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Comparisons made between the **Climate as a** fire loss ratios of this continent and **Rate Factor.** Great Britain are often made the text for reflections on the defective construction of buildings on this side the Atlantic. That is a very partial view. Factors of far higher power in the fire hazard problem than building construction here as compared with the old land are the climate and the fuel used. The "Insurance Post" puts this matter sensibly. It says:—

"Climate has much to do with fire insurance in this country. Americans are accustomed to the extremes of heat and cold, and do not pay much attention to their relation to fire insurance, but much of the wonderment of foreign stockholders and officers over the high loss ratios in the United States is due to ignorance of our climatic conditions.

Disparity in loss ratios between this country and Europe cannot be attributed entirely to the better construction that is found in older countries. Climatic conditions would make loss ratios in the United States higher than in England, Germany or France if the construction were similar, for those countries know nothing of the extremities of heat and cold that prevail here. Englishmen think they have reached the limit when the thermometer gets a little below the freezing point and can hardly imagine the 30 and 40 below zero of our North-west. With their moist climate, they escape the tinder-like conditions that prevail in the breezy West during much of the summer. Many criticisms of our high loss ratios are justifiable, and so far as those ratios are based upon preventable causes, they should be remedied, but American fire underwriters should not be held responsible for the freaks of the American climate."

Besides the risk attendant upon wood-work being dried up by great heat, there is another danger in the use of wood for fuel that is practically unknown in the old land. When wood is piled on a fire during a period of extreme cold the combustion is often so rapid and draught so strong that embers are carried up and out of the flue, that, falling upon a shingled roof when dry as tinder, start a fire. Careless firing up of wood stoves by soft wood has, no doubt, caused

numberless mysterious fires, especially where iron piping connected the stove with an outside flue after passing through a floor or wooden partition. Careless firing causes such piping to become red hot, and when this occurs the chance is good for a fire breaking out.

The demoralization of the retail **Insurance as** trade is manifested by the presentation of some "gift," so called, to **Part of a** each purchaser of another article. **Gift Enterprise.** To secure as much custom as possible by this bait, many storekeepers present a ticket with each purchase, a certain number of which conveys a title to a "gift." Tea that costs the retailer ten to fifteen cents per pound, he vends at twenty-five or 30 cents, clearing a gross profit of 15 to 20 cents per pound. A buyer, after paying for five pounds of this tea, has acquired tickets entitling him to a glass vase or a tea-pot that cost the retailer about 20 cents. So that after he has received from 75 cents to \$1 in profit, or an average of over 120 per cent., he returns a gift that costs him 20 cents, by which liberality his profit is reduced down to an average of close upon 100 per cent.!

Is it not a scandal to the insurance business to be mixed up with such a deplorable system of trading? Accident insurance has been especially exploited for this discreditable business. An accident policy given to a person who, when injured, has a certain newspaper in his possession, or to the holder of a theatre ticket, or the buyer of a pound of tea, or the purchaser of a pair of shoes or "breeks," is a style of enterprise "more honoured in the breach than the observance." It conveys an impression to the public mind either of the costlessness of accident insurance to the companies, from which arises an idea that their ordinary rates are exorbitant, or that the accident companies are conducted by fakirs, and not by honourable, self-respecting men of business.