

that a reasonable increase in Western banking facilities was called for.

Some additional figures taken from the Free Press help to illustrate the rapidity of the development.

#### EXPORTS AND IMPORTS.

	1901.	1906.
Winnipeg .....	\$6,139,525	\$17,875,088
Brandon .....	341,656	1,118,247
Calgary .....	2,307,676	
Lethbridge .....	669,509	1,301,096
Port Arthur .....	588,124	5,798,042
Kenora .....	20,381	365,643

The fire insurance premiums paid in Manitoba have increased from \$752,775 in 1901 to \$1,823,790 in 1906. In bank clearings, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Calgary have all increased at a very rapid ratio.

It is easy to see, by studying the addresses and remarks made at bank annual meetings in recent years, that the West has thrown out a glamorous attraction for the financial institutions of the East. One after the other the banks that were not represented out there have entered the field, and once they entered Winnipeg they caught the fever and extended into the tributary country. And the officers of other institutions which have not yet taken the step, have, on more than one occasion, thought it well to explain to their shareholders, in annual meeting assembled, why they have not done so.

A glance at the list of western branches shows that the bulk of them have been established by strong banks with a long experience behind them. This feature it is that imparts strength and confidence in the situation.



#### THE RESULTS OF CANADIAN FIRE INSURANCE FOR 1906.

We have at length received the Dominion Superintendent's Abstract of the Insurance Companies' Statements for the past year. This has been later in coming to hand than usual, owing, no doubt, to the investigation into the affairs of the Canadian life insurance companies. With regard to fire insurance we find the following showing as compared with that of 1905.

	Amount of Policies written.	Net Premiums
Canadian Co's.....	\$321,134,045	\$ 3,193,470
British Co's .....	672,298,145	8,601,960
American Co's.....	213,613,168	2,916,600
1906.....	\$1,207,045,358	\$14,712,030
1905.....	1,140,095,372	14,285,671
Increase.....	\$66,949,986	\$426,359

The premium increase does not show the growth that it has done in former years, but this is accounted for by the reduction in the average rate charged.

This has fallen from \$1.60 at which it stood during 1904 and 1905 to \$1.53 in 1906. This hardly bears out the complaint so frequently made that the insurance companies are always increasing rates. The reduction is doubtless owing to the increasing numbers of a superior class of buildings which have lately been, and are being, erected; as well as to improvements made in existing structures. This is confirmed when we observe that the increase in premium income of 1906 over that of 1905, when applied to the increased amount written in the former as compared with the latter year, would give only an average rate of about 60 cents per cent.

The year under review may be considered as satisfactory to the companies, the average loss ratio being 44.58 per cent. as compared with 42 per cent. for 1905. This has again had the effect of reducing the high loss ratio that ruled when calculated over a number of years, the figures for 38 years being now as follows: Premiums from 1869 to 1906 inclusive \$230,572,347; losses from 1869 to 1906 inclusive \$152,868,409. The loss ratio has thus been over 66.3 per cent., which with 30 per cent. for expenses leaves something more than 3 per cent. on the right side. This is not much and might easily be upset by a bad year or two; it is the best answer to those who are continually complaining that extortionate rates are charged by the companies.

It is too soon to judge of the business for the present year, but so far it is not by any means as satisfactory as that of the two former years. Property owners and insurers may rest assured that the only way to obtain lower rates is by reducing the fire waste. This can be done only by attending to the rules and instructions laid down by the underwriters as regards construction of buildings, fire protection and so forth; rates being based necessarily upon the hazard incurred. While upon this subject we would remark that we fully concur in a recent report made by experts upon Montreal, respecting the danger of overhead wires for lights and other purposes. Not only are these a constant menace to life, but they preclude our firemen, with our narrow streets, from handling a blaze with the speed so essential to the checking of its progress. Ladders can be raised but slowly and with difficulty under present conditions, and the men are seriously hampered in climbing up or down a building. If all wires were placed underground, we are convinced that many fires which verge upon conflagrations could be extinguished with comparatively little damage. Remove the hazard and rates will fall.



THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE (University of London) this year, for the first time, held examinations on insurance subjects.