Fire Insurance in Canada During 1919.

By C. S. WAINWRIGHT

While 1919 will go down into history as "Peace Year," following the termination of the Great War, it has been anything but a year of peace in industry, in business or in politics; on the contrary, it has, all over the world, been a year of "riots, strikes and civil commotions." Notwithstanding Canada's share of these adverse conditions it has been a year of great prosperity throughout the Dominion, that is, if a general increase in almost all classes of business (due to advances in values of stocks, building materials, etc.), as well as in bank deposits, bank clearings, etc., accompanied by vast expenditures of money by individuals, by municipalities and by governments, can be taken as a criterion of prosperity. The discontinuance of numerous plants formerly engaged in the manufacture of munitions of warfare and the existence of other post-war conditions do not seem to have had any general adverse effect. As a matter of fact, a large number of erstwhile munition plants are now being utilized for the manufacture of implements and commodities appropriate to times of peace.

On the whole, it may be said that no single event of outstanding significance or importance to the fire insurance business has occurred during the year—that is to say, nothing unusual has happened to cause any marked change in the methods of conducting the business. This is said, however, with the qualification that hardly a day comes but brings with it some new aspect or phase of the business to be dealt with by fire insurance men. It is only after a retrospective glance over a few years that one remembers and realizes the number and character of these frequently occurring changes, affecting and altering as they do the ways and methods of conducting the business.

YEAR'S "FIRE-WASTE."

It is pleasing to be able to record that no serious conflagration occurred during 1919. The value of the property destroyed in Canada during the eleven months ending 30th November is estimated at $21,-000,000, so that it is altogether likely that the "fire-waste" for 1919 will approximate $25,000,-000, as compared with $32,000,000 for 1918, and $20,000,000 for each of the years 1917 and 1916.

LARGE FIRES DURING THE YEAR.

The following is a list of some of the largest fires occurring during the year (the figures given being newspaper estimates):

JANUARY	
Portage la Prairie, Man., Grain Elevator	$ 400,000
Fort William, Ont., Grain Elevator	250,000
Halifax, N.S., Business Block (Roy Bldg.)	250,000
Montreal, P.Q., Cadillac Motors Workshops	500,00
Montreal, P.Q., Motor Warehouse, also Hudson's Bay Company's Warehouse	1,000,000
Chicoutimi, P.Q., Roman Catholic Ch.	350,000
Vancouver, B.C., Construction Co's Bldg.	250,000
MARCH	
Montreal, P.Q., Sohmer Recreation Park	500,000
JUNE	
Cross Point, P.Q., Lumber (opposite Campbellton, N.B.)	500,000
Saskatoon, Sask., Quaker Oats Plant	500,000
Quebec, P.Q., Storehouse for Stoves	500,000
AUGUST	
Port Colborne, Ont., Grain Elevator	1,500,000
SEPTEMBER	
Oromocto, N.B., Lumber Yard Mills, etc.	250,000
NOVEMBER	
Vancouver, B.C., B.C. Fir & Cedar Lumber Co's Plant and 3,000,000 ft. lumber	250,000
Trois Pistoles, P.Q., Saw Mill, Lumber, etc.	800,000
Montreal, P.Q. Laval University	400,000

RESULTS OF YEAR'S BUSINESS.

It is altogether likely that the year will not be an unsatisfactory one for fire insurance companies generally. There will no doubt be a considerable increase over the previous year in the total amount received by them for fire insurance premiums, chiefly due to increased values, etc. In addition they have derived a considerable income from the various "side lines" that are now being written by most fire companies.

CLASSES FOR WHICH COMPANIES MAY BE LICENSED.

In this connection it is interesting to note that —whereas the Dominion Insurance Act of 1910 permitted fire insurance companies to transact only five of the folllowing classes of insurance, viz.: Fire, explosion, tornado, inland transportation, sprinkler leakage, hail and weather insurance—under the present Act (1917) the Superintendent of Insurance may, upon the requisite deposits being made, license a fire company to transact ten of the following classes, viz.: Fire, explosion, tornado, inland tranportation, sprinkler leakage, hail and weather insurance, automobile, bond, burglary, accident, credit, guarantee, plate glass, sickness and steam