

tageous comparisons with the financial statements of the previous year are generally to be expected. The Phoenix has evidently been fortunate in the class of securities held, showing commendable care in the investment of its funds, as well as skill in the business of underwriting. The officers of the company are to be congratulated on the outcome of the year, for it is good management, not lucky accident, which in these days assures success. President Kellogg and Vice-President Skilton, with their associates, have long ago demonstrated their ability to organize and so successfully employ their force, as to win victories where others have suffered defeat. The Phoenix is fortunate in its selection as manager for the Canadian field of Mr. Gerald E. Hart, as shown by the work accomplished in the short period since he assumed control. Though having but eight months of the year in which to organize and employ his forces, the results achieved have been such as would have been creditable in a full year's work. The company not only in Canada but in all parts of the field enters upon the campaign of 1891 with excellent prospects.

THE WEAKNESS OF THE MUTUAL SYSTEM.

As stated elsewhere, the Western Manufacturers' Mutual Fire insurance company of Chicago, by far the strongest and best of the Western mutuals, has, after several years' experience, abandoned the mutual idea and transferred its risks to a stock company. The reasons for this action, as stated deliberately and forcibly at a meeting of the directors, make good reading just now, and we below present the preamble and resolution adopted in full:—

Whereas, It is apparent that fire insurance, conducted on the plan or system *where notes are required* for and as additional security, is in a much discredited condition at the present time; and as a large number of the strongest advocates and patrons of the system, by reason of the condition aforesaid and of apprehension founded thereon, have cancelled their policies in companies doing business on that plan; and,

Whereas, There is no doubt but that it would be better for the interest of all concerned that this company should cease active business while it can do so without discredit or disadvantage than to continue the business, which much necessarily diminish under the circumstances, and for the reasons stated, with increased ratio of expenses and losses, until obliged to cease doing such business with loss and possible discredit, and be obliged to make an assessment on the notes now held by the company; and,

Whereas, The plan or system of insurance, where premium notes are given, or where members are obliged to assume a liability in addition to the premium, has been brought into disrepute among others by the following causes:

First. By the failure of a number of such fire insurance companies in the West during the past few years, and requiring large assessments on the notes to meet their liabilities.

Second. The organization of such companies far in excess of the demand, and frequently located in other than prominent manufacturing or commercial centres, thus locally receiving small support.

Third. The organization of such companies to reduce rates on one class of hazard at the expense of all others.

Fourth. The organization of such companies by men

who have no knowledge of or experience in the business, solely for the gain of a personal promoter, without regard to the discredit they may bring on such plan or system, and without regard to or for the interest or protection of those whom they induce to take policies, if not with the real intent to defraud.

Fifth. The apprehension occasioned and fear of assessment excited by reason of the recent failure of several companies organized, as above indicated, causing a run of cancellation of policies in other companies which are managed honestly and successfully, and demanding the return of notes given therefor.

Sixth. The passage of discriminating, unfair and bad laws by the legislatures of different States, detrimental both to such companies and to those who are insured in and by them;

Therefore, *Resolved*, That a committee be and is hereby appointed, consisting of the President, the Vice-President and the Secretary, to consider the expediency, and, if in their judgment they deem it best, to procure reinsurance or the substitution of and for the policies of this company in those of first-class stock insurance companies, for the unexpired term of the present outstanding policies and certificates of this company, and to do all that may or shall be necessary to accomplish that object.

THE FIRE LOSS IN 1890.

The fire loss of the United States and Canada for the year 1890, as compiled by the *New York Daily Commercial Bulletin*, amounted to \$106,998,345, the December loss being \$12,880,000. The following comparative table shows the fire loss by months for the years 1888, 1889 and 1890:—

	1888.	1889.	1890.
January.....	\$16,040,000	\$6,898,700	\$9,179,300
February.....	11,213,500	12,800,000	7,387,025
March.....	9,918,100	10,912,000	8,466,300
April.....	11,326,350	15,987,000	8,285,520
May.....	9,188,500	9,915,300	8,838,100
June.....	9,594,400	7,755,000	5,655,000
July.....	10,508,470	11,020,500	14,723,500
August.....	10,236,000	11,153,850	9,009,100
September.....	10,624,700	9,735,900	6,943,700
October.....	5,945,500	8,366,600	7,279,500
November.....	16,003,975	20,051,600	8,351,300
December.....	9,956,300	7,304,800	12,880,000

Total...\$123,290,520 \$131,949,250 \$106,998,345

There is also presented in this connection the annual fire loss for the past five years, as follows:—

1886.....	\$116,600,000
1887.....	129,264,400
1888.....	123,290,520
1889.....	131,949,250
1890.....	106,998,345

Total, five years.....\$608,102,515

From the above table, it will be seen that the 1890 fire loss is gratifyingly light, as compared with the annual waste for the preceding year, and the fire companies may well congratulate themselves.

THE HARTFORD FIRE INSURANCE CO.

For eighty-one years the Hartford Fire Insurance company has furnished indemnity for loss by fire, and has steadily grown in favor with the public, as it has grown in financial strength and extended its protecting shield over an entire continent. Ten years ago it was a strong company, when its assets amounted to \$3,624,871 and its surplus to over a million dollars; but it has kept on growing, and now reports, as seen on another page, for January 1, 1891, assets aggregating \$6,576,160.