DOMINION LIFE INSURANCE ABSTRACT FOR 1906.

Delayed somewhat on account of extra work involved by the Royal Commission, the Government Abstract of Life Insurance Companies' Statements for 1906 is now available. In its issue of February 22nd, THE CHRONICLE published a preliminary compilation from advance figures supplied by the companies. That this differed only slightly from the official statement now to hand, is evident from a comparison of totals. For example, the Government return now shows the amount of new insurance taken up in the Dominion by the Canadian Companies during 1906, to have been $62,699,343. The amount given in the February estimate was $63,063,545 which was within about $360,000 of the officially stated total. When the earlier compilation was made, however, figures were not available from two of the smaller offices. Allowance being made for these, it now appears that the companies were, among them, a trifle over-sanguine as to their net new business showing, and estimated it at about $900,000 greater than the Insurance Department subsequently gives them credit for. This makes the year's showing for Canadian new business, written by the home companies, less than that of 1905 by $4,839,798—while 1905, on the other hand, showed an increase over the preceding year that amouted to $8,488,028.

The gain of insurance in force for Canada in home companies was $23,635,076, this was nearly $10,000,000 less than the increase experienced during the year 1905—the unfavorable showing being due even more to increased lapses than to decreased new business. Total terminations during 1906 amounted to $45,353,122 as against $40,531,471 in 1905, a difference of nearly $5,000,000. Examining these in detail, the columns showing terminations by death, maturity, expiry, change and not taken, all show more or less improvement for the year 1906. But the combined totals of surrenders and lapses for last year amount to $32,532,687 as against $26,671,755 for 1905—an unfavorable difference of $5,860,932. That this is not accounted for by the increase of business liable to lapsation is evident from the fact that in 1904, lapses and surrenders totalled $22,929,264, while in 1903 they were $20,676,884, and in 1902, $17,671,752, so that the increases for 1903, 1904, 1905 and 1906 were respectively $3,005,132, $2,252,380, $3,742,491 and $5,860,932. At best then the lapses and surrenders during 1906 seem to have been over $1,500,000 more than would ordinarily be expected, and this can be accounted for only by the unrest growing out of investigation in the United States and Canada. Putting it conservatively, there was about $13,500,000 less insurance at the end of 1906 carried by Canadian companies for the protection of Canadian policy-holders and beneficiaries than there would have been under normal conditions. Instead of a new business increase of about $7,000,000 or over, as might be looked for from the record of previous years, there was a decrease of close on to $5,000,000; to this $12,000,000 is to be added the $1,500,000 of abnormal lapsation, bringing the adverse effects of the year's agitation up to a total of $13,500,000. That this estimate is approximately correct may be judged by considering the growth of net insurance in force during preceding years. Up to 1906, each recent year's increase was greater than that of the previous year, and it is well within bounds to estimate that last year's increase would ordinarily have been about $4,000,000 greater than that for 1905. As this would have made an increase of say, $37,306,736 instead of the actual year's increase of $23,635,076, it again appears that the business in force at the close of December last was probably well over $13,500,000 less than it would otherwise have been.

American companies, whose new business in Canada in 1905 was less by $1,658,996 than that for 1904, showed the far greater decrease of $6,392,731 during 1906. British companies alone increased their new business record, and that but slightly—their growth in this respect being somewhat over a half million dollars for the year, as against an increase during 1905 of about three-quarters of a million.

All along the line, therefore, there has been an interrupting of life insurance activity, and a deprivation of insurance protection that must already have fallen heavily upon hundreds of families throughout the Dominion. That there have been discovered in Canada, life insurace abuses grave enough to account for so serious a falling off, is not seriously charged by anyone—though sensational journalism on the part of a newspaper here and there has sought to arouse doubt regarding the essential soundness of the business as conducted in this county. But already public opinion is sanely realizing that a mistake here and there, or an occasional error in management, is no reason for impugning the worth and overlooking the necessity of a business which must always rank as one of the most important of the world's "instruments of civilization." Until definite Parliamentary action is taken upon the commission's report, there will doubtless remain some unrest in life insurance affairs. But this is already limiting itself to the "doubting Thomas" type, and the year 1907 bids fair to prove more successful than 1906.

THE ROYAL INSURANCE COMPANY'S new office building in New York is a fire-proof structure, sixteen storeys high—handsome and up to date in every particular.