TELEPHONE STATISTICS.

A remarkable increase in the number of telephones in use throughout the Dominion during the five years, 1912-1917 is shown in the telephone statistics for the year ending June 30, which were tabled in the House last week. The number of telephones in use throughout the Dominion in 1912 were 370,884, while in 1917 the number had grown to 604,136. The number of telephone companies operating in 1912 was 683, and five years later there were 1,659 companies in operation. A total of 889,572 miles of wire was in use during the year 1912. In 1917 the wire mileage was 1,788,202.

The capitalization of telephone companies also shows a great increase. In 1912, it was $46,276,851, while in June, 1917, it was $79,121,702. The revenue during the same period had grown approximately eight million dollars. The number of persons for each telephone in the Dominion in 1912 was 19.3, and in 1917 13.4.

DAYLIGHT SAVING.

(Boston News Bureau.)

In England and France, where the new system is now ingrained in the fabric of conservative social orders, there accrued in fuel alone a joint saving of $24,000,000 in 5½ months. Here the economy has been figured as reaching at least a million tons of coal a year, and to users of artificial illumination a gross saving of $40,000,000 in light bills.

In industry there is predicted a better output as to both quantity and quality, and an accelerated handling and transportation, especially at terminals. For the first time the stock exchanges in New York and London will be simultaneously in operation for an hour. Agriculture, especially that by voluntary or marginal effort, will reap a large advantage.

To 95 out of every 100 persons the change means virtually a gift of 150 hours a year of afternoon "leisure." This is the extra dividend of play beyond that in work. Its value in terms of recreation, sport and health are patent.

Having "saved" these hours, the question comes to each of us as to the wisest ways, personal and patriotic,—in garden or elsewhere,—of spending them.

SHIPPING LOSSES.

London, March 27.

Submarines and mines have increased their weekly toll of British shipping. The Admiralty's report shows that in the last week 28 merchantmen were sunk, sixteen of the vessels being 1,600 tons or over and 12 under that tonnage. One fishing vessel was lost.

Nineteen merchantmen were unsuccessfully attacked. The arrivals at ports in the United Kingdom numbered 2,471; sailings, 2,488.

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The Admiralty report for the previous week showed the loss of seventeen British merchantmen by mine or submarine, while for several weeks preceding that the weekly loss was eighteen.

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The submarine losses for the week ending March 27 were the heaviest since September 16 last year, when the total number of ships destroyed during that week was the same. There were also 28 ships lost during the week ending June 23. In each of the two weeks previous to that date the losses were 32. In the May 5th week they were 46; April 28, 51; and April 21, 55, the highest number sunk in any one week since the Germans announced the commencement of their submarine warfare at the end of February last year. Since then the losses have exceeded this week's only six times and have equalled them three times.

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Paris, March 27.—The French shipping losses for the week ending March 23 by mine or submarine were one merchantman of over 1,600 tons and five merchantmen under that tonnage. Two vessels were unsuccessfully attacked.

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Rome, March 27.—Losses of Italian shipping through submarine attack during the week ended March 23, were three steamers of more than 1,500 tons, two sailing vessels of more than 100 tons and three sailing vessels of less than that tonnage, it was officially announced to-day. One steamer was unsuccessfully attacked.

WAR RISK INSURANCE MODIFIED IN BRITAIN.

The British Government has now abandoned its system of insuring all war risks of shipping at the same rate. It was never intended to supersede the open market, as it will be essential to have that in existence when the war ends, but a scheme by which all the more hazardous enterprises were insured with the Government, while the market got those which involved little risk, looked very poor business from the taxpayer's point of view. It has been decided therefore, after consultation with the various interests, to substitute for the flat rate a system of grading cargoes according to the actual risks upon particular voyages and charging proportionate insurance rates. The open market for war risk insurance will still continue in existence, and anyone who chooses may use it.

The following explanation of the action is given by the Government's "Board of Trade Journal":

It has been found necessary to modify the original plan of Government insurance of cargoes against war risks, which has been in operation since the early days of the war. The flat rate will be abolished, and cargoes will be insured at rates graded according to the risks of voyages. A branch of the War Risks Office is being established for the purposes of the new scheme and will be opened shortly. It will be remembered that upon the outbreak of hostilities an emergency War Risks Office was set up in the city and administered on behalf of the Board of Trade by an advisory committee consisting of underwriters and insurance brokers with legal experts and official representatives. The chairman of the advisory committee was, and still is, Sir Douglas Owen, formerly secretary of the Alliance Marine Insurance Company, and a member of the Inner Temple.

It was obvious both to the Government and to the insurance market that in August, 1914 a method simple in operation and capable of being administered rapidly was the first requisite. Speed and simplicity were essential, for the maritime business of the country had to be carried on free from insurance delays and at the lowest possible cost. It was also held to be important that the new system of covering war risks should be kept distinct from the insurance of marine risks, so that the ordinary machinery of the insurance market might be kept in being. Without a free market for marine insurance after the war British sea-carrying business could not be carried on.

Though the original scheme must now be modified, it served its immediate purpose very well. It was laid down that cargo carried in a British ship could be insured against war risks at a flat rate of premium, provided that the ship herself was insured under the Government's parallel scheme for hull insurance. This proviso was made in order that the movements of the ship might be under control. The Government took the whole of the war risk on cargoes offered to it and received the whole of the premium. The rates of premium were flat rates and no account was taken of the nature of the voyage. Cargoes shipped by comparatively safe routes paid the same rate of premium as cargoes shipped by dangerous routes.

There was no compulsion upon shippers to insure cargoes with the Government's War Risks Office; they could insure in the open insurance market whenever the market rate happened to be more favorable to them than the Government's flat rate. The Government's War Risks Office supplemented the market, but did not supersede the market. What, however, it did do most effectively, and was set up to do, was to prevent unreasonably high rates from being charged in the market and also to prevent any cargo in a British ship from being delayed through want of insurance. It is not too much to say that the country's cargo business could not have been carried on for a week after war broke out but for the establishment of the War Risks Office.

The scheme provided that the Government's flat rate of premium should not be less than 1 per cent and not more than 5 per cent of the insured values of the cargoes covered. The rate started at five guineas and was from time to time reduced. For a long time it remained at the minimum of 1 per cent—after the German cruisers had been driven off the seas—but the submarine activity introduced a new factor, the losses increased, and the rate was gradually advanced until it reached the maximum of 5 per cent. Losses continued to be suffered and to exceed in amount the premiums paid into the funds of the War Risks Office. It became than a matter for consideration whether the rates, at least, for certain hazardous voyages, should not be raised beyond the original maximum of 5 per cent. But an advance in the maximum would not necessarily have met the deficit in the funds between the losses suffered and the premiums—for reasons which are inherent in the system of charging flat rates irrespective of the risks of actual voyages. For alongside the War Risks Office stands the open marine insurance market, which charges rates based upon what underwriters, in their professional judgment, regard as the actual risks of particular voyages.

The cargoes proceeding upon the less hazardous voyages are charged rates less than the Government's flat rate, and these cargoes—so far as is possible for shippers to obtain the necessary amount of cover—are insured in the market. On the other hand, the market can always protect itself against accepting cargoes upon the more hazardous risks by charging rates in excess of the Government's flat rate. The tendency has been—and always must be, to whatever height a flat rate be raised—for the best risks to go to the market and the worst risks to the Government War Risks Office. When the War Risks Office has received a share in the better risks (those of cargoes shipped upon the least hazardous routes) it has been because there was more cargo seeking insurance than the open market was willing or able to cover. This financial disadvantage to the War Risks Office is inherent in the system originally adopted of a flat rate irrespective of voyage.

U. S. SHIPPING BOARD REPORTS ON WORK.

Figures on the progress of shipbuilding in the United States were made public last week, at Washington by the Shipping Board, as a result of a debate in the Senate during which officials said statements had been made based on inaccurate information.

Since the shipping board began its work, 188 vessels have been launched, of which 103 have been completed and put into service. The launchings were divided between 165 requisitioned vessels, and 23 which were built on contract for the Shipping Board, in yards that were constructed for the purpose, and which had only just been put into operation. Eleven of the launchings were wood, all the remainder being steel.

Twelve contract steel vessels have been launched and three of them completed. Three of 8,800 tons were launched at Los Angeles, two of 9,400 tons at Oakland, four of 8,800 tons at Seattle, one of 11,700 tons at San Francisco ,and two of 350,0 tons at a Great Lakes port.

With the exception of the four ships launched at Seattle, all the steel contract launchings and all the wood ships launchings have been from yards which were built from the ground up since the United States entered the war. Work on requisitioned ships has proceeded, and these ways will be filled with contract ships as soon as the others take the water. Quantity production is sought by the board in its preparations. "Quantity production will win the war," Chairman Hurley said to-day, "and that is what we are getting."