

WHAT CAUSED THE FACTORY FIRE?

First Report on Binghamton Fire is Issued—Question of Exits

The appalling fire in the Binghamton Clothing Company's factory, New York State, has created great interest among fire insurance men and others. Five official investigations are being held. The report of the first to be concluded is that of Mr. James P. Whiskeman, consulting engineer of the New York State Factory Investigating Commission, who has issued the following as to his findings regarding the fire:—

"All the accounts indicated that the flames spread with considerable rapidity, and in a very short time the entire building was one mass of flames. It was undoubtedly due to the open stair wells and to other vertical openings by means of which the flames were communicated from one floor to another, the spread of the flames being assisted by the open windows, of which there were a great many.

Walls Fall Outward.

"In a very short time the building collapsed, the walls falling outward, and an examination of these walls showed that there was little bond between the brickwork and the mortar which caused them to be unstable. An examination of the fallen walls showed that the mortar had completely fallen off the brick. It is an undisputed fact that the fire started on the first floor on a shelf that was built underneath the stairway. And despite the effort of the employees, who emptied all the water in the buckets at their disposal on to the fire, the flames could not be quenched, indicating the fire must have had a deep-seated origin and had considerable headway before it was discovered. The boilers did not explode.

Storage of Inflammables.

"Considerable material was stored on all the floors, and being of an inflammable nature, burned readily.

"The building was a four-story non-fire-proof building with brick walls filled with openings on three sides. The floors were supported by wood posts on piers, which in turn supported the girders, floor beams and flooring.

"The stairways were unenclosed and were wide enough to allow the free egress of two persons walking abreast.

"The elevator ran through a hatchway with automatic trap doors at each floor level.

Few Partitions in Building.

"With the exception of the first floor, which was filled with wooden partitions, the other floors had very few partitions on them. On the south-east corner of Center Street was a fire escape, which took in two windows and had an inclined ladder leading from one balcony to the other with a drop ladder to the first floor. This fire escape ran past unprotected windows through which the flames poured, rendering the fire escape utterly useless in the emergency, so that there was practically only one exit from the building, and this was soon cut off by the flames which poured up through it. From the first to the second floor there were two stairways, and if it had not been for the extra stairway on the front of the building, the loss of life would have been very much more, as the rear stairway was rendered useless on account of the fire having its seat of origin there. Every building, no matter what its height, should have at least two means of exits remote from each other, so that in case one of them was cut off, the other will be available in case of panic or fire."

This fire is another warning to Canadian factory owners to see that they have taken every possible step towards fire prevention.

FIRES IN GREAT BRITAIN

The cost of the principal fires in the United Kingdom during the past half-year is estimated at £1,675,000, an increase of £312,500 over the figures for the corresponding period of last year. The cost of the principal fires in the past month is shown to have been considerably heavier than that of the fires in June, 1912, largely, it is believed, owing to the dryness of the month. Losses attributed to suffragists last month are estimated to have amounted to £47,500.

The name of the Lear Plumbing and Heating Company, Limited, has been changed to the Townsend-Caven Company, Limited.

The Motor Car Supply Company, Limited, has increased its capital stock from \$10,000 to \$50,000. This is divided into 1,000 shares of \$50 each.

DOMINION'S FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

Show Large Reduction in Net Debt—Revenue and Capital Expenditure

The financial accounts of the Dominion for the last fiscal year has been completed with the result that it is found that the net debt of the Dominion, which at the end of the fiscal year 1912, stood at \$339,919,460, was on March 31st, 1913, returned at \$314,301,625, a reduction in the year of \$25,617,835.

This being \$2,300,000 more than the total announced by Hon. W. T. White, Minister of Finance, in the financial showing for the year, gives added emphasis to the finance minister's summing up of the budget upon this head when he declared, "that in a period of great financial stringency not only have we not been obliged to resort to the congested money markets of the world, but have been able to reduce so substantially the debt of the Dominion, thus diminishing our interest charges and still further enhancing the high standing of our securities."

Statement of Revenue.

The revised statement of revenue for the year ended March 31st, 1913, compared with the statement of revenue for 1912, is as follows:—

	1912.	1913.	Inc.
Customs	\$85,051,872	\$111,764,698	\$26,712,826
Excise	19,261,661	21,447,444	2,185,783
Post office	10,492,394	12,051,728	1,559,334
Public works, rail-ways and canals.	11,034,165	13,158,077	2,123,912
Miscellaneous	10,268,125	10,267,956	169
Totals	\$136,108,217	\$168,689,903	\$32,581,686

The total expenditure on consolidated fund for the fiscal year 1913 was \$112,059,537, leaving a surplus of revenue over ordinary expenditure amounting to \$56,630,366.

Included in Capital Expenditure.

Capital expenditure, including \$27,205,661 on public works, railways and canals, also on the National Transcontinental, and \$4,935,507 on railway subsidies, amounted to \$32,396,816. Thus the revenue provided for all expenditure both on ordinary and capital account, and left a balance of \$24,233,550 to the good. To this net surplus is to be added the sum of \$1,384,285 invested in sinking fund, making the total of \$25,617,835 by which the national debt was reduced during the year.

For the first two months of the current fiscal year, May and June, the revenue amounted to \$41,268,690, an increase of \$3,430,580 over the revenue for May and June, 1912. The ordinary expenditure was \$10,777,911, a decrease of \$1,704,020. The capital expenditure upon public works, railways and canals and including subsidies to railways for the two months, was \$7,729,726, an increase of \$6,195,806.

ELEVATORS IN SASKATCHEWAN

Probably 15,000,000 bushels of grain will be handled by the elevators of the Saskatchewan Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Company this fall, according to figures given by Hon. W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture for the Province of Saskatchewan. By this fall the company will have nearly three times as much storage capacity as any other line of elevators in the province.

In its first year, Mr. Motherwell said, the company operated 46 elevators, handling about 3,000,000 bushels of grain. On this business there was a profit of \$50,000 to the shareholders. Last year 140 elevators were operated, handling approximately 12,000,000 bushels. Although the annual statement has not yet been issued for 1912 it is expected that the profit on that year's business will be in proportion to the profit on the first.

This year at least 40 more elevators will be built by the company.

Halifax Tramway interests are stated to be in the market for \$1,000,000, and Montreal financiers are supposed to have been asked to secure a loan of that amount for a period of eighteen months at 6½ per cent. interest.

The ratepayers of Dundas, Ontario, passed the by-law providing for the guarantee of \$15,000 bonds of the Canadian Abrasive Wheels, Limited. The company is the first manufacturing concern to locate on the banks of the Desjardins Canal. It is capitalized at \$500,000.