

BRITISH AMERICA ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The annual report of the British America Assurance Company, Toronto, gives evidence of the thoroughness with which reorganization of business has been carried out by the General Manager, Mr. W. B. Meikle, and from now on a steady income can be looked for.

During 1908, the British America, in common with other fire companies, suffered from heavy conflagration losses, particularly at Three Rivers, Fernie, B.C., and Chelsea, Mass. In addition, the Company had to meet losses arising out of re-insurance contracts and agency business, which have been discarded during the past two years of risk-revision. However, there is now the satisfaction of knowing that liability on the discarded business has been practically run off, with the result that the aggregate liability in all cities with conflagration hazards has been reduced to moderate figures.

In moving the adoption of the report, the Vice-President, Mr. W. R. Brock, pointed out that the bulk of the fire business closed out by the Company during the year was in the United States, especial care now being taken to guard against conflagration risks in that field. The marine department also was discontinued early last year, so that the Company henceforth will limit its operations to fire underwriting.

Dr. John Hoskin, K.C., LL.D., in seconding the report commented upon the year's results as being encouraging indeed, in view of the fact that the business had been so conservatively revised, this necessitating temporary reduction in premiums. He pointed out further that the Company is already experiencing the practical benefits of the management's policy, the current year thus far having shown a loss ratio very considerably lower than for the same period of previous years.

The British America is fortunate in the personnel of its large and loyal agency force. The promptness and fairness with which these representatives have always transacted business with the insuring public have given it favourable prominence among fire offices everywhere. Since its inception, the Company has paid in losses over \$32,500,000—evidence enough that no small part has been played by this pioneer Canadian office in protecting commercial and general business interests. Founded in 1833, the British America has for three-quarters of a century borne an honoured title among the fire offices of the North American continent. It has ever maintained public confidence, even where sacrifice on the part of shareholders has been called for. As appears in the statement presented at the annual meeting, by the Secretary, Mr. P. H. Sims, the Company offers \$1,478,308 of total security to policyholders, surplus to policyholders over and above unearned premium liability being \$688,401.

The directorate re-elected for the current year, is notably representative of interests that pertain to the commercial and financial progress of Canada, composed as it is of the following gentlemen:—Hon. Geo. A. Cox, President; W. R. Brock, and John Hoskin, K.C., LL.D., Vice-Presidents; Robert Bickerdike, M.P., E. W. Cox, D. B. Hanna, Alex. Laird, Z. A. Lash, K.C., W. B. Meikle, Geo. A. Morrow, Augustus Myers, Frederic Nicholls, James Kerr Osborne, Sir Henry Pellatt and E. R. Wood.

THE SCOTTISH AMICABLE LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY.

The annual report of the Scottish Amicable Life Assurance Society shows new business in 1908, to have again exceeded all previous records.

The net sum retained at the society's risk, \$3,700,000 is \$125,000 in excess of the previous year's figure. The annual new business of the three years of the current quinquennium has averaged \$3,540,000, while the average of the five years of the last quinquennium, ending in 1905, was \$2,900,000, an increase of well over 20 per cent. This the directors consider sufficiently rapid progress. That the business has been of a thoroughly good class and largely permanent in its character, may be seen in the growth of the total assurances in force. The amount of these increased during the year by \$1,150,000, and the increase during the three years of the current quinquennium amounting to \$5,700,000, net, already exceeds the increase of the whole previous quinquennium.

As regards the expenses of management and commission, the report shows that this growth in new business has not been accompanied by an increase in the expense ratio. The actual amount (\$215,000) spent last year in expenses and commissions is almost identical with the amount so spent in the previous year, and owing to the advance in premium income, the ratio has fallen by .38 to 13.42 per cent.

Under the able direction of the manager and actuary, Mr. W. Hutton, the Scottish Amicable maintains its enviable position among conservatively managed life offices. During the year its funds increased by \$750,000 to a total of \$25,990,000. The premium income increased by \$45,000 and the interest revenue by \$25,000. The rate of interest earned upon the funds has been well maintained at with-in a penny of 4 per cent., which is 1½ per cent. in excess of the rate the company assumes in valuing its liabilities, so that there is therefore a considerable contribution to the surplus fund accruing from this source.

THE CANADIAN LIGHT, HEAT & POWER COMPANY, according to the bill passed at Quebec, this week, is to be accorded the free use of Montreal streets for erection of polls until civic conduits are laid; the company must, however, bury its wires without indemnity if the city is ready with its conduits within five years. An amendment to the bill as originally presented, provides that the company shall not sell, rent, or alienate any of its rights or franchises conferred upon it by its charter or amendments thereto to the Montreal Light, Heat & Power Company or to any of the companies affiliated to it, nor to amalgamate either directly or indirectly with any of the said companies.

AMERICAN RAILROADS REFUSED last year to lower grain rates from Buffalo to New York sufficiently to compete effectively for grain shipments that came by way of Montreal. But now the word goes forth that cuts are to be made this year. However, Canadian transportation interests are not planning to take this lying down, and both the Montreal Transportation Company and the Grand Trunk have announced rate changes to meet the situation.