

Both hot air and steam pipes may become red hot; hence the importance of cutting wood well away round them and covering them with insulating material. Painting increases radiation of heat and the danger. Hot air pipes may acquire a heat above 900 degrees Fahrenheit.

The danger of fire from gas lights in city churches is principally from the swinging, jointed brackets which are nearly always found in the basement and are sometimes seen near the organ. The number of fires from swinging gas jets is much larger than that from explosion of leaked gas. A swinging gas bracket is safe in no place in which a light is needed.

Heart-rending accidents have taught the danger from candle-lighted Christmas trees and the danger from the improvised kitchen of the church supper is little less.

Altar decorations and attendant candles are chargeable with a number of fires.

The congregation owning a fine church can well afford the cost of fire buckets and chemical hand extinguishers and the exertion incident to an occasional fire drill. In very large church edifices with high towers there should be standpipes and automatic sprinklers.

D. S. CREAMER,
State Fire Marshall, Columbus.

PERSONALS.

MR. R. S. DAY, of Victoria, B. C., passed through Montreal, returning from a visit to his native sod, County Cork, Ireland. Mr. Day speaks most enthusiastically of the future growth of the Province of British Columbia, and states that the City of Victoria is making good headway. This gentleman represents the Guardian Assurance Co., and also the Law, Union & Crown.

MR. W. B. COLLEY, joint manager of the London Assurance Corporation, who has been confined to his house for past three weeks, with an attack of bronchitis, is, we are glad to learn, greatly improved.

PROMINENT TOPICS.

NOT WITHOUT SOME ANXIETY is it possible to see the reduction of the sea-going strength of the Royal Navy by one-fourth. Not that there is any immediate prospect of a necessity for a great demonstration of naval strength by Great Britain. But any demonstration of naval weakness is a direct encouragement to ambitions which are a constant menace to England's peace. Most of Britain's wars have been brought on by British statesmen who before all things were the friends of peace.

THE INTER-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE at Ottawa with reference to the provincial subsidies appears to have arrived at a reasonable and satisfactory agreement with the Dominion Government. THE

CHRONICLE pointed out last week that there was an element of justice in the demands of the older Provinces for a readjustment because although the subsidies are nominally fixed upon a per capita basis, the populations of Ontario and Quebec are still assumed for the purposes of this calculation to be the same as in 1861. The Dominion Government has recognized the reasonableness of the Provincial contention in this regard and hereafter the subsidy of 80 cents a head will be paid upon the population as ascertained at the last decennial census. This will give the Quebec Government an immediate increase of about \$600,000 per annum. The Province will also get \$240,000 per annum instead of \$70,000 as at present for civil administration.

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THE ONLY ALARMING FEATURE of the Conference was the passing of a resolution to meet every year for the discussion of matters of common interest. Whatever be the present intentions of the premiers, there is serious danger that this annual conference may degenerate into a yearly raid upon the Dominion Treasury.

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ST. HELEN'S ISLAND, and the whole of Lafontaine Park, are about to become the property of the city, and the people of Montreal, therefore, can count upon two fine and convenient public parks being reserved to them probably in perpetuity. There has been a little, wholly unjustifiable grumbling at the price (\$200,000) asked by the Dominion Government for the Island. The best proof that the city has got a good bargain is that the Government could easily have got a much higher price for the property from private investors, had it been disposed to drive a hard bargain.

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THE GAS AND ELECTRIC LIGHT question still occupies a great deal of public attention, and we are still of the opinion that if the aldermen are really anxious to bring about a settlement, there are no serious difficulties in the way. It is in the manifest interest both of the city and of the company to arrive at an early solution of a problem that has been allowed to drag far too long. The stability of its franchises must be worth a great deal to the company and to secure anything approaching permanency, it ought to be prepared to make valuable concessions. Our own opinion which we have expressed over and over again is that the company should concede to the city a substantial proportion of its net earnings. After paying dividend and providing the necessary fixed charges the city's share to be applied partly to the reduction of the price of gas, but largely to the reduction of the general burden of taxation.