

NORTHERN ASSURANCE Co.—Continued.

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT.

Balance brought forward from last year:—	
General Fund	\$904,920
Shareholders' life bonus, instalment 1905	30,000
	\$934,920
Balance of interest account, after deducting the amounts due to the life and other funds	388,890
Amount transferred from Fire Account	606,650
	\$1,929,860

Amount transferred to Staff Pension Fund in terms of resolution of general meeting held 3rd May, 1905 ..	\$ 500,00
Dividend declared 3rd May, 1905	300,000
Shareholders' life bonus (1901-5), 5th instalment	30,000
Dividend declared 12th October, 1905	150,000
Income tax, after deducting amount applicable to life and other accounts	28,780
Allowances to families of deceased officers	4,250
Company's moiety of assurance premiums of staff	5,880
Agents' and other balances irrecoverable	4,860
Loss on exchange	10,075
Balance at credit of this account as per balance sheet ..	1,346,015
	\$1,929,860

Head Office for Canada, Montreal.

ROBERT W. TYRE,
Manager.

LONDON LETTER.

London, 19 May, 1906.

INSURANCE.

The recent developments of the warfare in connection with the New York Mutual's British business has provided us with a topic and strong local interest all the week. The full fruition of Mr. Haldeman's work now appears in his appointment as joint manager of the North British & Mercantile Company and as readers of the "Chronicle" know there has been added fresh fuel to the fire. The North British & Mercantile moving, it is alleged, in response to a widespread desire amongst British policy-holders to transfer to sound home offices considers itself fully justified in making a bid for the forty-five million dollars of New York Mutual business in this country.

Mr. Haldeman declares that the success of the circular issued by the North British to the Mutual policy-holders has been fully equal to his most sanguine anticipations. On the other hand Mr. Hogge, the gentleman who has succeeded Mr. Haldeman as chief of the British branch of the New York Mutual, declares as enthusiastically that crowds of Mutual policy-holders have written in and called upon him to express their strong intention of standing by the old company. Where Mr. Haldeman points to a desk piled high with registered letters containing Mutual policies sent in to be exchanged into North British contracts Mr. Hogge directs attention to another desk piled equally high with letters of encouragement and support for the New York Mutual.

In the thick of the fight as we are now, one cannot say how the matter will end. On the one hand there is no doubt that a very large number of the Mutual policy-holders are deeply concerned about recent developments in connection with the financial side of their company. On the other hand, however, attempts to move policy-holders out of one company into another are very difficult to engineer when both companies are important corporations and when the game is being played with clean hands.

At the annual meeting of the Central Insurance Company held this week, with Mr. Walter Chamberlain in the chair, some very interesting testimony was given about the progress of this young company. A special point was made of the large amount of re-insurance given away. In 1904 the proportion was 52 per cent. of the total income, whilst last year it was 55 per cent. By this policy the losses in the case of the San Francisco fire have been rendered very small for this company. The Central is now

a member of the Tariff Offices' Association, both home and foreign. For a long time past the company has been associated with the other fire offices in their foreign departments. This has worked well in presenting ruinous competition abroad and it was soon seen that what was good in the foreign department would also be good in the home section. As I have indicated some weeks back the Central joins the Tariff Association on terms which allow it to carry out all its moral as well as its legal obligations. The Central's losses in connection with San Francisco are estimated at not more than fifty thousand dollars—a matter of 6½ per cent. of the company's premium income.

MONTREAL CLEARING HOUSE.—Total for week ending May 31, 1906—Clearings, \$26,743,036; corresponding week 1905, \$22,633,097; corresponding week 1904, \$18,443,218.

A YEAR'S FIRES.—A Blue-book concerning the fires in England and Wales during the year 1903 gives the following figures—Rateable value, £189,454,034; fire brigades, 1,903; firemen, 25,637; cost to rates, £503,732; fires, 15,285; damage, £2,329,828; death, 185.

NO "FIRE-PROOF" BUILDING.—Lecturing on "Fire, Fire Risks, and Fire Extinction," at the Society of Arts, Professor Vivian B. Lewes said there was no such thing as a fire-proof building. That had been made manifest, he said, in every great fire during the last twenty-five years. Neither was there any such thing as fire-proof material. Granite and stone splintered, marble turned into lime bricks fused, and iron and steel melted. It was far more important to use a non-inflammable substance than any supposed fire-proof substance. In the great Cripple-gate fire of six years ago the so-called fire-proof buildings offered no resistance, and it was marvellous how the fire spread over the great area. In spite of that lesson, however, buildings of precisely the same character had been erected all over that area, and he ventured to predict that if there was another fire there the destruction of property would be as great as before. Stone staircases could not be relied upon, because directly the flames began to play round them they splintered. To render them at all reliable they should be erected on iron grids. A patent was taken out over 300 years ago for rendering wood non-inflammable, but it was only within the last fifteen years that the true way had been found out. The protection afforded by wood so treated was enormous. In conclusion, he complained that the regulation for making scenery of fire-proof material was frequently evaded.—*Exc.*