

FIRE COMPANIES NOT PROFITEERS

Referring to the continued successful conduct of British fire insurance, and the unusual conditions prevailing in 1918. In its annual review of fire insurances the London Times says:

Another ground for congratulation is found in the fact that "the cost to the assured of fire insurance was not as a rule raised during the war." Discussing rates and expenses, the Times continues:

"There was no general increase in the United Kingdom during the war, although, in accordance with the usual practice, some individual rates were raised where experience had shown that revision was necessary. In North America there was an advance last year of about 10 per cent. to meet high war taxation. At the present time French insurance offices are known to be considering the question of an all-round rise in rates, and to have approached British insurance offices with a view to making a similar advance in France. The need for such a rise is attributed to the higher cost of commissions, to increased salaries, and generally greater working expenses. In this country expenses have risen probably as much as anywhere. It is highly satisfactory that fire managers should not have felt compelled to raise their rates and that the term 'profiteers' cannot be applied to fire insurance offices.

The large increase in premiums of British companies, as indicated by annual statements for 1918 published in The Chronicle, was largely caused by higher values of the property insured.

"Higher values have been insured automatically in a large proportion of mercantile risks, because the price paid for merchandise bought was increased. Cases have lately occurred where insurances on business premises and plant have been increased by as much as 100 per cent. Business men know well enough that machinery could not be replaced on any terms approaching those obtaining before the war, and the movement in merchandise risks has been steadily toward values representing those now obtaining. There is reason to believe that owners of private property have not yet shown the same appreciation."

The London Times review may be considered of great interest, as a very substantial proportion of the business of British offices is transacted on this continent, in addition to that transacted in almost every other country in the world. The British fire offices were largely interested during hostilities in insuring munition factories both in the United States and Canada, although the reviewer states, "from a purely business point of view this class of business did not attract all the offices."

PERSONALS

Mr. J. Sandeman Allen, marine manager of the Phoenix Assurance Co. of England, who recently paid a brief visit to Canada, sailed from New York for England last week. We understand the Phoenix is seriously considering the organization of a Casualty Company in the United States, and definite action will be taken as soon as Mr. Allen submits a report, as the result of his investigations, to

General Manager Sir Gerald Ryan and the board of directors of the Phoenix.

Mr. J. R. Macdonald, joint manager of the Mount Royal Insurance Co., is at present in the West, visiting agencies of the company in important centres.

Mr. H. H. York, Toronto, Ontario inspector of the Mount Royal, spent a few days recently in Montreal.

Mr. William Aeneas MacKay, general manager of the London & Lancashire Life & General Insurance Association, who recently spent a few days in New York, on his arrival from England, is at present in Montreal. The London & Lancashire Life & General has been operating its fire department in the United States for the past two or three years and is gradually building up a satisfactory business in that country. Mr. MacKay will spend a few days in Canada before returning to England, and some important announcement may early be looked for in connection with increased facilities for agents and the future expansion of the company's business throughout the Dominion. Mr. Alex. Bissett, the company's Canadian manager, met Mr. MacKay at Halifax a few days ago and accompanied him to New York.

The Northern Assurance Company of London, England, has received a Dominion license dated August 7th to transact the business of accident, sickness and automobile insurance in Canada in addition to fire.

We understand the Essex Union Insurance Company of London has applied for powers to write all classes of insurance business and proposes to increase its capital from \$500,000 to \$2,500,000. At present the company only transacts re-insurance business in other than the marine branch of the business.

STRIKES

Leading bankers in the United States are inclined to regard favorably rather than otherwise the rapidity with which strike is following strike, says the Journal of Commerce, New York. This viewpoint was brought out recently in comment upon the local traction employees' demands: "The more the merrier" was one opinion.

"The more the public is inconvenienced, the more unreasonable the position labor takes, the better it will please me. We've got to face this thing and it is far better that the people should be jolted suddenly back to sane thinking than that it should be long protracted." Another statement in the same key was: "I wish that the railroad men, the traction workers, the policemen, everybody in the country, would strike simultaneously. A hard bump is more desirable than to slide down a spiked fence for the next couple of years."