

FIRE LOSSES IN UNITED STATES AND CANADA.

Aggregate for 1909 was about \$204,000,000—of which Canada's Share was Unfortunately Well on to One-Tenth.

The fire losses for the United States and Canada during the calendar year 1909, as compiled by the New York Journal of Commerce, aggregate \$203,649,200. Although this destruction of property in one year is enormous, it shows a reduction of about thirty-five million dollars from the record of the year previous and is considerably over fifty millions below the average of the past five years, owing to the fact that the San Francisco conflagration losses of 1906 are included in the average. As compared with the fire losses of the previous year, which aggregated \$238,562,250, the record for 1909 showed a steady decline in the value of property burned throughout the entire year and there was an absence of any sweeping conflagrations. May, July and December were the only months which recorded a larger fire loss than the same months of 1908. Canada's fire losses probably totalled \$18,000,000 or over, though the Quebec fire was the only occasion where property loss exceeded the million-dollar mark.

United States fires during 1909 were widely scattered throughout the country and no section or class of risk showed any special attack. As the Journal of Commerce points out, there was an absence during the year of any fire assuming the character or proportions of a conflagration, but several individual fires caused losses of a million dollars or more each.

The relative increase in the average annual fire loss when compared with the increase in the estimated aggregate wealth of the United States, as calculated by the Journal of Commerce, would seem to indicate that the fire waste has of late been very excessive. The average annual fire loss for the five years 1877 to 1882 was \$76,489,600, whereas the average yearly fire loss for the past five years was \$257,827,475, showing an increase of 337 per cent. On the other hand taking the estimates of the Bureau of Statistics the aggregate wealth of the country in 1909 was \$107,104,000,000, as compared with \$42,642,000,000 estimated wealth in 1880, or an increase in the thirty years of 251 per cent. Thus it would appear that the ratio of increase in fire waste had far outstripped the ratio of increase in the wealth of the nation.

The fire losses in the United States and Canada during the past thirty-three years aggregate the appalling sum of \$4,712,537,525, showing an average of \$142,804,000 per annum. The following table gives the 33-year record.

1909.....	\$203,649,200	1892.....	\$ 151,516,000
1908.....	238,562,250	1891.....	143,764,000
1907.....	215,671,250	1890.....	108,993,700
1906.....	459,710,000	1889.....	123,046,800
1905.....	175,193,900	1888.....	110,885,600
1904.....	252,554,050	1887.....	120,283,000
1903.....	156,195,700	1886.....	104,924,700
1902.....	149,260,850	1885.....	102,818,700
1901.....	164,347,450	1884.....	110,008,600
1900.....	163,362,250	1883.....	110,149,000
1899.....	136,773,200	1882.....	84,505,000
1898.....	119,650,500	1881.....	81,280,000
1897.....	110,819,650	1880.....	74,613,400
1896.....	115,655,500	1879.....	77,703,700
1895.....	129,835,700	1878.....	64,315,900
1894.....	128,246,400	1877.....	68,265,800
1893.....	156,445,875		
Total for 32 years.....\$4,712,537,525			

The year 1909 as regards fire losses stands out as the first moderate check in the rapid rush upwards, and the Journal of Commerce expresses the hope that it may indicate a turn in the tide induced by better general business conditions and an improved moral hazard in consequence. The record for 1909 by months shows that with few exceptions the decline in fire losses was general throughout the year. The following table affords an interesting comparison of the past three years:

	1907.	1908.	1909.
January.....	\$ 24,061,000	\$ 29,582,000	\$ 22,735,000
February.....	19,876,600	18,489,700	16,131,000
March.....	20,559,700	16,723,300	13,795,400
April.....	21,325,900	26,009,000	19,345,300
May.....	16,286,300	15,181,150	17,360,400
June.....	14,765,000	19,512,000	14,435,950
July.....	18,240,150	15,323,750	15,830,900
August.....	20,248,000	23,123,000	16,423,000
September.....	11,440,400	21,431,400	15,043,000
October.....	13,350,250	22,722,850	17,765,200
November.....	19,122,200	15,834,350	14,808,550
December.....	15,783,750	14,629,750	19,975,500
Total.....	\$215,652,250	\$238,562,250	\$203,649,200

Financial and Insurance Items

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, a week ago, cabled to Canada's financial agents in London to exercise the stipulated six-month option of converting on July 1st next the Canadian Government loan of £4,000,000 sterling, bearing interest at 4 per cent., issued in 1885 in London for a period of 50 years, but repayable in 25 years at notice.

Arrangements will therefore be made for the issuing of a Dominion loan of \$20,000,000 in London between now and July 1st next. Meantime money market conditions will be watched with interest. The New Year reduction in the Bank of England rate is taken as a good omen.

DOMINION COAL COMPANY's output for 1909 was 2,730,007 tons as compared with 3,556,300 tons in 1908—strike conditions, of course, accounting for the falling-off.

BRITISH FOREIGN TRADE for December, 1909, was \$25,000,000 greater than even the high-record for that month made in 1907.

ABOUT \$175,000,000 OF UNITED STATES capital is now invested in Canadian enterprises, according to the New York Journal of Commerce. And the Immigration Commissioner at Winnipeg estimates that the 90,000 American immigrants to the Canadian West during 1909 brought \$90,000,000 of capital with them.

THE FIDELITY-PHENIX MERGER plan has been announced and Mr. Henry E. Hess is to be president of the combined company. It is stated on official authority that the capital of the Fidelity-Phenix will be \$2,500,000, the net surplus about \$2,300,000, and the gross assets about \$13,500,000.

CANADA IMPORTED \$3,890,464 of gold from the United States during 1909, as compared with \$23,060,416 in 1908, and \$12,068,862 in 1907. That country's total exports in 1909 were \$130,000,000, a greater amount than was ever before sent out in one year.

Canada's population at the close of 1909 is estimated at 7,350,000 by the Census Bureau.