

were adopted in this country the public would obtain each year more complete and satisfactory information with regard to the actual value of a company's investments than it is sometimes possible to obtain under the Schedule of the Act as it is now framed."

FIRE LOSSES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA FOR AUGUST.

The loss by fire in the United States and Canada during the month of August, as compiled from the carefully kept records of the "Journal of Commerce and Commercial Bulletin" aggregate \$9,641,600, or nearly \$2,000,000 less than the same month in 1905. This brings the total fire waste for the first eight months of the current year to the enormous total of \$389,735,200. The fires during August were mostly moderate in size and were fairly well distributed throughout the country, Chicago and St. Paul being prominent factors in contributing to the aggregate. There were during August 222 fires where the loss reached \$10,000 or over in each case.

CANADA A RIVAL OF THE UNITED STATES IN ELECTRICAL MACHINERY.

The largest generator ever made in this country has just been made ready for shipment to British Columbia from the works of the Canadian Westinghouse Company, of Hamilton. The purchaser is the British Columbia Electric Railway Company, of Vancouver. The generator is 2,000 horse power, 3 phase, 7,200 alternation, 200 revolutions per minute, engine type for direct connection with the water wheel. The order also includes one rotary converter of 1,350 horse power, 550 volts, 3 phase, 7,200 alternations, 400 revolutions per minute, and eight air blast transformers each of 733 horse power, 2,200 volts to 24,200 volts, 7,200 alternations. The necessary switch boards and regulating and controlling the devices were also manufactured in this plant, and will be shipped with the balance of the order in the course of a day or two.

The new machinery is required by the Vancouver company to provide added power to meet the ever-increasing demand of Vancouver and vicinity. It is the fourth generator of the size ordered by the Vancouver company, but the other three were supplied by the Westinghouse company from its Pittsburgh works previous to the building of the Hamilton works. The one now ready for shipment is by long odds the largest ever manufactured in Canada.

GUANAJUATO MINES.

It is estimated by Mr. Dwight Furness, United States Consul, that before the end of the present year Guanajuato, Mexico, will be producing gold and silver bullion at the rate of \$70,000,000 annually. Four causes are assigned for this, modern

transportation facilities, the installation of modern mining and milling machinery, electrically-transmitted water power, and the cyanide process of ore reduction.

Guanajuato is said to be the most beautiful mining city in the world. It has a population of 42,000. It has some of the finest specimens of architecture, on the continent, in its public buildings, and residences, the expenditure being lavish in this direction, according as rich bonanzas were opened by the inhabitants. Surrounded by its mines, it stands as a remarkable monument to their permanency.

SAN FRANCISCO.

Not less than 20,000 suits against German fire insurance companies may be brought in the next few months to secure payment of policies for which liability is now denied. Litigation unparalleled in magnitude in this line is about to begin. The losses of policy-holders who looked to German and Austrian companies for payment are estimated at \$20,000,000 in round numbers.

Within the next fortnight many suits will be prepared to be submitted to the United States Circuit Court in this city. An equal or greater number will be shaped up for presentation to the courts of Germany and Austria.

It is reported that a small percentage of insurance, in proportion to value, was carried on most of the property destroyed at San Francisco. This is a contingency which companies are frequently confronted with, and affords a strong argument for the use of the co-insurance clause.

Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for views expressed by correspondents.

LONDON LETTER.

FINANCE.

London, Sept. 1, 1906.

At last after many years of waiting the Bill for the Amendment of the Bills of Exchange Act has become law having received the Royal assent. Bankers can now carry on their business feeling quite sure that a most unrighteous liability has been removed and one which ought never to have been placed upon them.

By the famous Gordon decision a few years back banks which credited their customers with the proceeds of crossed cheques before these cheques were cleared were considered by the Law Courts to have lost the protection of the Bill of Exchange Act. In other words, they were not protected from any liability to the true owner of the crossed cheque which had found its way into the hands of some one who was not the true owner, and who, being a customer of the bank, paid it into his account with the bank and the bank in turn obtained payment on the cheque. To have obeyed the literal ruling of the Courts would have meant that bankers in the country would have refused to