

BRITISH FIRE COMPANIES' EXPERIENCE IN 1916.

An examination of accounts relating to a year of war is vested with special interest, remarks the London Times in its annual review of the results achieved in fire insurance by the leading British companies during 1916. The companies have so far stood the strain of the war extraordinarily well, and the peculiar conditions were referred to by the chairmen at several of the recent meetings. The premium incomes of 21 leading offices are easily "record" figures. They show an increase of no less than £1,796,000 on those for 1915.

RESULTS OF INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY.

A revision of insurances has probably been fairly common in respect of industrial risks. In view of great activity and prosperity, manufacturers could well afford to increase the amount of their insurances. In times of industrial depression manufacturers are naturally enough inclined to scrutinize carefully every item of expense, but in such a year as 1916 the cost of insurance represented a comparatively unimportant percentage of working costs. Further, there was the effect of the excess-profits taxation, causing manufacturers also to be rather less concerned with the level of their expenses. At home, fire losses were considerably heavier. In the early months of the war there was a tendency to attribute an increased loss ratio to enemy influence, but the general impression of fire managers seems to be that this danger is now much less in this country, and that the increased cost of fires at home may be attributed mainly to the high pressure of work and, in some instances, to the lower standard of labor.

MORE BRITISH RE-INSURANCE.

One satisfactory influence in maintaining the premium incomes, remarks the Times, has been the larger amounts retained by the British offices in consequence of the cutting off of the German and Austrian reinsurance markets. Since the agents of the German companies were no longer at the elbows of the British managers, with their apparently attractive offers, the latter have gradually become accustomed to retaining larger sums, which so far they have found they have been able to do quite well, and they have also been reinsuring to a greater extent with each other. An opening has undoubtedly been made for the development of other re-insurance offices, particularly of British and Allied nationality. There are few British offices specializing in reinsurance, but such well-found companies as exist seem to deserve all the support which the great British companies can give them. They need encouragement, and the best assistance which the British giants can give them is a share of good business, for they could not be expected to flourish if fed only with second or third-rate risks. It must not be forgotten that the Germans organized reinsurance business thoroughly, and that by the system adopted by the leading German companies of allowing large commissions and redistributing the risks among comparatively small companies throughout Germany, they were able to offer the British office terms which ensured a profit to the latter. Cheap working costs and satisfaction with an extremely moderate ratio of profit were probably the principal reasons of their ability to absorb so much reinsurance business from both British and American offices.

NORTHWESTERN LIFE OF WINNIPEG.

The Northwestern Life of Winnipeg reports having written over twice as much business in June, 1917, as in the same month of 1916.

W. H. Sutherland of Dauphin who has successfully represented the Northwestern Life at Dauphin for the past year, has been appointed Superintendent of Agencies for the territory north of the Main Line of the C.N.R. in Northern Manitoba and Eastern Saskatchewan.

M. E. Gobert of Glenboro, formerly with the North American Life, who during the past year has successfully handled a small district in Southern Manitoba for the Northwestern Life, has been appointed Inspector of Agencies for the Southwestern Manitoba District with headquarters at Souris.

C. C. Clough of Elm Creek, formerly with the Confederation Life, and who for the past year successfully represented the Northwestern Life as Local Agent at Elm Creek, Manitoba, has been appointed Inspector of Agencies for the Central District in Southern Manitoba.

J. I. Borgen of Winnipeg, formerly with the Monarch Life and prior to that a prominent merchant at Plum Coulee, has taken a contract to travel in Southern Manitoba for the Northwestern Life.

CONSCRIPTION AND FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS.

(Continued from page 753.)

largely increased premium, in order to maintain policies in force while on active service. There is also the question of mortgages on homes. In the new Class II, there must be hundreds, if not thousands, of young married men who are paying for their homes on mortgage. If a man is called up, and any plea for exemption on the ground of "serious hardship... owing to his exceptional financial or business obligations or domestic position," is not allowed, what are he and his family going to do about it? Presumably, in certain of the provinces, the legislation which forbids foreclosure of property of a soldier on active service, will protect the conscript. But in the other provinces, what? An early statement by the Government of a policy of assistance in this connection, would go, perhaps, a longer way than is suspected in some quarters towards allaying possibilities of discontent and grievance over the working of the Act.

CANADA LIFE STAFF BUSY GARDENING.

The July issue of "Life," the Canada Life's monthly agency paper, is devoted to market gardening. The company has rented a large market farm some few miles out of Toronto, where the male members of the staff put in one afternoon a week. Potatoes, carrots, beans and turnips have been planted, with indications of a bumper crop. The lady members of the staff also have obtained a plot of ground from the War Thrift Committee and are growing all the different market vegetables in their spare time. At both "farms" the staff is divided into teams, and great friendly rivalry exists between the different "farmers." The Canada Life was the first insurance company to go into this new avenue and already several others have followed suit.