

In the recent fire in the Parker building in New York (a twelve-story so-called fireproof building) many seem to find food for argument in favor of their contentions that a fireproof building is an impossibility, but the facts

built, in which every precaution has been taken against the spread of fire on the inside, but with no provision made for the protection of the contents of the building from being ignited by flames from the outside. This is

one of the grossest and most common mistakes in modern warehouse construction.

In connection with this subject the International Society of Building Commissioners recently issued a bulletin, which makes the statement that 44 per cent. of all the fire losses during 1907 were directly attributable to the lack of proper window protection. Fire originates in one building, but cannot be confined there, and its travel is made easy via the window route to every building in the neighborhood. Further, 80 per cent. of all the damage done in buildings in which fire did not have its origin is fault of sufficient window protection. In conflagrations like those of Toronto or San Francisco, nearly 100 per cent. of the damage is directly attributable to that same cause, for in the latter case we know of but fourteen separate and distinct fires occurring in the city on that memorable morning. Had the adjacent buildings been made invulnerable by protected windows, those fires would have been confined in the structures in which they had their inception, and would have resulted

in but insignificant blazes. Surely this matter of properly protecting windows is an important one. Automatic fire doors and shutters afford a large amount of protection, but the universally approved system of window protection is a metal or incombustible sash filled with wire glass, and where the danger is particularly great, on nar-

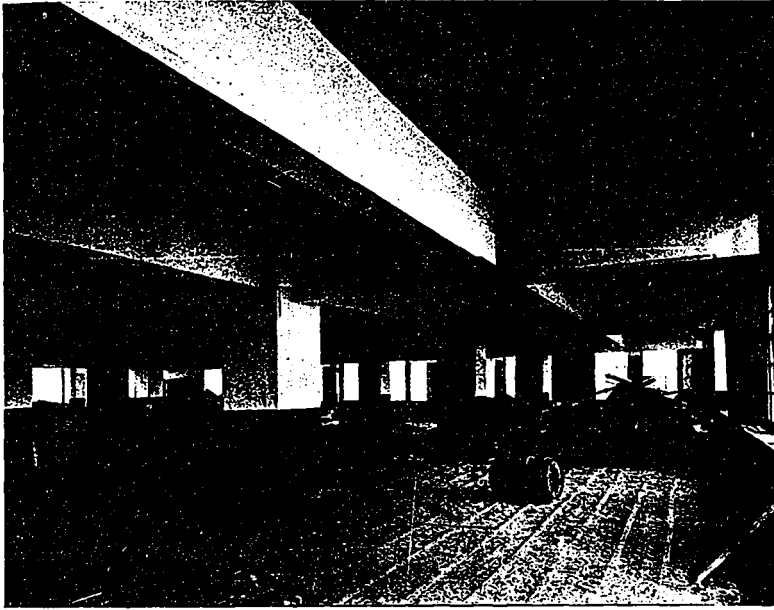


Fig. 2—INTERIOR VIEW OF GROUND FLOOR OF ANDREW DARLING BUILDING, SHOWING THE MASSIVE REINFORCED CONCRETE BEAMS, GIRDERS AND COLUMNS, THAT SUPPORT THE FLOORS. THE SPRINKLER PIPES RUNNING THROUGH THIMBLES IN THE BEAMS AND GIRDERS MAY BE SEEN. NOTE THE LARGE AMOUNT OF LIGHT THROWN TO THE CENTRE OF THE BUILDING.

of the case go to prove the very opposite. That is, the necessity of intelligently using every possible precaution in rendering a building absolutely fireproof.

It is true that in the Parker building approved elements of a fireproof structure were used; that is, steel and brick and hollow tile, but these materials were not properly put together, much of the steel work was left absolutely unprotected by tile, and, of course, was heated and thrown out of place by the fire, thus causing collapse of many sections of floor construction; its stairs and elevator shafts were open from story to story, and its windows were unprotected by wire glass, so that fire had a clear sweep, both within and outside; there was not sufficient water pressure to reach above the fifth floor, and the building was used for far more hazardous purposes than those for which it was intended. Had this structure had every particle of the steel frame amply protected with hollow tile or concrete, and had each story constituted a unit by itself, and all external openings protected by metal sash and wired glass, the fire would have been extinguished before it caused any appreciable damage.

A great many structures are



Fig. 3—INTERIOR VIEW ON SEVENTH FLOOR, ANDREW DARLING BUILDING, TORONTO, SHOWING THE SMALLER DIMENSIONS OF THE BEAMS, GIRDERS AND COLUMNS AS COMPARED WITH THOSE SHOWN IN FIG. 2. A BETTER ILLUSTRATION OF THE DIMINISHING DIMENSIONS OF THESE PARTS IS SHOWN IN FIG. 4.