gentleman named Holmes, while on his way to business, last winter, slipped and fell, the concussion being so serious as to call for a physician's services. He had severe pains, took to his bed, which he kept for about two months, and died. The company contended that death was the result of disease and not of accident, a small cancerous growth having been revealed by the *post-mortem*. It was also shown that for some years, during which his policy had been continued without question, the deceased had suffered at intervals from bilious attacks, vomiting, etc. The judge charged that if it had been shown that cancer was the cause of death, though accelerated by the accident, the jury should find for the defendant; but that if, on the other hand, the accident was the prime cause of death, even though accelerated by the diseased condition, they should find for the plaintiff. Judgment was given for the plaintiff.

OUR NEW YORK contemporary, the *Monitor*, in its last issue refers to our recent exhibit of the fire insurance business in Canada for twenty-two years. nd makes some very practical remarks thereon. Among other things, it says: "Nothing can be plainer than the fact, which the figures prove, that *the rates are too low*. For twenty-two years the losses paid have equalled 70 per cent. of the premiums received. Insurance has been sold at or below cost. These facts ought to make the public and the legislatures lenient towards fire insurance—but they will not. The remedy will rest with the companies, where it always rests; and if they, through cowardice or indifference, elect to continue the status, it will go on until the companies themselves change it. There has been nothing profitable in Canadian insurance, except the banking side of the business." Of course, the twenty-two years covered include the great St. John fire of 1877, involving over six and a quarter millions of loss, but, then, other St. John fires are liable at any time to occur, and must go into the general average.

AS WE FULLY expected, the officers of the New York Life have taken steps to push to an issue the libel suit against the New York *Times*, which they some time since instructed their attorneys to institute. Since our last issue, the declaration in the case, sworn to by President Beers, has been duly served, setting forth nineteen causes of action arising from the publication of that number of articles in the *Times* from June 12 to June 30 inclusive. Just how soon the case can come to trial, provided the defendant interposes no obstacles to cause delay, we do not know, but probably not before the investigation now going on by the insurance department shall have been concluded. We quite agree with *Insurance*, that the Insurance Superintendent has ample authority to make, or at least will not be hindered in any way by the company from making, inquiry into the Banta charges. Assuming this to be the case, that gentleman and all others making charges against the company are under obligation to come forward with their evidence, if they have any, and tender it before an impartial examiner.

SOME VERY INTERESTING statistics have been gathered by Dr. Billings, special agent of the United States Census Bureau, with regard to water works and fire departments in fifty of the larger cities of the country. It appears from the statement made, that in twenty-two cities of over 100,000 inhabitants each, the average cost per annum for fire department expenditure was 81 cents per head of the population. Boston stands highest at $1.78; San Francisco next at $1.15; followed by New York at $1.06; Cincinnati 92 cents; Brooklyn 70 cents; Chicago 64 cents; St. Louis 62 cents; Philadelphia 60 cents; and Baltimore 35 cents. In the cities having less than 100,000 inhabitants, the average annual cost per head of the population was 71 cents. In the cities of over 100,000 inhabitants the average total fire loss was $2.20 for each person in 1889, and in 27 cities under 100,000 the average loss for that year was $1.45 each. An average of 81 cents per capita for fire department expense in the largest cities of the continent is a moderate tax, when we consider what the large average of fire loss must have been without this outlay.

THAT THE TIME has fully come when the strife for new business by the hot-house method, among certain of the United States life companies, should cease is very evident. We believe in the wisdom of pushing vigorously for new businesss, and hold that lively honorable competition is a good thing; but competition may be altogether too lively, and pushing may be carried to the brink of danger. When companies send out a corps of "executive specials" of the Dinkelspiel stripe, allowed, if not instructed, to get business already worked up by the industrious local, by giving the assured nearly or all of the first year's premium, and when contracts are made giving a round commission and fat salaries to successful agents to buy them away from rival companies, leaving absolutely no margin for the first year's business, it is time to call a halt. Under this condition of affairs it is not at all strange that almost 18 per cent. of the new assurance written should be reported "not taken." Just now, in a significant sense, life assurance management is on trial by the public, and the companies, great and small, will, if they are wise, welcome reform where reform is needed.

THE CRY AGAINST COMBINATIONS.

In this age of ours the old absurdity to which human nature is prone is conspicuously manifested in the popular crusade against combinations of like interests in the commercial and financial world. Because sporadic cases have occasionally occurred where combinations of men controlling large capital or extensive products have used the power thus gained to oppress and injure the community, the popular voice is at once raised to condemn all combinations of capital or products. It is a repetition of the old injustice of judging a race, a whole community, or a society by a few renegade examples. The perverted use of some meritorious article or valuable privilege is popularly