

WESTERN ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The old-established Western Assurance Company, of Toronto, which is under the able management of Mr. W. B. Meikle, issues a report for 1912, that is on the whole a satisfactory one. It is true that the marine business, which in 1911 yielded a handsome profit, resulted last year in a slight deficit, but on the other hand, the fire department did pretty well. There were at the outset of the year an abnormal number of fires, but during the last four months of 1912 the Fire Department made excellent returns, and with a favorable loss ratio a good profit was secured on the year's operations.

The net premiums in the fire department last year amounted to \$2,064,353, a slight decrease of about \$6,900 upon the fire premiums of 1911. This decrease is due, it is stated, to the continued reduction in the average rate of premium, alike in Canada, the United States and Great Britain. Net fire losses came to \$1,065,495, showing a reduction of over \$120,000 from the figure of \$1,187,436, which they reached in 1911, and giving a ratio of loss to premiums of only 51.61 per cent. as against 57.33 per cent. in 1911, and 55.47 per cent. in 1910. The details of the fire business show that while the Company's business in Canada has not increased in volume, it has been the most profitable for the year and has given the lowest loss ratio experienced by the Company for many years. Owing to the large increase during recent years in the number of companies transacting fire business in the Dominion, the competition for the business is now very keen, and has led to an increase in expenses. The Company's British and foreign business conducted from the London office yielded an average profit. With regard to the United States business, the opinion is expressed that the exceptional number of losses in the early months of the year were not wholly attributable to the cold weather. The uncertainty as to the results of the Presidential election had a disturbing effect on all businesses, while the frequent changes in styles may be responsible for the abnormal losses in garment factories and warehouses in New York and other large cities.

The Marine Department gave a small loss instead of the handsome profit of 1911. But that is not surprising in view of the fact that 1912 was probably the most disastrous year known in the history of marine insurance. Even in this department, the Western got a profit in its London branch, which shows exceedingly skilful underwriting, and a loss on the marine account as a whole of less than \$9,000 cannot be considered a serious matter in such an unfortunate year for marine underwriters as 1912 proved itself to be.

The profits of the year amounted to \$225,309 against \$263,519 in 1911. The total assets of the Company at December 31 last, were \$3,372,409. Unearned premiums and other liabilities at the same date aggregated \$1,548,445, so that there is a surplus to policyholders of \$1,823,964, an increase of \$40,000 over the figure at the close of 1911. The losses paid by the Company since its organisation, it is interesting to note, now aggregate over \$56,000,000.

While an increase in the agents' commission, due to a new method of remuneration introduced from the United States, has given a temporary set-back to the policy of a gradual reduction in the percentage of expenses to premiums, it is stated that if state and

municipal taxes are kept within reasonable limits (which is devoutly to be hoped) there is every reason to expect a saving of 2 to 3 p.c. Economies in various directions are gradually tending towards this end.

SUGGESTED INSURANCE LAW IN SASKATCHEWAN.

Insurance interests have appealed to the provincial government of Saskatchewan for legislation, so that only life insurance companies having a Dominion license shall be entitled to carry on business in the province. At the present time all that the Saskatchewan government does is to collect the taxes incurred by the various companies. In connection with this matter, the following letter was recently sent by Mr. George Wegenast, president of the Canadian Life Officers' Association, and managing director of the Mutual Life of Canada, to the provincial Attorney-General:—

The Canadian Life Insurance Officers' Association, comprising in its membership nearly all the Canadian, British and American life assurance companies licensed by the Dominion Government to transact business in Canada, has for its object the promotion of the general welfare of life insurance within the Dominion.

Under the existing insurance laws of the Province of Saskatchewan, there are no provisions defining what class of insurance companies shall be empowered to transact business in that province. This Association considers that it is of the highest importance to protect the policyholders of your province against unlicensed companies. In framing the Dominion Insurance Act the Hon. Mr. Fielding kept this as one of its important provisions in view, and in order to obtain a Dominion license certain stringent requirements must be complied with before it is granted. Similar legislation was also recently enacted in the Province of Ontario, and a provision is embodied in the new Ontario Insurance Act with regard to licensing of insurance companies.

In February last an appeal was made by the life companies to the government of the Province of Alberta for an amendment of its statutes to protect the policyholders of the province from foreign companies transacting business therein until such company had furnished satisfactory evidence to the provincial registrar that it was duly licensed by the Dominion Government. As a result the Foreign Companies Ordinance, being Chapter 14 of the Companies Ordinance of 1903, was amended.

Mr. Wegenast showed that the Alberta law demanded that every foreign insurance company shall, before carrying on business or before being registered, produce evidence satisfactory to the registrar that it is licensed by the Dominion Government.

"It is hoped, therefore," proceeds the letter, "that, looking to the important interests involved, your government will give relief by a similar provision in a legislative enactment during the approaching session of the legislature of your province."

As our readers are aware, Lloyds will cover any contingency from the birth of twins to the loss of an elephant, and we hear that during the last few days they have devised a scheme for insuring golf greens against damage by women suffragists. Several courses are stated to have been insured upon this plan, under which the underwriters agree to pay for all direct damage done by suffragists to any property of the club in excess of £5 for each claim. The premium for a 12 months' policy for £500 is £2 10s., with a similar rate for every additional £100 insured.

—The Policyholder.