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would result in unscrupulous agents endeavoring to twist policyholders from one company to another. It would also afford a means of heated electioneering campaigns, etc. It is believed that the plan followed for many years by the Australian Mutual Provident is the best; namely, that each year there be sent out by mail to policyholders of the company full particulars of the proposed election of directors, together with a form of proxy, to be given in favor of such person as the policyholder elects, such person being himself a member of the company. This would make practical the securing of an independent policyholder's vote. This feature may be enlarged upon as the investigation proceeds.

INTERCHANGEABLE FIRE APPLIANCES.

That the fire brigade of one town or city should go to the help of another where a conflagration takes place is natural and noble. But it is a distressing thing to find, when the visiting brigade, with its fire engine, reaches the stricken town, that their efforts are greatly lessened in value when their hose or hydrant couplings will not fit the hydrants or hose of the town they came to assist. This has happened so often on this continent that one would think any proposal for curing such a condition of things would be quickly adopted.

Not so, however. It is more than thirty years since the National Association of Fire Engineers made recommendations that a universal thread of 7 1-2 to the inch on 2 1-2-inch fire-hose, and a few departments here and there adopted them. Then in 1879, and at various times up to 1891, other and not gravely different recommendations were made with the same object in view. But the subject remained, we are told, practically dormant until the autumn of 1904.

At that time the tremendous losses caused by the Baltimore, Toronto, and Rochester conflagrations aroused attention afresh to the need of some concerted action, since in all these cases aid offered to the places named was largely nullified because the visiting brigades could not use the hydrants nor hose couplings of the burning cities. The National Fire Protection Association now joined the International Fire Engineers in a committee to further definite action in securing uniformity of fire-hose and hydrant couplings. What this committee advised for general use is a coupling with 7 1-2 threads per inch for a 2 1-2-inch diameter; 6 threads per inch for a 3 or 3 1-2-inch diameter; 4 threads per inch for a 4 1-2-inch diameter. It is impracticable for us to give the other fractional dimensions in the committee's pamphlet, or to reproduce the illustrations, (actual size), of the couplings. What we can do, however, is to urge municipal officers or chiefs of fire brigades in Canada to correspond with G. I. Griswold, 56 Cedar St., New York, chairman of special committee on public fire service who, we doubt not, will send copies of the leaflets issued.

It is proof that the recommendations are worthy of attention when they have been approved by the National Board of Fire Underwriters, and the Fire Protection Association of the United States in May last, by the National Firemen's Association, which met at Kansas City last fall, by the waterworks associations of several states, and by the International Association of Fire Engineers in August last, which was attended by various Canadian fire chiefs.

What is more, the city of St. Louis, which has 600,000 people, has already adopted this standard,

changing all its hose couplings and other connections from six threads to the inch to seven and a half to the inch.

A natural question is, why so plain a safeguard for cities and towns liable to conflagration—and what city or town is not so liable?—does not meet with instant adoption. It is not hard to imagine that the matter of expense stands in the way, for one thing. We are told that what the committee call "reducers and expanders," a device intended to connect hose of differing diameters, and which are called by the Toronto Brigade "adjusters," cost two dollars each, so that where cities like Buffalo and Detroit, which have something like 300,000 feet of hose, would have to provide them, the cost would be something heavy. Still, interchangeable fire appliances in adjoining cities are a very needful thing. Hamilton and Toronto have now, we understand, uniform diameters and threads, likewise Toronto Junction and East Toronto. It remains to have the improvement urged more widely.

THE LUMBER SITUATION.

The strength in all grades of white pine lumber continues as marked as ever, and as we pointed out in our last article on the subject, there is very little chance of the situation becoming any different, so far as the trade can foretell. Since our last report there has been no appreciable change in prices, though the tendency has been to get nearer to the higher range of values. In laths, this has been particularly noticeable. The demand for these, as well as for all other lines required in the building trade, has been very brisk, and more particularly so during the last few weeks.

The story that comes from various points in the United States is very similar. Conditions in the lumber trade are more tense than in any previous period of its history. A review in "Journal of Commerce," of New York, shows that values of pine in the past three years have advanced at least 30 to 35 per cent., the larger sizes of construction timber having been most prominent in the upward movement. The steady increase has been due to the unprecedentedly brisk demand. The prices ruling in spruce to-day, it says, are the highest on record, but this in no way deters available stock from being snapped up. Hemlock is also quoted at the highest rates known in history of the trade, namely, at (base), \$22 per 1,000 feet, which on a general average means about \$30 per 1,000 at retail. A few years since a base price of from \$12 to \$13 was considered good. One authority declares that as regards the general features of the lumber business, the outlook was never better. "Prices, to be sure, are high, and supplies are not coming in quite so fast as we would like, but the latter are certain even if so slow, and certain, also, is the demand; indeed, for the balance of this year it is likely to break all records. The call at manufacturing points for hard woods and cypress can hardly be met, and there is little likelihood of relief ahead. Additional shipping facilities would be welcome." At the present time the West is buying more heavily than ever from the East, and the railroads should now be in a position to avail themselves of a profitable haul both ways. As regards the British demand for Canadian woods, the circular of Farnworth and Jardine for April gives a good idea of the conditions at Liverpool. The arrivals at that port from British North America during the years 1904, 1905, and 1906, have been 70,693, 67,979, and 76,854 tons.