

# Insurance Chronicle

## FIRE INSURANCE.

Commerce," said a Canadian day. Confidence in Fire insurance is quite as worthy of the days of the great fire disasters on the Pacific, concerning which the insurance companies have been writing concerns has persisted. When a host of Chicago fire-dry because of the failure of the big fire of 1871, in British companies got something happened when Boston. The effect of such full payment of business for British Chicago, and in many other cities had paid-up promptly.

ability of old and well-known British, Canadian, or other, is the provision of but still possible consequences reserves were obtained down fire premiums to a merely enough to pay losses all dividend. This is what proper and economical thing. charging rates and by insisting that would enable slow and funds for exceptional disasters. any, the Liverpool and London since 1866 in connection with States alone no less than Chicago, 1871, \$3,240,000; Jacksonville, 1901, \$305,000; San Francisco, 1906, \$4,000; of this company were a year providing for life and annuity fund, and capital paid in, the fund of \$7,000,000, which is everything the law requires to 0,000 may properly be called a and is properly kept apart from sheets of many other British or companies show similar accretions. surplus assets being regarded, as the fruit of needless exactions could really be considered the communities the world over.

isolation, based upon the report mission, will not be attempted the reasons given by friends of the delay, is the fact that the of Justice, and probably two leave for the Colonial Conference. Perhaps it is better that the bonded rather than any hasty the insurance situation should and of the session. The belated be voluminous in the extreme.

expected that 1906 would prove the companies in the matter of continent, even although connectivity have been exceptional. ation into wasteful methods of the United States caused many the whole system of life assurance. The fact that Canadian companies examined had a prejudicial in the unusual proportion of companies generally, and especially

ally by the newer ones. Never before, perhaps, were so many inquiries made by policyholders of agents and managers as to "what it all meant." Yet it will probably be found that the aggregate insurance in force has not been lessened but increased, showing that the calmer sense of the community believes in the general soundness of life insurance. In Canada and Great Britain, the impression prevails that the ordinary life business of 1906 will show a satisfactory increase. As regards industrial insurance, a large growth in receipts is expected. The simple fact that the Prudential assets have increased by £3,000,000 is sufficient evidence of the phenomenal growth of that company.

## FIRE INSURANCE.

The Waterloo Mutual Fire Insurance Company reports a satisfactory year's business. Its annual meeting was held last week.

A London despatch says that the fire insurance policies in Jamaica effected through British companies aggregated about \$7,500,000.

This year's estimates of the Toronto fire department call for \$305,094. The expenditure last year was \$285,588, being \$20,506 less.

The Fireman's Fund Insurance Company, of San Francisco, is to be reorganized, and the capital increased from \$1,000,000 to \$1,600,000.

The Rochester German Insurance Company is represented in Toronto by Messrs. Muntz & Beatty. Mr. G. S. Muntz is inspector for Canada.

The Atlas Assurance Company of London, England, has decided to open a general agency in Prince Edward Island with Messrs. Hyndman & Co., of Charlottetown as general agents.

The Hartford Fire has issued its 97th annual statement. The reinsurance reserve is increased, and the net surplus is \$515,000 greater, which is most satisfactory, considering that \$13,000,000 losses were paid in 1906, one-half of which were in San Francisco.

Halifax has ordered a new steam fire engine from England, which has some novel features. Its capacity is 800 gallons; it is stoked from the side instead of the end, and will raise 100 pounds steam in seven or eight minutes. The price was \$5,330.

Mr. W. E. Fudger has been engaged to act as managing director of the Ontario Fire Insurance Company, with headquarters in Toronto. The stock will be principally held by New Brunswickers, led by Wm. Thompson & Son, of St. John. Of the capital stock of \$500,000, there has already been subscribed \$325,000.

Here is a new fire danger—loose paper getting under counters which are not fastened close to the store floor. A fire occurred in a department store in New York. Smoke was discovered under a long counter, where enough paper was found to fill several baskets. The fire was started either by mice gnawing matches or by spontaneous combustion.

The city engineer tells the Fire and Water Committee that the consumption of water in Hamilton for December last was one-fifth more than in December, 1905. He fears that the present engines will be unable to pump water enough for summer increased consumption, and regrets that the by-law for electric pumping engines at the Beach was not carried.

That oldest of British fire companies, the Sun, has issued its statement of affairs for 1906. Increases are shown in assets, reserve, and surplus. The assets now reach \$3,556,754, while the reserve for unearned premiums is \$2,317,958, and the surplus \$937,813. The Sun Insurance Office is conspicuous even among British underwriting institutions for its strength and high standing.

The report for 1906 of the Phenix Insurance Company, of Brooklyn, which has stood all kinds of conflagrations, shows on January 1st handsome assets and an ample net surplus. The assets are now \$9,541,321; the unearned premium fund, \$5,290,103, and the net surplus, \$1,666,823. This exhibit will be very gratifying to the army of Phenix agents

who have stood unswervingly by the old company through all the ordeals of many years, and now find their confidence justified.

Halifax was fortunate last year in escaping large fires, the entire fire loss in the city amounting to only \$27,000, the insurance on the properties and contents in which damages occurred being \$139,800. The loss by fires not covered by insurance amounted to \$929.

Twice a year the Winnipeg firemen inspect the largest buildings in their respective districts, examining elevator shafts, basement entrances and such matters of moment in case of an outbreak of fire. This year they report the buildings in better shape than in any former year.

Insurance Commissioner Wolf has prepared a new insurance bill for the California Legislature which embodies lessons of earthquake and fire. It is drawn on simpler and more definite lines than the New York standard form, which all the insurance corporations ask shall be adopted, but which Mr. Wolf thinks is cumbersome, wordy and full of opportunities for quibble on the part of unscrupulous insurers. It is a standard form of policy providing for loss by fire, explosion, or collapse due to earthquake.

The tribute paid at the annual meeting to Mr. W. B. Clark, president of the Aetna Fire Insurance Company, who has completed 50 years service with the company, was one of great warmth. Forty agents and other business men came from New York to take part in it. Delightful in its modesty was the response of Mr. Clark to the presentations made to him and the encomiums heaped upon him: "Dear friends," said he, "I have done nothing great; I have only been square."

The North German and Transatlantic Fire Insurance Companies of Hamburg, who pleaded non-liability for damages by the fire in San Francisco that followed the earthquake, owing to the earthquake clause in the policies, have been adjudged responsible by the Court of First Instance in Berlin. The court held that the earthquake clause in the policy was too ambiguous to justify the company seeking to escape liability. The court also ordered the Transatlantic Fire Insurance Company to reimburse two English companies which had reinsured San Francisco risks with it for losses already settled. The court refused to sustain the Transatlantic Company's contention that the English companies exceeded the limit of generosity in settling the losses so speedily.

All is probably not yet known of the effect of the repeated shocks of earthquake at Kingston, Jamaica, and neighborhood. It appears certain that much of the loss to property arises from fire which broke out after the shocks. Canadian fire insurance companies had but a trivial amount at risk in Kingston, and this under policies containing a very strong earthquake clause. They have written business there for a number of years, using the same form of policy as the British companies insuring on the Island. What arrangement will be reached as to payment of fire claims, other than those admitted, is purely a matter of conjecture.

There are about a dozen fire insurance companies doing business in different parts of Missouri known as town mutuals. They are small concerns, each founded to do business in a certain town or township, on the communistic plan; so to speak. But the Insurance Commissioner complains of them as either unsafe or poorly managed, having gone outside of their bailiwick to do business. He declares that they are under a special law, "which exempts them from the operation of the general laws," and, therefore, something must be done concerning them.

The losses during 1906 on buildings and contents in London, Ont., were \$48,000, made up of \$12,400 loss on buildings and \$36,000 loss on contents. The insurance on buildings damaged amounted to \$88,000; and on contents \$92,000. The loss last year to the insurance companies was only \$34,000, as \$14,000 was not included in the \$48,000 representing the total loss of 1906. There were 157 alarms during the year. It is stated that it is the intention of several well-known fire insurance firms to cut their risks in half in this city, one reason being the defeat of the scheme to improve the waterworks system.

Recognizing the carelessness or ignorance that prevails on the subject of fireproof buildings, the National Board of Fire Underwriters is making an effort to enlighten the nation, or at least the more important persons having to do with fire prevention, on better construction. One of its proposals is to send out 30,000 copies of the revised national building code. Separate letters have been prepared for