APRIL'S FIRE LOSS.

The losses by fire in the United States and Canada during the month of April, as compiled from the records of the New York Journal of Commerce, reach a total of $18,597,225, as compared with $12,681,050 in April last year, an increase of $5,916,175, or about 47 per cent. The losses for the first four months of 1917 now aggregate $104,139,655, as compared with $97,555,420 for the same months of 1916 and $70,108,600 for 1915. The following table gives a comparison of the losses for April of this year with those of the preceding year, together with the losses by months for the balance of 1916:—

	1916	1917
January	$21,423,350	$36,431,770
February	24,770,770	29,587,660
March	38,680,250	17,523,000
April	12,681,050	18,597,225
Total 4 months	$97,555,420	$104,139,655
May	15,973,500	
June	12,247,500	....
July	23,013,800	....
August	10,745,000	....
September	12,244,625	....
October	17,701,375	....
November	19,898,450	....
December	22,063,325	....
Total for year	$231,442,995	....

The fire loss of 1917 so far is over $6,500,000 greater than for the same period of 1916, which was an abnormally bad year, the fire waste amounting in the first four months of 1916 to over $27,000,000 more than in the same period of 1915.

GIVING FIRE INSURANCE GRATIS TO THE DEAD BEATS.

While fire insurance companies are retrenching, a certain and justifiable saving can be made in the matter of the great waste incurred by giving away fire insurance. Thousands of policies are returned with no premium paid after being in force anywhere from a week to three months or more. In nearly every instance, if a loss had occurred, a claim would have been made. The loss of earned premium in this manner is calculated by prominent company managers as from 2 to 3 per cent. of their premium incomes.

It must also be remembered that the expense of clerical labor and stationery is as much if not greater on a "not wanted" or "not taken" policy as on one on which an honest insurer pays the premium. If any credit is to be given for fire insurance the underwriters should be protected against dead beats and the broker or agent who delivers the policy should be required to guarantee the payment of the earned premium. If he is not certain enough of his customer to do this he should collect on delivery. The stopping of this leak would save so much money that the gain from cutting off blotters, etc., would seem insignificant.—*N. Y. Journal of Commerce.*

An interesting use to which life insurance can be put is drawn attention to by the Phœnix Assurance Company of London, which has published a prospectus in England pointing out the applicability of term insurance to ensure repayment of bankers' and stockholders' advances. There should be an unusual demand for such contracts at the present time, in view of the borrowings effected by many of the public who subscribed to the latest British War Loan.

CUTTING FIRE INSURANCE EXPENSES.

Canadian fire insurance agents who are prone to thinking their lot is not a happy one should take a look at Queensland. In that State, as we learn from the Monetary Times, the Government has tackled the thorny problem of the fire companies' expense ratio, and handled it without gloves. Commissions have been limited to 10 per cent. and can be paid only to licensed brokers or agents. Payments to general agents are limited to 5 per cent. to one such in the northern district and one such in the central district.

The stock fire companies' tariffs are at the same time cut 20 per cent., and can only be raised if results in any district or class show the need of increased rates. This cut is met by the above reduction in agents' commission, and by doing away with a 10 per cent. discount to the insured, which had been uniformly made to compete with the mutual companies. Now the mutual companies will quote the same rate as the stock companies.

The recent death of Dr. John L. Davison, chief medical referee of the Imperial Life, is much regretted. Dr. Davison had occupied his important position since the Company's earliest days, and his able and broad-minded conduct of the affairs of his department has been an important factor in the Company's success.