

The prices of all articles of ordinary consumption have risen considerably, and it is thought in local financial circles that the situation may become a cause of still more serious trouble unless the Government take some far-reaching measures.

These are further indications of the world-wide stringency and of the harmful effects of war.

**CANADA'S FIRE WASTE**

The fire losses in Canada for the first two months of the current year total \$5,950,771, an average of \$2,975,385 per month. This is equal to a daily loss of \$100,860. In other words \$4,202 worth of property has been burned every hour since the new year dawned, or \$70 every minute. This is largely an extravagant waste of capital. The losses as compiled by The Monetary Times during 1909, 1910, 1911 and 1912 are as follow:—

	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
January .....	\$1,500,000	\$1,275,246	\$2,250,550	\$3,002,650
February .....	1,263,005	750,625	941,045	1,640,153
March .....	851,690	1,076,253	852,380	2,261,414
April .....	720,650	1,717,237	1,317,900	1,355,055
May .....	3,358,276	2,735,536	2,564,500	2,251,815
June .....	1,360,275	1,500,000	1,151,150	4,229,412
July .....	1,075,600	6,386,674	5,384,300	1,741,371
August .....	2,582,915	1,667,270	920,000	1,164,760
September .....	1,615,405	894,125	1,123,550	883,949
October .....	2,208,715	2,195,781	580,750	1,416,218
November .....	935,191	1,943,708	1,506,500	1,184,010
December .....	1,433,813	1,444,860	2,866,950	1,769,905
	\$18,905,538	\$23,593,315	\$21,459,575	\$22,900,712

Adding to these figures the total loss for the first two months of 1913, we have a fire loss in fifty months of \$92,809,911, an average monthly loss of \$1,856,198.

In addition, there has to be recorded a disastrous list of fire fatalities. During February in Canada 21 people met their deaths in fires. During the first two months of the year 35 people were sacrificed in the same manner. In the fifty months since January, 1909, no less than 1,030 persons lost their lives in fires, a monthly average of almost 21 persons. The following table gives the details:—

	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.
January .....	16	27	27	27	14
February .....	8	15	12	11	21
March .....	16	20	18	24	..
April .....	18	37	20	15	..
May .....	21	15	28	18	..
June .....	16	52	13	6	..
July .....	4	15	110	9	..
August .....	17	11	22	16	..
September .....	10	10	13	6	..
October .....	26	16	17	21	..
November .....	34	19	20	22	..
December .....	33	19	17	28	..
Totals .....	219	256	317	203	35

In February eleven deaths were caused by burning buildings, six by clothes catching fire, two by coal oil explosions, and one each by playing with matches and fire caused by railway collision.

Of the presumed causes for fires during February, 13 were attributed to defective chimneys and flues, 32 overheated stoves and furnaces, 12 matches, 10 overheated stovepipes, 9 defective stoves and furnaces, 8 thawing pipes, 9 electrical defects, 7 hot ashes, 5 heaters, 4 spontaneous combustion, 4 gas jets, 3 sparks, 3 cigar stubs, 3 candles, 3 lamps exploded and upset, 3 gasoline, 2 defective stovepipes, 2 lighted torches, 1 clothing left near stove, 1 locating gas leak with light, 1 children set pillow alight, 1 incendiary, 1 gas stove, 1 friction, 1 upset gasoline stove, 1 hot journal, 1 smoking in bed, 1 coal oil stove ignited straw, 1 salamander set cotton alight.

The alarming statistics respecting Canada's fire waste may be used as an excellent reason for the cele-

bration of a Fire Prevention Day in Canada. On such a day everything possible should be done to remind the individual of his responsibility in the matter of fire waste, and the subject is one which must be dinned into the public ear every day. We might allot one day a year on which to make a din that would be remembered for many months. Burning property at the rate of \$70 every minute this year is a record of which no Canadian citizen can feel proud.

**FUEL FROM STRAW**

The waste of by-products in Western Canada especially has been noticeable. The chief reason is that time is too valuable and labor too scarce to earn a difficult dollar when an easy dollar calls attractively. So coal dust is wasted, straw is burned by hundreds of tons, and other by-products are sacrificed to the demands of a new country. Many schemes have been mooted to utilize straw in the prairie provinces for commercial purposes. So far, their success has been negligible.

A Dr. Andrews is now trying to convince the Regina board of trade that in straw an everlasting coal mine has been discovered. Regina city's coal bill, not counting that of the individual citizens, during last year cost about \$75,000, and consisted of less than 10,000 tons. Within a radius of 20 miles of the city, Dr. Andrews stated there is material for the production of 375,000 tons of briquettes from straw, at a cost of about \$2 per ton. As a binder for the briquetting, Dr. Andrews proposes to use potatoes, which can be grown cheaply on the prairies. The board of trade decided to petition the Provincial Government to make an appropriation to permit Dr. Andrews to continue his experiments.

The Saskatchewan Government will undoubtedly prove that Dr. Andrews' scheme has been advanced by him beyond the early experimental stages, before they make a grant, as the Regina board of trade proposes. Science has made much progress in the past few years, and makes it dangerous to be too skeptical in these days. On the other hand, the Provincial Government should keep its eye on the treasury a long while before it parts with money to see if Regina can keep warm on a prescription of straw and potatoes.

**SMALL CHANGE**

The national watchword for 1913—"Economy."

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One day, perhaps, the Macleans, MacLeans and McLeans will try uniform spelling.

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An Amherst child was born with three hands—evidently preparing for the Canadian shipbuilding boom.

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Hon. Winston Churchill would probably like to strip his ministerial clothing and enter the ring as a common citizen.

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We hear of certain drafts returned east from Western Canada, and they are not related to the Chinook winds, either.

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Dr. Andrews told Regina that one of the ways of generating cheap power was by means of wind—an idea evidently acquired from mining prospectus writers.

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London underwriters took 60 per cent. of a Government guaranteed British Columbia railway issue, indicating what a picksome appetite the British investor still has.