

TO LESSEN MONTREAL'S FIRE LOSS.

The following recommendations were recently presented to the Mayor and Board of Control of Montreal by representatives from several business associations.

There is now being prepared by the Committee a by-law which later on will be submitted to the Mayor and the Board of Control and an effort made to have it crystallized into law. The recommendations follow:

To His Worship the Mayor and the Board of Commissioners of the City of Montreal:
GENTLEMEN:

We respectfully beg to submit for your consideration that several meetings have been held of duly accredited representatives from the

Montreal Board of Trade

La Chambre de Commerce du District de Montreal

Canadian Manufacturers Association
(Montreal Branch)

Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association
Montreal Builders' Exchange

Architects' Association of Quebec

having as their object the consideration of ways and means of effecting a reduction in the enormous waste by fire of life and property which is annually taking place in this City; and a Permanent Joint Fire Prevention Committee was recently formed, comprising representatives of the above named organizations.

Now, after having made a careful study of the problem, the Committee desire to lay before you certain suggestions and recommendations, which if carried out would in their opinion, ameliorate conditions to a very large degree. In doing so the following facts should be emphasized:

FIRST.—That there is an enormous loss of life and property, one half of which is caused by preventable fires.

SECOND.—That it is a serious misconception of conditions to consider that the fire waste only concerns the Insurance Companies.

THIRD.—That the destruction of property by fire means an irrecoverable loss of values and is frequently the cause of serious disturbance in business conditions, which is far reaching in its effect.

FOURTH.—That while it is important that our water supply and fire fighting system should be maintained in the highest possible state of efficiency, every means possible should also be used to prevent the inception of fires.

FIFTH.—That the recognition of individual responsibility is absolutely necessary to minimize the hazard, and to bring this about it is necessary to educate the public by the enforcement of proper by-laws carrying with them a penalty where other means fail.

The Committee are unanimously of the opinion that a very great proportion of the fires which occur in Montreal might be prevented by the enforcement of municipal by-laws requiring buildings to be so constructed as would reduce the hazard of fire to a minimum, and also regulating the maintenance and care of buildings in order to guard as far as is possible against an outbreak of fire. At the present time, the Committee understand, there is practically no inspection of business premises on the part of the City for the purpose of seeing that the by-laws actually in force, are observed; and further that the investigations of the causes of fires which have occurred is not carried on with that promptness and efficiency which might make them of value.

The Committee would therefore suggest that a Fire Prevention Bureau under the control of the Fire Department, for the prosecution of this work, be established; that the Bureau comprise a staff of not less than thirty-seven competent inspectors (there being thirty-seven fire stations in the City) whose duties should include the frequent inspection of all buildings and premises to see that the by-laws concerning cleanliness of premises, the removal of waste, the disposal of hot ashes, and, generally, all by-laws dealing with the hazard of fire, be strictly enforced. The inspectors should have authority to enter any building and to bring an action against any persons who fail to observe the regulations established. The entire time and energy of the staff should be occupied in making these inspections. The Committee are of opinion that all matters which have any relation whatever to the safeguarding of life and property from fire, including the erection and maintenance of fire escapes and all other appliances, should be within the jurisdiction of the Fire Department, which is in closer touch with and which has a better knowledge of conditions in that respect than any other branch of the municipal service. Also, the duplication of inspection work might thus be avoided.

Further, the Committee consider that a prolific cause of fire is smoking, and would recommend that regulations be framed which would absolutely prohibit smoking by employees in factories, workshops, buildings under construction, warehouses, places of amusements, departmental and wholesale stores, and similar buildings. Employers should be required to keep notices signifying such prohibition conspicuously posted on their premises.

Provision for adequate punishment of offenders should be made. It is thought that it would be unnecessary to extend this prohibition to retail stores or office buildings.

The regulations regarding the storage of inflammable articles and explosives should be strengthened and provision made for their strict enforcement.

Therefore we respectfully urge that such legislation as is required to put these recommendations into effect be enacted with the least possible delay, and that in your appropriations for the coming year you include a sum to provide for the maintenance of a Fire Prevention Bureau under the control of the Fire Department, with a staff of capable inspectors sufficient in number to cover the entire city. We believe that such action would be justified by the results attained and that it would be approved by the public.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

VESSELS AND TONNAGE.

The following are the numbers and net tonnage of sea-going vessels which have entered the port of Montreal from the commencement of navigation until October 31 inclusive, since 1910;

	No. of ships.	Tonnage.
1910.....	674	2,010,924
1911.....	694	2,116,275
1912.....	655	2,141,053
1913.....	744	2,431,757

The increase in the number of sea-going vessels since the opening of navigation up to the present month is therefore 89 compared with the corresponding period of last year.