

MUTUAL COMPANIES' LOSS RESULTS IN DIVIDEND REDUCTION.

Following the destruction of the plant of the Union Switch & Signal Company, at Swissvale, Pa., a sprinklered risk insured in the factory mutuals, these companies have considerably reduced their March dividends. The fire line carried by fifteen mutuals at Swissvale was \$1,975,000, on which the loss is about total, and they have also a 75 per cent. loss on a \$300,000 use and occupancy line. The losses of the individual mutuals range from \$325,000 down to \$45,000.

MUTUAL DIVIDENDS RETURNED FEBRUARY 1, 1917.

Company—	1-y'r. term.	3-y'r. term.	4-y'r. term.	5-y'r. term.	Av. 10 years.
Manufacturers...	92	68	60	56	92
Rhode Island...	92	68	60	56	92
State...	92	66	60	55	91
Mechanics...	93	71	64	60	92
Enterprise...	93	82	75	71	93
American...	93	82	75	71	93

MUTUAL DIVIDENDS RETURNED MARCH 1, 1917.

Company—	1-y'r. term.	3-y'r. term.	4-y'r. term.	5-y'r. term.	Av. 10 years.
Manufacturers...	80	55	46	40	90
Rhode Island...	80	56	46	40	90
State...	80	54	46	40	90
Mechanics...	80	59	50	45	91
Enterprise...	80	69	60	55	92
American...	80	69	60	55	92

Attention is called especially to the actual dividends returned for three-year term as compared with the 86 per cent. and 87 per cent. probable dividends which these companies practically guaranteed when soliciting business three years ago. This fire again emphasizes beyond all doubt the uncertainty of the cost of mutual insurance, and the impossibility of computing fire insurance costs in advance when such indemnity is furnished by other than stock fire insurance companies. At the time of outbreak of the Swissvale fire, the sprinklers were out of commission and it is claimed also that the fire was poorly handled.

IS MONTREAL LIABLE FOR LACK OF WATER SUPPLY?

There was an echo of Montreal's "water famine" at Christmas, 1913, and New Year, 1914, in a test case heard in the Montreal courts this week. While the "water famine" was on, a number of fires took place in the city, one being on the premises of the Auto & Garage Co., Ontario Street East. As an outcome of this outbreak, Maxime Daoust now sues the city for \$20,000 damages, alleging that if there had been a proper water supply at the time of the fire very little loss would have been suffered. His own Maxwell car was completely wrecked, and for this he claims \$3,000, the balance of his claim being made up by transfers, which, he says, owners of other wrecked cars made to him to complete these proceedings. The City's defence was a direct denial of all liability in damages for failure to supply water to put out fires. Mr. Justice MacLennan, sitting in the Superior Court, reserved his decision. Eighteen other similar claims are pending.

Texas has a State Fire Insurance Commission which controls rates. They are considerably higher than before the creation of the Commission when fixed by the companies.

PAYMENT OF WAR CLAIMS: INDEMNIFICATION FOR ERRORS.

With a view to avoiding delays in the payment by life insurance companies of claims arising from the death or disappearance of Canadian soldiers at the front an Order-in-Council under the provisions of the War Measures Act has been passed on the recommendation of the Minister of Finance providing that all life insurance companies transacting business in Canada shall recognize as satisfactory evidence of death the official certificates of death or presumption of death, as the case may be, issued by the Department of Militia and Defence.

The Order also provides that should any claim be paid in respect of a soldier resident in Canada at the time of the issue of the policy or of enlistment, who has been officially certified as dead or as missing and assumed to be dead, but who subsequently proves to be alive, and the company fail to recover the amount from the beneficiary, there may be paid to the company from the Consolidated Fund under the provisions of the War Appropriation Act, the amount by which the payment made exceeds the actuarial reserve maintained by the company in respect of the policy.

The official certificates of death referred to are issued from the Adjutant General's Office, Militia Headquarters, Ottawa, about two or three months after the date of death. In the case of men missing more than six months and believed to be dead full enquiry is then made and the official certificate of presumption of death is issued as soon as possible thereafter.

The provision now made by the Order-in-Council will, it is believed, fully protect the companies and avoid delays in paying claims which in some cases have proved embarrassing to the claimants. The Order will apply to fraternal societies as well as to ordinary life insurance companies.

MR. H. E. WILSON.

Officials of the Northern Assurance Company in Canada, and those who have had the privilege of making the acquaintance of Mr. H. E. Wilson, the late general manager, on his visits to Canada, will be interested in the following, taken from the London Post-Magazine:—"The retirement of Mr. Henry Edward Wilson from the position of General Manager of the Northern Assurance Company—a change which took effect at the beginning of the year—afforded an opportunity for giving tangible expression to the high esteem in which he is held by the Company's officials throughout the world. The opportunity was eagerly grasped, and, although the greatest care was taken to ensure the absence of the slightest pressure by senior officials, practically every employee, allowing for those who, being quite juniors in the service, could hardly be expected to respond, participated in the presentation which followed. This took the form of a Silver Tray and an Illuminated Album containing the signatures of over 650 officials, the balance of the fund raised permitting of the purchase for Mr. Wilson of the right to nominate a candidate for the Home for Little Boys at Farningham in 1917, 1918, 1920 and every subsequent third year of his life. Mr. Wilson's acknowledgement showed him to be immensely pleased and greatly touched by the sentiments towards himself so universally entertained."