

NORTHERN ASSURANCE COMPANY.

When the Northern Assurance Company held its annual meeting of a year ago, the San Francisco disaster was of too recent occurrence for other than a rough estimate of the company's losses. Sir David Stewart, who was then chairman, cautiously estimated the liabilities at \$2,500,000. Sir Thos. Burnett, who presided at the 71st annual meeting of May 1, this year, commented upon the fact that the estimate made in May, 1906, erred slightly on the safe side, the losses having been found to be about \$2,400,000. Aside from San Francisco results, the ordinary losses of the year amounted to something under \$3,100,000 or approximately 50 p.c. of the premiums. Apart from this conflagration disaster, there would have been a profit for the year of about \$675,000. Referring to San Francisco settlements by the company, the chairman referred to the fact that although these were numerous—exceeding 1,250—each claim was most carefully examined, a desire being shown in each instance to deal as fairly as possible with claimant. "I should like," said Sir Thomas, "to have time to tell you a few of the very flattering things which were said of the adjusters of the Northern and the fairness and extreme courtesy with which they dealt with all claimants, as I am sure that it would give you quite a glow of pride to know the respect with which our good Aberdeen company is held so far away from home. The beneficial effect of these settlements will last, I am sure, for many years, and will give us a better hold on the good business and a stronger position than we have ever had before."

The fire insurance premiums received last year amounted to about \$6,140,000, an increase of more than \$575,000 over the previous twelve months' showing. Expenses of management, including commission to agents and charges of every kind, amounted to 33.9 p.c. of the premium income—a reduction of 1.3 p.c. for the year. The unearned premium reserves (being 50 p.c. of the revenue for 1906) amounted to about \$3,070,000 at the close of the year, while the fire reserve fund stood at \$4,000,000. The company has an honourable record in Canada under the able management of Mr. Robt. Tyre, of Montreal.

WATERWORKS SYSTEMS IN SMALL CITIES.

Continuation of Paper by George W. Booth,
Hydraulic Engineer, National Board of
Fire Underwriters.

In cities where distribution is in two or more services, the higher, and naturally weaker, parts of the lower service may often be re-enforced in emergency by opening gates in connections to the upper service. The plan of extending high service mains into important sections in the low service, for fire purposes only, will sometimes furnish a supply at pressures sufficient for good hydrant streams and automatic sprinklers.

A water supply designed to supply fire streams direct from hydrants would seem especially suited to the needs of the small city. It may not always be possible without excessive cost to furnish at sufficient pressure such amounts of water as will

warrant dispensing with fire engines altogether, but with a pressure of 90 to 100 pounds, a well designed system of pipes of moderate sizes will supply enough hydrant streams to cope with the great majority of fires, with the engines held in reserve for conflagrations or emergencies. With such a system, much more effective service is possible, especially with the limited fire-fighting force usually available in small cities, than when pressures must be raised by fire engines, with all their attendant disadvantages.

Provision for future growth is usually a question for special study in each individual case. However, some general rules may be laid down: The construction of pumping stations, filter plants, etc., should be so planned that additional units may be advantageously installed; supply mains and arteries to well established mercantile or manufacturing sections should be of such size as to allow for considerable growth; feeders should be laid, if possible, in circuits rather than in single, unsupported lines. It is an excellent plan to design a system of large mains somewhat in advance of the growth of each section rather than to lay only such sizes as immediate needs may demand.



COMPILATION OF CONFLAGRATION RECORDS

Some General Observations from the able Address
given by Mr. John B. Laidlaw, Toronto, at
N. F. P. A. Convention, New York.

The spectre of the conflagration hazard has ever been attendant upon the operations of the insurance manager, and from the earliest days of the business there is recorded failure after failure of insurance corporations which had existed for a longer or shorter time, some of which, by great skill and persistent effort, had been brought to a point of comparatively great strength, but which in a few hours were overwhelmed by the losses sustained in a conflagration and were either snuffed out as a candle, or only continued in business in a crippled condition after great sacrifices made by their stockholders.

There is seldom a variation in the number of fires in any city of more than 15 to 20 p.c. as between one year and another, although the amount of the losses sustained may fluctuate in the hundreds of per cent. as between one year and another. That same law, I think, prevails in regard to conflagrations, for a conflagration is merely a small fire grown larger; so of each 100,000 fires which occur in a year, it would, I think, be found, if the records were available, that a certain definite percentage would not spread beyond the building in which they originated; that a further definite percentage would spread to a second building; other percentages to a second and a third; still smaller percentages to a fourth and a fifth, and a very small percentage would get completely beyond bounds and become a conflagration.

I would suggest, therefore, that if the records of conflagrations are to be kept it will be necessary to embrace under that head all fires which extend to, say, three or four buildings, no matter how small the buildings may be, nor how insignificant