

ONTARIO BURNED \$1,000,000 MONTHLY

In all, 8,900 fires had been reported in Ontario during the past year. These entailed a total loss of over \$12,000,000. This was the highest fire waste touched by the province since 1904, the year of the great Toronto conflagration, according to Fire Marshal E. P. Heaton's remarks at the convention of the Mutual Fire Underwriters' Association of Ontario, held at Toronto. It was significant that the State of Ohio, with double the population of Ontario, had only experienced 6,042 fires, with a total loss of \$7,376,000.

The enormous number of barn fires during 1915 and 1916 had given rise to a general suspicion that they were of enemy origin. There was no evidence to support this belief, beyond the fact that a huge percentage were ascribed to unknown causes. Through investigations of officers, it was found that practically all the barns so destroyed had no proper ventilating system.

The fire marshal criticized the number of barn fires accredited to the cause of lightning. In one county, out of 22 barn fires, 19 were ascribed to lightning, two to unknown causes and one to incendiarism. In another county, out of 38, no less than 27 were assigned to lightning and seven to causes unknown. The fires said to be caused by lightning were scattered over a period from January 14 to December 11.

Mr. James McEwing, ex-M.P.P., said it was thought that many a torch was applied to a barn during a thunderstorm for the purpose of charging the destruction to lightning, and other speakers agreed with this statement.

F. N. BURT COMPANY

Without the assistance of war orders, the F. N. Burt Company, Limited, achieved excellent results during 1916. The company's profit on the year's operations was \$329,515, an increase of \$107,284 over the profits of 1915. With a balance of \$161,266 brought forward there was \$490,781 for division. Dividends on preferred and common stock took \$183,264. To the reserve was added \$75,000 and the balance \$232,517 carried forward. These are typical indications of the progress this well-known firm is making. From the balance sheets of the past two years the following comparisons are made:—

	1915.	1916.
Profits	\$ 222,267	\$ 329,515
Assets total	3,391,496	3,698,005
Accounts and bills receivable ..	318,847	357,272
Cash	107,413	137,027
Accounts and bills payable ..	260,963	408,221
Reserve	175,000	250,000
Profit and loss balance	161,266	232,517

Mr. S. J. Moore, speaking at the company's annual meeting, said:—

"A new record was established in the year 1916 for both volume of business and net profits. The profits, to which the United States and Canadian factories contributed in increased amounts, are almost 50 per cent. greater than those of any previous year. This result corresponds with the increased business done, and is gratifying in view of the extraordinary conditions that had to be met during the year by reason of rapid advances in costs of raw materials and scarcity of labor.

"Surplus profits to the extent of \$146,251, or 44 per cent. of the year's total, were retained in the business, and have been used to provide for all of the increase in properties account, and to increase the surplus of quick assets over liabilities by upwards of \$71,000."

"The directors asked the shareholders for authority to increase the common shares by \$750,000, which was granted. It is not proposed to immediately dispose of any part of this stock, but the rapid growth of the company's business may make it desirable to issue the shares at a subsequent date. The company has a bright outlook for the current year."

The directors of the company are: President, Mr. S. J. Moore, who is very active in the company's interests; vice-presidents, Messrs. A. E. Ames and F. N. Burt; Messrs. A. Jephcott, J. Ryrie, W. Findlay, Hon. C. H. Duell and Hon. W. C. Ely. Mr. E. G. Baker is the company's energetic secretary.

CUSTOM'S MINISTER TO FIX PAPER PRICES

Canadian Government Passes Order-in-Council Dealing with Paper Situation

After various conferences between newspaper publishers and the Canadian government with regard to newsprint prices, it is now thought that effective means have been devised by the government to ensure the supply of newsprint paper to the newspapers of Canada.

By an order in council passed on February 7th, the minister of customs has been empowered to license the export of paper and also to fix the quantity and price, etc., at which paper is to be furnished to Canadian publishers. The order in council provides that all orders and regulations made by the minister shall be enforced by the sheriff of the county or district where the said paper is manufactured, or by any officer of customs. For contravention of any of the regulations a fine of \$5,000 or three years' imprisonment may be imposed, applicable to any director or officer of the offending company.

The paper manufacturers conferred with the minister and the majority expressed their willingness to meet the views of the government. The manufacturers will so arrange matters, it is stated, that it will be unnecessary for the minister of customs to exercise the powers conferred upon him by the order in council.

Complex Business Situation.

The situation relating to newsprint paper is complex. Some of the paper manufacturers sell all their product in the United States under existing contracts with publishers there. Others manufacture only for Canadian consumption. Others manufacture for both markets. Some manufacturers make their own raw material, and others buy it from other concerns at prices greatly in excess of those prevailing before the war.

There was further an international situation involved, which was all the more delicate on account of war conditions. The United States government was equally desirous of dealing with the situation so as to insure reasonable prices to the United States publishers.

The manufacturers' costs of production have increased, and in making their contracts they have been faced with the uncertainty of the future. Coal and raw material of all kinds have advanced in price, and they claim that they must in turn increase the price of their product.

The manufacturers are meeting to decide upon their course of action.

Other Papers Too.

Publishers of trade and class papers have decided to ask the finance minister to have an investigation held into the costs and prices of book papers used by them, and also the costs and prices of pulp and other materials used in their manufacture.

PATRONIZE CANADIAN LIFE INSURANCE

"Canadians should patronize Canadian companies, in preference to foreign institutions, and place all their insurance with Canadian or British companies. It is not the great age, size, or volume of business done by an insurance company that renders it more secure or reliable to intending insurers," said Mr. G. B. Woods, president and managing director of the Continental Life Insurance Company. "Our agents will do well to remember these facts, and without casting reflection upon our competitors, point out that under our stringent laws smaller companies are equally as secure and advantageous as the older and larger; that a high reputation for liberal and honorable dealings with policyholders, and the prompt, straightforward payment of claims are among the most desirable and necessary features to be secured by insurers."

Mr. F. B. Francis, senior inspector of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, at Winnipeg, has been appointed senior agent at New York. Mr. Francis is succeeded by Mr. J. B. Corbett, who has been junior inspector at Winnipeg.