

MR. H. M. BLACKBURN.

By the death at Toronto, on January 22nd of Mr. Henry Mercer Blackburn, manager for Canada since 1892 of the Sun Insurance Office of London, England, Canadian fire insurance loses not only an underwriter of outstanding ability, but, on account of his personal traits, one of the most esteemed and respected members of the profession throughout the Dominion.

Mr. Blackburn, who was a Lancashire man by birth and came to Canada in early life, had been continuously in the current of Canadian fire underwriting since 1873. In that year he entered the Montreal office of the Liverpool and London and Globe, then managed by the late Mr. G. F. C. Smith, and remained with that Company three years, a portion of the time being spent at the Toronto office. Mr. Blackburn then joined the staff of the Royal Canadian, under another well-known fire underwriter, the late Mr. James Davison, and was with them also three years, taking charge of the Company's Canadian business. Following a subsequent longer spell of service with the British America, Mr. Blackburn in 1884 accepted the position of office manager of the Lancashire Fire, a post which he filled with great satisfaction to his superiors and profit to the Company until the fall of 1887. At that time Mr. Blackburn was offered and accepted the management for Ontario of the City of London Fire, his field subsequently being enlarged to include both Ontario and Quebec. Five years later, in 1892, on the entrance of the Sun Insurance Office into the Canadian field, Mr. Blackburn was chosen as its manager for Canada, a position which he had since occupied.

While Mr. Blackburn's early career was thus marked by the capacity to rise steadily from post to post, making each position a stepping stone to future success, his long administration of the Sun's affairs in Canada, extending over a period of twenty-three years, confirmed the reputation he had previously won for underwriting ability. Consistently holding the confidence and esteem of his head office, Mr. Blackburn also possessed the regard of his colleagues, who elected him president of the Toronto Board at the same time that he became associated with the Sun, and have been ever since accustomed to look to him for sage counsel and wise advice when grave problems were under consideration.

Of Mr. Blackburn's kindly traits, THE CHRONICLE can bear personal witness. A representative of this journal has been accustomed to call upon him, on every occasion when in Toronto during the last twenty-five years, and on the latest of these occasions, a week before Mr. Blackburn's death, his usual kindly greeting was keenly missed. When not at his desk, Mr. Blackburn found recreation in a round upon the links. To the Sun's staff throughout the Dominion, his death following an operation, at the comparatively early age of 64, means the loss of a chief respected for his ability and esteemed for his consideration, while to his colleagues in the underwriting profession, and to his personal friends, his passing makes a gap that cannot be filled.

Eight members of the British staff of the Canada Life are now with the Colours. Twenty-three have gone from the Head Office at Toronto.

CONFEDERATION LIFE ASSOCIATION.

The old-established and highly-respected Confederation Life Association goes steadily on its way year by year, making sound progress and continually adding to the strength of its position. The Company has consistently been built up upon the best lines, it having been for many years under the skilful management of Mr. J. K. Macdonald (president) and Col. W. C. Macdonald (managing-director). While the experience of life insurance companies is bound to fluctuate in line with the financial and industrial conditions of individual years, there can be no doubt that in the case of so well-established and sound an organisation as the Confederation Life, continued steady progress over a long period is assured.

The forty-fourth annual report for the year ended December 31st last, published on another page, shows that in face of the considerable difficulties with which life insurance business was surrounded last year, the Confederation Life made a substantial advance in many ways. New insurance written amounted to \$10,754,279, the total insurance on the books at the close of the year being brought up to \$72,343,726. Net income from premiums and annuities was \$2,600,771, a slight decrease compared with 1914, while interest and rents reach almost the round figure of a million at \$994,667.

Disbursements to policyholders and their beneficiaries amounted to \$2,062,120. These include death claims, endowments, annuities, matured investment policies, surrendered policies and profits. The death and disability claims, it may be noted, are \$640,751, an increase of only \$17,500 upon last year. Presumably the Confederation, in common with the other Canadian companies, has had a share of claims arising from the war, and the figures suggest that these have been compensated for to some extent by a favorable ordinary mortality experience. Profits paid to policyholders, at \$263,150 again show an increase over the previous year, an advance of \$28,000 on those paid in 1914 being registered.

After payment of expenses, etc., the balance on the year's operations was such as to increase the net invested assets of the Company from \$18,602,000, at which figure they stood at December 31, 1914, to \$19,357,425, credit not being taken for an appraised or market value of real estate, bonds, debentures and stocks \$72,604 in excess of the ledger value. Total assets are \$20,587,571. Cash surplus over all liabilities is handsomely increased from \$2,246,182 to \$2,390,163, of which \$2,067,667 is appropriated to policyholders' account.

Henry Ford refuses to buy supplies from any concern which is so reckless that it goes along without automatic sprinklers. He does not intend to be crippled because a factory from which he draws supplies "has to stop some morning to dig itself out of a hot ash heap."—*Scientific American*.

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A movement towards an increase in the purchase of annuities on this side of the Atlantic, is suggested by a writer in the N. Y. Spectator, both by reason of the better returns which can now be offered as a result of the rise in interest rates, and through the educational influence and increased popularity of income insurance.