

VALUE OF ACCIDENT PREVENTION.

The monthly bulletin of the Fidelity & Casualty Company publishes a chart prepared by the Bureau of Safety, Relief, Sanitation and Welfare of the United States Steel Corporation showing the results accomplished by that great industrial corporation through its accident prevention measures, and comments on the demonstration as follows:

"Many are sceptical as to whether accident prevention measures do accomplish results commensurate to the time, energy and money expended upon them. It is valuable and satisfying, therefore, to have a practical demonstration of the fact that not only do accident prevention measures pay in the sense that lives and limbs are saved, but that they pay financial returns of no small amount to the employer. The chart is so clear that it hardly requires any explanation. It suffices to say that throughout comparisons are made with the data of the year 1906, both as respects accident frequency and compensation benefits paid. As to "accidents" it will be noted that in the years 1907 to 1913, inclusive, there were 11,874 less serious accidents than would have been the case had the 1906 rate of accidents been maintained. As to compensation, it will be noted that the payments per injured workman were increased year by year over what they were in the year 1906, so that the corporation did not take the saving to itself but applied it, in part at least, to the giving of greater compensation to workmen who were injured.

REDUCTION IN SERIOUS ACCIDENTS.

"The most interesting part of the chart is the 'comparative saving—serious injury—casualty expense.' It is shown that in the years 1911 to 1913, inclusive, there were 6,308 less serious accidents than would have been the case had the 1906 rate of accidents been maintained, and that the gross savings in casualty expense in the three years was \$4,775,692.64, or subtracting the cost of the accident prevention measures in the three years of \$2,003,712.29, that the net saving in casualty expense was \$2,771,980.85. It is not saying too much to say that this is a magnificent showing, and that the United States Steel Corporation deserves the congratulations and applause of all right-thinking men. We understand that the Corporation has expended upwards of five million dollars on accident prevention measures. It takes courage of a high order to expend money thus on what at its inception was in a considerable sense an experimental undertaking, and it takes faith in one's self and in one's plans in no small degree. The Corporation has furnished an object lesson of the highest value to others and set up a standard that all should aim to duplicate.

"It is our understanding that the corporation has found by experience that it cannot rely simply on the installation of safety devices, but that it must enlist the intelligent and active co-operation of its men to prevent accidents. It has found the human element more important than the mechanical element. But to obtain the helpful co-operation of the human element, it has also found that it must itself give earnest of its sincere and hearty desire to prevent accidents by spending its own money on accident prevention measures. It has, therefore, done its part by far-seeing, far-reaching measures and spending its money, and its men have responded nobly, as men will always do when they see the other fellow lifting his end of the log."

BRITISH LIFE OFFICES AND INCOME TAX.

It is noted by the London Economist that one or two British life offices whose quinquennial periods unfortunately ended upon December 31st last, have declared lower rates of reversionary bonus or have refrained from raising rates where they might otherwise have done so. This action, says the Economist, has no doubt been prompted more by the desire to be on the safe side than by dire necessity. Interest earnings of life assurance companies at the present time form the chief item in profits, and, assuming the depreciation which a rise in the rate of interest involves in capital values to have been met, profit prospects would be good but for a new factor, namely, income-tax, which, thanks to the war, has become a matter of serious moment. Life assurance companies distribute only a small portion of their profits to shareholders, and the burden of a higher rate of tax on "unearned" income falls directly upon the with-profit policyholders in the form of lower rates of bonus. It may be claimed, of course, that (at present) policyholders get the benefit in the shape of abatement in respect of life assurance premiums, but this applies equally to the non-profit policy-holder, and the system is therefore inequitable as between non-profit and with-profit policies. It would be better to sweep away the premium rebates with their many anomalies, and, instead, to give the companies relief in the shape of lower tax rates upon their investment income.

BRICK AND STEEL VS. CONCRETE.

Brick interests in the United States having published a pamphlet on the subject of the recent Edison fire, with the apparent purpose of discrediting the use of reinforced concrete in fireproof buildings, Mr. Edison has got out a vigorous rejoinder. He states that of the seven reinforced concrete buildings at his plant none was destroyed. A small section of the upper floor of one of the buildings fell in but was supported by the lower floors. On the other hand, every brick and steel building which was attacked by the fire was completely destroyed, together with all the machinery they contained, while the damage done to the concrete buildings amounted to about 12½ per cent., and of the machinery contained in the concrete buildings 98 per cent. was saved and is now in operation. Manufacturing was resumed in some of the old concrete buildings within a few weeks after the date of the fire. Temperatures were far in excess of those in the ordinary fire, but reinforced concrete showed its superiority over any other fire-resisting material.

Press notices and dispatches, as collated by the bonding department of the Fidelity & Casualty Company of New York, indicate, for the month of February, 1915, the following defalcations:

Beneficial Associations	\$86,569
Banks and Trust Companies	97,610
Public Service	10,632
Insurance Companies	129
General Business	205,868
Courts and Trust Companies	118,130
Transportation Companies	400
Miscellaneous	226,652
Total	\$745,990