

# The Chronicle

## Insurance & Finance.

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### Test of Steel Frame Building.

A fire recently occurred on the 5th floor of the Masonic Temple, Chicago, which is of steel construction, twenty storeys high. The fire was a very hot one, owing to the ignition of a large mass of packing material, yet it did not spread to any other part of the building, only the contents, the flooring, doors, and window frames being burnt. Before the firemen arrived the janitors had eight streams playing on the flames, the water being drawn from a stand pipe. It is evident that, as the flooring was not made of fire-proofed wood, it only needed a little more time for the fire to pierce through and spread the fire to the storey below. Wood is the medium by which fire is carried from one part of a building to other parts. To obviate this ever-present danger, the use of fire-proofed wood is essential.

### A Weak Spot in Safes.

The bottom plate of a safe is the most vulnerable section of its walls, owing to safe-makers considering it as so unlikely for burglars to be able to operate on this part. New York burglars having found this out, have adopted the plan of turning a safe on its side, or otherwise placing it in a position for drilling through the bottom plate. The noise and risk of dynamite has led to these marauders having adopted the above plan in a number of recent burglaries. Bank safes are usually impossible to upset, but there are thousands of safes in private offices that could be turned over by a gang of burglars. Safe makers will have to provide against this new risk. The present activity of burglars again emphasizes the necessity of protecting the public by more severely restricting the liberty of these, the worst of criminals. The short sentences generally passed upon them is a wrong to both the possible victims of these crimes, and a wrong to the men themselves, who absolutely need to be confined to be kept out of mischief.

### U. S. Iron Production, 1903.

The official organ of the American iron and steel trade gives the following statistics:  
The total production of pig iron in 1903 was 18,009,252 gross tons, against 17,821,307 tons in 1902 and 15,878,354 in 1901.

The stocks of pig iron which were unsold in the hands of manufacturers and which were under their control in warrant yards and elsewhere at the close of 1903, and were not intended for their own consumption, amounted to 591,438 tons, against 126,301 tons on June 30, 1903, and 49,951 tons on December 31, 1902.

The American Pig Iron Storage Warrant Co. held no pig iron whatever in any of its yards on December 31, 1902, but on December 31, 1903, it held 47,200 tons, of which 40,149 tons were still controlled by the makers and 7,051 tons were in other hands.

The whole number of furnaces in blast on December 31, 1903, was 182, against 307 on December 31, 1902. The number in blast at the end of 1903 was the smallest at the close of any calendar year since December 31, 1896, when 159 furnaces were in blast.

As the iron trade is usually regarded as a trade barometer, these returns have much significance, but they do not lend support to the theory that production has been, or is being overdone.

### New Fire Protection System.

Reference was made, in a recent issue, to the new system established at Philadelphia, by which a large area of that city is provided with a fire extinguishing service that is independent of fire engines, and reported to be far more efficient. The descriptions before us then were too technical for reproduction, but the following, from the "Insurance World," gives a good description of new apparatus:

The new high pressure pumping station, which