

Department increased during the year by nearly \$350,000. The Guardian has shown a most commendable conservatism, in resisting the temptation to enter into an unhealthy competition with offices, which, by extravagant expenditure, seem sometimes apt to swell the amount of their new business at the expense of their policyholders' bonuses. Relying upon the solidity of the Company to commend itself to the public, the business done speaks for itself, while the expenses of management and commissions in the life department appear to have continued upon the same moderate scale as heretofore.

Taking into consideration the adverse results of the fire business, the dividend has been reduced 1 per cent., the amount paid being 7½ per cent.

The strength of the Guardian's finances is displayed in its premium and general fire reserves aggregating \$3,365,500; and in addition it has a paid-up cash capital of \$5,000,000.

#### OCCUPATION AND HABITS.

Amongst the many interesting papers which were presented at the Insurance Congress of the World's Fair last week, that of Mr. Wm. T. Standen, actuary of the United States Life Insurance Co., dealt with the "Effect of Occupation and Habits on Life Insurance Risks." After citing the number of points that have to be taken notice of in determining what constitutes a healthy life, he goes on to answer what constitutes a just and proper "selection," what degree of moral and physical impairment of risk is admissible, and whether an existing policyholder is injured by a company's accepting risks not conclusively proven to be on the same plane of excellence with himself. In speaking of those persons rejected by reason of "occupation," a large number was embraced who were engaged in the liquor traffic and in mechanical trades believed to entail too great physical and moral hazard. Out of 7345 years of exposure in which an expected death loss would have been thirty-nine, and the actual number of deaths were forty, he found the preponderance of deaths was among those who were rejected, because they were in business identified with the traffic in ardent spirits. Merchants and commercial men, bankers, brokers and professional men are all supposed to be desirable risks, while many other occupations are supposed to be dangerous, and therefore undesirable as an insurance risk, because of the physical hazard involved. But while many of the so-called dangerous occupations do involve some physical hazard, there is a law of compensation operating somewhere. He points out that the privilege of out-door employment and the exercise of the entire muscular system, with the brain force needed to enable every skilled mechanic to faithfully perform his work, induce a condition of vigor and health that the sedentary habits and overpowering brain exhaustion of the banker deprive him of

Taking the experience of the same Company, whose statistics form a basis of his calculations, he finds that the question of personal habits cuts a far more serious figure than the question of occupation. The applicant

for insurance, whose habits are vicious in respect of excessive eating, drinking or smoking, should be debarred from obtaining insurance in every well-regulated life office. Out of a calculation of rejections, because of unfavorable personal habits, in which there were 7,285 years of exposure, calling for 90 deaths, the actual deaths were 200. The general deductions made by Mr. Standen from an examination of statistics upon the action of companies in relation to different occupations seems to be that if we exclude those engaged in the liquor business, and also exceptionally hazardous risks like aeronauts, divers, manufacturers of explosives and a few others,—that nearly all other occupations, a vast number of which are commonly so severely discriminated against, can be safely written upon at ordinary rates, and without doing violence to the interests of other policy-holders, provided the physical risk be perfect and the applicant *a man of good mental power and moral force*. This last qualification should be strongly emphasized, for an intelligent man, who possesses the advantage of a good common school education, can much more be safely trusted in a dangerous occupation than a man of very low intellectual calibre. The suggestion is worth noting, that whenever a case is in doubt, by reason of the stated occupation of the applicant being hazardous, the executive officer of a company could be greatly assisted by a careful inquiry along the line of the applicant's intelligence. It is true that companies are more or less obliged to have a general rule upon the subject of occupations and habits, but with freedom left to the executive to use their judgment about acceptance, there is no doubt that a vast majority of the occupations that are, as a class, always discriminated against and frequently rejected might in many individual cases, be written with perfect safety upon the ordinary plan and rates.

#### A MODERN WONDER AND ITS DANGERS.

The intimate relation between fire insurance and the various forms of applied electricity is now pretty generally understood by the public as well as by the underwriters. The extent to which the fire hazard is affected, either adversely or favorably, by modern electrical appliances is very imperfectly realized, however, by the general public and scarcely understood by the majority of underwriters themselves. So rapid has been the growth of the telephone, the electric light, and the use of electricity as a street car motor, and so numerous are the other uses to which this subtle force has been and is constantly being applied, that it is very difficult to realize the entire revolution which has taken place in one short decade or to comprehend the possibilities and estimate the probabilities of the next ten years. It is for this reason that the electrical exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago is one of its most important features, if not the most important feature presented. That an entire building covering more than five acres of ground, and equipped with extensive galleries on all of its four sides, should be not only set apart for electrical exhibits but completely filled with electrical appliances, scarcely a dozen of which were