

4th Government supervision, Legislation and Taxation,

5th Conflagration hazard.

In regard to the main climatic conditions which have to be considered, he first alludes to the bush-fire hazard.

"As summer nears its end and the sun has dried up every thing exposed to its rays, it needs but a spark in the grass to start a fire which may end one knows not when—perhaps not until heavy rains extinguish it. Numerous towns and villages throughout the Dominion are exposed to this danger and many have suffered severely."

The reverse climatic condition is thus referred to:—

Intense cold throughout nearly the whole Dominion comes upon us in "snaps" during the winter months lasting generally not more than three days at a time, but while with us is much dreaded by fire underwriters. The atmosphere throughout Canada is notably dry. This dry air, heated inside our buildings to a temperature of from 60 to 75 degrees, while the outside temperature may be from 20 degrees above to 20 below zero, must necessarily make such buildings and their contents more sensitive to ignition or more combustible. For firemen to cope with a fire when the mercury stands at zero, or thereabouts, is a terrible task. To us, in Canada, the term "cold snap" brings visions of frozen hose, frozen hydrants, charred and ruined buildings covered with masses of ice, and firemen with clothes first wet, then frozen almost to the skin. I think you will agree with me that Climate is truly one of our problems."

As regards "Competition," three varieties exist in Canada:

1. That between Tariff and non-Tariff Companies, all legally operating in the field.
2. That between the various Tariff Companies themselves.
3. That between companies legally operating in Canada, and companies from the United States, not licensed by the Canadian Insurance Department, not paying any taxes in Canada, but *illegally* transacting business therein."

Illegal competition ought to be stopped, but as the author says: "The law is not enforced."

In regard to Electricity as an insurance problem, Mr. Johnson says:—"Montreal has been characterized by an eminent electrical engineer as, "the most poorly wired city on the North American continent." He protests against the taxation and other burdens laid upon insurance companies by the various governments, Dominion and Provincial, as well as by Municipal Corporations. In regard to the Conflagration Hazard, the paper before us draws attention to "the concentration of values in relation to the fire loss, which evidenced by the drift of population. The deduction is drawn from a consideration of the movement of population in Canada that "The general tendency of population is towards greater

increase in the West than in the East. On the other hand, we know that our premiums in the larger centres have increased, and this clearly indicates a concentration of value in these centres, which indeed has taken place in certain well defined sections of the larger cities. Thus, we are collecting in our cities more and more inflammable material, concentrated within certain areas, and it is in these areas these conflagration hazards will evince themselves."

The problems as above outlined suggest the questions: "What preparation shall we make for the days to come? What preparations can we make? We are accustomed to balance our yearly accounts, and having paid our losses and expenses, and charged ourselves with reinsurance reserve, to call the rest if there be any 'profit.' But, how much of this profit, how much more than it amounts to, may we not soon be called upon to pay out for conflagrations? We have at once to guard our interests in the East, and yet keep our anxious eyes on the West, with its hurried construction of frame towns and the feverish and careless haste of its inhabitants. Verily," says the author of this interesting and valuable paper, "Verily, of all our problems this is the greatest!"

THE CANADA LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The 57th annual meeting of the Canada Life Assurance Company was held at Toronto on 24th February. The shareholders and policyholders present were highly gratified at the Report and Statement, which brought out very complimentary remarks upon the work done by the officials and the efficient management which had characterized the conduct of the company's affairs. In the face of the intense competition now prevailing in the business of life assurance it is no slight achievement for an old established company to beat its own record. This was done last year by the Canada Life, the new business of which is stated in the Report to have been the largest ever submitted to the company. The movement of the business last year as compared with 1902 is shown in the following table:—

	1903.	1902.	Increase + or Decrease —
Net premiums.....	\$2,798,989	\$2,615,172	+ 183,817
Interest and rents	1,114,617	1,084,882	+ 29,735
Other receipts.....	49,477	51,086	— 1,609
Total income.....	3,963,083	3,751,140	+ 211,943
Payments to policyholders	1,673,694	1,605,378	+ 68,316
Expenses and dividends.	934,503	774,332	+ 160,171
Total outgo.....	2,608,197	2,379,710	+ 228,487
Liabilities not including capital.....	25,318,640	24,133,214	+ 1,185,426
Total assets.....	27,180,007	25,964,932	+ 1,215,075
Surplus to policyholders	1,861,367	1,831,718	+ 29,649
Surplus over all liabilities and capital	861,367	859,438	+ 10,929
Assurance in force	95,531,110	89,170,710	+ 6,360,535

The number of applications received was 6,863, which is an increase of 1841 over 1902. The amount