

FIRE UNDERWRITERS INCREASE MONTREAL RATES.

At their meeting on Tuesday of this week the Fire Underwriters' Association unanimously decided to raise rates in Montreal in view of the fact that the reply of the City Council to the association's recent queries gave no adequate information as to improvement in existing conditions. Indeed, the civic communication simply enclosed reports from Mr. Janin, chief of the Water Department, and from Mr. Benoit, chief of the Fire Department. So far as the Council is concerned, it did not commit itself in any way to an endorsement of the recommendations which the reports contained.

Mr. Janin's report supports the view of the underwriters as to the necessity of increasing the boiler capacity for the operation of the present steam pumps and for the new pump which is now in course of installation. Mr. Janin also states that if his new aqueduct project is to be long delayed it will be necessary to provide immediately for the ordering and installation of a new steam pump and boilers. The aqueduct scheme cannot in any event be put through until considerable time has elapsed. What the underwriters desired in reply to their communication to the City Council was definite assurance that the steam pumping capacity would be made amply sufficient for all needs before next winter at latest.

The underwriters contend that the requirements stated in their communication are simple and, with the exception of another new pump, could be carried out within the next two months with but very slight expenditure, while the cost of the new pump could be provided for out of the annual estimates. In reply to criticisms upon their action as hasty and unduly drastic, the underwriters point out that ample opportunity for promise of improvements was given by them, and that it is absolutely necessary for business to be done on a reasonably safe basis and not as a mere gamble. They contend that present conditions are evidenced by the fact that, while the total premium income from the city is only about one and three-quarters of a million, over three-quarters of a million is on risks in the congested district—in which district there have been fire losses during the past three months aggregating a million and a quarter. That this state of affairs thoroughly justifies a rate advance is the unanimous conviction of all engaged in the fire insurance business—and the responsibility for such increase they place altogether on the City Council.

The increases, which are to apply only to renewals and new business, may be summarized as follows:

(1) An advance of 50 cents on the gross rate without co-insurance clause, and of 40 cents on net rate with co-insurance clause, to apply within the congested district bounded by Craig Street, the Place Viger depot, the River St. Lawrence, and a line from Little St. Antoine street south to the river.

(2) An advance of 25 cents on the gross rate without co-insurance clause, and of 20 cents on the net rate with co-insurance clause, throughout the city outside the aforementioned limits.

Mercantile risks situated in the small portions of the city which have not yet been reached by the system of specific rating, and which remain subject to the minimum tariff, are not chargeable with the above extra, but as soon as any risk therein is specifically rated the extra must be added. The increases will not apply to buildings possessing a sprinkler system approved by the underwriters, or to dwellings, or to fire-proof buildings, or to St. Henri or Ste. Cunegonde, the two latter having a separate water system and a special insurance rate.

That the action of the underwriters will arouse a most practical interest there is little doubt. The argument of fifty cents extra premium, when applied to millions of dollars of property, is a forceful one, and the business community is not likely to cease agitation until improvement of existing conditions leads to a substantial reducing of insurance rates.

SERIOUS TORONTO FIRE.

Factory and Offices of Toronto Plate Glass Importing Company.

The factory and offices of the Toronto Plate Glass Importing Company were completely destroyed on Saturday last. For a time St. Michael's Hospital was seriously endangered. The new building of the Crown Life Assurance Company was also threatened and the stand-pipe system with which it is equipped, was started. Quantities of water dripped through the whole building and ran down to the cellar.

The total insurance, held in the following companies, amounted to \$150,500, with a loss of about 90 p.c.

Company	Building	Schedule	Stock	Mach'y.
Aetna		\$2,000	.....	.....
Anglo American		5,000	.....	.....
Atlas			\$2,500	.....
British America		5,000	.....	.....
Caledonian		2,000	.....	.....
Commercial Union	\$13,000	.....	.....	.....
Connecticut		2,500	.....	.....
Montreal Can.		3,000	2,500	.....
Equity		2,500	.....	.....
Guardian			5,000	.....
Economical		2,000	.....	.....
Hartford		7,500	.....	.....
Home		1,500	5,000	.....
Independent Cash Mutual				
Law, Union and Crown		1,500	.....	.....
Liverpool & London & Globe			3,000	.....
London Assurance		7,000	.....	.....
London Mutual		2,500	.....	.....
Manitoba				\$5,000
Merchants		2,500	2,500	.....
Metropolitan		3,000	.....	.....
Monarch		3,000	.....	.....
Northern		5,000	7,500	.....
Ottawa		2,500	.....	.....
Phoenix of Brooklyn			1,500	.....
Rochester German			3,000	.....
Phoenix of Hartford		2,500	.....	.....
Ontario			2,500	.....
Royal	7,000	10,000	.....	.....
Standard		5,000	.....	.....
Union			5,000	.....
Waterloo		2,500	.....	.....
York Mutual		3,000	.....	.....
		\$20,000	\$85,500	\$40,000
				\$5,000