

Insurance in British Columbia for 1915

Report of Provincial Superintendent Gunther Issued Recently Covers Operations of All Classes of Insurance Up to the Beginning of the Year.

At the end of 1915 there were 114 companies licensed to transact the business of fire insurance in British Columbia.

Where incorporated.	Dominion licensees.	Provincial licensees.
Dominion of Canada.....	18	.....
Provinces of Canada.....	6	.....
Great Britain.....	26	5
United States of America.....	29	24
France.....	4	.....
New Zealand.....	.....	1
Sweden.....	.....	1
Totals.....	83	31

During the year the British Dominions General Insurance Company, Limited, obtained Dominion license to transact fire, inland transportation, and sprinkler-leakage insurance.

The following companies ceased business in British Columbia:—

Germania Fire Insurance Company, Dominion licensees. Austin Fire Insurance Company and Commonwealth Fire Insurance Company, business reinsured June, 1914, with Glens Falls Insurance Company; Citizens Fire Insurance Company (of West Virginia), business reinsured December 31st, 1914, with Niagara Fire Insurance Company; Hamburg Bremen Fire Insurance Company and Nord Deutsche Insurance Company, owing to war between Great Britain and Germany; Northwestern Insurance Company, Limited, amalgamated with British Dominions General Insurance Company, Limited, all provincial licensees.

The following companies commenced fire insurance business in the province during 1915:—

With Dominion license.—Dominion of Canada Guarantee & Accident Insurance Company, Toronto, Ont.; London Guarantee & Accident Company, Limited, London, Eng.; Ocean Accident & Guarantee Corporation, Limited, London, Eng.; the Phenix Fire Insurance Company of Paris, France, Paris, France.

Provincial licensees.—National Benefit Life & Property Assurance Company, Limited (reinstated), London, Eng.

Amongst the causes of fires most frequently reported, Mr. E. F. Gunther, superintendent of insurance, classifies the following:—

Cause of fire.	No.	Loss reported.
Sparks from chimneys falling on shingle roofs.....	84	\$33,245
Defective chimneys and fireplaces.....	57	43,383
Furnaces, stoves, or pipes insufficiently protected.....	54	66,990
Clothes, decorations, or firewood too near stoves or pipes.....	24	7,713
Smokers' carelessness.....	25	17,811
Sparks from fireplaces, furnaces or stoves.....	20	11,707
Defective furnaces, stoves, or pipes.....	16	17,544

The whole list, he says, shows that the fire waste is due almost entirely to preventable causes, the remedies for which are obvious but too frequently disregarded.

The importance of fire-prevention and the elimination thereby of fire waste is beginning to be recognized.

The net losses (paid) reported by the fire insurance companies for the past three years are as follows:—1913, \$1,043,254.41; 1914, \$1,542,845.20; 1915, \$1,311,370.18.

The fire losses reported by municipalities for the last two years are as follows:—

	Fires reported.	Amount of loss.	Loss over \$10,000.
1914.....	758	\$1,639,834	.....
1915.....	709	1,230,810	19 fires.

The only large fires in unorganized districts were mill fires. The most destructive of these, already referred to in the report of last year, occurred on April 4th, 1915, at Comaplix. Careful investigation showed this fire to have been of incendiary origin, but evidence as to the identity of the perpetrator of the crime was not obtainable.

Thirty-three fires of alleged suspicious origin were reported to the department and investigated. There were three convictions for arson in the Province during 1915.

At the end of 1915 there were licensed under the "Insurance Act" ninety-four companies, as follows:—

Where incorporated.	Dominion licensees.	Provincial licensees.
British Columbia.....	.....	2
Canada.....	32	.....
Other Provinces of Canada.....	5	1
Great Britain.....	17	8
Australia.....	.....	1
Hong Kong.....	.....	2
United States of America.....	23	3
Totals.....	77	17

The business of the companies was distributed as follows: Life—twenty Canadian, six British, and seven American companies; accident—twelve Canadian, ten British, and nine American companies; sickness, twelve Canadian, nine British, and eight American companies; automobile—four Canadian, four British, and eight American companies; burglary—four Canadian, one British, and four American companies; explosion—one Canadian company; guarantee—nine Canadian, five British, and four American companies; hail—one American company; inland transportation—one Canadian, three British, and five American companies; inland marine—one British company; live-stock—one Canadian and one British company; marine—one Canadian, ten British, two Hong Kong, one Australian, and five American companies; plate-glass—two British Columbia, seven Canadian, five British, and six American companies; sprinkler-leakage—one British and one American company; steam-boiler—two Canadian and four American companies; fly-wheel—one American company; tornado—one Canadian and two American companies.

The Federal Life Assurance Company (Dominion licensee), ceased to do business in the Province, and the following were added to the list of licensed companies during 1915:—

With Dominion license.—British & Foreign Marine Insurance Company, Limited, Liverpool, Eng., marine, inland transportation, and sprinkler-leakage insurance; Northern Life Assurance Company, London, Ont., life insurance; Norwich Union Life Insurance Society, Norwich, Eng., life insurance; Travelers Indemnity Company, Hartford, Conn., accident, sickness, steam-boiler, plate-glass, burglary, automobile, and fly-wheel; Western Assurance Company, Toronto, Ont., marine, inland transportation, explosion, and tornado.

Provincial licensees.—Royal Plate Glass Insurance Company of Canada, Vancouver, B. C., plate-glass insurance; Union Marine Insurance Company, Limited, Liverpool, Eng., marine, inland marine, inland transportation, accident, and automobile insurance.

The name of the First National Life Assurance Society of America was in August, 1915, changed to Union Pacific Life Insurance Company.

(We published the insurance abstracts supplied by the Superintendent of Insurance in advance of the publication of the Annual report as follows: Life Abstract, issue of May 20, 1916; Fire Abstract, issue of June 3, 1916; and Miscellaneous Insurance Abstract, issue of July 15, 1916.—Editor.)