THE 1916 FIRE LOSS.

The losses by fire in the United States and Canada during the calendar year 1916, as compiled from the records of the New York Journal of Commerce aggregate $231,442,995. These figures are severe compared with the annual average and are nearly fifty millions ahead of 1915, when the losses reached a total of $182,836,200. The losses for the year just closed were only exceeded six times in history, and were largely contributed to by heavy losses in the South and in Canada, besides which the Black Tom Island explosion and fire in New York harbor accounted for $11,000,000 of the total. Higher values of almost all classes of commodities undoubtedly had a material influence in swelling the total fire losses.

OUTSTANDING FIRES.

There were several heavy general conflagrations in the South. The Canadian losses were heavy, mainly due to the destruction of several large individual risks, including the Canadian Parliament building with a loss of $3,000,000 and the oatmeal mill at Peterboro, Ont., with a loss of $1,200,000, but on the former loss fire underwriters escaped as the Government buildings were not insured. The war munition hazard was again a contributing factor to the heavy fire losses, as there were numerous losses in plants of this character, some of them being of considerable value.

The movement for national fire protection has not lost ground during 1916, remarks the Journal of Commerce, notwithstanding the heavy losses, and legislation as far as it has gone has been along the lines of stimulating greater interest of the public in regulations and laws that will prevent fires. Political factions in all States have shown a broader view as to the value of such legislation and are favorable to the passage of laws that will restrict the country's excessive fire waste.

FORTY YEARS' FIRE WASTE.

The aggregate fire waste of the United States and Canada during the past 40 years from 1877 to 1916 inclusive reaches the enormous total of $6,281,260,220, showing an annual average property destruction of $157,031,505. This great drain upon material resources continues to gain in spite of the efforts of the fire preventionists, and that the drain is uncalled for is shown in the data as to origin of fires, which indicate that a very large percentage are from preventable causes. The following are the annual figures since 1905:—

1916	$231,442,995
1915	182,836,200
1914	235,591,350
1913	224,728,350
1912	225,320,900
1911	234,337,250
1910	234,470,650
1909	203,649,200
1908	238,562,250
1907	215,671,250
1906	459,710,000
1905	175,193,800

MONTHLY LOSSES IN 1916.

The losses by fire during 1916, when considered by months, show the usual decrease during the summer months with the exception of July, which was increased by the Black Tom Island disaster. The following table shows the losses during 1915 and 1916:

	1915.	1916.
January	$20,060,600	$21,423,350
February	13,081,250	24,770,770
March	18,786,400	38,680,250
April	18,180,350	12,681,050
May	11,388,450	15,973,500
June	10,893,950	12,247,500
July	9,006,800	23,013,800
August	10,067,100	10,745,000
September	14,823,500	12,244,625
October	14,465,850	17,701,375
November	21,204,850	19,898,450
December	20,877,100	22,063,325
Total for year	$182,836,200	$231,442,995

BRITISH LIFE COMPANIES AND WAR FINANCING.

Figures given by Mr. S. G. Warner, in his presidential address to the Institute of Actuaries, show that British life companies since war broke out have invested in British Government securities of various kinds upwards of $375,000,000, and have sold or lent to the Treasury securities of a face value of over $230,000,000. Additionally, they have sold to parties other than the British Treasury, American securities of a value of $100,000,000. Mr. Warner points out that holdings by the life companies of war stocks are essentially democratic—at one remove the war loans held by the assurance company are the property and investment of the policyholder.