

EVEN FIRE STATIONS BURN

A fire destroyed the St. Lambert, P.Q. fire station on the 9th instant, together with all its fire-fighting apparatus and three horses. Twenty-four hours after the catastrophe, the Montreal Gazette published the statement that the town of St. Lambert is in a better position to cope with conflagrations than it has ever been, this very gratifying situation being due to the action of the cities of Westmount and Montreal, in supplying hose waggons, ladder trucks and hose.

In the mean time it is hoped that no very severe test will be thrust upon the St. Lambert Fire Brigade in the way of a conflagration, even with the very great advantage of its present position, as stated by the Gazette.

Investigations in connection with the fire are sure to follow, as they usually do under such circumstances. While the investigators are operating, would it not be well to extend investigations to several other towns in Quebec Province, and draw the attention of municipal authorities in such towns to the burning of the St. Lambert fire station? There might be a moral.

The Tokio Marine and Fire Insurance Company Limited

The Tokio Marine and Fire Insurance Company Limited having made the necessary arrangements for the transaction of fire insurance (tariff) in Canada, has appointed Mr. Geo. W. Pacaud, Montreal, chief agent for the Dominion. The Company is in excellent repute, and is known as one of the big companies of the world. The last financial statement available shows capital paid up \$3,750,000, total assets \$49,623,262, and a net surplus of \$39,097,570. The Tokio was organized in 1879, and operates practically all over the world.

HALIFAX NEEDS WATER

It is well to treat the water supply as seriously deficient—this quoted from the report of an engineer who has recently made a survey of conditions in Halifax. The daily consumption of water is three times the actual needs of the city and is largely due to waste and leaky mains. With this abnormal consumption the capacity of the supply mains is taxed to the limit for domestic purposes alone. In as much as part of the supply line is over 60 years old, and the combined capacity of the two Low Services is not sufficient to deliver the required fire flow with even a normal rate of consumption, expert engineers made some important recommendations as far back as 1916. It was urged that a new supply line be laid from Lower Chain Lake to the city, so connected that it could serve either the high or low services. But

this important and expert advice passed unheeded, and to-day the city is facing a serious situation. True, a metering system is being installed, by which the consumption will be somewhat reduced; but this will not bring the fire flow up to standard or even nearly standard. The presence of considerable 4 inch pipe in the grid iron and the wood stove joints in the old mains produces additional weaknesses. To-day, an ordinary fire, taxes the water supply to the limit, and at a recent fire, a number of streams had to be cut off because the fire engines exhausted the capacity of the mains.

Halifax has been fortunate in not yet meeting a combination of adverse circumstances. For instance if the city had to cope with two simultaneous fires necessitating the use of steamers, there would not be sufficient water to meet the situation, and the fire department would be helpless to check what might easily develop into a conflagration. A city so structurally weak and possessing the inherent hazard of a congested frame water front, needs to be doubly sure of a reliable and strong water supply. Coupled with the deficient fire flow is an unreliable fire alarm system. The fact that the apparatus is housed in a fire-trap is in itself enough to condemn the system. Its removal to a fireproof building has been repeatedly urged. Why it still remains in a small overcrowded room in the city hall, appears to centre around the personal whims of the official in charge, who has occupied the same quarters for 25 years, and whose vision has been narrowed down to the four walls of his office.

Halifax needs to show some signs of improvement along fire protection lines or insurance companies will think twice before buying liability at the present low rates. The snappy fire department with its showy new equipment only tends to create a feeling of false security. Halifax needs water and needs it badly.

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