

LONDON MUTUAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.

The newly-issued balance sheet of the London Mutual Fire Insurance Company, of Toronto, appears to have been drawn up on conservative lines. There was a considerable extension of the business last year, gross premiums amounting to \$770,783, an increase of over \$42,000 upon 1912. Preferred business accounted for \$27,648 of this increase, and accordingly it was necessary to make a substantial addition to the re-insurance reserve, this being raised by over \$51,000 from \$286,822 to \$338,113. This additional reserve is charged to expenditure, so that the trading profit is reduced to the modest amount of \$5,683. On profit and loss account, there has been written off bad debts, \$17,761; written down securities, \$10,232 and a contingency reserve against depreciation of securities of \$25,000 has been set up. The directors have thereby, and also by the payment of the 1912 dividend of \$25,000, reduced the surplus to \$250,705. The taking of these steps augurs a commendable courage and conservatism. It would have been possible to make the same provision over two or three years, and give the annual statement a better appearance. However, the decision was apparently taken to get down to rock bottom figures, which is a desirable policy. The provision which has been made for depreciation of securities will probably only be found to be temporarily necessary, and these amounts will be set free in due course for the surplus.

Assets apart from premium notes amounted at December 31 last, to \$686,619, including cash, \$142,253, bonds, debentures and stocks, \$303,419, mortgages \$37,845; real estate and building (net), \$100,677. The total security for policyholders, including reserve for unearned premiums, capital stock paid and unpaid, surplus and unassessed premium notes is \$1,022,235.

Mr. F. D. Williams is the London Mutual's managing director, and the Company is represented in Montreal by Messrs. Matthews, Wrightson & Co. (Canada), Ltd.

SAVINGS BANK INSURANCE.

One by one, the illusions of the advocates of savings bank life insurance in Massachusetts are being ruthlessly swept away by the hard logic of fact. First, the public was told that the insurance was to be sold "over the counter," no agents were to be employed, because agents would be unnecessary. The promoters of the scheme even went so far as to incorporate in their savings bank insurance bill a provision prohibiting the banks from employing agents, and that provision stands in the law to-day. But when it became apparent that, without agents, the scheme would soon become as dead as a door nail, though the banks could not employ agents some one else did, and now the public hears no more of "insurance over the counter." Then—and this was a point on which the advocates of the scheme waxed eloquent—lapses were to be enormously reduced. Another illusion. The lapse ratio on the life business of the Massachusetts savings banks is greater than that of the Metropolitan. The result is a vindication of the judgment of practical men as against that of visionaries.—*Boston Standard.*

COMPARATIVE COST OF FIREPROOF CONSTRUCTION.

The comparative cost and reasons showing the need, both private and public, of fireproof construction are well stated by Philip H. Bevier, C. E., as follows:

"At the present price of building material, fireproof construction can be erected at a cost not to exceed 10 to 15 per cent. more than non-fireproof, and when we consider that fireproof buildings deteriorate about one-tenth of 1 per cent. per year as compared to 4 per cent. for ordinary buildings, that they rent better and that money can be borrowed on them on better terms, that they are vermin-proof, cooler in summer and warmer in winter, it would certainly seem the part of wisdom and self-interest to adopt a better method in every case when a building is intended to be of a permanent character.

"When a man builds a house in the country, it may be that he has a right to jeopardize his own life and property and those of his family and gamble with the insurance companies; but there is no question that the owner of property in a city or town has no right to erect a structure which will be a menace to the safety of the life and property of the adjacent owner. The principle is clearly recognized in practice, and many of the smaller cities are adopting building codes requiring fireproof construction throughout a certain portion of the business section, and semi-fireproof building in less congested districts.

"If one-half of the money spent by American cities for fire losses were spent for better building construction, the annual loss by fire would soon begin to decrease. Improvement along the line of better construction can only come gradually. It can and should be hastened in thickly settled communities by stringent building laws. City officials must be awakened to their responsibilities and the individual shown that his own pecuniary interests lie in lessening the fire waste. Old buildings cannot be torn down at once and rebuilt, but we can see to it that no more fire traps shall be built where they are a menace to other structures."—*Mutual Insurance Journal.*

"FIRETRAP HOTELS."

Fire perils abound in most of the transient lodging houses and cheap hotels in the United States and Canada, says *Safety Engineering*. It is not unreasonable to contend that the proprietors of these places should show cause why the placard "Firetrap Hotel" should not be tacked over the portals of their houses. Some persons may argue that those seeking shelter in these places are not useful members of society, and should be content with what they get. They are content. The poor and needy are philosophical, consciously or unconsciously. Poor persons with but a few cents for lodging are not apt to be overparticular about frills. But there is no relative preciousness of life. The humble guest in a lodging house is entitled to lay down and sleep in perfect safety from fire just the same as the favoured guest in a luxurious fireproof hotel in a great city.

A man never quite realizes how much good-as-new household stuff an ordinary dwelling will hold, until he, his wife and the girls get together to inventory their "fond recollections," after a fire.—*Glens Falls Now and Then.*