

THE SITUATION RE FIRE PROTECTION.—A public meeting of the Montreal Board of Trade members will be held next month to consider the fire protection of this city. The whole question will probably be threshed out, and the situation presented from the standpoint of the underwriters, the civic authorities and the citizens at large as represented by the Board of Trade. The Council of the Board of Trade, by a special committee, of which Mr. F. H. Mathewson is chairman, has moved in this matter in an effort to have improvements made in the fire protective service.

The underwriters contend that the expenditures made by the Fire Department of the city in enlarging the brigade and its equipment, up to the present time, have only been such as were rendered necessary by the natural growth of the city and the increased number of lofty buildings. While these outlays are satisfactory they do not supply what is needed to raise the fire protective service to a state of adequate efficiency.

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WHAT DEFECTS REMAIN UNREMEDIED.—Amongst the improvements needed are: (1) the lighting of the pumping station by electricity instead of coal oil lamp; (2) some measures to enforce the observance of the city by-law regarding electric installations; (3) the placing of electric wires in underground conduits; (4) better regulations regarding the storage of explosives and inflammables. In addition to the foregoing the underwriters urge the need of a high pressure water supply system. The underwriters complain that even when their suggestions have been approved by the City Council, or the Fire Committee, no action has been taken to carry out the improvements suggested so that the situation, as regards the fire protection of the city, remains without any material change year after year.

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A SPECIAL SOURCE OF DANGER is the state of the pumping station as we have repeatedly pointed out. That building is in a dangerous condition, yet, were it to be burnt, the water supply of the city, for all purposes, would be interrupted. Not another day ought to pass without the pumping station being made fireproof. Why is this obviously necessary work, which calls for only a very moderate outlay, not executed?

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THE FIREPROOF BUILDING FOR THE FIRE ALARM SYSTEM should also be erected without delay, a site for which has been secured.

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THAT QUEBEC STAMP TAX.—On the 1st inst., the tax on transfers of securities came into force. The tax of 2 cents per \$100 is paid by a stamp affixed to the sales note. The brokers are paying the tax although grave doubts are entertained by eminent

legal authorities as to its legality and unconstitutionality, as was shown in our last issue.

The tax places Montreal at a disadvantage compared with Toronto and other centres. The vendor of securities all over Canada will have to consider this tax and buyers, wherever they reside, will have to pay it in some shape.

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THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' TAX.—The license fee of \$300 on commercial travellers from outside who solicit business in this province has been condemned more generally and severely than any impost we remember. It will yield little or no revenue, but has aroused indignant criticisms of Canadians, which, though often unjust, are likely to injure this country.

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WHEAT IN WINNIPEG.—Owing to huge operations in the wheat market, which created an abnormal demand to cover engagements in Winnipeg and other centres connected therewith, the price of wheat in that city has been forced up to \$1.35 per bushel. Buyers at this figure must have been in a very tight place, tight enough to squeeze a stream of money out of their pockets. People in the Northwest would do well to leave wheat speculations alone, it is a peculiarly risky business.

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THE SOVEREIGN BANK, considerably and wisely, has given a bonus to the staff, who thereby share in the prosperity which this institution is enjoying.

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MR. H. A. A. BRAULT has been chosen to represent the Chamber of Commerce on the Harbour Board, to succeed Mr. Geoffrion. Mr. Brault will do good service as a harbour commissioner.

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THE BANK OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA has declared an interim dividend of thirty shillings per share (\$7.30) free of income tax, for half-year ended 30th June last, being at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum, and has carried \$45,000 to next year.

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THE CARPENTERS ON STRIKE put themselves in a regrettable position on 1st inst., by entering a building being erected in this city and attempting to interfere with non-union carpenters.

It is a penal offence to enter premises without authority for the purpose of coercing and interfering with the liberty of any occupant.

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THE ADDITION MADE to the cost of each Session of Parliament by recent increases is very large. For the members of the House of Commons to have voted themselves an addition of \$1,000 to their Sessional Indemnity of \$1,500, which was a liberal allowance, showed a lack of due regard to the principle of economy which they are bound to observe in dealing with the public revenue.