

MISCELLANEOUS UNDERWRITING IN CANADA, 1914.

Of the various branches of insurance outside fire, life and marine, which come under the general heading of miscellaneous underwriting, employers' liability is the most important in Canada in the extent of the volume of business transacted. The term employers' liability, retained to denote the class of insurance thus transacted is to some extent misleading. By no means all the business transacted under this heading is strictly, employers' liability business. A good deal of it is workmen's compensation business—a very different thing—and the proportion of the latter has undoubtedly increased in recent years as various provinces have brought into force legislation on modern lines, giving compensation to the workman who meets with an accident in the course of his employment as a matter of right, instead of as formerly compelling him to prove the liability of his employer to grant him compensation. The retention of the old term of employers' liability insurance in Government blue books and elsewhere to include insurance which is workmen's compensation, pure and simple, is not without its drawbacks to the insurance companies. It perpetuates the widespread impression that they are not capable of transacting a workmen's compensation business and that they are in some way or other interested in the maintenance of the bad old system of employers' liability. Nothing could be further from the facts. The companies are as well able to undertake the one class of business as the other; they are merely in the position of operating in each province in accordance with the law of that province—doing business on the lines permitted or required by the law. They are no more responsible for the drawbacks and idiosyncrasies of the particular law under which they operate than is the average private citizen.

ADVENT OF STATE INSURANCE.

The past twelve months has been particularly eventful for this class of business in Canada, owing to the experiments in State administration which have been put forward. The Ontario scheme, the radical successor to a antiquated liability law, came into force on January 1st, and this scheme has now been largely copied in new Nova Scotia legislation which, however, will not come into operation for some time yet. Underwriters can afford to wait the result of these rash experiments with equanimity, although in the case of Ontario, they have good reason for serious complaint of unfair treatment, a plant which had taken years of hard work and heavy expenditures to build up having been simply rendered useless by the new legislation. But there are very good reasons for doubting whether the present scheme will in the long run, reach that height of success which its sponsors apparently anticipate for it.

Already there are complaints—and from those friendly disposed towards the scheme—of extravagance of administration, and manufacturers are grumbling bitterly that they have no option to insure with the companies but must cover themselves in the Government fund. With symptoms like these already in evidence, further developments may safely be left for time to reveal.

Nova Scotia has not even the excuse that prior legislation was antiquated. An act on modern lines came into force no longer ago than 1911, and there seems good reason to believe that the present legislation, trimmed carefully to meet the wishes of those in the province politically important, has been largely passed in order to provide the government with a good vote-catching cry at the next provincial election.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

Of the other departments of miscellaneous underwriting, accident, guarantee, sickness and automobile are the most important in Canadian insurance. Speaking generally, these various lines and the other smaller lines into which insurance energies in the Dominion are also directed appear last year to have produced on the whole fairly satisfactory results. There is to be noticed a restriction of the business in comparison with several immediately preceding years. In some cases this shows itself in an actual decrease of the volume of premiums for the year; in others by a falling off in the ratio of increase, which in some cases has been very large for several years. In this respect, of course, the business reflects the general conditions of last year.

Further details regarding each branch of miscellaneous business done in Canada last year by companies reporting to the Dominion Government will be found in the subjoined summaries.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY INSURANCE.

For the first time in a number of years this business received a check last year, as a result probably of lessened construction. The growth of this business in recent years has been very rapid, the premium income having been increased by practically 200 p.c. between 1909 and 1913. The following is an eight-year record of premiums:—

1907.....	\$ 908,998	1911.....	\$2,103,275
1908.....	1,009,885	1912.....	2,817,286
1909.....	1,182,852	1913.....	3,516,758
1910.....	1,644,252	1914.....	3,439,719

With a falling-off in the volume of premiums, the companies were fortunate also to have a larger falling off in the volume of loss payments which were \$1,512,062 against \$1,973,319 giving a ratio of 44 per cent, a great improvement on 1913, when the ratio was 56.1. It is to be anticipated that this year