

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE INSURANCE FEDERATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

STATIC ELECTRICITY AND GASOLINE EXPLOSIVES.

In our issue of April 20th we printed a paper read before the Insurance Institute of British Columbia by Mr. R. Bruce Abel, insurance inspector of H. Bell-Irving & Company on "Insurance Hazard of Gasoline and Gasoline Devices," which has occasioned considerable comment.

In connection with this an inquiry has arisen from a reader regarding static electricity when filling tanks, especially motor cars, with gasoline. This has been the cause of fires.

In reply thereto, Mr. Abel reports as follows:

"The fire danger inherent in static electricity is present only when a chamois skin is used as a lining for the funnel or other filling apparatus.

"The use of chamois skin suggests itself because of the property of chamois to pass gasoline but to retain water.

"It has been found that when gasoline runs through a metal funnel with chamois skin, static electricity is released which in a few cases on record has generated a spark and ignited the contents of the tank. It has been demonstrated experimentally that a spark is generated only when the funnel is held in midair, without making contact with the metallic gasoline tank itself.

"Since electricity always seeks the shortest path, it is advisable to ground the chamois-lined funnel, by permitting it to make contact with the metal walls of the gasoline tank. In that manner all danger is avoided."

A case in point of the effect of the hazard of static electricity occurred on July 2nd when an auto truck of the Imperial Oil Company at its filling plant corner Cambie and Smythe Street, Vancouver, took fire. The wagon was being filled from the tank and the driver had not made the proper ground connection, the tank being insulated by the automobile tires. During the process of filling, static electricity was generated by the flow of gasoline through the filling pipes. The spark carried, making a small explosion which ignited the liquid in the tank truck. The auto was totally destroyed together with a new Studebaker car belonging to Mr. Snider and badly damaged a horse drawn tank wagon belonging to the Imperial Oil Company and a Ford delivery truck.

In this connection great credit is due the Vancouver Fire Department for the manner in which they handled the fire as they prevented the ignition of the 400-barrel gasoline tank which was within fifteen feet of the burning truck. They surrounded the fire with hose streams and gradually closed in until they were able to make a complete sheet of water over the burning surface which immediately smothered the fire. Should this tank have exploded it would in all probabilities lead to one of the most disastrous fires which had ever occurred in the city of Vancouver.

Mr. D. B. Johnson, insurance agent, Kamloops, has been visiting Coast cities and calling on general agents of companies he represents in his city. He reports excellent conditions and looks for splendid crops if lack of rain does not interfere.

INSURANCE AGENCY MOVES.

The J. H. Watson Insurance Agency has moved from the Board of Trade Building, Vancouver, to Suite 303-306 Rogers Building. The best wishes of the insurance fraternity go with Mr. Watson in his moving to more commodious offices. His firm is the provincial agent of the London Guarantee & Accident Company of London, England and enjoyed a very favourable loss ratio last year. Mr. Watson reports increasing business.

MR. JOHN H. POFF WILL GO TO SOUTH AMERICA.

Mr. John H. Poff, who has been for the past ten years the British Columbia manager of the Sun Life Assurance Company, has accepted the management for the same company in the United States of Columbia and will leave on September 1st for the southern republic. It is difficult to express the regret which the life underwriters and the hosts of friends which Mr. Poff has made during his stay in British Columbia in leaving his work in this province. A man of delightful and genial personality and always a clean fighter, his going will leave a wide gap not only among the life underwriters in the province but also among the large number of his friends, particularly in the city of Vancouver.

Mr. Poff is succeeded by Mr. H. O. Leach, a head office official who was until he entered the services of the Sun Life, Vice-President of A. M. Best & Company, insurance reporters of New York City. While Mr. Leach will have a difficult part to perform in filling the place so long occupied by Mr. Poff, the best wishes of the life men are cordially extended to him.

BANQUET TO MR. J. P. MacLAURIN.

Mr. J. P. MacLaurin, special agent for British Columbia and Alberta of the Sun Insurance Office and who has just been appointed to the position of Secretary of the Imperial Underwriters' Corporation with head office at Toronto, was tendered a banquet by the Ancient and Honourable Order of the Blue Goose, of which Mr. MacLaurin is a noble gander, at the Hudson's Bay private dining room on Wednesday, July 3rd. The banquet, which was attended by about forty of the fire underwriters of Vancouver took on much the nature of a love feast in which those present expressed high appreciation of the value of Mr. MacLaurin and felicitated him on his elevation to so important a position in the fire insurance business of Canada and at the same time felicitated themselves upon one of their number, a true British Columbian, educated in the British Columbia field, being called to take an important place in the fire underwriting field of Canada. As a token of esteem and remembrance Mr. MacLaurin was presented with a silver match box with the emblem of the Blue Goose engraved thereon. The hope was generally expressed that Mr. MacLaurin would not be long away from us, but it seems probable that for him to return to British Columbia, he must bring his own head office with him.

INSURANCE NOTES.

The Svea Fire & Life Insurance Company, Limited, of Gothenburg, Sweden, has ceased to transact business in British Columbia. The company will carry out its outstanding contracts to expiration, and any claims for loss arising therefrom may be presented to B. S. Heisterman, 608 View Street, Victoria.

The British America Assurance Company has been licensed under the "Insurance Act" to transact in British Columbia the business of hail, ocean marine, inland marine, inland transportation and automobile insurance. This is in addition to fire insurance. The Provincial attorney is P. R. Brown, 1112 Broad Street, Victoria.

The Michigan Fire & Marine Insurance Company of Detroit, Michigan, has ceased to write business in British Columbia. The company will carry out its outstanding contracts to expiration, and any claims for loss arising therefrom may be presented to C. E. Schlingheyde, Winch Building, Vancouver.

Mr. A. W. Ross, manager for Alberta and British Columbia of the Commercial Union Assurance Company, has recently returned from a convention of branch managers for Western Canada held at Winnipeg last month.

Mr. William Thompson, manager for Alberta and British Columbia of the London & Lancashire Fire Insurance Company, has returned from a convention of managers held last month in Montreal.