

## THE GROWING FIRE TAX

### Greater Care Would Result in Substantial Reductions in the Heavy Burden Now Resting on Canadians

The Citizens' Research League of Winnipeg, Man., has issued its Bulletin No. 12, under the title, "Your Growing Fire Tax." The following figures are given showing the cost of fires to Winnipeg during the year:—

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Insurance premiums paid in 1917 (approximately) | \$1,600,000 |
| Expenses of city fire department (over)         | 500,000     |
| Total   | \$2,100,000 |

These figures do not take into account the expense of private fire protection by occupants and owners.

The league points to the experience of the city during the fortnight in May, 1918, when the civic fire brigade was on strike. During these two weeks there were only 56 calls as compared with 127 during the corresponding two weeks of 1917. Of these 56 calls only 17 were actual fires. Knowing that the fire department was on strike, owners and householders were for once impressed with the absolute necessity for carefulness and the results indicated how large a proportion of fire losses is the result of negligence.

Canada has the greatest fire loss per capita of any country in the world from which statistics are available. During the quarter century preceding the war, our annual fire losses had increased by 290 per cent., while the Dominion's population had increased by only about 67 per cent. The per capita fire loss is nearly \$2.75.

Winnipeg's annual fire losses as given by the chief of the city fire department show a considerably higher average than that of over 300 leading North American cities. In 1916 the city's losses amounted to practically \$3.75 per capita and in 1917 to almost as much. The five-year average approximates \$3 annually, as against \$2.25 for 300 United States cities, 74 cents for the whole of France, 64 cents for England, and 13 cents for Switzerland.

In explanation of the excessive loss in the city of Winnipeg, it is pointed out that the climate is comparatively dry and high winds are frequent. Many of the houses are built of timber with shingle roofs and must be artificially heated during many months of the year. The fire area covered is 29.9 square miles and the city fire department is kept in an efficient state.

The expenditure on fire protection during the past two years has been as follows:—

|                                    | Expenditure<br>1916-7. | Per<br>capita. | Expenditure<br>1917-8. | Per<br>capita. |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Fire department                    | \$359,079              | \$1.78         | \$399,038              | \$2.18         |
| Fire alarm system                  | 22,585                 | ...            | 20,771                 | ...            |
| Fire hydrants                      | 69,660                 | ...            | 70,650                 | ...            |
| Fire service water-works operating | 66,029                 | ...            | 63,960                 | ...            |
|                                    | \$517,354              | \$2.56         | \$554,420              | \$3.03         |

#### Remedies Suggested.

The Winnipeg Fire Commission in its report on a large fire in 1916 made the following four principal recommendations:—

1. That the fire department should make closer and more detailed inspections.
2. That owners of buildings should instruct employees as to promptly calling the fire department.
3. That display cards should be placed in every building giving the location of nearest alarm boxes.
4. That in the interest of public safety it may be advisable for the city to get legislation requiring old as well as new buildings of hazardous occupancy to be safeguarded against fire by the installation of automatic sprinklers.

The following suggestions are put forward by the league in its bulletin:—

1. A more exacting test of general intelligence would seem feasible. Candidates for the position of firemen are in several cities (after newspaper notice of vacancies has been given) chosen by open competitive examination of the civil service sort, aimed at discovering general intelligence and special aptitude.

2. In its report of a year ago the league urged the instituting within the fire department of a regular school of instruction. On this point the chief's report for 1917 says: "The school of instruction is maintained during the year for five days in the week, weather permitting, and members from each station are drilled two hours each day and instructed in the use of scaling ladders, extension ladders, laying of hose and the use of all tools used in fire fighting, so that all unnecessary delay, excitement and confusion are eliminated at fires; and by this constant training the men are kept in such a physical condition that they are at all times able to cope with the most strenuous work that is expected of a fireman."

3. It was further recommended by the league that the instructor or instructors in the department's "school," should have available a library of up-to-date fire-fighting and fire-prevention literature, which should also be accessible to the men and which they should be encouraged to read. Evidence of familiarity with this should be counted to a man's credit and entered on his record as contributing to promotion.

## LOST—FIVE BILLION DOLLARS

The "Liberty Book," issued by the International Harvester Company, of Chicago, comments as follows on the need for efficiency in farming:—

The principles of good business observed in manufacturing or commercial pursuits, apply also to the business of farming. This is especially true at this time when efficiency in every line of endeavor is imperative.

On the farms of the United States there is an average annual loss of about 30 per cent. of the gross income, and all this waste can be prevented.

The principal sources of this loss are as follows: Failure to test seed corn, more than \$100,000,000; improper harvesting and storing of seed corn, millions of dollars in yield and quality; planting of imported seed corn, cannot be estimated; ravages of corn root worm, more than \$100,000,000; waste of cornstalks left in field instead of being put in silo, at least \$500,000,000; failure to treat small grains for smut, \$35,000,000; waste of manure through careless handling, \$100,000,000; weeds, \$300,000,000; hog cholera, over \$65,000,000; Texas fever cattle tick, nearly \$500,000,000; "scrub" dairy cows, \$745,000,000; for depreciation of farm machinery and tools from failure to house or care for them; soil erosion resulting from one-crop system of agriculture; and for carelessness, neglect, shiftlessness—because we are in the rut—we will charge \$2,500,000,000 more.

## TO RESTORE AMERICAN CULTURE

A recent article in the "Gateway Magazine," of Detroit, contains a eulogy of the work of Mr. John Stuart Thomson, who has been a frequent contributor to *The Monetary Times*. For many years he has been leader of a number of international movements, especially official recognition of the Chinese Republic by Britain and America; retention of the Philippines; medical missions for China whereby American-trained Chinese physicians mainly are used (the Rockefeller Foundation has adopted this plan in its work in China); preservation of Chinese territorial integrity; use of Japanese army in the war; Anglo-American defensive naval alliance; American-Japanese partnership in China's and Siberia's railways (the Knox-Harriman scheme of 1910); private ownership of railways in peace times. An article upon the latter subject appeared in *The Monetary Times* of January 4th, 1918.

In a recent article, Mr. Thomson wrote:—"In the last two decades, Pan-German imperialists had a hundred books praising their culture, nation, etc., issued in the United States, compared with one book praising Anglo-American culture. When in 1913-4, supported by the written approval of leading magazines, statesmen, churchmen, etc., of the United States, France, Britain, the colonies, etc., I urged publishers to bring out one special book proposing definitely a defensive Anglo-American-French naval alliance as insurance against this war a number of publishers replied: 'No feeling for it; wouldn't pay; no entangling alliances.'"