

rather—shown by the classification are considered, these expenses can be deducted, and an approximation at once arrived at, which can be verified by the more concise details of the company's books.

That such results can be reached with but a comparatively small amount of detail and labor has been verified by a number of offices now classifying their business upon this system in the United States; and we trust that ere many more moons shall have waxed and waned in the Dominion many of our leading companies and agencies will have adopted this, or some similar plan of learning the first great lesson of their calling, and that is the cost of the indemnity they offer to their customers.

FIRE INSURANCE AS A TEST OF WEALTH.

Statistics are generally considered somewhat dry reading, but at the same time they are also instructive and must occasionally be used to check random statements, otherwise the latter will have a very prejudicial effect with the masses, who are too apt to accept such statements, when not controverted, as bearing the stamp of truth upon them.

In our June issue, by an article on "Native Manufactures," we endeavored to dispel a few of the delusions attempted to be forced upon the public regarding the enormous strides Canada had been making of late years in her cotton and woollen factories owing to her protective tariff, and we now propose to examine the much-vaunted wealth of our country, the trumpets of which are so continually being sounded in our ears.

That the undeveloped resources of Canada are prodigious we will gladly admit, but that her present accumulated wealth is very small is quite as apparent if we look closely into the matter. It is curious to note the data brought forward by the papers (generally from a political standpoint) in support of the prosperity, or otherwise, of a country, one side arguing that low wages and cheap living means poverty and destitution to the land in which they exist, while the other side will reason in exactly the opposite direction—The one will point to the pauperism of the United Kingdom in support of its views, closing its eyes to the poverty round its own doors, and the other will paint the latter in vivid colors, thrusting the former as far as possible out of sight. We believe to the unprejudiced mind it will be evident that of late years wealth has been diffused more evenly than it was up to the end of the last century, and that this is especially the case in new countries which have started untrammelled by many of the old customs or traditions belonging to past times. Nevertheless, it will generally be conceded that extreme wealth and abject poverty still walk side by side, and that the richer any city becomes the more the poor will crowd into it. London and New York are good illustrations of this adhesion of poverty to wealth, and it would seem that, whether the country be old or new, republic or monarchical, Lazarus will always be found hanging round the gates of Dives. However, with the moral, political or economical aspect of this question we have nothing to do, nor would this be the medium through which to discuss the same, and we are simply prepared to give a few facts taken from Fire Insurance Records, which may be ac-

cepted as a fair criterion of the accumulated wealth of a country, not so much by the premiums paid as by the amounts insured.

We will therefore now lay before our readers some figures we have collected showing the amounts of property covered as compared to the population in Canada, the United States, New York State, and London (Eng.) respectively, the same being (without re-insurance) as follows:—

	Est. Population	Amount Insured against fire.
Canada for 1883.....	5,000,000	\$513,580,303
U. States for 1883.....	56,000,000	9,440,409,187
N. Y. State for 1883.....	5,000,000	2,880,432,062
London for 1882.....	4,500,000	3,483,575,705

The figures in the second column, so far as Canada and the States are concerned, are taken from the returns given to the Dominion and New York State Departments and are therefore not strictly accurate, as there are several companies in both countries which do not report, but the said figures are near enough for our purpose, and from them will be observed that the amount insured "*per capitum*" stands, leaving out fractions, respectively thus—

Canada.....	\$102
U. States.....	169
N. Y. State.....	576
London.....	773

Regarding the last, however, we must remark that the amount insured is taken from the returns made by the Companies for the purpose of assessment by the Salvage Corps, and it is quite probable that the area thus covered does not contain nearly the estimated population we have given, which would of course increase the amount "*per capitum*" in London to even more startling figures.

It will thus be seen that Canada stands considerably lower than any in point of accumulated wealth, and consequently it follows that the field open to Fire Insurance in the Dominion is still comparatively very limited, and only a small income can be expected for some time. To make this yet more obvious we may point out that one company alone in the States (the Liverpool and London and Globe) last year insured the sum of \$528,439,136 or more than all the companies reporting to our Insurance Department did for the whole Dominion. Taking the entire premiums we find the following comparisons, viz:

Canada.....	\$4,624,741 or about 90 cents per capitum
U. States.....	91,048,273 " " \$1.80 "
N. Y. State.....	17,290,510 " over \$3.00 "

As to London we have no means of getting at the amount of premiums, but doubtless the same would show a much lower ratio compared with the foregoing.

Some will probably be startled by what we have just laid before them, which we have done to dispel the exaggerated ideas many have of our country's wealth without any desire not to acknowledge the progress we are steadily making, but there are companies whose managers imagine that there should be no difficulty in securing speedily a large and profitable income in Canada, and yet when we take the total premiums just given, remembering such to be on all classes of business, it will be seen how difficult it must be