

**FIRE INSURANCE IN CANADA DURING 1909.**

On another page we publish a summary abstract of the fire insurance business in Canada for the year 1909 showing the comparative results from 1902. The figures for 1909 are taken from the abstract statement just issued by the Superintendent of Insurance. The net cash received for premiums amounted to \$17,058,843, while the net losses incurred during the year totalled \$8,585,354. The following shows the premiums and losses of the three groups of companies.

	Net Cash Received.	Net Losses Incurred During the Year.	Percentage
Canadian Offices.....	\$3,764,351	\$2,085,238	55.4
British Offices.....	9,730,366	4,834,233	49.7
American Offices.....	3,564,126	1,661,883	46.6
	<b>\$17,058,843</b>	<b>\$8,585,354</b>	<b>50.3</b>

The net cash received for premiums in 1908 was practically the same as those for 1909, namely, \$17,027,275, while the net losses were \$8,585,354 as against \$10,347,576 in 1908. The net amount at risk in 1909 was \$1,863,459,522 as against \$1,700,708,263, or \$162,751,259 more than the amount in 1908. Fire insurance is largely a matter of averages, for while the loss ratio in one year may show a profit, yet it is likely to be wiped out by excessive losses in other years, for the conflagration hazard is one which has to be met and which seems to occur from time to time. The following figures showing the summary result of business for a period of 41 years, namely, from 1869 to 1909 inclusive, will be interesting.

**41 YEARS RECORD OF FIRE UNDERWRITING IN CANADA.**

1869-1909.

Premiums received....	\$280,749,845
Losses paid ... ..	\$180,258,902
Expenses 33 1/3 p.c. ...	93,583,282
Increase in reserve liabilities... ..	10,000,000
	<b>\$283,842,184</b>
Deficit... ..	<b>\$3,092,339</b>

The above figures show a deficit on the 41 years trading of \$3,092,339 after making an allowance of \$10,000,000 for the increase in reserve liabilities and calculating the expenses on an average of 33 1/3 p.c. which we believe is a fair average. When, therefore, the public consider that the rates are too high, they should go to the Government returns and find out what are the real facts, for as stated above, the result of fire insurance is largely if not entirely a question of average experience spread over a number of years. The physical condition of various cities and towns in the Dominion have recently been much improved owing to the recommendations of the fire offices. It pays the insurance companies better to prevent fires than to change high rates. Promoters of new companies refer to the names of the old established

British offices as indicating the possibilities of profit for new concerns. They do not, however, point out that the dividends are for a large part due to the investment earnings of the companies as well as to the world wide business which is transacted by them.

**NORTHERN ASSURANCE COMPANY.**

In this issue we publish the report for the year 1909 of the Northern Assurance Company, famous throughout the world for its large operations and the skill and judgment with which its business is conducted. Sagacity in underwriting accounts for its many prosperous years, while even in lean ones, the Northern is wont to come out better than most of its rivals and 1909 is no exception to the rule, the year being on the whole favourable to fire insurance companies.

The fire premiums for the year 1909 amounted to \$6,143,510, and the losses to \$3,068,225 or practically 50 p.c. Expense of management (including commission to agents and charge of every kind) were \$2,324,165 or 37.8 per cent. of the premiums, a combined ratio of 87.7 per cent., a very satisfactory showing indeed, and one which should prove very acceptable to the shareholders.

The Canadian Branch net premiums for the year were \$546,028 and the net amount of losses incurred \$277,250 a ratio of 50.8 which is nearly equal to that for the whole business of the company, and is no doubt gratifying to Mr. Robert W. Tyre, the well-known manager for Canada.

The following figures show the general progress of this company:

Year.	Net Fire Premiums.	Total Funds.
1836 .....	\$ 4,500	\$ 191,000
1840 .....	14,500	319,000
1850 .....	40,000	814,000
1860 .....	607,000	2,576,000
1870 .....	1,068,000	5,771,000
1880 .....	2,223,000	13,108,500
1890 .....	3,357,000	19,878,000
1900 .....	3,761,500	28,491,500
1909 .....	6,143,500	37,180,000

**The Rise in Silver Bullion.**

Cobalt mine owners have been much encouraged latterly by the steady rise in the price of bar silver. Coming as it does at the time when the leading mines have begun to receive the long looked for produce more extensively and at a lower cost—it means some increase in mining profits. It has been feared that the Cobalt production would be large enough to seriously depress the price of the white metal in the world's markets. A cable published in the Star gives some of the causes of the recent rise. They are: good crops in British India; large purchases for Chinese account; the revival of business all over the world; and the prospective purchases of the metal in connection with the new coinage plans of the Latin Union and of Germany."