MUNICIPAL HAIL INSURANCE IN ALBERTA.

As a result of heavy losses in the season 1916, the municipal hail insurance scheme in Alberta broke down, and only a certain percentage of losses were paid. Subsequently arrangements were made for an increase in the rate, and loans to certain districts, to be repaid out of future collections. Now it seems probable that the scheme will be voted out of existence at an early date. Mr. P. P. Woodbridge, the secretary of the United Farmers of Alberta, writes very frankly on the subject in the Grain Growers' Guide. Mr. Woodbridge complains that farmers have not taken an intelligent interest in the matter at all, and says that the municipal scheme is a failure so far, in that it has not paid a hundred cents on the dollar.

With regard to the companies, Mr. Woodbridge makes the following interesting admissions:—"From certain causes, which investigation would undoubtedly reveal beyond a shadow of doubt, the big companies who form the backbone of the hail insurance business in this province, and who, when it comes down to brass tacks, are the only ones in a position financially to stand the strain of a bad year, have almost consistently lost money, and are now seriously considering withdrawing from the province entirely, a movement which is entirely within their rights, since no man or corporation can be reasonably asked to continue to do business at a loss, and that the big companies have been doing this there is no doubt whatsoever. With the big companies removed from the province, there is no private provincial company that can possibly carry with any degree of safety to itself, even a reasonable proportion of the $18,000,000 worth of risk that is written in this province each year."

Mr. Woodbridge continues:—"From the information gathered through our experience this year, this office is frank to admit that we consider that ways and means must be found for the present at least, to keep the big companies in the field, and that can only be done by offering them inducements in the way of a reasonable opportunity to make a fair margin of profit on the business that they do. Whether that can be done by an increase in the rate, or by a reduction in the cost of administration, is for us to determine and by investigation. But we as farmers have got to realize that hail insurance is a business proposition whether we handle it ourselves on a co-operative or some other basis, or whether we have some outside private organization doing it for us. We have either got to carry our own insurance and pay ourselves for it, or we have got to get somebody else to carry our insurance and pay them for doing it, and the situation at the present time in all seriousness looks as if we were going to vote out of existence the scheme which offers us an opportunity to carry our own insurance, at the same time that the private companies who have been supplementing this municipal scheme are about to withdraw from the province entirely."

The whole question is to be discussed at the forthcoming U. F. A. convention. The U. F. A. is at least to be congratulated on having an official who unflinchingly recognises the logic of facts and is not merely content to take the easy way of speaking smooth things to the members, and harsh things of the companies.

BANQUE D'HOCHELAGA.

The Banque d'Hochelaga reports for the year ended November 30 profits of $565,433, an increase of about $19,000 upon those of 1916, and equal to 7.3 per cent. on the combined paid-up capital and rest against 7.1 per cent. in 1916. A balance of $42,711 brought forward makes the total available on profit and loss account $608,144, which is allocated as follows:—$360,000 to pay the 9 per cent. dividend; $120,000 to provide against possible depreciation in investments; $40,000 for war tax on note circulation; $25,872 to writing down the premises account; $12,250 to patriotic and philanthropic funds, and $5,000 to pension fund, the slightly-increased balance of $45,022 being carried forward.

The main features of the balance sheet are as follows:—

	1917.	1916.
Circulation	$ 6,099,742	$ 4,154,382
Deposits not bearing interest	6,291,798	5,338,234
Deposits bearing interest	27,418,195	24,242,304
Total liabilities to public	43,591,960	34,023,980
Specie and notes	4,666,737	4,346,060
Securities held	10,511,017	4,878,425
Call loans	1,682,408	1,686,053
Total liquid assets	22,584,429	15,977,630
Current loans	26,010,267	23,535,024
Total assets	51,429,047	41,861,527

Circulation shows the very large proportionate increase of $1,945,360. The increase in deposits of $4,129,454 has been wholly retained in liquid form, the liquid assets of the Bank having been increased from $15,977,630 to $22,584,429, a proportion to liabilities to the public, which were enlarged during the year by $9,500,000, of 51.8 per cent. against 47.0 per cent. in 1916. Included in the liquid assets are security holdings, which have been much more than doubled during the twelve-months, from $4,878,425 to $10,511,017, as a result of the Bank's assistance in Government war financing. Current loans show a growth of $2,500,000 from $23,535,024 to $26,010,267. Total assets are $51,429,047 against $41,861,527.

PRUDENTIAL OF AMERICA.

President Forrest F. Dryden, of the Prudential of America, states that during 1917 all previous records in production have been surpassed. The results of the year are summarised as follows:—

The Industrial actual increase is greater than ever before.

The arrears are lower and the advance payments higher than during any previous year.

The percentage of collections is well over 100 per cent.

The rate of Industrial net lapse is much lower than ever before.

The persistency of new business is more favorable than that of 1916.

The average earnings of the field force, even leaving out of consideration the temporary additional payments, have again materially increased, establishing a new high mark.

The number and percentage of chargeable agency finals is less than for 1916.

The Ordinary paid-for business and the Ordinary increase are the greatest in the Company's history.

Exceedingly favorable showings have been made with respect to Ordinary lapses and "not takens."