

economic question, a question of almost paramount economic importance, awaiting consideration and remedy in this waste by fire. All the insurance in the world cannot reduce one iota the burden of fire tax which the people of the nation bear."

Turning to the special tables showing the main causes of fires (originating on the premises) in different classes of property in 1892, one is struck with the part played by incendiariism. This is assigned as the leading cause in retail clothing stores, in boot and shoe stores, in drug stores, in general stores, groceries, furniture stores, breweries, liquor stores, school-houses, and even churches. In fact, out of 26 classes of properties specified, incendiariism heads the list of causes in 17. The next most destructive cause of fire appears to be defective flues, which heads the list in the case of hotels, dwellings, and asylums, and is a large factor in many other buildings. It is very noticeable, too, in this list, that stoves are a prolific source of destruction of property, but hardly worse than explosions of lamps, gas, or chemicals. It was perhaps to be expected that spontaneous combustion would account for many fires in drug stores, as it does—not so many, however, as explosions—but one hardly expects to find one sixth of the fires in printing and lithographing works attributed to spontaneous combustion; one-sixth of those in carriage or wagon shops; and one-fifth of those in furniture and undertakers' shops of the same cause. Sparks are down for 170 fires; and furnaces, smokestacks, etc., for 108 out of 534 foundries and machine shops. Not unnaturally, "gas jets" are blamed for setting fire to 22 out of every 100 millinery shops; this cause also heads the list in the case of retail dry goods stores, and accounts for ten per cent. of the retail clothing fires. Overheated or defective ovens burned 166 baker or confection shops, and 100 were set on fire by ignition of grease. Matches, sparks, lamps, are as a rule well up to the top in the list of causes, and it is worthy of note that electric light wires or lamps are down as a cause of fire in every one of the twenty-six classes of property burned—the total number of fires from this cause being 215, clothing stores suffering most.

In a list of some forty thousand fires, we find the following locations given:

Dwellings and tenements.....	26,978
Retail groceries	1,454
Country stores	1,274
Hotels	1,196
Liquor stores and saloons	1,171
Cotton-gin houses	1,169
Churches	681
Bakeries and confectioneries.....	667
Retail dry goods stores.....	699
Restaurants.....	601
Foundries and machine shops.....	534
School houses	479
Retail drug stores.....	470
Retail clothing stores.....	430
Furniture stores.....	396
Printing and lithographing concerns...	324
Boot and shoe stores.....	320
Millinery stores	284
Grain stores and elevators	257
Carriage factories	253
Hardware stores.....	169
Breweries.....	168
General warehouses	139
Asylums	99
Theatres	96
Public halls.....	72

40,280

Here is a table for Canadian underwriters or adjusters to cut out and carry round in their pockets. It represents the leading causes of fire in the United States in 1892 among different classes of traders. We have compiled it from the figures furnished in the fire tables. Incendiariism, furnaces or flues, lamps, matches, and stoves appear to be the worst causes:—

	Incendiariism.	Furnaces or flues.	Stoves.	Lamps.	Matches.
Country stores	59.6	9.26	1.5	6.5	3.0
Groceries	26.6	8.5	5.5	12.3	12.0
Saloons	30.1	11.2	5.5	13.4	8.0
Bakeries.....	5.3	14.4	5.4	6.6	5.0
Dry goods	16.0	7.8	5.3	12.0	6.0
Foundries	12.0	15.3	1.5	1.1
Drug stores	21.0	10.4	1.3	8.3	4.4
Clothiers	20.0	7.2	8.6	9.5	6.2
Restaurants	12.4	14.0	19.3	13.4	8.0
Hotels.....	27.1	30.2	6.6	5.9	3.2
Furniture	24.5	8.0	8.4	8.4	6.3
Boots and shoes.....	19.0	10.9	11.5	22.5	7.8
Millinery	12.6	10.0	1.2	16.8	8.0
Hardware	21.8	1.2	3.0	2.0	7.6

ENDOWMENT ORDERS, AND THE LIKE.

The receiver of the Order of the Royal Ark, which once boasted of 18,000 members, has made his report, dated Boston, Mass. It shows that 8,500 members received in cash \$100 each for \$42 to \$72 paid in by each; 7,000 lapsed and received nothing, and now the 3,013 matured or in good standing are to receive 5½ per cent. of the amount they paid in. They will receive all the way from 22 cents to \$3.85 each.

Thus over 3,000 persons were completely swindled out of all they had paid into the concern. Such an exhibit as this gives point to some remarks in the report of Mr. Merrill, the Insurance Commissioner for Massachusetts. The report of this officer, dated Boston, May 26th, says with respect to endowment orders:

"With the passage of the act to wind up the affairs of the eight remaining Massachusetts endowment orders, the last official chapter in this extraordinary craze will be written. During their brief existence the fifty-six Massachusetts corporations of this class gathered a membership of 365,000, and collected from the certificate holders over \$12,500,000. From this sum less than 9 per cent. of the membership received in payment of the earlier matured certificates over \$3,000,000, while \$2,000,000 was paid in claims for sickness. Nearly \$4,000,000—one-half undeniably, if not undisguisedly, a steal—went into the pockets of the promoters and officers as 'expenses,' leaving at the end only about \$3,500,060 for distribution to the remnant of 330,000 members, only a trifle more than was gobbled by the 30,000 who got in 'on the ground floor,' which list, of course, included all of the 'supremes,' [as the controlling officers are called] their 'sisters, cousins and aunts.'"

Mr. Merrill's report adds that the total number of life assurance policies in force in Massachusetts, at the close of last year, was 1,471,068, covering a total of more than four thousand millions of dollars (\$4,077,168,000) equal to an average of \$2,772 per policy.

TORONTO AND THE STREET RAILWAY COMPANY.

No one need be surprised that the Toronto Street Railway Company is trying to wriggle out of the bargain by which it pays \$800 a mile per annum for the privilege of the franchise it enjoys in the use of the public streets; and the Board of Works is trying to help it, having already adopted a resolution which, if endorsed by the council, will have that effect. The bargain is a good one for both the city and the company; and the safety of the city lies in the rigid maintenance of the agreement intact. What does the company propose to give in lieu of the \$800 a mile? It offers to maintain the roads on which the tracks are laid. It is doubtful whether the city could legally abandon its obligation to maintain these roads, or to transfer the duty to the company; and if there were no doubt on this point, the change would be certain to involve a heavy loss to the civic treasury. Unless the company would gain by the change, it would not have proposed the substitution. In a matter of this kind the city ought to know how to protect itself against possible intrigue and wire-pulling; but if this is to be done, the citizens must bestir themselves at once. The agreement between the street railway company and the city was obtained after a great struggle, and it is perhaps the best of its kind that has ever been made. Ex-Alderman Macdougall, Mr. Samuel Blake and Mr. Christopher Robinson gave their best energies to the work, and no change should even be considered except upon the advice of these gentlemen. The council managed to estrange Mr. Blake, who threw up his brief; and at present Mr. Robinson is away in France. The time chosen for the attack on the agreement is when he is absent. The exercise of the keenest vigilance by the citizens may be necessary to prevent a snap judgment by the council, which may cost the citizens an amount of money that would astonish by its magnitude, if a total could be definitely arrived at.

TORONTO GENERAL TRUSTS COMPANY.

At the eleventh annual meeting of this important company, a statement of cheerful character was submitted. Mortgage and debenture investments to the extent of \$1,165,000 have been completed for the clients of the company, and securities to the value of \$448,600 have been paid off, so that the addition to the investments held by the company has been over \$716,000. The aggregate value of assets in charge of the company at close of the year is close upon eight millions of dollars, the year 1892 having developed the largest business (almost \$2,000,000) it had ever transacted in twelve months. Notwithstanding the increased expense attendant upon this influx of business, the net profits, \$49,380, were greater than in 1891. After declaring ten per cent. dividend, which absorbed \$17,396, the directors placed \$19,000 to Reserve Fund and \$10,000 to Contingent Fund, making the reserve and guarantee account stand at \$225,000, and the contingent at \$20,486. But a further call of 2½ per cent. is to be made upon the subscribed capital, so as to bring the amount paid up to \$200,000. This is wise policy, for while there is a large