

HISTORY OF FIRE INSURANCE IN CANADA.

The members of the Insurance Institute, Toronto, were favoured in November last by a paper on the "History of Fire Insurance in Canada," contributed by Mr. C. C. Foster, secretary of the Western Assurance Co. This highly interesting paper appears in full in the annual report of the Institute. Mr. Foster found the materials for his history rather scanty, but he made the most of them. The Phoenix, of London, was the pioneer insurance company in Canada, which it entered in 1804 by establishing an agency in this city, the agents being Messrs. Maitland, Gordon and Aldjo, who, in 1826, were succeeded by Messrs. Gillespie, Moffatt & Co. The British companies that opened business in Canada with their respective dates of entry are given by Mr. Foster as follows:—

The Phoenix, of London.	1804
The Alliance, of London	Early in the century.
The Globe Insurance Co.	"
The State Fire Ins. Co., of England,	Previous to or about middle of Century.
The Unity Fire and Life, "	"
The Beaver Fire "	"
The Equitable, of London.	"
The British Commercial.	"
The Royal Fire and Life.	1851
The Liverpool and London Fire and Life.	1851
The Athenæum Fire, of London	During 5th decade.
The Beacon Fire and Life, "	"
The Monarch " "	"
The Home and Colonial Fire and Life, of London	"
The Aetna, of Dublin	"

The Globe Insurance Company must also have put in an early appearance as it is found to be a participator in the losses caused by the Toronto conflagration of 1849. It did not amalgamate with the Liverpool and London until after 1860.

The Sun established an agency at Montreal in 1856, but, owing to the death of the agent shortly afterwards, it discontinued business and allowed current risks to run off.

The dates when other British companies entered Canada are given below:

The North British and Mercantile.....	1862
The London Assurance.....	1862
The Commercial Union.....	1863
The Imperial.....	1864
The Lancashire.....	1864
The Western of England.....	1864
The Northern.....	1867
The Guardian.....	1869
The Scottish Imperial.....	1869
The Scottish Commercial.....	1874
The London and Lancashire.....	1880
The Fire Insurance Association.....	1880
The City of London.....	1881

The other British companies which are now established in Canada have entered since above date.

In 1819 the Aetna, an American company, came

to Canada in 1821, and the Hartford in 1836. In 1844 the New York Contributionship Fire Ins. Co. had agencies in Canada and was represented in Canada by Rigney & Co., hardware merchants. Mr. Foster gives a list of 24 American fire companies that were operating in Canada after 1844, which had agencies in Toronto, but the order of their coming, or how long they remained he is unable to state.

The Agricultural of Watertown, N.Y., began in 1870 and retired in 1897. The Insurance Co. of North America, the Connecticut Fire and the Phoenix of Hartford, who are still in Canada, "are late arrivals." As regards Canadian companies, prior to 1840, there were at least six formed, the Halifax, Quebec, British America, Central of Fredericton, Home District Mutual and Gore District Mutual.

The Halifax Fire Insurance Co. claims to be the pioneer fire company of Canada. It was established in 1809. In 1819 it was incorporated under its present name. In 1859 it suffered heavily by a fire in the city and was re-organized, since which time it has had a prosperous career.

The Quebec was organized in 1818, and has had serious losses by the fires of 1845, 1862, 1865, 1866, 1870, 1876, 1881.

The British America Fire and Life Assurance Co. is the oldest Upper Canada company. It was incorporated in 1833. In 1842 it was authorized to transact marine insurance, and in 1851 its powers were extended to ocean marine. The charter members and original stock holders of the British America are names of Toronto's oldest families, as, Strachan, Gamble, Baldwin, Jarvis, Boulton, O'Hara, Cawthra, Cayley, Ridout, Widmer. Later on we find Hon. G. W. Allan, a director, Peter Paterson and Jos. D. Ridout. The dates of the establishment of the Canadian companies are given by Mr. Foster as follows:—

Home District Mutual.....	1837
Gore District ".....	1839
Montreal Assurance Co.....	1840
Wellington Mutual, of Guelph.....	1840
Niagara District Mutual.....	1840
St. John Mutual, of St. John, N.B.....	1846
King's County Mutual, of N.B.....	1847
Kingston Fire and Marine.....	1847
Provincial Ins. Co. of Canada.....	1849
Ontario Marine and Fire.....	1853
Canada West Farmers' Mutual.....	1853

The Western Assurance Co. was incorporated in 1851, and was empowered to carry on the business of fire, marine, inland navigation and life assurance. During next 25 years 21 companies made their appearance.