

Star Life

Assurance Society
of LONDON - - - England

Assets, 31st Dec., 1893 **\$17,500,000**
Annual Income **2,700,000**
Assurance Force **66,000,000**
Invested in Canada **1,600,000**

For information as to Loans, Assurance,
or Agencies, address

J. FRITH JEFFERS,

Sec'y for Canada

Head Office for Canada—29 Richmond St. West,
Toronto.

mensurate rates. This is, however, a fallacy. The inevitable losses will always afford sufficient employment for insurance offices, and it is as much to their interest as it is to the interest of policyholders to lessen the annual fire waste by the elimination of preventible fires. It is far easier, for the offices to secure a satisfactory margin of profit from the business when the rates fall lightly upon their insured than it is to do so when the insurance tax is a heavy one.

So far as the home business is concerned it may be remarked, that, in the absence of any reliable statistics, the apathy and ignorance of the general public respecting the national loss by fire is not a matter for surprise. The fact that insurance does not repair but only diminishes a loss is very generally overlooked, and comparatively few realize that every addition to the British fire loss is, in a monetary sense, as great a national misfortune as the sinking of an ironclad of equal value. With the object of inquiring to what extent our home losses are preventible, it will be useful to compare the fire experience in this and other countries. Although our ratio of loss to sum insured is naturally far less than in America and other places subject to climatic and other special influences, it will be found to compare unfavorably with those of several of our neighbors on the continent. In the absence of any better data, the cost of insurance must be taken as a guide, and a recent compilation gave the following average rates current in various countries:

France.....	0.08 per cent or 1s 7d per £100
Germany...0.15	" " 3s "
England...0.25	" " 5s "
Australia...0.36	" " 7s 2d "
Russia.....0.61	" " 12s 2d "
U. States...1.00	" " 20s "

The estimate of 5s per cent for England is difficult to check, as the insurances in force and the home premiums are not given in the reports of British offices. It is, however, sufficiently correct for our present purpose. In order to confirm the continental rates, we have taken the combined figures of three representative offices in each of the countries named, and the results thus obtained by France and Germany are even more favorable than those above shown. Our figures for Austria are a little higher, and for Russia somewhat lower than those given. The average

rate received by three Belgian, three Italian and three Scandinavian offices are respectively 1s 8d, 2s 2d, and 3s 7d per cent. When comparing the average cost of insurance in different countries, the general character of the business, such, for instance, as the comparatively large number of commercial and manufacturing risks in the United Kingdom—must not be disregarded. The conditions are also dissimilar, and companies insuring property here do not enjoy the advantage of the average condition which is universally applied in continental policies. The exceptionally low rates in France and Belgium are also in a measure attributable to supplementary assurances to cover liabilities respectively incurred by the landlord and tenant, to each other, and to their neighbors, under the Code Civil.

But, after making full allowances for features of this kind, it is evident that the cost of insurance in the United Kingdom is generally than elsewhere in Western Europe. It will, therefore, be of interest to examine a few of the conditions surrounding insurances in France, Belgium and Germany. The Code Civil adopted in the first two countries enacts: (1) That a tenant is liable to his landlord for any damage which his carelessness or that of his servants may cause to the building he occupies. (2) That a landlord is liable to his tenants for any damage by fire they may suffer through defects in the building.

(3) That each person is responsible for any damage which may be caused to his neighbors if the fire commenced on his premises, and is originated by his own or his servants' carelessness. No doubt the code has had an excellent effect in regard to the construction of dwelling houses and other buildings; especially in the past, when insurance was not so widely resorted to. Houses in towns are usually tenanted by a number of families, and a fire resulting from carelessness may involve very heavy civil penalties, while the strict police or criminal jurisdiction which prevails renders fires caused by design of comparatively rare occurrence. In Germany the police take a considerable interest in fire insurance. They keep particulars of each proposal, and no policy may be delivered until the insurance has been approved and recorded in the police registers. A small fee is charged for the registration, and the management is effective in preventing over insurance and in reducing the moral hazard. Every agent must announce his appointment to the police within a specified delay. While we are far from advocating any such stringent measures in this country, we think some useful hints may be derived therefrom. Insurances are sometimes granted here without inspection or sufficient inquiry, and unsatisfactory circumstances often transpire upon a loss occurring, or during its settlement. Attempts have occasionally been made to estimate the losses which occur in the leading countries of the world. Figures of this class are doubtless very far from exact, but they afford some clue to the magnitude of the destruction of property by fire. We append an estimate of insurance and losses by

fire which was authoritatively offered ten years ago. The losses appear to have been over estimated, and the figures require revision; but even if the present national losses be taken at considerably less than the sums given, the total is sufficiently suggestive:—

Countries.	Annual fire insurance premium.	Ratio of insurance loss to sum insured.	National losses by fire annually.	Loss per inhab. ann.
United Kingdom....	£5,000,000	0.25	£1,250,000	51
France.....	3,760,000	0.10	3,760,000	20
Germany.....	6,500,000	0.21	6,100,000	22
Russia.....	900,000	0.50	21,000,000	60
Belgium.....	400,000	0.10	500,000	21
Scandinavia.....	300,000	0.57	1,000,000	32
United States.....	11,000,000	0.90	22,500,000	105
Canada.....	1,551,000	1.10	1,100,000	230
The World.....	31,010,000	0.57	67,500,000	59

The actual premiums received by the British fire offices approximate to £10,000,000 annually—in 1893 the amount will be nearer to £20,000,000—but that includes the sums received for insurance in other countries, and for purposes of this estimate it is necessary to give each country credit for the entire sum paid by it in insurance premiums, quite irrespective of the nationality of the companies by whom the insurances are effected.

SENSATIONALISM IN THE PRESS.

Within the last month three notable protests have been made against sensationalism in the Press. Lord Roseberry declared that the manner in which foreign news is dressed up by the Press in England, in order to create excitement, was at times a source of embarrassment to the Government in its dealings with foreign powers, who are prone to take British newspaper utterances too seriously. The President of the American Bankers' Association, in his recent address at Baltimore, affirmed that the panic of 1893 had been very materially aggravated by sensational articles in the Press. Later, the Grand Jury at Toronto in their presentment denounced the style in which murder cases, with their revolting details, were dished up in newspapers in order to pander to the depraved taste of a certain section of the public.

The mischief caused by what Lord Roseberry referred to we in Canada have no opportunities for creating. From that against which the American banker complained the Press of Canada is happily free, it will be remembered that Mr. Clouston, at the Bank of Montreal meeting in June last, complimented the Press on