

ent upon varying business conditions, any fixed definitions and regulations—however good in purpose—are practically certain to work unfairness in application. And, once again, the thought suggests itself, as to whether arbitrary restrictions are really necessary at all. That the generality of Canadian managers can now be counted upon (without compulsion) to aim at due economy, is evidenced by the emphasis placed upon decreasing expense ratios in the various companies' reports lately published. If here and there a company is in the future tempted to undue extravagance, provision for adequate publicity of accounts will bring about the prompt corrective treatment of competitive criticism.

THE ROYAL VICTORIA LIFE INSURANCE CO

The annual report of the Royal Victoria Life Insurance Company of Canada, shows new business of \$1,000,000 to have been written during 1908, the amount in force being now well over \$5,000,000.

The ratio of expenses to income has been further reduced by 1 1-2 per cent. It is to be noted that if taxes paid were excluded from expenses, the reduction in the ratio to income would have been 2 per cent. during the year.

The total income for the year reached the sum of \$185,000, being some \$10,000 greater than for 1907. The interest earned on the company's investments is reported as showing a satisfactory increase in the average rate. Loans on first-class mortgages were considerably increased. As indication of the high character of the company's assets in general, it is pointed out, that interest has always been promptly paid, and that no investment losses have ever been incurred.

The total payments to policyholders during the year amounted to \$55,708.29, of which \$27,471.25 was for death claims (\$6,000 of this amount occurring in 1907); \$12,682.76 for surrendered policy values; \$10,200.00 for matured endowments; and \$5,354.28 to annuitants.

The assets of the Company have increased during the year by \$69,950.00, which now brings the security for policyholders (including capital) up to \$1,442,729.81.

The retiring directors were re-elected as follows, at the recent annual meeting: James Crathern, Esq., president; Hon. L. J. Forget and Hon. Robert Mackay, vice-presidents; David Morrice, Esq.; Gaspard Le Moine, Esq.; Charles F. Smith, Esq.; George Caverhill, Esq.; A. Haig Sims, Esq.; Herbert B. Ames, Esq., M.P.; T. G. Roddick, M.D., F.R.S.C., medical director; David Burke, A.I.A., F.S.S., general manager.

Mr. David Burke, general manager, is indefatigable in his efforts to make the Royal Victoria a successful Company. In this respect he has the loyal support of the agents and officials.

FIRE INSURANCE PROFITS IN CANADA.

Year in and year out, fire insurance in Canada with its recurring conflagration losses, has not proved over profitable to the companies regularly engaged in the business. Taking a period of forty years, and allowing 30 per cent. of premiums for expenses, the combined losses and expenses upon the business reported to the Department at Ottawa,

have been 95 per cent. of premiums received. By four-year periods, the showing may be summarized as follows:

FORTY YEARS OF FIRE INSURANCE LOSSES

ALL COMPANIES,	Premiums.	Losses.	Loss Ratio. %	Comb. Loss & Exp. Ratio. %
1869-1873.....	\$11,621,000	\$ 7,794,000	67.1	97.1
1874-1878.....	17,958,000	17,670,000	98.4	128.4
1879-1883.....	19,389,000	12,566,000	64.8	94.8
1884-1888.....	25,447,000	15,703,000	61.7	91.7
1889-1893.....	30,898,000	19,479,000	63.0	93.0
1894-1898.....	35,238,000	23,243,000	66.0	96.0
1899-1903.....	47,854,000	29,755,000	62.2	92.2
1904-1908*.....	75,510,000	45,222,000	59.9	89.9
Total 1869-1908.	\$263,915,000	\$171,432,000	65.0	95.0

* Figures for 1908 are estimated in case of three Canadian Companies—exact details not being furnished.

FIRE UNDERWRITERS, MERCHANTS AND MANUFACTURERS AT OTTAWA.

A large deputation of merchants, manufacturers and members of the Montreal Board of Trade and also members of the Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association had a hearing before the Banking and Commerce Committee at Ottawa this week, in connection with the new Insurance Bill. Mr. T. L. Morrissey on behalf of the underwriters contended that the adoption of the clause objected to by the manufacturers would simply make the present law effective, the contention being that the law as it exists to-day is intended to prohibit what the new bill expresses in so many words.

He granted, however, that the law should admit of the public being able to place surplus lines in unlicensed companies, which they were unable to get covered in licensed companies, and introduced the following amendment to that effect:

"Provided, however, that where it is found impossible to secure insurance, or sufficient insurance with licensed companies, such insurance or shortage of insurance, may be effected with unlicensed companies, but in such cases the person effecting such insurance shall forthwith, or within the period of ten days from the effecting of such insurance, file with the Superintendent an affidavit setting forth that having after diligent effort failed to secure the necessary insurance in licensed companies, he has effected such insurance with unlicensed companies, and specifying the date, the name of the company, person, partnership or association with whom such insurance has been effected, the amount of such insurance, the premium paid and the location of the property insured; and upon the receipt of such affidavit it shall be the duty of the Superintendent, within ten days from the receipt of such affidavit, to publish the particulars therein contained in the Canada Gazette."

Mr. Lansing Lewis, Mr. J. B. Laidlaw and Mr. Otty, also spoke in support of the amendment. The following representing the merchants spoke in opposition, Messrs. G. L. Cairns and Geo. Caverhill, Montreal, and Messrs. Russell and Kemp, Toronto.

On Wednesday, Mr. A. Geoffrion, K.C., spoke on behalf of those who wished to deal with reciprocal underwriters and Mr. Rowley, Ottawa, spoke in favour of allowing Canadian industries to be insured outside Canada. Mr. T. L. Morrissey replied.