

QUERIES' COLUMN.

In order to furnish our readers with information we propose to devote this column to replies to correspondents. Letters should be addressed to "THE CHRONICLE, Enquiry Department, Montreal."

Answers will only be given to such communications as bear the writer's name, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and only to questions referring to matters of general interest in regard to which the Editor of Queries' Column will exercise his own discretion.

1487.—A. C. S., Winnipeg.—United States Rubber Co., common has now had a good advance on dividend prospects. Action on the dividend, however, may not be taken for six months to come. On any decided reaction the stock is speculatively attractive. The next meeting of directors will be held early in January, 1906.

1488.—J. H. J., Montreal.—The new issue of Great Northern Railway Company stock is not in any way connected with the ore land holdings of the company which are steadily appreciating in value and will eventually show satisfactory returns to shareholders.

1489.—A. F. M., Ottawa.—Yes, wireless messages have already passed between Ottawa and Montreal through the De Forrest Company's equipment.

THE SEPTEMBER FIRE LOSS.

The fire loss of the United States and Canada for the month of September as compiled from the carefully kept records of the New York "Commercial Bulletin," shows a total of \$13,715,250.

The losses by months for the first nine months of 1903, 1904 and 1905 were as follows:

	1905.	1904.	1903.
January.....	\$ 16,378,100	\$21,970,200	\$13,166,350
February.....	25,591,000	90,051,000	16,090,000
March.....	14,751,400	11,212,150	9,907,650
April.....	11,901,350	23,623,000	13,549,000
May.....	12,736,250	15,221,400	16,366,800
June.....	11,789,800	10,646,700	14,648,350
July.....	13,173,250	11,923,200	12,838,600
August.....	11,435,600	9,715,200	8,428,350
September.....	13,715,250	14,387,650	9,939,450
Total 9 mos.....	\$131,436,000	\$208,560,500	\$114,971,550
October.....		\$12,866,200	\$ 10,409,800
November.....		11,515,000	13,589,550
December.....		19,422,350	17,224,700
Total for year.....		\$252,364,650	\$156,195,600

During September there were 270 fires of a destructiveness, each, of \$10,000 or more. They may be classified as follows:

\$ 10,000 to \$ 20,000.....	107
20,000 to 30,000.....	58
30,000 to 50,000.....	29
50,000 to 75,000.....	34
75,000 to 100,000.....	10
100,000 to 200,000.....	23
200,000 to 811,000.....	8
Total.....	270

The larger fires during the month just closed were the following:

Portland, Ore., grain elevator and dock.....	\$210,000
Chicago, Ill., grain elevator.....	725,000
Nome, Alaska, sixty stores and dwellings.....	300,000
Grangeville, Ida., department store & other.....	230,000
St. Joseph, Mo., wholesale furniture warehouse.....	200,000
Charleston, W. Va., several business houses.....	200,000
Butte, Mont., department store and other.....	811,000
Spokane, Wash., wholesale grocery and other.....	200,000

The Pacific Coast figures very expensively in the September list of fires. The Baltimore fire in February, 1904, involved loss of \$70,000,000. The two years 1904 and 1905 compare very unfavourably with 1903, even with the conflagration extra eliminated, the remainder would still be in excess of the figures for the first nine months of 1905.

PROMINENT TOPICS.

EXPROPRIATIONS AGAIN.—When a few years ago the City Council thought it well to go to Quebec to secure amendments to the consolidated charter, which had been prepared with so much care, and surrounded with so many safeguards, it was pointed out in THE CHRONICLE that a very serious error was being committed. Several illustrations of this mistaken policy have been presented. The latest is that in connection with the expropriation proceedings for the widening of portion of Amherst street. The framers of the consolidated charter deemed it expedient and essential that the city should not enter into any expropriations until she had funds on hand for that purpose, for this widening and expropriation business has been the cause of the large debt incurred by the city. This expropriation law has been stigmatized by the writer, on more than one occasion, as being conceived in iniquity, and carried out by jobbery and corruption. Every expropriation which has been carried out so far has cost the city nearly double the amount anticipated and provided for. The sooner the city reinstates the expropriation clause in the consolidated charter, the better it will be for the interests of the community generally. The moment the city goes to Quebec to have its charter amended, or altered, it opens the door for private interests to secure amendments for their own advantage, and, unfortunately, they too often succeed. Charter tinkering is most undesirable and no changes should be asked for by the City Council which are not of the most urgent character, or clearly in the interests of the city as a whole.

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THE MOUNTAIN LOOK-OUT.—The proposal to erect a new building on the site known as the "Look-out" on the Mountain, in which a restaurant would be included, has met with strenuous opposition from a number of prominent citizens who represent the "Parks and Playgrounds Association" of this