

Fire Assurance Co., which commenced business in 1818 and was largely confined in ownership and operations to Quebec province; the British America Assurance Co., incorporated in 1833, the oldest company in Ontario; the Western Assurance Co., organized in 1851, and now, after a rapid and steady growth, one of the largest companies of its kind on the continent; two United States companies, the *Ætna* Insurance Co., Hartford, Conn., and the *Hartford Fire Insurance Co.*, which commenced business in Canada in 1821 and 1836, respectively.

The report of the Superintendent of Insurance for the year ended Dec. 31, 1937, shows that at that date there were 274 fire insurance companies doing business in Canada under Dominion registration; of these 56 were Canadian, 68 were British, and 150 were foreign companies. In 1875, the first year for which authentic records were collected by the Department of Insurance, 27 companies operated in Canada—11 Canadian, 13 British, and 3 United States. The proportionate increase in the number of British and foreign companies from 59 p.c. to 80 p.c. of the total number is a very marked point of difference between the fire and life insurance businesses in Canada, the latter being carried on very largely by Canadian companies.

Although in its early days the Dominion did not prove a very lucrative field for fire insurance companies, the great advance in building construction and the wide use of improved fire appliances and safety devices have materially reduced the danger of serious conflagrations and have placed the risks assumed by companies in Canada on an equality with those of other countries.

A feature of the fire insurance business, besides the large percentage of British and foreign companies, is the continued increase in the number of companies which are operating on the mutual or reciprocal plan. These companies, in which all profits or losses are directly received or paid by the policyholders, are making themselves felt as competitive factors in the fire insurance business.

Statistics of Fire Insurance.—Statistical tables of fire insurance in Canada, illustrative of the progress of total business since 1869, and of the operations of individual companies for the year 1937, follow. The net amount of fire insurance in force on Dec. 31, 1937, with companies holding Dominion licences, was \$9,773,324,476,* while the net amount in force with provincial companies on the same date was \$976,220,698. Thus the grand total fire insurance in force on Dec. 31, 1937, with Dominion and provincial companies was \$10,749,545,174.

Table 1 shows figures of the growth since 1869 of companies registered by the Dominion, the relationship between losses paid and net premiums written, and the variation in the cost per \$100 of insurance. It will be observed that the cost of insurance reached a maximum in 1904 and 1905; there has since been a steady decrease with the exception of the years 1921, 1922, and 1924, when temporary reversals of the downward swing were in evidence. It is noteworthy that the cost of fire insurance has decreased by 56.88 p.c. since 1905. Table 2 shows the business done in Canada by individual companies during the year 1937, while in Tables 3, 4, and 5 are given figures of the assets, liabilities, incomes and expenditures during the years 1933 to 1937, classified by nationality of companies. A further summary of business is given by provinces in Table 6 for the years 1936 and 1937, showing premiums and losses classified by provinces and by nationality of companies. Further, a summary of the business transacted by both Dominion and provincial licensees is given in Table 7.

* According to preliminary figures, fire insurance in force in companies registered by the Dominion increased by \$190,197,753 in 1938. The large increases of later years are due, in part, to Dominion registration of certain provincially registered companies.