FEBRUARY'S HEAVY FIRE LOSS.

The New York "Journal of Commerce" says:—The fire loss of the United States and Canada during the month of February, as compiled from our daily records, aggregates the abnormal and discouraging sum of $18,469,000. The seriousness of the increase is shown in the following comparative table exhibiting losses for the first two months of 1897, 1898 and 1899:—

	1897.	1898.	1899.
January	$12,049,700	$9 472,500	$10,718,000
February	8,676,750	12,629,300	18,469,000
Totals	$20,726,450	$22,101,800	$29,187,000

It will be seen that excessive fire waste in February has made such a difference in the total for the first two months that it will unquestionably put the 1899 record ahead of that of 1898, which was quite large. During the month just closed there were 279 fires of a greater destructiveness than $10,000 each. They may be classified as below:—

$10,000 to $20,000	111
20,000 to 30,000	47
30,000 to 50,000	45
50,000 to 75,000	30
75,000 to 100,000	15
100,000 to 200,000	13
200,000 to 895,000	18
Total	279

The principal February losses were these:—

Columbus, Ohio, dry goods store and other	$750,000
Philadelphia, Pa., several factories	610,000
Winnipeg, Man., hotel and other	400,000
New York city, bag factory and warehouses	350,000
Toronto, Ont., wholesale crockery store	200,000
Chicago, Ill., book and stationery store	650,000
New York city, brass works	250,000
Chicago, Ill., storage warehouse and other	716,000
Cincinnati, Ohio, hat and clothing factories	350,000
Philadelphia, Pa., business block	400,000
Port Washington, Wis., chair factory and other	425,000
Brooklyn, N.Y., Navy Yard Machine shop	895,000
New York city, grain elevator	200,000
Chicago, Ill., business block	225,000
Chicago, Ill., packing company's warehouse	200,000
Muscogee, I. T., various	400,000
Minneapolis, Minn., newspaper office and other	236,000
Holyoke, Mass., clothing store and other	310,000

Chicago and Philadephia have suffered such heavy losses as to settle the question of underwriting profit from them for the entire year; and, altogether, between the low rates at which business has been written for about two years and the increased loss ratio, the general fire insurance outlook for 1899 is exceptionally bad and eventually means numerous retirements. Nothing short of immediate and marked advances in rates can restore the business to a profitable plane.

Notes and Items.

(AT HOME AND ABROAD.)

THOMAS F. HANLON, who has had many years experience as an Underwriter and Adjuster of losses, has opened an office in Washington, D.C.

SIR MONTAGU FREDERICK OMMANEY, K.C.M.G., has been appointed a director of the London Assurance Corporation in place of Mr. Edwin Gower, who has resigned.

PHŒNIX ASSURANCE CO., OF LONDON, ENG.—We understand that the well-known Firm of Patterson & Son, General Agents for the Dominion, for the above Company, have taken a very commodious suite of offices in the handsome new building, erected by the London & Lancashire Life Insurance Company, on St. James St., in this City. It is expected that the building will be ready for occupation about the 1st May, when the business of the Phnoenix will be transferred from 35 St. Francois Xavier St., where it has been so ably conducted for many years by the Messrs. Patterson.

THE GIANTS EXCHANGE PLEASANTRIES.—The new policies issued by the three great United States life companies have been made the subject of much discussion by the respective rival agents. Circulars reviewing and criticizing the latest policies of each of the companies are being exchanged. Copies of these circulars have reached this office, and with them a poetical comment on the position of affairs calculated to make a stutterer die of vexation. The teasing, tormenting, tautological, alliterative versification runs as follows, and bears the initials G. W. P.

A tutor who tooted the flute
Tried to tutor two tutors to toot;
Said the two to the tutor, "Is it harder to toot, or
To tutor two tutors to toot?"

FIRE INSURANCE TAXATION. — Assembly-man Cross, of Steuben, recently introduced a bill at Albany, to provide for the taxation of fire insurance companies doing business in the State of New York. It provides that all fire insurance companies doing business in that State shall for the purpose of taxation under the act be classified into domestic, State and foreign companies. Domestic companies shall include only companies organized under the laws of this State. State companies shall include every fire insurance company incorporated under the laws of any State of the United States other than this State. Foreign insurance companies shall include every fire insurance company incorporated under the laws of any State, nation, government or country other than one of the States of the United States, and shall include every State or domestic company whose charter is owned or a majority of whose stock is controlled by, or whose business is carried on in the interest or benefit of any fire insurance company incorporated under the laws of any State, nation, government or country other than one of the States of the United States.