

## Fire Prevention Day

To bring home the danger of fire the Dominion government set aside October 9 to be observed as Fire Prevention Day. The Dominion Fire Commissioner (Mr. J. Horace Smith) prepared a programme to include lessons in all public schools on fire prevention; public meetings in the cities, towns and villages; advice to owners and occupants of property relating to the removal of fire hazards from their premises, etc. In his explanatory letter of the programme Mr. Smith pointed out the duties of local authorities as follows:—

"Fire waste is one of the most serious economic problems confronting Canada at the present time. The public in general is vitally affected by the tremendous losses annually incurred by fire and the enormous expenditures rendered necessary to adequately protect life and property from its ravages. Seeing that at least seventy-five per cent of all fires are caused by carelessness and can therefore be prevented, it is the obvious duty of municipal authorities, fire department officials, boards of trade and other representative citizen bodies to bring the matter to the attention of the people."

According to statistics Canada's fire losses in 1918 amounted to close on thirty-four millions, or \$4 per head of the population. This in comparison with Europe's 33 cents per head makes very bad showing even with climatic conditions against us, and when it is considered that by far the larger part of Canada's fire losses were preventable it is time that something was done to bring home to the citizens their individual responsibility.

In studying urban fire statistics we find that the heavier losses were in those municipalities where the fire regulations were very imperfect and the enforcement of them even worse. In some of our smaller centres the fire fighting apparatus is very meagre and what there is very much out of date. We find fire by-laws vague to the extent of being misunderstood in many of our small municipalities and even in more than one city. So that there is much to do by the local authorities to help make safe the lives and property of the people. The Dominion authorities are to be commended for the start made to lessen the fire risks of the country and they should receive all the support possible from the local authorities.

## The National Industrial Conference

The National Industrial Conference that was held last month in Ottawa, while fully reported in the daily press, did not seem to receive much editorial comment. Whether it is because we do not yet fully realize the changes now taking place in the industrial and social conditions of the other countries and which are even affecting Canada, the indefiniteness of the said editorial comment is, to say the least, not very encouraging to those who would have this Dominion in the vanguard of material and social progress. While the Conference may not have brought about a perfect understanding between the contentious elements in our industrial fabric, it undoubtedly went far in getting capital and labour to see each other's point of view at first hand. This is more than a step forward. So far as Canada is concerned the conference marked an epoch in the values of the relationship of capital to labour, and labour to capital. By special invitation a third group was in attendance which for want of a better definition may be termed as representative of communal values. As such this group was led by the three delegates directly representing the municipal interests of Canada and though the third group had no voting power there is no doubt that in the deliberations both in the open conference and in the committees, the community delegates had a positive as well as a restraining influence. In other words, for the first time in the history of industrial Canada, both capital

and labour were made to feel in a very direct way their responsibility to the community. It is true the fact was not made too evident in the deliberations, nevertheless the resolutions passed, consciously or unconsciously, bear strong evidence of the spirit of compromise which in itself cannot help but be of benefit to the communal life of the country.

Among the resolutions adopted unanimously by the Conference were those urging investigation regarding Proportional Representation; Joint Industrial Councils, and State Insurance against Unemployment, Sickness, Invalidity and Old Age. Resolutions were also adopted commending the Dominion and Provincial Housing schemes, Compulsory Education and one urging the carrying on of Public Works by the "Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments." To what extent these non-contentious resolutions will be carried out depends on the powers that be, but the fact that they have been seriously discussed by responsible men is sufficient indication that the questions involved in the discussions are exercising the mind of the public, and cannot be shelved by the authorities. And by authorities we do not mean the Dominion Government alone, but the Provincial and Municipal Governments as well. Perhaps the Industrial Conference may be summed up as the first Joint Industrial Council in Canada, and we hope it will not be long before Industrial Councils are established throughout the Dominion.

## Garden Cities for Soldiers

Mr. Mowat, the member for Parkdale, recently sponsored a resolution in Parliament which practically calls for a government housing scheme for returned soldiers in the form of "Garden Cities," the idea being that the necessary loans be repaid in twenty years. In our July issue we had already urged the extending of the Dominion land scheme of \$2,500 loans to soldier farmers to returned men desirous of building their own homes, and Mr. Mowat is to be commended for his advocacy of what would

be if adopted, a sane solution of much of the present dissatisfaction among our returned men, who in the main are not so desirous of gratuities as an opportunity to make up for the time lost to them during the period they were in khaki. In the establishing of "Garden Cities" as suggested in Mr. Mowat's resolution the country has everything to gain and nothing to lose. What is more such a scheme would bring contentment.