

\$9,226,325, it might be mentioned, is the second largest total registered in the Dominion, and represents a jump of nearly four millions over her amount of the preceding year.

Equally as marked progress is also noted in Alberta, as besides Lethbridge's gain, previously referred to, Calgary annexed a gain of 189 per cent., and Medicine Hat advanced 62 per cent. Edmonton's loss cannot be regarded seriously, as her total of \$2,128,166 shows that the city is, and will continue to be, for some time to come, an important factor in the building line.

As regards Ontario, this province presents a series of bewildering gains. Toronto's total of \$18,200,000 shows the greatest volume of work undertaken in any city in the Dominion. It is a record of which Canada can be justly proud, as there is possibly no city of like size in the world that can boast of such pronounced growth. Ottawa also forged ahead in a most striking manner, her total for permits issued being \$4,527,590, as against \$1,794,075, a gain of 152 per cent., while other advances which give evidence to the gigantic strides which are being made are: Kingston, 165 per cent.; Berlin, 129; Fort William, 90; London, 83; Peterboro, 43; Windsor, 42; Niagara Falls, 33; and Hamilton, 16 per cent. Although Port Arthur failed to submit comparative figures, it is known that her total of \$584,810 is also in excess of the amount registered in 1908.

In the east, Montreal recorded an increase of 53 per cent. and Sydney a gain of 139 per cent. The activity shown in these two places is more or less representative of the progress made in most of the Eastern towns and cities. Apart from Halifax, few, if any, places met with reversals. Three Rivers, as is generally known, spent huge sums in the rebuilding of her burnt district, but in this and other instances, no record of operations have apparently been kept.

Regarding operations in December, Fort William's and Brantford's gains of 2921 per cent. and 1200 per cent. respectively are by far the outstanding feature. The other increases noted are, however, of a most substantial nature, and while smaller amounts are registered in some cases, as compared with the corresponding month in 1908, these represent, as stated above, the aftermath of a most gratifying harvest and the preparation of the "soil" for a more prolific crop.

All in all, 1910 promises much. Toronto predicts a total of \$23,000,000; Winnipeg expects to build to the extent of \$14,000,000; Montreal reports the outlook as "roseate"; and Vancouver says that she is just beginning to grow. This is only an idea of the optimism which pervades the entire country. Prospects for both large and small work were never better, and architects and builders can look forward to an extremely busy season. To sum up the situation in a word, 1909 has been a great year, but 1910 will, unless all signs fail, be a greater one in every respect.

### A Nation's Prodigality.

**F**IRE LOSSES in the new world have reached such stupendous proportions that it seems almost impossible that people should give this criminal waste of our resources so little consideration. Portions of the globe, less rich in natural resources, would fall under the stress of so wanton a prodigality of much smaller proportions. We stand aghast at the monstrous expenditures of the countries of the old world, in the building of Dreadnaughts, and the maintenance of vast armies, while we, through pure neglect and improvidence, stand by and watch over two hundred millions of dollars go up in smoke every year, a sinful waste for which there is no excuse; a waste that, if not remedied, will eventually effect our ruin.

Sins of commission, and sins of omission both contribute to this enormous annual fire loss. The causes are dealt with from time to time in the public press, and it

would seem that we should soon awaken to the need of correcting conditions responsible for a ruinous waste almost unparalleled in the history of the growth of nations. Some statistician has recently compiled figures showing the great property loss due to the seemingly harmless "parlor match." It is maintained that a large percentage of the fire loss in the United States is due to the careless use of the "parlor match." In support of this contention, the following figures are given:

"In Massachusetts in 1907 there were 5,794 fires, 1,230 of which, entailing a loss of \$658,346, were caused by matches.

"Within sixty days, 25 fires, involving a loss of \$106,327, were traceable directly to the parlor match.

"In one year 446 fires from matches in Ohio, 122 were caused by children, 298 by carelessness of adults, 26 by rats and mice—also carelessness of adults.

"The number of persons burned to death in the United States each year by the parlor match is between eight and nine hundred, and the property loss more than two million."

It is pointed out that a law was recently enacted in Great Britain, prohibiting the use of any but "safety matches."

While the accuracy of the above figures is not to be questioned, and the suggestion for the prohibition of the use of overly sensitive lucifers is a good one, this is not the basic reason for the extremely large fire loss. It is not the indiscriminate use of the "parlor match" that accounts for the vast difference in the average per capita fire loss on this continent, as compared with that of the countries in Central, Western and Southern Europe, which is \$3.02 for the former and 33 cents for the latter. The real cause lies in the "flimsy" character of our buildings. In this connection, F. W. Fitzpatrick, the great "fire fighter" and exponent of safe building construction, in a recent article in a United States publication, gave some interesting figures as follows:

"Despite the wonderful advance made in so many sciences, we remain a *wooden* people. Even in the year 1907, 61 per cent. of all the construction carried on in the United States was of wood—well-seasoned *tu*el for future fire. In that same year we did a vast amount of building. In fifty-five of our leading cities the total reached was \$580,000,000. But in that same space of time we also burnt up in that same number of cities, \$215,000,000 worth of property. Plus that, our fire departments, water service and those alleged cures for fire, cost us another \$200,000,000 and more. Then, we also paid out over \$195,000,000 to our friends, the insurance people, who always accommodatingly bet with us on the question of fire. We paid that out in premiums and we got from them in return \$95,000,000 to apply on the \$215,000,000 of fire waste. A simple addition will show you the terrific cost of fire in this country. No other tax equals it. No other waste of a frightfully prodigal people comes within a stone's throw of it; and yet we pat ourselves on the back and say we are the most progressive and sensible people on earth."

We are following fast in the footsteps of our Southern neighbors; we are adopting, to a great extent, United States building methods, and what Mr. Fitzpatrick says of conditions in the United States, is equally true of Canada.

In the days of our early pioneers, before the advent of steel frame and reinforced concrete construction, and when terra cotta, tile, cement, asbestos, metallic lath, fire-proof doors and windows, and iron stairs were unheard of, there might have been some excuse for the indiscriminate use of wood in building construction; not so to-day. With every conceivable material and device within easy reach of every builder, at a cost so comparatively little in advance of combustible materials, and with the experiences of the neighboring Republic to profit by, there is no