

THE JULY FIRE LOSS.

The fire loss of the United States and Canada, for the month of July, as compiled from the daily record of the New York "Commercial Bulletin," is stated by that paper to show a total of \$13,609,100. A comparison of the losses by months during the first seven months of 1900, with the same period of 1898 and 1899, is given in the following table:

	1898.	1899.	1900.
January.....	\$9,472,500	\$10,718,000	\$11,755,300
February.....	12,629,300	14,469,000	15,427,000
March.....	7,645,200	11,493,000	13,319,200
April.....	8,211,000	9,213,000	23,777,000
May.....	11,072,200	9,091,900	15,759,400
June.....	9,206,900	6,714,850	21,281,000
July.....	8,929,750	11,426,400	13,609,100
Totals.....	\$67,166,850	\$77,126,150	\$116,908,000

The "Bulletin" remarks: "With the exception of February, every month so far this year shows a heavier loss than the same month in 1898 and 1899. The fire loss is rapidly increasing, and to an extent which should attract public attention. Much is heard about the pension list, but in its heaviest year it amounted to \$159,000,000. The fire loss for the full year of 1900 will, it is claimed, be an enormous sum, even if no large conflagration occurs. How far public opinion will permit such a serious drain on the nation's wealth to proceed is an interesting question."

LOSS RATIOS.**A Seasonable Query.**

The hazards of the risks fix the amount of loss.

The necessities of business fix the amount of expenses.

The underwriters' rates of premium fix the income.

The people who pay premiums are responsible for the losses.

The needs of the people who want indemnity are responsible for the expenses.

The underwriters are responsible for the rates of premium.

The underwriters cannot decrease the losses.

The underwriters cannot lessen the expenses.

The underwriters can make rates that will pay losses and expenses and leave a small profit—why don't they do it?—Firemen's Fund Record.

MONTREAL CLEARING-HOUSE.

	Clearings.	Balances.
	\$	\$
Total for week ending		
16 Aug..... 1900,	13,863,863	2,350,971
Corresponding week... 1899,	14,165,212	2,287,515
" " 1898,	11,109,227	1,567,191
" " 1897,	11,813,408	1,594,602

Notes and Items.**At Home and Abroad.**

WORLD'S GREAT FIRES.—U. C. Crosby, late President of the National Fire Protective Association, has compiled a very interesting list of the world's great fires. In describing some of the most important disasters, he says:

London was nearly destroyed by fire in 798; again in 982, 1212, and 1666. The latter fire is known in history as the "Great Fire;" it burned over a territory of 436 acres, including 400 streets, 15,200 buildings, and property value upward of \$53,000,000 were destroyed. Edinburgh was nearly destroyed by fire in 1700. Lisbon was burned in 1707. Venice was destroyed by fire in 1106, and again in 1577. Berlin was destroyed in 1405. Berne in 1634, and again in 1680. Hamburg was nearly destroyed by fire in 1842; 4,219 buildings were burned, and 100 people lost their lives; property value destroyed, \$35,000,000. Copenhagen was burned in 1728; 1,650 houses destroyed; again in 1795, and 1,563 houses burned. Stockholm in 1751, with 1,000 houses destroyed. Moscow in 1752; visited by a large fire; 18,000 houses destroyed. Again in 1812; this time the fire set by Russians in order to prevent the French occupation of the city; 38,000 houses were destroyed, and over \$150,000,000 of value.

Constantinople has been the scene of numerous and costly fires; in 1729, a great fire destroyed 12,000 buildings and nearly 6,000 people. In 1745, another great fire lasted five days; again in January, 1750, 10,000 buildings destroyed. In April, the same year, another fire, with \$15,000,000 of property destroyed. Again, latter in the year, a fire destroyed 10,000 houses; in 1756, 15,000 houses were destroyed and 100 lives lost. In 1782, 10,000 houses were burned; in 1791, between March and July, serious fires destroyed 32,000 houses, and nearly the same number were destroyed again in 1798. In 1816, 12,000 houses and 3,000 shops were destroyed. In 1870, Pera, a suburb of Constantinople, was nearly destroyed, 7,000 buildings and over \$25,000,000 property being consumed.

THE UNDERWRITING TROUBLES.—The New York "Journal of Commerce" in expressing regret that the fire underwriters, although they have been holding general and committee meetings since January last, have "so far accomplished nothing" in the way of bettering their condition, says:

"Apparently the public are not opposed to an increase in rates, and the fire loss for the first half of the year clearly shows that at present tariffs fire insurance is a losing game for nearly all the companies. Meanwhile, companies are gradually being forced one after another to the wall, and the market for insurance is becoming more and more restricted. In any other line of business, rates would naturally advance when the demand exceeded the supply; but even on the thousands of risks which such a condition exists, policies are still as a rule, sold at prices which are below cost. In other corporations, the failure of the managers to make profits results in their being turned out and more competent men installed in their places. In fire underwriting, however, the stockholders allow the surplus to be gradually used up, and then liquidate the corporation. It would