

## MONTREAL FIRE BRIGADE AND DEFECTIVE FIRE HOSE.

Montreal has suffered from an unprecedented series of disastrous fires. That these have not gotten beyond control of the present undermanned fire department is a cause for great congratulation.

The present equipment of the Montreal fire department is defective, especially as regards the hose. An expert from New York, who was visiting Montreal at the time of the Jennings fire, has severely criticized the hose that was being used. It is understood that there has been no new hose purchased by the city since 1915. This is a serious condition, and Chief Chevalier has submitted an urgent requisition for twenty thousand feet. The city must have this if a disaster is to be avoided. During the progress of the various recent fires many lengths of hose have been destroyed and dozens of lengths burst, during the Jennings fire.

Montreal's water supply for the congested district is fairly good, but this will avail nothing if the fire department is to be hampered by defective hose, which is bound to cause delay and possibly disaster.

It has also been stated that, although there is a small amount of reasonably good hose in use in the center of the city, some of the hose for the outlying districts has been in service for over twenty years.

The rank and file of the Montreal fire brigade are considered individually to be among the most efficient in Canada, but no matter how capable a man is he is unable to perform good work unless supplied with adequate appliance.

The fire department, under the two-platoon system, is inadequate to properly man the apparatus, and the force should be increased along the lines urgently recommended by both Chief Chevalier and the Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association. It must be understood that, on account of accident and sickness, the working strength of the department is never as high as it appears on paper, and due allowance must be made in order that the city may have adequate protection.

Montreal is prominent among North American cities, having a most serious conflagration hazard. Underwriters for many years have feared that a disastrous fire would visit the city, as all the elements which cause such fires are present. In the inner congested value district among the most serious features are the narrow streets and close grouping of highly combustible materials in buildings of ordinary construction.

In the past this danger has been avoided by an excellent fire department. If now the department is to be handicapped both as to man force and equipment, the city will be inviting a disaster such as has destroyed other communities within the last fifteen years.

## REPATRIATION AND EMPLOYMENT.

Hon. J. A. Calder, Minister of Immigration and Colonization, addressed a large gathering at the Canadian Club of Toronto on Friday, January 10, in his capacity of Chairman of the Committee on Repatriation and Employment.

The Minister pointed out that the reconstruction problem facing Canada was not of the intensity which faced the devastated countries of Europe, although Canada's condition at present was admittedly different to pre-war days.

Most of the changes to be made, he said, were those which would contribute most materially towards bringing the entire scheme of rehabilitation to a satisfactory conclusion. There was no apprehension in official circles that there would be any lapse into Bolshevism or that any serious upheaval would eventuate.

He concluded his remarks as follows:

Well, what is the crux of the whole situation. It is this, that there are too many people in Canada who are prone to put this job entirely upon the back of the government. That is not the place for it. I say again that that is not the place for it. This problem of repatriation of the soldiers and the caring for those thousands of dependents who are to come home will never in the world be solved by any government. There is only one way in which it can be solved and that is by the people of this country. Unless our people, unless our country rallies to help in the solution of this problem, well, I am afraid we are steering straight for serious trouble. This job is a national one, it is a personal one. The question in my mind which every one should ask himself now is not what is the Government doing, but what am I prepared to do? You know it is better to be penny wise now than pound foolish a little later on. As I intimated in the first part of my remarks I do not anticipate trouble in this country. I do not look for it because our people during all these trying times have shown themselves to be splendid to the last degree. Our people have not shirked their responsibility in war time and I believe that they will not shirk them in peace time. I believe that our people, who did what they did in the way of raising men, sending them across, supporting them while there, raising the necessary funds in this country to carry on the work, doing what we did in the way of production and in a hundred other ways, I say people who did that in war time are not going to fall down in peace time. A nation that produced the army that smashed its way through after four years of war all the way from Amiens to Mons, after having lost in casualties something like 200,000 men during the war, I say a nation that will produce such an army as that army was, resting in honour at historic Mons when the armistice came, the people who will produce an army like that is not going to fall down on this peace task that we have now taken hold of. But again I say the problem is yours and it is the problem of all the people of Canada, and if there is one idea more than any other I would like to bring home, not only to those in this room, but every man and woman in Canada, it is this: The time has come when they, when you, must take up your share of this work because after all the greatest thing we can do is to see that when these men come back to this Canada of ours, these men who have done so nobly, these men who have fought your battle and my battle, protected your home and my home and your property and my property,