

PREMIUMS AND LOSSES OF FIRE COMPANIES IN CANADA, 1869-1915.

On page 819, THE CHRONICLE publishes a tabulation of the premiums and losses of the fire insurance companies in Canada from 1869 to 1915 inclusive, the aggregate and average figures for each company holding a Dominion license being detailed. These figures should be read in conjunction with the article "47 Years' Fire Underwriting in Canada" appearing in our issue of May 5th last. At that time, figures other than the totals for each class of companies were not available, but the comments then made stand.

The following is a summary of the present tabulation:—

	Premiums Received, 1869-1915.	Losses Paid, 1869-1915.	Per-cent-ge.
Canadian Companies.....	\$ 91,230,608	\$ 57,200,156	62.7
British Companies.....	253,013,304	155,441,540	61.4
U. S. & French Cos.....	78,711,796	44,483,186	56.5
	<u>\$422,955,708</u>	<u>\$257,127,882</u>	<u>60.8</u>

Points made in our comments on May 5th and which may be here repeated are as follows:—

(1). In the forty-seven years, 1869-1915 inclusive, the companies operating under Dominion licenses in Canada received in premiums a sum of \$422,955,708. They paid in losses an aggregate of \$257,127,882, a proportion of 60.8 per cent. to the premiums received. With an all-over allowance of, say, 35 per cent. for expenses, which, be it remembered, include heavy taxation and much expenditure on purely preventive work, and an allowance for the increased premium reserve, it is apparent that the average remuneration obtained by the companies has been exceedingly meagre. Probably 4 to 5 per cent. would be a very liberal estimate of it, for which handsome profit the companies have to be prepared at any time for a great inroad upon their resources through a conflagration.

(2). The reason that the American companies' loss ratio is considerably better than that of the British companies probably lies in the fact that the greater number of the American fire companies are comparative new comers to the field. On the other hand, the majority of the British companies have been long established here, and they have borne the brunt of past great conflagrations which have entailed enormous insurance losses, and may have successors any day. The American companies have, perhaps, found conditions a little more favorable for fire underwriting at a profit than they were in earlier days.

It will be noted that of 47 Canadian companies with Dominion license which at one time and another have been transacting fire business in Canada since 1869, only 24 survived at the close of 1915, and two more have since gone. In one or two cases, of course, companies which have disappeared have been perpe-

tuated in existing organisations, or the business was profitably sold outright to new owners who did not continue the separate organisation. But these cases form only a very small proportion of the whole of the cessations, which have been mainly due to financial failure. It is to be noted, also, that of the 22 existing Canadian fire companies, ten are subsidiaries of British companies. The facts constitute eloquent comment upon the difficulties which Canadian fire companies aspiring to stand on their own feet have to meet.

"THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY."

The Board Room of an old established Insurance Company is to me always a place of great interest. It may be fanciful—but I think I can see in the decorations, the furniture and the pictures on the walls a vivid reflection of the business methods that have characterized the Company in its public dealings. Some Board Rooms are unduly ornate and extravagantly furnished and I have usually found rooms of this character associated with companies more widely known for their promises than their performances. Others, again, are mean and dingy, and I have observed that the companies concerned are usually laggards in the race. The majority, however, are dignified, but not ostentatious; the furniture is solid and handsome; the decorations harmonious and the pictures chiefly confined to portraits of Directors and Officers who have, in years gone by, rendered faithful and efficient service. One does not often see portraits of living officials—and this reminds me of the concern exhibited by a Director in a well known New York Office when he discovered at a Board Meeting that his portrait, as a matter of compliment, had been placed in a conspicuous position. At the close of the meeting he arose solemnly and offered a resolution that it should be forthwith removed from "the Morgue"!

J. L. K.

The Mutual Life of Canada announces that applications from women will now be considered at regular rates on the Ordinary Life Plan. Agents the Company says, should exercise extreme caution and good judgment in soliciting this class of business, as the Company will apply the most careful scrutiny to these applications in order to avoid speculative insurance and undesirable risks.

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Underwriters have been amused by the notification to the stockholders of the Remington Arms Company and the Union Metallic Cartridge Company, located in Bridgeport, Conn., that among certain economies to be introduced in the management of those companies is a large saving to be caused by the abolition of the "fire-fighting brigade," used on their premises. This must be suggestive good news to the Germans who are interested in suppressing the manufacture of warlike munitions.—N. Y. Spectator.