

NORTH AMERICAN LIFE.

As remarked in THE CHRONICLE of a week ago, expense reduction rather than new business expansion has been the keynote of the North American's success during 1906. As President Blaikie pointed out in his yearly address to shareholders and policy-holders, it would have been an easy matter to equal or considerably exceed the new business showing of 1905 if the company had been desirous of increasing expenditures to meet the year's somewhat abnormal conditions. Instead, the efforts of the management were directed to further strengthening the company's undoubted financial position. Now that undue public excitement regarding life insurance affairs is abating, the coming year should prove a particularly bright one in every regard for The North American Life. As shown by the report appearing elsewhere in this issue the saving in expenses amounted to practically \$50,000 for the year—a reduction of about 5 p.c. in a single year in the ratio of expenses to premium income. While new business was less than during 1905 the cash income and assets showed gratifying increase during 1906. Allowing for all liabilities, including a special addition made to reserves, the company's net surplus now stands at over \$650,000.

To policy-holders' account during the year the large sum of \$589,196 was paid. Over one-half of this amount was paid to present holders of contracts—nearly \$100,000 of the sum being dividends.

In summing up what was termed the company's best year's work from a financial standpoint, the president paid a well-earned tribute to the energy and ability of Managing Director L. Goldman, and the company's other officers, branch managers, inspectors and agents. A complimentary dinner was given to those of the field staff attending the annual meeting, and Mr. G. Herbert Simpson, the company's favourably known Montreal manager, reports the occasion to have been a particularly enjoyable one.

A WEEKLY STATEMENT of bank clearings is proposed for the City of Chicago. The "Wall Street Journal" expresses the hope that it will avoid the defects and shortcomings of the New York statement. What it wants is a bank statement that will include every banking institution of the city whether national or state or trust company. In other words, it should endeavour to give all the information possible to afford a comprehensive review of actual banking conditions.

THE RUMOURS prevalent for some time, regarding the amalgamation of certain British Fire offices, are still without official verification.

PROMINENT TOPICS

Georgian Bay Canal. At this week's luncheon of the Montreal Canadian Club a most interesting address was given on

The Georgian Bay Canal and Ottawa River Route. The speaker was Mr. H. K. Wicksteed, C.E., chief engineer of the Canadian Northern's eastern lines. Dealing with the argument sometimes advanced as to railway development largely doing away with the usefulness of canals, Mr. Wicksteed stated that while railroads on favourable long-distance hauls could carry ore or wheat at from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of a cent. per ton-mile, properly constructed boats could handle such traffic at much less than 1-10 of a cent. per ton-mile. The cheap and expeditious carrying of ore from the Lake Superior region to the coal of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton was considered by Mr. Wicksteed as being perhaps even more important than the opening up of a new grain route from the West. Combatting the argument that the Western States would profit more than our own new Provinces from the project, the speaker said: "It can do us no harm to have American commerce sailing past our doors. It can do no harm to Montreal and Quebec to have this commerce transhipped in their harbors; and it can do no harm, especially in a political sense, to have Canada controlling the main gateway of the commerce of half this continent." The cost of completing the proposed route was estimated at about \$100,000,000, but against this Mr. Wicksteed estimated a revenue from water power for electrical development that would more than equal the interest on that capital amount.

Huron and Erie Loan Company. The Huron and Erie Loan and Savings Company is to hold its annual meeting on the 13th inst.,

at London, Ont. The advance statement of the company's 1906 business has already come to hand and shows the year to have been a most successful one. The report is of particular interest as being the first since amalgamation with the Canadian Savings & Loan Company. The harmonious joining of the two companies has resulted in increased strength and profits, due not a little to lessening of competition and reduction in working expenses. The assets amount to considerably over \$11,000,000, and the reserve fund stands at \$1,600,000, or over 84 p.c. of the paid-up capital. For the year the net profits were \$235,833, and two half-yearly dividends at the rate of 9 p.c. per annum were paid. Mr. G. A. Somerville, the company's efficient manager, is to be, indeed, congratulated on the record made during the initial year of the reorganized company.