interest. But it would be a serious thing should any considerable losses fall upon the savings banks, and the fact that the pending bill seems to originate in railroad and political circles, and not to come from quarters especially interested in the safety of the deposits, suggests the propriety of great caution. Would it not be practicable to have the savings banks officers of the State

prepare such a bill as they believe the Legislature can pass with advantage to the depositors?"

ALLIANCE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The yearly report of the Alliance Assurance Company shows the operations of the past twelve months to have been highly satisfactory, especially in the life department. More than the usual interest attaches itself to the business statement under review, because it presents the results of the quinquennium terminating on December 31st last.

In the life branch, the number of new policies was in excess of all former records, being 1,672, and amounted to \$6,028,575. Re-assurance reduced these figures to \$5,286,075. The total of the net life premiums amounted to \$1,614,715, the entire income of the Department being \$2,310,250. The increase in the life funds for the year, after payment of all claims, commissions and expenses, was \$893,880. For the purpose of illustrating the progress and rapid growth of this Department of the Company's business, we present the following tabulated statement of the present and past quinquennium periods:—

Term.	New policies.	Assurances.	Funds at end of period.
1879-83	1,919	\$8,201,800	\$6,443,235
1884-88	2,810	11,457,530	8,037,220
1889-93	4,355	16,036,800	11,851,990
1894-98	7,610	28,667,045	15,626,790

The net premiums received for the past five years were \$6,991,595, an increase of \$2,144,565 over the preceding quinquennium. The net profit was \$1,550,000 as against \$1,390,000.

The fire business of the Alliance for 1898 was satisfactory, although of course, not so profitable as in the preceding four years, owing to the somewhat heavy losses which, in common with the majority of offices, the company had to bear. But the net premium income of the fire branch amounted to \$2,718,850, an amount sufficiently large to provide for the loss ratio of 56.04 per cent., and expenses 36.17 per cent., and to leave a surplus of 7.79 per cent., or \$212,000.

From the interest on capital and fire and general reserves, and the fire and life profits of the year, the handsome dividend of \$500,000 on the paid-up capital (\$2,750,000) was paid, leaving a small surplus.

Analysis of the assets of the Alliance reveals the advantages enjoyed by this Company when seeking investments for an amount rapidly approaching twenty-five millions of dollars. With such a powerful directorate, and excellent management, the continued growth and success of the Alliance is almost certain, and the members and policy-holders of the Company have good reason to be satisfied with the report and balance sheets of the Alliance Assurance Company for the year 1898. It must be pleasing to the Mayor of St. Lambert, Mr. P. M. Wickham, the respected manager for Canada, to have the satisfaction of issuing his Company's figures for the past quinquennium.