

Insurance Premiums are a good investment in Quebec, a sure return sooner or later to Policy-holders. Quebec has been unfortunate and fortunate. Unfortunate because of by-laws that allow the construction of so many frame buildings within the city limits, more unfortunate because of its defective appliances for extinguishing fires, and most unfortunate for having rulers who suffer this state of things to continue after the repeated warnings of previous conflagrations. But it is fortunate as well, fortunate in its founder. Champlain must have had in his minds eye the usual perversity and deal-headedness of city fathers, and said to himself "here will I found a city that, despite aldermanic stupidity, loose building inspection, and chronic failure of water at the right time, cannot, from the contour of the ground alone, burn down in a single conflagration, nay, nor in two or three."

Firemen, from the volunteer torch-boy to the veteran branchman, are brave souls ever, and Quebec possesses no exception to that rule in her brigade. "B" battery men are good and true as well. They all worked heroically at the late fire; but the bravest men must give way or perish before an Isandula of flame.

There never was a great fire that did not teach some lesson, and some learnt it, others have waited till the next lesson. Perhaps the lesson of this one will be heeded by some who neglected the last. Perhaps some places that have never learned a lesson will teach the next by a great experience.

Is there no system by which towns and cities can be inspected with a view to the prevention of possible conflagrations. The chiefs of Brigades in the great thickly built cities of the United States do not wait for fires to break out, and suddenly become inspired with knowledge necessary to the confining of the flames within certain limits. They know every inch of the ground, construction and height of the buildings, every weak point where fire will be most disastrous, and each point of vantage where it can be most successfully combated. The thorough Fireman acts not alone upon what he sees, but upon what he knows, and this must be learnt beforehand. This is a question that must be answered by a civic authorities in all young, growing cities. Some may take the trouble to investigate the experience of others, and find out their danger, in the calm light of day. Some will procrastinate until they awaken to a personal experience, and read in the sad black-letter of a thousand ruined homes, the tale of their own criminal negligence.

We have given a tabulated statement of the number, construction and occupation of the buildings in the burnt district of Quebec. One quarter of the buildings were brick and stone, (but not by any means first-class, shingle roofs being a large percentage), and three-quarters wood. These figures we leave to the contemplation of the underwriter who has still large lines, in the "wooded retreats" of Quebec and other cities, for which decidedly rustic rates are received.

The following are the losses of the different Companies as correctly as they can be ascertained up to the present:—

Commercial Union.....	12,000
Guardian.....	15,800
Imperial.....	29,000
Liverpool & London & Globe.....	45,000
London Corporation.....	6,000
Lancashire.....	33,000
North British.....	60,000

Northern.....	18,000
Phoenix.....	7,000
Queen.....	35,000
Royal.....	40,000
British America.....	11,000
Canada Fire & Marine.....	2,500
Citizen.....	14,090
Dominion.....	15,000
Quebec.....	375,000
Royal Canadian.....	41,000
Sovereign.....	21,000
Western.....	12,600
Ætna.....	50,00
Hartford.....	2,500

TOTAL..... \$800,490

LOCAL BOARDS.

Last month we referred to the Toronto Board of Fire Underwriters in our article on the benefits of Local Boards to Insurance Companies, and we now briefly sketch the history of a Board that has been in continued existence for nearly sixteen years without even a suspension of its tariff of rates, which clearly "proves the possibility of such organization in other places," as contended for by us in the article referred to.

The New Brunswick Board of Fire Underwriters was formed in St. John in 1866, by eleven agents, all that were in the business at that period, who, from the continuous decrease in the rates of premium, felt the necessity of adopting some means to prevent further demoralization of their business. The late Mr. Edward Allison, then representing the "Liverpool and London and Globe," was appointed President, and the late Mr. W. J. Starr, agent of the "Continental" and "Lorillard" Insurance Companies, the Secretary. The first tariff adopted by the Board, went into operation on 1st February, 1866, and consisted of nine short pages in very large type.

In 1869, Mr. Allison, President, and Mr. C. E. L. Jarvis, agent of the "Queen," Secretary, the Board revised their tariff, which resulted in the January, 1870, tariff, containing a constitution of eleven articles and by-laws in nine sections, with forty items of risks and minimum ratings for each of three building classifications. This tariff then gave place to that of January, 1873, which contained the Constitution, By-laws and Rules of Construction, Ratings for Ordinary and Special Risks on Public Buildings, on Hotels, on a number of Brick and Brick-cased Buildings in the city and adjoining Town of Portland, on Special Hazards, on Sundry framed Buildings and on Ranges of Buildings. These various classifications of Special Risks being recapitulated for the purpose of easy reference under an alphabetically arranged Street Index, which, with tables of Short-time Rates and Ship-building Rates, made a book of 107 pages. This Tariff originated a system of Specific Rating in the Province, and its advantages over general ratings, solely, became apparent to every member of the Board, so much so, that each succeeding Tariff has contained an increased number of Specific Ratings. When this Tariff came into force, Mr. James T. Kaye was President, Mr. Allison having retired from business, and Mr. Jarvis continued as Secretary.

In 1876, when Mr. S. J. King was Secretary, another revision was made, which continued in force until the greater part of its contents was made inoperative by the great conflagration of the 20th June, 1877, sweeping out of existence most of the risks specifically rated.