

**FIRE AT MONTREAL.**

A disastrous fire broke out in the Berry building, 7 St. Helen Street, at 2.30 on the morning of the 1st instant, and for some time threatened a repetition of the Board of Trade conflagration three years ago. We append a list showing the actual losses to insurance companies:—

	9 St. Helen.	Gault Bros., 15 St. Helen.	Gault Bros., 17-21 St. Helen.	Laporte & Co. Martin & Co.
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Ætna.....	3,750	3,000	600	....
Alliance.....	6,000	12,000	5,100	300
Anglo-American.....	3,500	.....	1,200	....
Atlas.....	.....	.....	1,200	....
British America.....	2,500	4,500	1,200	....
Caledonian.....	7,000	3,500	2,400	300
Commercial Union...	5,000	6,000	1,800	225
Equity.....	5,000	3,000	.....	....
Guardian.....	5,000	3,000	1,500	300
Hartford.....	3,000	1,500	900	....
Home.....	.....	3,000	2,400	300
Law Union & Crown..	2,500	3,000	600	....
Liv'pool and L. and G.	5,000	9,500	4,200	150
London and Lancashire.	4,000	3,000	3,000	....
London Mutual.....	2,000	.....	1,200	150
London Assurance...	.....	1,500	1,600	210
Manchester.....	.....	2,100	480	....
Mount Royal.....	.....	.....	.....	150
National of Ireland...	1,000	900	1,000	....
North America.....	2,500	3,000	1,200	270
North British and Mer.	16,500	3,500	2,400	....
Northern.....	4,000	8,400	3,600	300
Norwich Union.....	2,500	3,000	2,700	300
Ottawa.....	4,000	6,000	.....	300
Phoenix of Brooklyn...	1,750	6,000	3,000	150
Phoenix of Hartford..	.....	1,500	.....	....
Phoenix of London...	.....	.....	2,900	120
Quebec.....	3,000	3,000	1,800	....
Queen.....	.....	4,200	2,400	300
Royal.....	6,000	8,400	3,900	900
R. D. & Yamaska....	2,000	.....	600	....
Scottish Union & Nat.	5,000	.....	2,100	....
Sun.....	.....	3,000	600	300
Union.....	7,000	6,000	3,300	75
American Companies..	.....	.....	13,100	....
Western.....	4,500	.....	3,000	150
	\$114,000	\$115,500	\$76,980	\$5,250

Total loss to insurance companies, \$311,730.

By the conflagration above referred to, the fire insurance companies lost a very large proportion of their entire premium income derived from their business in this city in one year. How unreasonable then it is to complain of their maintaining rates at such a standard as enables them to provide for ordinary losses and such contingencies as a fire, entailing such an enormous loss as the above.

LONDON AND PARIS AS FIRE RISKS.—The "Review" says: "When it comes to safe building in order to minimize fire, London and Paris lead the world. We can remember seeing the Avenue de l'Opera, Paris, built, and examining the external construction. We should say that it was quite impossible to burn that street any way or by any means."

**PROMINENT TOPICS.**

The fire at Rideau Hall and the lamentable accident which recently befel Her Excellency, Lady Minto, continue the unfortunate record of "Government House," Ottawa. H. R. H., Princess Louise, met with a serious carriage accident when *en route* to a State function in Parliament buildings; Lady Aberdeen was in danger of being drowned not far from the Hall, and now Lady Minto is invalided owing to a serious accident on the skating rink near the residence. The fire at Rideau Hall destroyed, or materially damaged one of the wings of that building which is an agglomeration of wings, the whole structure having been built up piecemeal by additions and extensions. One-half the money that has been spent in altering, enlarging and repairing the Governor-General's residence at Ottawa, would have been sufficient for erecting a mansion worthy of vice-royalty and of Canada.

There are those who consider it would be wiser to build a new residence than continue wasting large sums annually in patching up the present most unsatisfactory structure, which has no unity of plan inside, nor harmony of exterior design.

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There seems an air of authenticity about the reports that France will wholly abandon her territorial claims on a certain portion of the shore of Newfoundland, in exchange for concessions in Africa. When this arrangement is complete, Newfoundland will be wholly a British possession, and the chief obstacle to the Island entering Confederation will be removed.

The rumour that the Islands St. Pierre and Miquelon would be bought by the United States, is a mere canard.

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A Government Bill is before the Legislature of Ontario, by which taxes will be imposed on railways in that Province as follows: in organized districts the tax on railways will be \$30 a mile for a single track and \$10 a mile for each additional track; in unorganized districts the tax will be \$20 a mile for a single track and \$5 for each additional track. If a railway in an unorganized is less than 100 miles in length, the tax will be \$15 and \$5. Under the present law the provincial tax on railways is \$5 a mile.

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The first sign of the opening of navigation was the unloading of a cargo of wheat by a steamer at Collingwood.

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The ice holds firm yet in the lakes, but is showing a slight movement in the river, opposite Verdun. Night frosts are delaying the break-up. The season threatens to break the record for lateness, but a few warm days with wind would bring the anxiously longed-for opening of navigation.