tory reply is not received from the Council agreeing to make these improvements, they will raise the premium rates in Montreal on Monday.

The Committee of Five of the thirty-five insurance companies that acted in unison in the settlement of losses in San Francisco has reported that the total loss of every description by earthquake and fire was about $1,000,000,000. The estimated value of the property insured by 233 companies was $315,000,000, on which the loss amounted to $180,000,000. The thirty-five companies settled claims to the amount of $64,531,935.

PACIFIC COAST FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.

This company is seventeen years old, and does business almost exclusively in dwelling house risks. A new issue of shares has been sold and part of the uncalled capital has been called up, so that the paid capital is $81,330, the amount subscribed being $115,500. By the transfer of $11,486 from the profits of the year the re-insurance reserve is brought up to the Dominion Government standard. A surplus of $20,928 is shown and the shares are selling at 50 per cent. premium.

The board of directors has been increased to number 18 persons, who reside in Seattle, Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary and Winnipeg, a number of them quite wealthy men, prominent in business. Mr. Langlois, for some time president and general manager, gives up the general management into the hands of Mr. R. H. Duke, hitherto secretary, who in noting the remarkably large business of 1906 stated that the premium income had increased by 40 per cent., and the reserve and surplus in much greater degree.

OTTAWA FIRE INSURANCE CO.

The seventh annual meeting of the Ottawa Fire Insurance Company has been held. The company has done a considerable business, showing an increased premium income and a fair underwriting profit for 1906. The fire losses which in the previous year were almost 60 per cent. of the premiums are less than 49 per cent. now, which is a comforting thing. Nearly $10,000 was obtained from interest and rents and a profit was derived from the sale of the company's real estate. A dividend of 5 per cent. has been declared and a call of 10 per cent. on the subscribed capital of $250,000 is made.

An addition of $10,000 is made out of the earnings of the year to Conflagration Contingent Fund, the same sum having been contributed last year. This is a satisfactory feature. Something of the kind would be a good move for others of our companies. This company's total assets now approach $300,000; its reinsurance reserve is $128,000; conflagration fund, $20,000, and balance at credit of profit and loss, $31,029. Changes have been made in the company's Western agencies. Messrs. Irvine and Austin are general agents at Calgary for Alberta; McCallum, Hill and Co., at Regina, for Saskatchewan. A branch office has been opened in Montreal with Mr. Pickering as resident agent. The Ottawa has many friends, who will wish it increased business and success.

QUEEN CITY FIRE INSURANCE CO.

This company has long preferred a limited field of operation and a select class of business, confined almost entirely to mercantile and non-hazardous risks. There is a marked increase in the volume of its 1906 business, which yielded $102,074 premium income and showed 9,341 policies covering $7,247,000. Losses and expenses absorbed only 40.35 per cent. of the premiums, an excellent record. The result of the year's trading is the payment of the usual dividend and the carrying of $33,393 to profit and loss, making that fund now $73,855, and the reserve fund $50,000, the capital stock, fully paid up, being $100,000.

MILLERS' AND MANUFACTURERS' INSURANCE CO.

The twenty-second yearly meeting of the Millers' and Manufacturers' Insurance Company has been held. It has [illegible]077 policies at risk covering $2 518,000. The year's income from premiums and interest was $114,556; and after deducting reinsurances and cancelled policies, and paying $33,710 losses and expenses—30 per cent. of the premiums—there is $56,961 at the credit of revenue account. The efforts of the directors are now properly directed to the building up of reserve. Its capital uncalled, undertakings in force, and cash assets amount to $193,133.

REFORM IN BUILDING.

Contrasts are often made between the lesser devastation caused by fire in European countries than in our own. The extent of the fire-waste in the United States and Canada has in fact become a scandal, so enormous is it and so disproportioned to the experience of other lands. A strong article on the why and wherefore of such wasteful national excess appears in the February issue of the "Canadian Cement and Concrete Review and Fire-proof Building Record." After quoting comparative figures of fire loss in Europe and America, that journal says:

There are several contributory causes for this state of things. The appalling fire loss is partly due to the carelessness of the people and to the peculiarities of the climate. But the great underlying cause, and the key to the situation, is the defective building construction which is operative all over the country, not excluding even our best-built cities. In this respect America has to take a step back to the primeval days, when compared with the substantial methods and material which are employed by the older countries. As one insurance authority remarks: "America may fairly be said to be putting up its buildings for the sake of burning them."

A great responsibility rests with the architect. Say what you may, on the architect lies the whole burden of responsibility. When a big fire occurs, and loss of life is probably added to loss of property, "Who is to blame?" is the first question asked. The people are usually responsible for the money for building. They detail in a general way what they desire in the matter of space, and so forth. But they cannot be expected to stipulate means and methods for preventing its destruction by fire. This is the province of the architect alone. Has he done his duty in the past? According to Mr. W. Fitzpatrick, consulting architect, Washington, D.C., there are in the United States some 11,000,500 buildings. Their value is something like $14,500,000,000. Of that number there are but 4,000 whose authors even claim as at all fireproof. Of these 4,000 there is but one building, the Underwriters' Laboratories, in Chicago, where all the known methods of fireproofing are assembled under one roof. One is inclined to become somewhat cynical on the subject of American progress when that great continent can boast of but one absolutely fireproof building. The others of even the 4,000 are damageable from 20 to 90 per cent. of their cost value.

The fact is we need architects who are not afraid to sacrifice, in building construction, a little beauty for solidity, a little art for safety, and a little external or internal fussiness for fireproof qualities. An owner intends to spend so much money on his building. The architect exceeds that sum in his estimates. The owner is dissatisfied. Then the architect, not wishing to do away with an ornamental cupola or a swell, little veranda, rips off some of the fireproofing, perhaps even of the steel. Any useful part of the building may be cut out if he can only preserve that beautiful exterior.

When we get the architect who knows, and who is not afraid, we shall have fewer disastrous conflagrations. Reinforced concrete has proved its value as a fireproof and heat-resisting material. It has withstood the rumbling of the earthquake and the ravages of the flames. It is questionable whether for many years to come anything better will be discovered. In some respects the use of the material is experimental. It is so simply because some of those who use it are content to have it slapped together by their laborers, without science, and with just a benediction and a hope that the building will stand. When reinforced concrete is used intelligently there will be no outcry against it. When it is used in such a manner that huge buildings collapse it takes away public faith. Progress is then difficult. There are a hundred little ways in which the architect can make his building fireproof. There are a dozen means in which he can add to the fireproof efficacy of the reinforced concrete structure. The absolutely fireproof building must come, and it is for the most up-to-date architect to be the pioneer.