

PRINTING & LITHOGRAPHING WORKS IN RELATION TO THEIR FIRE HAZARDS.

At the usual weekly meeting of the Fire Insurance Class, under the auspices of the Montreal Fire Insurance Association of the Blue Goose held on February 26th in the Board Room of the C. F. U. A. Mr. J. D. Simpson, a popular official of the Liverpool & London & Globe was favoured with a large audience to hear his address on the subject of Printing and Lithographing Works in relation to their fire hazards. After a careful and detailed explanation of the most interesting features connected with the various departments of printing works such as electrotyping, lithographing, photo engraving, die stamping, etc. Mr. Simpson said in part:

Turning now to the more prominent fire hazards of the foregoing classes of risks, we find that the fire record shows the loss ratio to be divided almost equally between the special hazards peculiar to printing and lithographing, and common hazards associated with the ordinary heating, lighting and general construction of manufacturing premises as a whole.

Our consideration, however, is confined to special hazards responsible for approximately 46 per cent. of the fires occurring in these establishments. Of this 46 per cent. almost one-half or 22 per cent. is accounted for by oily rags. No matter what is the size of the printing office from the smallest to the largest, oily rags are present. These are required for cleaning ink off the face of type which has been used, and also for cleaning of rollers when it is desired to change the colour. The rags are saturated with either coal oil or benzine, and in the use and storage of these latter there is a definite fire hazard.

Benzine is a distillate of petroleum or crude oil similar to gasoline or naphtha and involves considerable fire hazard. When cotton waste or wipes are soaked in benzine or coal oil and thrown aside, spontaneous combustion quickly follows. It is therefore imperative that all rags and oily wipes be deposited immediately in metal receptacles with closely-fitting covers, and must be removed from the premises each day. It is not sufficient to allow them to accumulate in the basement. They should be burnt in furnace or removed from building entirely. Benzine, apart from Rags, accounts for an additional 4% of losses.

Lamp Black as an ingredient of printer's ink is sometimes stored in quantity and is also "extra hazardous." It is obtained by burning heavy oils, resins or fats in furnaces with a defective air supply, and the soot which settles is lamp black. It is subject to spontaneous combustion, and has considerable affinity for vegetable oils; but it is most important that this material, hazardous in itself and doubly hazardous with water and oils should be properly and carefully dealt with. Whenever possible it should be removed beyond

the precincts of the risk itself, but where it is necessary to have a quantity stored on the premises, it should be free from all contact with damp and also from drippings from oily bearings, whether supplied with drip cups or not. Wherever possible it should be in a separate fireproof compartment, as in the event of a basement fire, the hose might be turned on the lamp black and unwittingly aggravate conditions instead of improving them, materially increasing the loss.

Paper Cuttings and Waste Paper account for 4.7 per cent. of the total loss, and it is therefore important that all cuttings and sweepings should be cleaned out regularly. Trimmings from the guillotines and spoiled sheets from the various printing presses should be carefully baled and removed promptly from the premises or burned. In paper bag factories it is difficult to prevent litter, but no accumulation should be allowed.

In Photo Engraving also we have those materials already mentioned which in themselves are extra hazardous, and about which a great deal of interest to fire official may be written.

Stereotyping and Electrotyping Furnaces and their connections account for 3.7 per cent. of the losses. Photo engraving 2 per cent., printing presses 1.4 per cent. and miscellaneous hazards 2.6 per cent.

The number of hands employed in any plant has a direct relation to the hazard involved, and in reporting on printing offices or other establishments the Fire Inspector should specify the average total number of employees.

Care and management as usual are determining factors in the freedom from fires and private protection in the shape of chemical extinguishers, standpipes and hose, and the ever handy water bucket have a wide scope of usefulness in printing and lithographing offices. Particularly in the benzine and coal oil storage departments are chemical extinguishers of value, while a bucket of sand in the transformer or dynamo house, at the proper time, may be worth its weight in gold.

That "Cleanliness" is next to "Godliness" may or may not be true, especially of newspaper offices, but there is no gainsaying that cleanliness is first handmaiden to a good loss record.

Quebec Statutory Condition 10 (f) restricting storage of benzine, coal oil and other oils and spirits may require to be waived or varied according to the conditions found in the risk.

The Montreal Branch of the Fire Insurance Officials Organization known as the "Blue Goose" have had a very successful season during the past winter. The weekly meetings which have been addressed by some of the leading insurance and legal gentlemen of the city have had an average attendance of 100, and many expressions of appreciation from the fire insurance profession generally have been tendered to the officers of the branch who have all loyally worked to make the classes a success.