

for investments yielding more, by one or two per cent., might have obtained had they been less careful in selecting only first-class securities. Competition is now so acute and the demand for low-priced life assurance so active as to constitute a temptation to the companies to realize as large an income as possible from their assets. It is to their honour, and should be highly to the satisfaction of the policyholders, that safety has been their guiding principle rather than a high rate of interest.

The rapidity with which the funds owned by life companies operating in Canada are growing is shown by the mean amount of assets, as above explained, of the Canadian companies having risen from \$43,542,782 in 1898 to \$53,614,037 in 1900; the British companies, operating in Canada, from \$63,480,923 in 1898 to \$69,010,667 in 1900, and the American, operating in Canada, from \$828,275,000 in 1898 to \$984,892,664 in 1900. The respective increases were: Canadian companies, \$10,071,255; British, \$5,529,744; American, \$156,617,657. What the future of interest rates will be is a problem for the solution of which we do not possess the requisite data. But, so far as human foresight extends and experience indicates, the life assurance companies for years to come will find the present interest rates on which their calculations are based amply sufficient for their obligations which have been entered into under the influence of conservative, financial principles.

FIRE INSURANCE IN CANADA, 1900.

The tabulated returns of Fire Insurance in Canada for 1900, that appear in this issue, are those published by the Superintendent of Insurance.

The gross amount of policies, new and renewed, taken during the year by fire companies was \$803,428,654, which is greater by \$47,171,556 than the amount taken in 1899. The premiums charged thereon amounted in 1900 to \$10,031,735.34, being \$715,049.98 greater than the amount charged the previous year. The rate of premiums (1.249) does not differ to any material extent from that of 1899 (1.232). The loss rate (93.31) is 27.80 per cent. greater than the loss rate of the previous year (65.51) and 27.36 per cent. greater than the average loss rate (65.95) for the past thirty-two years, the year 1877 being excluded. The highest loss ratios between 1886 were 75.55 in 1893, and 74.37 in 1898, in all the other years the ratio was below 70, and in 1899, 1890, 1889 and 1888 below 60.

The rate per cent. of premiums charged upon risks taken is shown in the following table:—

	Gross Amount of Risks taken during the year.	Premiums charged thereon.	Rate of Premiums charged per cent. of Risks taken.	The same for 1899.	The same for 1898.	The same for 1897.	The same for 1896.
Canadian Co's	\$184,851,897	\$1,951,306.85	1.26	1.27	1.36	1.32	1.31
British	540,448,980	6,709,847.10	1.24	1.22	1.23	1.23	1.24
American	108,127,777	1,370,581.39	1.27	1.22	1.27	1.27	1.24
Totals	\$803,428,654	\$10,031,735.34	1.25	1.23	1.26	1.25	1.25

The increase in the amounts taken in 1900 as compared with 1899 among Canadian companies is \$24,342,702, among British companies there is an increase of \$15,468,638, and among American companies there is an increase of \$7,360,216, making a total of \$47,171,556. In 1899 the increases in amount of fire insurance written among the companies, reporting to the office of the Superintendent, of Insurance, Ottawa, were, Canadians \$19,502,974; British \$43,575,889, and American \$12,017,546, the total increase being \$75,096,409.

Of the increase in insurance, taken in 1900, the Canadian companies are credited with 51.6 per cent., the British 32.7 per cent. and the American 15.7 per cent. The Canadian companies came through the disastrous period of 1900 with a rate of losses to premiums received of only 78 per cent., compared with 94.34 per cent. of the British companies, and 104.95 per cent. of the American companies, the latter having been struck exceedingly hard by the blows that fell upon the business generally last year. The rate of premiums charged per cent. of risk taken was practically the same in 1900 as in 1899, the difference being Canadian 1.26, 1900, against 1.27, 1899; British, 1.24 against 1.22, and American 1.27, against 1.22, the general or average rate being 1.25 in 1900, compared with 1.23 in 1899.

The premium rates charged in 1899 produced an income barely sufficient to pay losses and expenses and leave a highly attenuated margin for profit in the business, it is evident, therefore, that the increase in ratio of losses to premiums from 64.24 per cent., in 1899, to 93.38 per cent. in 1900, swept away a large slice of the companies' earnings in previous years. In those years there had been no such profits realized as to allow of an accumulation of them sufficient to meet the drain of so disastrous a year as 1900. It is evident that rates had not been high enough to cover the risk of a vast conflagration, to which fire insurance companies are constantly exposed. An increase of rates had become desirable before the year 1900, the experience of that year made it an urgent necessity.

THE FIRE LOSS IN AUGUST.

The fire loss of the United States and Canada for the month of August, as compiled from the records of the New York "Commercial Bulletin," shows a total of \$8,334,000. The following table will give comparisons:—

	1901.	1900.	1899.
January	\$16,574,950	\$11,755,300	\$10,718,000
February	13,992,000	15,427,000	18,469,000
March	15,036,250	13,349,200	11,493,000
April	11,352,800	25,727,000	9,713,000
May	22,380,150	15,759,400	9,091,900
June	9,590,000	21,281,000	6,714,850
July	15,740,000	13,609,100	11,426,400
August	8,334,000	10,298,250	9,703,700
Total	\$113,009,150	\$127,206,250	\$86,829,850

August shows the lightest fire loss this year and falls below that of any month in 1900, or 1899, though larger than the record of 1898, which was only \$7,793,500. The total for 1901, up to end of last month, is however too large to admit of any pleasant reflections.