

The Necessity For Adequate Fire Escapes

"When I woke up I was in the strangest position. I had to stop and study it out. My hands were down by my feet, and I was doubled up. I heard men and women, far off, shouting and screaming. I tried to move and could not. After a long time I heard a voice and a window was opened. Two men got hold of me, and took me inside the building. My hat, coat, and skirt remained on the big spike in the wall. The men wanted to know how I got caught on that spike, and I told them. I fell from the ninth floor. In spite of the horror of the situation we all laughed as we thought of it."

"But I shall never forget what I saw below me when I was hanging from that spike. I saw men and women piled up on top of one another; some were quite still and others were frantically waving their arms and shouting. I saw a girl tripping a man's face with her handkerchief. After a while they all quieted down."

Now that the inevitable has happened, there is a great rush to place the blame where it belongs, and to take steps to prevent the recurrence of such a disaster—under those particular conditions. The fire marshal, the district attorney's staff, the coroner, the state labor department, and other public, semi-public and private bodies were immediately stirred into action, and enquiries into the causes of the disaster have been commenced. The stable door is being locked after the steed has been stolen.

What the probers found—evidence that doors at exits swung inward, the crumpled fire escape in the air shaft, the one fire escape blocked by iron shutters when opened, an empty water tank on the roof, and the practice prevalent among cutters of lighting cigarettes a few minutes before quitting time—all this and what is yet to be ferreted out is being placed before the grand jury for action.

The tenement house department summoned owners of half a dozen faulty structures to police court as a preliminary step to a far-reaching investigation of tenements. Fire Marshall Beers summoned the proprietors of the Triangle Waist company and several employees to testify at a public investigation, largely to enquire into the truth of reports that doors leading to fire exits were blocked. "So far as I can discover," he said, "there has never been a fire drill in this factory." In his opinion it would take 700 girls three hours to reach the street by the one fire escape in that building. Ninety-five of the employees cannot speak English, yet I could not find a sign in Yiddish or Italian pointing out the fire exits.

Fire Chief Croker said: "I do not hesitate to say a most appalling loss of life in office buildings and big stores is likely to come upon New York any moment because of the lack of safeguards."

District Attorney Whitman is convinced that had there been an automatic fire alarm in the building in which the Triangle company's plant was located, fifteen minutes would have been saved by the firemen in reaching the scene and that that time would have enabled them to get up on the upper floors and lead many of those who later lost their lives to safety by means of the roof and adjoining structures.

Whitman's inspection of the building has shown criminal negligence on some of the stairways reinforced with iron and open upwards, so that those who tried to open them were pinned against them. Chief Croker and Deputy Gims reported to the district attorney that they found charred bodies piled in front of the doors on the ninth floor, showing that dozens of girls had rushed straight for the doors, but the first comers failed to get the doors back-coming to pressure from behind. The law specifically states that such doors shall open outwardly "wherever practicable."

This severe rattling of dry bones occurs in New York, as is usual in other cities also—after the event. That prevention is better than cure is only realized after the cure becomes necessary.

It might be well to consider, in the light of the experience of New York, in this recent disaster, how well Winnipeg is provided with safeguards against just such a catastrophe in our own city, and what steps have been taken to equip already existing buildings, as well as buildings under construction or to be built, with adequate means of preventing loss of life in case of fire. What would be the result of a sudden alarm of fire in some of Winnipeg's tallest buildings? Would the fire-escapes they are supplied with accommodate the crowds of inmates who would seek egress by them? Are they built with proper regard for the conditions of the buildings and their surroundings; and, what is a very important point in this connection—

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try, with due consideration for the climate in which they are to be used? To begin with, it must be borne in mind that the building by-law in force in Winnipeg is a very chaotic document. It is the growth of years, the production of countless brains, of generations of aldermen; each of whom had his own particular pet idea of what was necessary in a building, and what were the duties of builders towards the city, towards the inmates of the buildings they erected, and towards themselves. Instead of a single comprehensive by-law covering every point necessary, clearly and concisely, the building by-law is composed chiefly of countless amendments in which the original law is so buried as to be totally unrecognizable. And the inability to recognize it is of no particular import, since its original provisions bear no relation at all to the needs of a city of the present magnitude of Winnipeg.

The latest in the shape of amendment to this by-law, was passed on November 22nd, 1909—that is, the latest amendment which deals with the subject of fire-escapes. This amendment covers the erection of tenement buildings, and contains some very manifest improvements over the state of affairs previously existing. From that date, any new tenement buildings over three stories in height must be of fire-proof construction; and any alterations to existing tenement blocks raising them to that height or over brings them under this fire-proof construction law. That is a good thing in itself, provided the construction insisted upon is really fire-proof. But it is a very debatable point whether so-called fire-proof construction, construction which satisfies the city's demand for fire-proof qualities, is really fire-proof. If the underwriters are to be believed, or even many of the architects in Winnipeg, the really fire-proof buildings in Winnipeg, of any denomination whatever, are few and far between.

But reverting to this tenement building by-law, with particular reference to fire-escapes, the by-law reads as follows: "Every tenement house of three or more stories in height hereafter erected, or every building of three stories in height now in use as a tenement house which is not provided with proper and sufficient means of egress in the event of fire, or any building of three or more stories in height not now used or arranged to be used as a tenement house, but which shall, after the passing of this by-law, be used or arranged to be used as a tenement house, shall be provided with one or more fire-escapes to the satisfaction of the Inspector of Buildings."

"In every case each separate apartment shall have direct access without passing through any other apartment, to at least one fire-escape, unless such apartment shall have direct access, without passing through any other apartment, to at least two separate flights of stairs leading to the ground, one of which shall be placed in the front and one in the rear of the building; but when each separate apartment shall have direct access to such flights of stairs, there shall be in place of the usual vertical ladder, a metal stairway between the balconies of every such fire-escape, securely fastened to the wall of the building and not less than two feet wide and with proper hand-rails. The balconies and stairs of all fire-escapes must be kept in good repair at all times and free from snow and ice, or obstructions or encumbrance of any kind whatever. All hallways, corridors, or other approaches to fire-escapes shall be kept unobstructed at all times and doors or other openings to the fire-escapes shall never be fastened from the inside."

The by-law goes on to say: "In all tenement houses the hallways and stairways shall be properly lighted when occupied at night, and at the head and foot of each flight of stairs and at the approaches to all exits there shall be kept during the night red lights; and one or more proper alarms or gongs capable of being heard throughout the building shall always remain ready of access and ready for use in each of the said buildings to give notice to the inmates in the event of fire. There shall also be placed in a conspicuous place on each flat proper signs with the words 'TO FIRE-ESCAPES' at or near the exit to said fire-escape."

It would be interesting to know just how many of the apartment blocks now existing in Winnipeg comply with all the requirements mentioned above. Take the lighting of all stairways, for instance. How many of the blocks which are used by apartment blocks in the city have their back outside stairways kept lighted? How many of them are provided with the red lights at the head and foot of each flight of stairs and at the approaches to all exits? How frequently can you come across, in the apartment blocks of Winnipeg, those conspicuous signs showing the means of exit to the fire-escapes? In how many of these are the fire-escapes, or the wooden back stairways, which in far too many cases are made to take the place of fire-escapes, kept clear of ice or snow?

A careful inspection of the apartment houses of Winnipeg would reveal very few cases where the above rules are strictly adhered to; and in some of them the breaches would far outnumber the observances. Apart from the observance of it, the by-law is in many respects, it is capable of a good deal of improvement. Take for example the permission it gives to blocks to do away with iron fire-escapes if there shall be two stairways leading to the ground, one to the front and one to the back. This leads to the adoption of the outside wooden back stairway, itself a veritable death trap. This wooden

stairway usually leads from wooden balconies of comparatively flimsy construction, which stretch across the whole of the block at the back, and on to which the back doors of the suites open. Any fire, on any story of the block, has ample access to these wooden stairways by means of the unprotected windows and doors which give them below and above. Once this structure is on fire at any point its usefulness as a means of escape is gone. The furnace room door is usually placed directly beneath it, and it is peculiarly fitted to be the means of spreading a fire rather than to be the means of escaping from it.

Even where fire-escapes proper are installed, they are almost universally of a type which is excessively dangerous to even the most sure-footed for at least five months of the year. After a fire in the winter it is a common sight to see the fire-escapes so coated with ice from the streams of water played upon the fire that it would be impossible for anyone to get down to the ground without losing his footing upon the slippery surface of the fire-escape steps. Imagine trying to walk down four storeys of an apartment block, or any other block, in the dead of night, and in the hurry and excitement attendant upon the mildest kind of a fire, by way of a fire-escape coated with ice like the one in the illustration on this page.

And it is not alone the apartment blocks which are a source of danger to the inmates. Many of our tall office buildings are far from ideal in their conditions in this regard. The usual scheme of construction in a tall office building, so far as means of egress are concerned, is an elevator shaft, with a stairway winding around it from top to bottom of the building. This shaft is open from roof to cellar. It forms a flue through which the flame spreads from storey to storey until the whole building is enveloped. What is more serious still, it puts a stop to the elevator service almost at the inception of the fire; and, incidentally, cuts off egress by means of the stairway. The only means of escape left is by the roof. Try to imagine the average stenographer or even the average man, emerging from a burning building onto an open iron stairway ten or twelve storeys from the ground, and crawling down that dizzy height past doors and windows spouting flame, cinders and smoke. It would be extraordinary if they got down at all—if they did not lose their balance from combined giddiness and excitement, and fall.

In one section of the city's building operations, however, steps have been taken to eliminate the dangers from the ordinary fire-escape. The Winnipeg School Board has adopted a form of fire-escape for the schools which deals from the point of view of perfect safety, ease in operation, and of speed in emptying a burning building. In nearly every school in the city the spiral fire-escapes have been installed. In the schools, now under construction, they are being built into the building itself. Their manufacture and operation shown are simple in the extreme, as will be seen by the drawing shown. The fire-escape is a spiral slide inclosed in a sheet steel cylinder six feet in diameter. This stand pipe extends entire length of escape and has cross brace connections at bottom and top. The escape is connected with the building with iron runways, which are protected with heavy wire railings. All doors are made in pairs of sheet steel well braced with half oval iron. The entrance doors have projecting frames so that they can open inward and not interfere with the slide. These doors close automatically, and prevent the entrance of smoke and heat. The exit doors open outward. A very slight pressure of any object sliding against it opens an automatic latch on these doors. The slide comes within eighteen inches of the ground. Escaping persons get up as if rising from a chair on reaching the exit.

A sheet steel roof covers the escape, which keeps it nice and dry from snow and ice, which are such a menace to life on all steep escapes. The entire work is mechanically and substantially constructed and painted with two coats of best mineral paint. The escape is set between the windows so as not to obstruct ventilation and light. By means of this fire-escape the schools of Winnipeg, in case of fire, can be emptied in less than five minutes, without crowding, without possibility of accident, and in perfect order.

Some such perfect means of escape ought to be installed in every factory, office building and apartment block. With such a fire-escape, a disaster like that which happened in New York last month would have been impossible. In one actual test, made at a school, 501 children on two floors of a school building passed through the escape, and landed safely in the school yard in two minutes and ten seconds from the time the alarm was sounded.

If it is necessary to install fire-escapes and if it is permissible for a city to legislate as to the type of fire-escape to be installed, it seems only reasonable that the standard should be made as perfect as possible. The best is none too good when it comes to a question of saving life—and that is the function of a fire-escape. When it comes to a question of the lives of our children, we install the spiral fire-escape. Are we to commit ourselves to the view that our own lives, and the lives of our employees and fellow citizens, are of less value than the lives of the children? Only on that hypothesis can the present regulations for the installation of fire-escapes in factories, office buildings and apartment blocks be justified.

Charles P. Taft, the president's brother, lost his baggage en route to Philadelphia and attended the Philadelphia Medical Club's banquet last night in the evening clothes of a waiter. "He gave me the laugh when I demanded that he right the wrong he did my daughter," was Frank McMahon

explanation for mortally shooting George Leary, 33 years old, of Philadelphia. With a part of his sixth rib in place of his skull, George Wildams, of New Orleans, has left a St. Louis hospital feeling fine. The transplanting was made to protect the brain membrane. So enraged was Albert Allen, a deaf and dumb soap peddler, when fined \$10 at New Rochelle, New York, for peddling without a license, that he swore, the first words he had uttered in ten years.

Dealers Asked \$1.00 a Bag This Morning At The Market. Other Prices.

It was a real spring market this morning. The first consignment of rhubarb was offered for sale and onions also made their appearance. Judging from the sale of flowers, Mothers' Day will be observed by a large number tomorrow. There was a large supply on hand. The price of potatoes took a soar this morning, the produce handlers asking 90c and \$1.00 a bag. Small seed potatoes sold at 65c. Cabbage, tomatoes and cauliflower plants found a big sale. The price of produce was as follows:—

Eggs, per doz.	16c and 17c
Butter, per lb.	22c and 25c
Cheese, per lb.	16c
Rhubarb, per bunch	05c
Onions, per bunch	05c
Tomato plants	15c
Cabbage plants	10c
Aster plants	15c
Honey, Imp. qt.	50c
Maple Syrup, per gal.	\$1.50
Potatoes, per bag	90c and \$1.00

Members of the Board of Health Have An Idea Which They Think Practicable.

Since Rev. Mr. Oberlander inaugurated his energetic campaign for the establishment of a sanatorium in Berlin, the members of the Board of Health have become impressed with the idea that such an institution is urgently required. They not only do, however, quite approve of Mr. Oberlander's plans, which up to the present have been considered to be quite in line with the requirements of this town. The Board's objection appears to be to the proposed location of the sanatorium in Woodside Park.

Certain members of the Board are now advocating that the sanatorium be made a county affair and that an effort be made to get other towns and counties interested in the project. With this end in view the members of the Board on Friday afternoon visited Chicopee Heights in search of a suitable location. Several sites were inspected, any one of which would make an admirable location for such an institution.

At the Board of Health meeting Friday evening a committee was appointed to go further into this proposition. If the Board of Health insists on its program being carried out it will probably mean not only the abandonment of Mr. Oberlander's plans, but will also delay the project for an unknown length of time. To arrange all details for the purchase of the land, to interest other counties and towns and to make other arrangements may require years of effort.

On the other hand Mr. Oberlander's object was to immediately provide an institution for the treatment of sufferers from tuberculosis. In fact he was ready to proceed at once with his campaign. His plans were ready and all that was required was the consent of the Board of Health to erect the sanatorium on a site in Woodside Park.

This permission the Board of Health has seen fit to withhold.



Topsy Hartsel, the veteran outfielder of the Athletics, is still in fast company, notwithstanding his many years of service. The little fellow hangs on in great shape and promises that he will take a very lively youngster to supplant him.

Hospital Board Will Send A Circular Letter To The Ratepayers.

The Berlin-Waterloo Hospital Board at its meeting on Friday evening decided to send a circular letter to all the ratepayers of Berlin setting forth the reasons why the by-law to raise the sum of \$15,000 by debentures for the purpose of erecting an addition to the Hospital should be supported. The members are confident that when the property-owners are made conversant with the circumstances making it necessary to increase the present accommodation of the institution that the by-law will receive practically a unanimous endorsement from the friends and supporters of the Hospital including all the ratepayers of the town.

It will be pointed out in the letter that Stratford has just recently opened a \$31,000 new addition Guelph last year spent \$22,000 on a new wing, Galt proposes extending at least \$31,000 for increased accommodation and in Toronto a magnificent new hospital is being erected to cost \$2,000,000. In view of the phenomenal growth of the towns of Berlin and Waterloo the necessity of more room at the Hospital is apparent. It is also shown that during the last ten years the average number of patients was 303; operations 97 and births 13, while last year 347 patients were treated, 138 operations were performed and there were 37 births recorded.

The Board also decided to ask the co-operation of the Ministerial Association and the Trades and Labor Council to use their influence in support of the by-law. The Lady Superintendent's report for April showed 215 days for free patients and 460 days for pay patients totaling 675 days, receipts amounted to \$677.05, admitted 39, discharged 39, in on April 30th, 25.

The Secretary-Treasurer reported receiving the Government's half-yearly grant of \$308.04, the sum of \$86.88 from Dr. Geo. W. Waterloo, Dr. Minchin, A. J. Ross, G. M. Wedd, L. D. Merrick, F. W. Sheppard, G. D. Richmond and Secretary Eby, of Berlin. Dr. G. H. Bowber, of the Medical Advisory Committee, was also in attendance.

BLAZE AT PETAWAWA.

Buildings at Camp Are Destroyed—Many Other Fires.
Ottawa, May 13.—The Militia Department was apprised yesterday of a fire at Petawawa military camp on Thursday which destroyed the ordnance stores building, the army service corps building, and the house of Sergeant Blais, the caretaker, entailing a loss of about \$25,000. The fire was caused by lighting, which struck the building, and, despite the efforts of a number of men employed in getting the camp ready for the summer training, the buildings and contents were consumed. The loss is made up mainly of the blankets used in camp, a number of Ross rifles, several sub-machine guns and transport wagons. The buildings were one-storey frame structures.

Craighurst In Danger.
Craighurst, May 13.—Bush fires are raging furiously all around the Village of Craighurst, causing much alarm to the residents. Unless the high winds that prevail at the present time abate, and rain is forthcoming, the village is in danger of being wiped out. The fire is making rapid strides, fanned by high winds and the village is enveloped in smoke. A number of the male residents are out to fight the flames.

Approaching B.R.
Bala, May 13.—Wm. Carr started a fire Thursday to clear the corner of a chopping. After dinner it was beyond his control and is now across the O.P.E.U. track. The fire is raging before a high wind eastward along Shanty Bay towards Bala. Buildings will be in danger if it crosses the swamp north of Robertson's Point, as there is no provision of any kind for fighting it.

Lavant Threatened.
Kingston, May 13.—A big bush fire is raging at Lavant, on the line of the Kingston & Pembroke Railway, sixty miles north of here. Mayor Graham has been ordered to render assistance last night. The mayor gave Fire Chief Armstrong permission to take the Chatham fire engine and as much hose as he could spare. A special train was made up and left as soon as possible with men and equipment. The report from Lavant states that the fire is about a quarter of a mile from the village. It is believed it will be checked in time to save the buildings in the village. There are less than a dozen houses at Lavant.

May Become Serious.
Mégantic, Que., May 13.—Forest fires are raging in the Woburn district near here. Between four and five miles square of forest have already been burned over. A large force of men have been rushed to the scene and are now making an effort to stay its progress. Unless rain comes soon, the situation will be serious.

Complete Program for the Visit by Vice-Royalty to Berlin has been Arranged—Formal Unveiling of the Monument will take place about two o'clock in the Afternoon of Monday, May 29th.

Final arrangements were made this morning for the visit of the Governor-General to Berlin on Monday, May 29th, when his Excellency will unveil the Queen Victoria Monument in Victoria Park.

A letter received by the Mayor this morning announces that Earl Grey will be accompanied by her Excellency Lady Grey and Ladies Sybil and Evelyn Grey, as well as three or four members of the Governor-General's staff, so that he vice-regal party will be an imposing one. The letter further states that his Excellency is looking forward with much pleasure to his visit to Berlin, and has expressed the desire to be driven about town and conducted through a number of the industries.

Accordingly arrangements will be made by the Daughters of the Empire to have this desire carried out.

The program as now arranged, subject to minor alterations, is as follows:—

The distinguished visitors will arrive in Berlin via G. T. R. at 11.20, where they will be tendered an informal reception by the civic officials, members of parliament and the reception committee.

The Board also decided to ask the co-operation of the Ministerial Association and the Trades and Labor Council to use their influence in support of the by-law. The Lady Superintendent's report for April showed 215 days for free patients and 460 days for pay patients totaling 675 days, receipts amounted to \$677.05, admitted 39, discharged 39, in on April 30th, 25.

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mittee of the Daughters of the Empire.

A procession will be formed which will march to the City Hall. On arrival here, a formal reception will be tendered the party. The Governor-General will be presented with an illuminated civic address prepared by Mayor Schmalz, as well as an address from the daughters of the Empire. This ceremony being concluded, the party will proceed to the Country Club where luncheon will be served, after which his Excellency will address the Daughters of the Empire and members of the Canadian Clubs.

The party will then return to the City Hall and a procession will be formed and proceed to the Park, where the unveiling of the monument will take place. This will be followed by short addresses from Dr. Lackner, Hon. Mr. King and possibly others.

The unveiling having been completed, the vice-regal party will be driven about town, as requested by Earl Grey.

It is understood there will be no formal presentations to their Excellencies, although those on the platform will probably have this honor.

Permission to Build at Woodside Park withheld by the Board of Health Last Night—Mr. McKay the Chief Objector.

When the Rev. F. E. Oberlander appeared before the Board of Health at a special meeting held Friday evening, to gain the Board's formal consent for the erection of the sanatorium building at the south eastern corner of Woodside park, which he has had under contemplation, his plans were given a temporary setback, inasmuch as the Board disagreed with him in the matter of the location of the buildings. He was asked to defer the matter of choosing the site until a committee, appointed to inquire into the purchase price of a site, located at Chicopee Heights, reported at the next regular meeting of the Board. The Board, although not unanimously, favored the town's purchasing these Heights for the sanatorium a several of the members had visited the locality in the afternoon, and were enthusiastically in favor of the land for such a purpose.

The Board's action did not coincide with that of the plans of Mr. Oberlander, which he set forth to the meeting. After explaining the necessity of such an institution for the treatment of tubercular patients, the reverend gentleman stated that he had made arrangements with the Park Board for a lease of a piece of property at Woodside park. He asked permission to proceed with his plans. The members of the Board were quite in sympathy with the proposition. Mr. J. E. McKay the instigator of the movement to acquire Chicopee Heights, however expressed his disapproval of the Woodside park location, because of the proximity to the residential section that would in time spring up there. He strongly favored the erection of the sanatorium at Chicopee Heights and felt the citizens at large would support the idea of purchasing the land. He estimated the 30 acres could be acquired for \$3,000.

When Mr. Oberlander, who had himself thoroughly inspected this property was asked for his opinion of such an action, his answer was that the land had its impractical features. Chief among which was the access to the property. The idea was not to isolate patients but to allow them to visit friends, as loneliness in the treatment of tubercular patients was an impediment. The spot itself, he like Mr. McKay thought an ideal one, but the difficulty in reaching the place was something that impaired it.

Mr. McKay thought this was not something which could not be readily overcome. Rev. Oberlander "Why not then erect your isolation hospital there?" Health Officer McGillivray replied it was too distant for such an institution.

Mr. Macklin favored allowing Mr. Oberlander to proceed with his plans at Woodside park. He did not believe a sanatorium should prove contrary to opinions of nearby residents. Mr. Oberlander pointed out there was no danger from a health standpoint, otherwise he would not have erected a miniature building for the treatment of a patient at the rear of his own residence. Mr. McKay however, persisted in his proposal to have the Chicopee Heights acquired and he had Mr. Bi