

"interested motive it was to wrest the control of hundreds of millions of trust funds from the 'keeping of those lawfully and properly in charge.' In view of the feeling aroused and the legislative action taken the wonder is, the author seems to think, not that there was so great a business falling-off, but that life insurance withstood all with no greater loss.

General business interests throughout the state are involved in this matter—and business men surely if slowly, are realizing that the shoe is pinching other than life companies.

AS OTHERS SEE US: A BRITISH SUMMING UP OF FIRE INSURANCE BUSINESS IN CANADA DURING 1908.

Canadian experience, as the Post Magazine sees it, has in many ways run parallel with that of the United States. Although in a less degree, Canada shared in the American financial depression, and, like the States, gave every promise of recovery towards the close of the year. There has been an excellent harvest, steady progress in land settlement and railway extension, and there is now every prospect of steady trade revival. Owing, however, to unusually heavy losses, insurance offices cannot look back upon a favourable year. Amongst the worst fires was that in the Maple Leaf Milling Company's flour mill and warehouse, Kenora, Ont., damage approaching \$1,000,000. The mill had only been in operation a few weeks and the insurance was held chiefly by "non-admitted" and "non-Board" companies. Conflagrations occurred at Three Rivers, Que.—loss about \$2,000,000, insurance about \$1,200,000—and at Pembroke, Ont., where many acres of valuable property were destroyed. Forest fires were also unusually prevalent in the Dominion, one sweeping the town of Fernie, B.C., clean out of existence, destroying \$3,500,000 worth of property, and involving insurance offices in a loss of \$1,900,000. The town, however, is being rapidly rebuilt. The bad experience of 1907 in New Brunswick has continued. This appears to be entirely due to natural causes, so that in the ordinary course of events an improvement should set in before long.

The Post Magazine refers to the figures published some months ago in THE CHRONICLE, covering fire insurance in Canada from 1869 to 1907, which show that the total loss ratio of all companies for the 39 years works out at 65.4 per cent. With 30 per cent. for expenses and no provision for unearned premiums, the margin is slender enough and, in fact, exceedingly disappointing. Our contemporary holds that an extra for conflagration hazard is urgently needed, for the rates ruling for ordinary risks allow nothing for the widespread fires which recur so frequently in America.

Throughout the Dominion the applied principle of schedule rating continues to find favour and must in time produce good effects. In the city of London, Ont., defective fire protection has necessitated a sharp advance in the rates, while at Summerside, P.E.I., improvements in water service and fire defences have been followed by a 20 p.c. reduction in rates for mercantile buildings and 15 per cent. for contents. Competition from mutual and non-tariff offices has been most keen throughout, especially in Western Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia. In the Maritime Provinces it has been particularly aggressive. One or two British offices and several of the larger United States companies have started business in Canada; and amongst new or projected companies may be mentioned the *Northern Fire* of Winnipeg, the *Niagara Falls* of Toronto, the *Manitoba Prudential Fire* and the *Imperial Fire* of Montreal. The *Ottawa*, a local concern, reinsured its business in the *Ontario*.

In the face of a bad year it is pleasant to observe the rapid extension of high pressure water supply. The Winnipeg service has been handed over to the city authorities. While, at Toronto, some slight defects delayed the inauguration of the new system, it is now in working order. Some of the towns in the Maritime Provinces—for example, Truro, N.S., St. Stephen, N.B., and Fredericton, N.B.—have made marked improvements in building construction and fire protection; but at Ottawa, Ont., there is still a shortage of water. Fires have also been frequent and serious in Newfoundland. In St. John's, where large sums have been spent in recent years on the water supply, a fire broke out in some mercantile buildings in Water Street, at which the service turned out to be a lamentable failure. For twenty minutes after the firemen arrived the pressure was not sufficient to throw a jet ten feet high. Later, it was greatly increased, but not before the flames had obtained firm hold, the fire resulting in a loss of \$600,000 of which \$326,000 was insured.

COMMUNITY OF INTEREST IN LIFE INSURANCE MANAGEMENT.

A week ago, reference was made to certain amendments recommended by a special committee of the New York Chamber of Commerce, with a view to removing the disability under which fire insurance now labours in that state. This week the case is clearly put from the viewpoint of the company manager, and of the policy-holders whom he serves, in a "plain talk with policy-holders" issued by President Darwin P. Kingsley in presenting the sixty-fourth annual report of the New York Life.

As virtual partners and participants in the business of the company, the policy-holders are