

individual risks are maintained. In this connection all daily reports are examined and approved, or otherwise, as the cases may warrant. In the congested or mercantile sections of a city, special inspections and rates are made, each risk being rated upon its own merits. The same thing applies with respect to special hazards and all important risks. The inspections or surveys of each risk, together with detailed information are kept on file in our offices, and are open to the inspection of all parties interested. It has been the practice of this Association since my connection with it, to invite the inspection and criticism of the owners of risks, and we are only too pleased upon every occasion to have the interested parties visit our offices and consult upon any real or supposed grievance which may exist. We advise them always to undertake improvements which we suggest. In this way they can materially improve the hazard in the risk, thereby reducing the rate. In a few instances we experience some difficulty in inducing owners to undertake suggested improvements, but we find the number of such persons is gradually becoming less, and I am pleased to state that our experience proves that the large property owners and public generally are daily becoming more disposed to consult with us on the question of construction and protection than they ever have been before.

Our surveying staff make periodical inspections of the more important risks in so far as it is possible, with the assistance employed. Investigations are constantly being made as to the extent and efficiency of fire departments, water supply, character of streets, condition and construction of buildings in various cities and other important matters incident to the prevention or suppression of fires, and the extent of the conflagration hazard. The staff in charge and employed in the various departments of our Association are trained, efficient, and experienced men, capable of applying the various rating schedules for the purpose of establishing fair and equitable rates on all classes of property within the jurisdiction of this Association.

THE ALTERNATIVE TO ASSOCIATIONS.

Without such organizations as this Association, each insurance company would be governed by its own experience only, in the matter of fixing rates. Each one would be obliged to employ its own corps of experts for the sole purpose of inspecting every risk within the territory in which it transacts business. This method would create great increases in the cost of business. Each company would have a different rate, and the difficulties and perplexities of writing insurance would be incalculably enhanced. It is absolutely necessary also that concurrent forms for the protection of policyholders should be demanded and this is one of our requirements. By this means satisfactory adjustments of losses are made. Everything which enhances the cost of insurance in this regard must naturally fall upon the property owner, but organized effort gives the property owner the benefit of a corresponding reduction in rate. This is especially important if the value of his property is large. Rates are uniform, which could not be if companies were not permitted to base their rates upon united experience and to employ a few competent men to apply such schedules based upon such average experience rather than an army of men who would otherwise be employed to fix rates based upon limited individual experience.

It is also of the greatest importance that policies be concurrent and forms prepared and examined by competent men, rather than by a number of local agents scattered throughout the country not fitted by training or education, although entirely honest and well meaning, but who, naturally, have only a limited experience and are not able to properly draw important contracts involving material interests. Unless different companies can co-operate in this matter of drafting concurrent forms the policyholder is almost sure to have trouble in the event of loss, because of the impossibility of reconciling differences between the companies; and then again the policy holder might find that considerable property values have been omitted entirely from the protection of his policies on account of imperfect description or otherwise. For this reason the insured is as much benefited relatively by an organization for joint ratings and concurrent forms and inspections as are the companies themselves.

During the sessions of this Commission so far some evidence was directed against this Association, designating the same as a "combine." The name, in my opinion,

is wrongly applied for the reason that in no other manner can equitable and just rates be made and proper credits given for improvements in risks or charges made for increases of hazard. Every encouragement is given to each individual property owner to improve his own risk so that he can obtain a lower rate. He is shown just how his building is rated and advised as to what he can do to make it better and safer. Each change for the better thus secured serves to minimize the fire hazard not only of his, but the surrounding property, and so the whole character of a city or town is gradually improved. In this connection tariff associations, with very carefully prepared schedules for rating all classes of risks, have done more than all other causes combined to improve the conditions, to secure better buildings, improve old ones, to increase the efficiency of the fire departments, to provide better water supply, larger mains, improved streets and alleys, reduce the possibility of fires, increase the facilities for fighting the same and minimize the conflagration hazard, which at the present time in a greater or less degree exists in every town or city. This Association has accomplished so much good in this direction by making discriminating charges for deficiencies and credits for improvements as to be entitled to the confidence, respect and encouragement of property owners and the public everywhere, and I am quite confident from my experience that the great mass of the insuring public throughout this Province are satisfied with the work we are doing.

Notes on Business.

Bank of Hamilton.

The anticipated announcement was made at the annual meeting of the Bank of Hamilton on Wednesday, of an increase in the dividend to the rate of 11 per cent. per annum. The existing rate of 10 per cent. was established in 1901. This increase in dividend comes at the conclusion of a satisfactory year, ended November 30, 1910, in which the trading profits reached \$422,000. As the 10 per cent. dividend only absorbs \$258,514 it will be seen that the increase in dividend is amply justified. An amount of \$500,000, partly premium on new stock issued, but mainly an allocation from profits, is carried to reserve, making this fund \$3,000,000, and after making other allocations there is a balance forward to the current year of \$192,810. The following table of principal items from the balance sheets of 1909 and 1910, show that there was steady expansion in the Bank's commercial business during 1910.

	1909.	1910.
Paid-up Capital	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 2,680,570
Reserve	2,500,000	3,000,000
Profits	382,332	422,090
Circulation	2,468,185	2,813,645
Deposits	30,981,464	32,310,001
Specie and Dominion Notes	4,313,277	4,035,874
Call loans	1,498,926	1,816,029
Current Loans	23,787,447	26,526,651
Total Assets	39,332,760	41,214,369
Quick Assets	13,588,721	12,523,159

Trust and Loan Company of Canada.

At an extraordinary general meeting of shareholders of this Company, recently held in London, the directors were authorized to issue 25,000 new shares of £20 each. The Hon. Sydney Peel (vice-president), who was in the chair, explained that they hoped to offer almost immediately to the shareholders, 15,000 shares which would be £5 paid, the shareholders having the right to take them up in the proportion of three to every 25 shares now held. The issue would be completed before March 21, and after the payments of the half-year's dividend on the