



PUBLIC WITHOUT PROTECTION AGAINST THE USE OF FIRE-TRAPS — ILL-FATED STRUCTURE AT TILLSONBURG ONLY ONE OF A THOUSAND IN THE DOMINION. - -

LEGAL PROTECTION is afforded the hotel keeper against being defrauded by the man who neglects or refuses to pay his hotel bill. If a guest absconds and surreptitiously evades payment for "service rendered," he is arrested and thrown in jail. But what protection does the law give to the man that is obliged to pay for a service not rendered and loses his life because of the inadequacy of this service?

We ask what protection has the public against the niggardly, criminal policy of the hotel-keeper who does not conduct his business (licensed by the Government) in a structure that gives some measure of safety to those whose business requires them to patronize his hotel, which he has failed to equip with the necessary means of protection in case of fire.

The law protects the hotel-keeper against being defrauded of a few dollars by a dishonest guest, but fails to protect the life of the guest against the criminally negligent, closefisted hotel-keeper who does not provide a suitable structure in which a man may take a night's rest without taking his life in his own hands.

The Queen's hotel at Tillsonburg, recently destroyed by fire, is only one of thousands of structures of like nature throughout the Dominion, in which men are licensed to serve the public without the least apparent consideration being given to safeguards against the loss of life, property, or permanent bodily injury in event of fire.

There was nothing surprising in this recent fire that took its toll of two lives and serious bodily injury to six, unless it was that such fires are not more frequent and that the list of fatalities was not greater. The two lives that were lost are simply sacrifices to the criminal greed of the proprietor upon the altar of government shortsightedness and official negligence.

A man who would use a building of the same type of construction and equipment as the Queen's hotel for a warehouse for the storage of any commercial commodity other than ice, would be considered little short of insane. Fire insurance companies would refuse to give him insurance on such a risk. But a man is licensed by the Government to use such a structure for the "storage" of human lives and the proprietor has no desire to use a better class of structure than required, because he is not *legally* responsible for the lives of his guests.

Human life represents no commercial value to him.

QUEEN'S HOTEL, TILLSONBURG—A GOOD BUILDING FOR A BONFIRE—AN ANTIQUATED "TINDER BOX" WITH NO MEANS FOR ESCAPE. - - - - -

THE QUEEN'S HOTEL was a three story frame structure constructed on the simplest lines of frame construction of thirty years ago. In plan and arrangement no consideration had been given to means of escape in case of fire. It was simply a square frame building, with wood staircases, the top two floors of which were apportioned off into narrow halls and small bedrooms. Every material used in its construction was of the most inflammable nature. Its exterior appearance gave unmistakable evidence of its age, and suggested the impression that if not shortly torn down, it would have to effect its own destruction either by burning or collapsing.

If some patriotic town desired to celebrate Guy Fawkes' day with a mammoth bonfire, they could not have selected better materials to make a quick, glorious blaze than those of which this hotel was constructed, nor could they have built or selected a stack of debris, or a deserted worthless structure that would have given the desired effect in a great blaze better than would the Queen's Hotel at Tillsonburg.

We are told that in this, the very exemplification of fire-trap building construction, even the few safeguards provided by law, in a rather indifferent manner, in the shape of fire ropes, and fire escapes, were neglected and when the fire broke out the inmates found themselves closed up in a blazing "tinder box" without any means of escape. Would that the agonizing torture of the last moments of the unfortunate victims could be forever painted upon the minds of those responsible for their deaths!

It is said that many hotel-keepers object to fire escapes because they suggest a means of jumping bills by