

posed to publish the opinions of interested individuals, but rather to furnish records of actual results, leaving the public to form their own judgment. This, we believe, to be the only true method of assisting towards a satisfactory solution of the matter.

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—For the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers, the year 1903 has been one of great expansion, and Mr. Blackwell and his co-workers in the executive council can look back upon their term as one of greater progress than any in the history of the society. They have worked like beavers, and like that noble type of Canadian industry, have carried out their plans without undue noise and ostentation, building for the future. The membership of the society has increased notably, and its influence has extended in every province in Canada.

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### ELECTRICITY AND FIRES.

One result of the recent terrible holocaust in Chicago has been to turn the attention of authorities in every city to the condition of the fire prevention and protection facilities of theatres and public halls. It is to be hoped that steps will be taken in this matter which will effectually prevent a repetition of such a catastrophe as that of the Iroquois Theatre fire. Some doubt exists as to the actual cause of the fire, although it is alleged that it was due to some of the stage drapery coming too close to a naked arc-light. Be this as it may, electricity is generally believed to have started the fire, and this raises the question as to whether sufficient precaution is taken in the equipment of electric light in buildings, to prevent fires occurring. In this connection it is well to note that following close upon the Chicago fire, the report of the Fire and Light Committee of Montreal for the last three months in 1903, records no less than 150 electrical fires, with losses aggregating \$1,500,000. We have no reports from other cities, but there is reason to believe that in this respect Montreal is no worse than other places that make no such records, and these facts must seriously prejudice the public mind against the use of electricity. It is, therefore, in the interest of the electrical industry that attention should be called to this condition of affairs, and that some steps should be taken to ascertain its causes and remedy them.

An analysis of the Montreal report shows that twenty-two fires were due to crosses of telephone, telegraph and low potential wires with high tension circuits. Seven pole and tree fires are also recorded. It is clear that underground wires would have prevented these fires. Nineteen were due to wires grounded on gas pipes, eleven to defective wiring of fixtures, five by flexible cords wrapped round gas pipes, the current having punctured the pipe and the gas had ignited; three by short circuits in mouldings; three to open link fuses in porcelain cut out bases; fifteen to overheated resistance coils and heating devices, and nine to incandescent lamps coming in contact with inflammable material. It will be seen that all these fires were due to preventable causes, and this fact emphasizes the necessity of adopting some method of better supervision in the carrying out of electric light fitting and wiring, and also of educating the public in exercising proper care in the use of electrical apparatus.

In the report referred to, 135 fires are also recorded, where electricity was suspected as the cause, but could not be proved owing to conclusive evidence having been destroyed. Thus it will be seen that wherever a building in which electricity is used is destroyed, there is a tendency to put the blame down to this cause. It is therefore incumbent on electric light contractors to use every means in their power to carry out their work in the most perfect manner. Steps should be taken to ensure that every one undertaking this work is properly qualified and that only reliable material is used.

Unfortunately, the competition in this business has educated the public to sacrifice efficiency for economy, with the result that in this country, where there is no Government supervision, the class of material used in the wiring and fitting of electric light systems in buildings is much below the standard of that in Great Britain, so much so that notwithstanding the preferential tariff, English makers cannot compete with the United States. The onus of the present condition of affairs lies upon the public who insist on the first cost of an installation at the lowest possible figure, they being too short-sighted to see the possibility of being "penny wise and pound foolish." Electrical engineers and contractors are not to blame in this matter, they are only too willing to put in the best work, if they get a fair price for it, and the time is now an opportune one for them to get together and devise some scheme which will result in the universal adoption of only the highest standard of material and workmanship in electrical installations.

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### CANADIAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS.

The annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers was held in the society's rooms, Dorchester St., Montreal, on the 26th, 27th, and 28th January, the president, K. W. Blackwell, in the chair.

There were present during the convention the following members:

From Montreal—K. W. Blackwell, W. J. Sproule, R. Bickerdike, Jr.; C. H. McLeod, W. McLea Walbank, Joseph W. Heckman, J. A. Jamieson, H. R. Lordly, Wm. Arch. Duff, Charles S. Leech, L. G. Papineau, H. Irwin, Ernest Marceau, J. M. Donaldson, George Holland, Henry Goldmark, R. M. Hannaford, W. M. Reid, Henry Holgate, Robert A. Ross, James S. Costigan, J. A. U. Beaudry, Marcil Beullac, H. G. Rogers, C. Percival Metcalfe, H. L. Jordan, R. S. Lea, A. W. Robinson, G. Fiset, R. S. Kelsch, A. A. Blanchard, S. Blumenthal, J. M. Nelson, E. Vautlet, K. B. Thornton, A. Dedman, J. A. Burnett, C. de B. Leprohon, Stuart Howard, T. W. Lesage, George Janin, Alcide Chausse, R. A. Kimber, J. G. G. Kerry, Lewis Skaife, John Kennedy, N. Hanson Greene, Dr. J. B. Porter, J. M. Shanly, F. H. Pitcher, John R. Barlow, J. Ewing, Gordon Grant, H. C. Grant, Wm. Kennedy, Jr.; D. MacPherson, F. L. Gagnon, F. J. Gilman, O. Hall, E. Belanger, E. S. Mattice, W. McNab, H. R. Ives, H. A. Haffner, Dr. A. Stansfield, A. D. Dubuc, R. H. Balfour, W. Redpath, J. L. Allison, J. N. Smith, J. W. G. Greey, P. W. St. George, F. L. Fellowes, G. B. Ashcroft, H. L. Price, G. Le Grand, A. D. Porcheron, J. H. Edgar, Hon. J. P. B. Casgrain, C. V. Corless, R. F. McIntosh, D. W. McLachan, M. J. Butler, George Kydd, W. F. Drysdale, W. D. Lawrence, C. R. Young, H. Idsardi, A. P. Joseph, F. C. Laberge, L. A. Herdt, Phelps Johnson, O. H. Cote, W. Chase Thomson, T. Kirk, E. B. Jost, F. P. Shearwood, F. Lambart, C. F. Eicks, F. S. Keith, H. W. Jones, E. A. Wallberg, T. M. Fysche, C. C. Richards, J. Duchastel, Alex. Peden, Jr.; A. E. Smail, W. V. Taylor, E. Fusey, J. T. Lemire, S. F. Rutherford, C. L. Trimmingham, E. G. M. Cape, E. A. Rhys-Roberts, Frank Peden, Fred. A. McKay, R. B. Kennick, C. N. Monsarrat, Le A. Desy, Arthur Marsey, W. P. Boucher. From Toronto—C. H. Rust, A. A. Bowman, C. E. Cooper, N. B. MacTaggart, Alfred J. Stevens. From Ottawa—C. I. Pinhey, A. S. Laurent, Louis Coste, Robert A. Surtees, W. Dale Harris, Col. W. P. Anderson, G. H. Blanchet, A. D. Harris, G. A. Mountain. From Quebec—Thomas Breen, A. Rhodes, G. G. Gale. From Levis—A. H. Larochelle. From Sorel—G. J. Desbarats, J. D. Lachapelle. From Charlottetown—R. A. Morrow. From Glace Bay—C. M. Odell. From Sherbrooke—C. K. Addie, J. T. Morkill. From Amherst—O. W. Smith. From Indian Lorette—Henry O'Sullivan. From Niagara Falls—G. A. McCarthy, A. C. Blanchard. From St. John's, Nfld.—H. C. Burchell. From Vancouver, H. E. Carry, G. H. Dawson. From Three Rivers—G. R. Duncan. From Ste. Anne de la Pocatiere—J. E. Serois. From Cornwall—A. L. Killaly. From Peterboro—Richard B. Rogers. From Iroquois—F. R. Wilford. From Carleton Place—E. T. Wilkie. From Ste. Anne de Bellevue