The leading surety companies of the United States have been able to make out a strong case in a petition to the federal government protesting against the Washington requirement that premiums for bonds on government officials shall be no higher than rates in force prior to January 1, 1909. Such rates were found a losing proposition. To enforce them by law is the extreme of bureaucratic interference, even for the United States.

Notes.

Franklin J. Moore, U. S. Manager of the General Accident Assurance Company, of Perth, Scotland, is at the Home Office to attend the company's annual meeting.

The Home Insurance Company has formed desirable connections in Cuba, and will hereafter do business upon that island.

President Paul Morton, of the Equitable Life, is now in Europe, where he will visit the Society's agencies in the principal cities of France, Spain, Germany and England.

The fire companies are to be congratulated that the legislature at Albany has adjourned without passing an anti-compact bill.

QUERIST.

New York, May 12, 1909.

THE APRIL FIRE LOSSES.

Total for United States and Canada $19,345,300—Considerably Less than a Year Ago—May Losses Already Heavy in Canada.

The fire losses of the United States and Canada for the month of April, 1909, as compiled by the New York Journal of Commerce, show a total of $19,345,300. The following table gives the figures for the first four months of 1909, in comparison with the same months of 1907 and 1908, and shows the losses for the remainder of those two years:

	1907.	1908.	1909.
January	$24,064,000	$29,582,000	$22,735,000
February	19,876,600	18,489,700	16,131,000
March	20,559,700	16,723,300	13,795,400
April	21,925,900	26,009,000	19,345,300
Total 4 mos.	$86,426,200	$90,804,000	$72,006,700
May	$16,286,300	$15,181,150	......
June	14,765,000	19,512,000	......
July	18,240,150	15,323,750	......
August	20,248,000	23,123,000	......
September	11,440,400	21,431,400	......
October	13,350,250	22,722,850	......
November	19,122,200	15,834,350	......
December	15,783,750	14,629,750	......
Total for Year	$215,662,250	$238,562,250	......

In Canada property losses from fire during April are estimated by The Monetary Times at $720,650, each month of the year thus far having shown some decrease from the preceding, as will be seen from the following summary:

January	$1,500,000
February	1,263,005
March	851,690
April	720,650
	$4,335,345

It is to be noted that loss of no less than eighteen lives during April was an unfortunate outcome of the months fires; deaths from such cause since the beginning of the year total 58.

Prominent Topics.

The British Income Tax. A special agent of the United States Department of Commerce and Labour, Mr. Charles M. Pepper who has been investigating European fiscal affairs, has made an interesting report upon the operation of the income tax in Great Britain. The total revenue from income tax in the year ending March 31, 1909, was $165,000,000 this being the greatest single source of revenue. Assessments on incomes of $250,000 and over were paid by 20 individuals and 92 firms. The incomes assessed between $800 and $1,000 numbered 238,000 and those between $1,000 and $1,500, numbered 206,000. Incomes under $800 are exempt and there are graduated abatements on incomes between $800 and $2,500. Two thirds of the tax is paid indirectly and the collections include the tax on land paid through the tenants, on dividends paid through public companies and on consols paid through the Bank of England. The new budget increases the rate of taxation on all incomes and adds a super tax of sixpence in the pound on all incomes over $25,000 a year. These increases are estimated to add $26,000,000 to the national revenue.

Injunctions Against Parliament. Mr. Justice Teetzel, of Toronto, has refused to issue an injunction restraining the Dominion Parliament from passing the Canada Life Bill—which has now had its third reading in the Commons. It would have been strange if he had not done so. His Lordship gave as a reason for his refusal that plaintiffs had not made out a case of manifest fraud and injustice to warrant the court intervening. We doubt if anything would warrant the court in intervening in this particular way. The actions of Parliament are subject to judicial revision, as are the actions of less august bodies, but we question the propriety or the right of any other court in the land to undertake to enjoin or restrain the action of the High Court of Parliament, of which His Majesty the King is himself a constituent part. Parliament is supreme within its sphere. It is one thing for the courts to interpret the law, it is another thing for the courts to undertake to restrain the power that makes the law.

Interprovincial Insurance Questions. It seems generally understood at Ottawa that a conference of the Provincial Premiers will be held early next autumn. There are topics enough for discussion in addition to matters relating to conservation of national resources. Questions of provincial rights have been recurring rather frequently of late, and others are in the offing.

Among these, are some relating to jurisdiction in insurance matters. There has been some tendency of late for provincial and federal authority over insurance companies to clash. Also, there has been considerable evasion of Dominion regulations by companies holding licenses under the less stringent provincial laws. There is no doubt that while a strict interpretation of the Dominion Insurance Act limits the activity of a provincially chartered company solely to its province of origin, the provision is being evaded to a very considerable extent, more especially in the West.