

79 Per Cent of Fire Losses

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obvious dangers of women kindling fires with coal-oil and children playing with matches. Such campaigns of education are, at best, a trench warfare aimed at wearing down public indifference. Whatever their effect in the future may be, their immediate results are imperceptible.

The frequent statement that Canada's fire loss exceeds that of other countries because of our ignorance of fire dangers and incendiary tendencies is open to proof. What are the facts? Analysis of the fire waste during the first ten months of 1918 shows that, although 15,927 fires occurred and entailed a total loss of \$28,443,200, over \$22,650,000 or 79 per cent of that loss was caused by 234 fires. The actual figures as compiled and classified by the Commission of Conservation are as follows:

CANADIAN FIRE RECORD, 1918
(January to October, inclusive)

No. of Fires.....	15,927	Total loss	\$28,443,200
Fires above \$10,000.	234	\$22,654,500	
Manufacturing ----	168	13,371,000	
Mercantile ----	39	8,339,000	
Miscellaneous ----	27	944,500	
Fires above \$100,000	62	16,787,000	
Manufacturing ----	33	10,320,000	
Mercantile ----	24	5,350,000	
Miscellaneous ----	5	617,000	

Fires above \$10,000 in Man'g Risks—		
Metal Workers --	24	5,960,000
Wood Workers --	27	2,957,000
Food Products --	19	2,193,000
Textile Products --	18	8,156,000
Miscellaneous --	20	2,346,000

The significance of this statement is clear. Through the negligence of 234 owners and occupants of property, the eight million people of Canada are being burdened with a fire loss of over \$22,000,000 in ten months and stand indicted before the rest of the world as a nation of careless spendthrifts. While 70 to 80 per cent of Canada's annual fire loss is due to fires in manufacturing plants and business establishments, the time, thought and energy spent upon teaching fire prevention in public schools comes dangerously near to being misdirected. Any education to be effective must be directed toward the real offenders—the owners and occupants of property whose revenues are augmented by neglect of the principles of fire protection and who, through insurance channels, silently capitalize their evasion of public duty.

The only way in which fire waste conditions in Canada can be remedied is by the enforcement of personal responsibility. We may install water-works, buy fire engines, maintain firemen and establish elaborate insurance schemes from now till eternity, but fire losses will continue to increase in exact ratio to the growth of our national wealth. The greater the responsibility accepted by the community for fire protection the less responsibility is recognized by every individual in the community. That is fundamental. There is no mystery in preventing fires. Every building in Canada can be made reasonably, if not absolutely safe and the means of doing it may be learned for the asking.



WHERE THE BULK OF CANADA'S HEAVY FIRE LOSSES OCCUR
Between 70 and 80 per cent of the national fire loss takes place in factories, warehouses and other high-value mercantile buildings.

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The personal obligation cannot be discharged by the process of insuring nor escaped by pleading defective building laws, indulgent inspection departments, inefficient fire brigades and other scapegoats of individual carelessness. The property owner who insures to cover his own neglect is gambling with the Canadian public and if the game goes against him he should be made to bear at least a proportion of the loss.—J. G. S.

ELECTRICITY USED TO
EXTRACT OCEAN SALT

It is stated that experiments in Norway with a view to extracting salt from sea water by means of electricity have been successful and that two salt factories will be started for this purpose in the near future, under the name of De Norske Saltverkter. One is to be in western Norway and the other in northern Norway, as these districts, on account of the fisheries, are the best home markets.

Each factory is calculated to produce 50,000 tons of salt per year for a start, but they will be so constructed that the production can be doubled, if necessary. Besides the salt, certain by-products will be produced. The capital of the two factories will be 20,000,000 crowns (\$5,360,000). Each of them will use about 6,500 horsepower for the normal production.

During the war it has been difficult to get salt from abroad and sometimes it has been impossible to salt

down the fish. The new salt works should greatly improve the situation.
—Fishing Gazette.

FARMERS' ACCOUNT BOOK

"Will you kindly send me a copy of your *Farmers' Account Book* of which we were told by our pastor?" That is the way a letter recently received from a farmer by the Commission of Conservation reads. It shows how the clergy are seconding the efforts of the Commission to encourage business-like habits among farmers. The *Farmers' Account Book*, which contains blanks for a simple but comprehensive system of farm accounts, will be sent on request to any farmer who states the number of acres of land he works.

TO INFORM THE PEOPLE

Baltimore publishes a Municipal Journal every two weeks for the purpose of giving the public definite and detailed information about the operations of city government. It is brightly written, well edited and attractively illustrated. The practice is one which could be followed to advantage by Canadian cities. In a democracy, the basis of efficient government is a well-informed electorate.

Apples are an unexpectedly good crop in portions of Western Ontario. Many farmers are having them ground to make cider and apple butter, the latter to be used as a substitute for potatoes, which, in some districts, were a failure this year.

Carelessness Caused
Great Forest Fire

Minnesota Blaze One of Worst on Record
Fire Conditions in Canadian Forests Improving

During October, forest fires at Duluth, Minnesota, destroyed about one thousand human lives and \$75,000,000 worth of property. The number of lives lost, the Minnesota disaster is of at least four times the magnitude of the great Claybelt which swept a section of northern Ontario in 1916.

Reports indicate that the Minnesota holocaust is the direct and logical result of indifference on the part of the general public toward the existence of numerous small fires which, first, did not immediately threaten property or lives, coupled with the failure of the state administration to provide adequate funds for fire patrol and extinguishing of fires in the incipient stage. It appears that numerous small fires had been burning for some time in swamps and on cut-over lands between Cass Lake and Duluth and were regarded with practical indifference by the bulk of the general public. With continued dry weather these fires ran together, and, driven by a 60-mile gale, they swept everything in their path.

Minnesota has an excellent fire service, but its efforts have been crippled by lack of sufficient funds. Apparently, the lessons of the great Hinckley and Baudette fires had been sufficiently learned, with the result now seen.

In eastern Canada, however, the lessons of the great Claybelt fire of 1916 have been carefully heeded by the Provincial Governments of Ontario and Quebec. In Ontario, forest service, under E. J. Zavitz, Provincial Forester, maintains a staff of about 1,000 fire rangers during the season, and expends around \$500,000 annually on this work. Particular attention is paid to the protection of Claybelt, where extensive clearing settlers, coupled by cutting operators by pulpwood companies, render extreme protective measures imperative.

Through most of Quebec, forest protection is handled by the co-operative fire protective associations of landholders, but, in the Claybelt district along the Transcontinental railway, the patrol is maintained by the provincial forest service, under G. Piché, Provincial Forester.

In neither province, however, provision yet been made for the reduction of the fire hazard through enforced disposal of logging slash in licensed timber lands. This is necessary precautionary measure toward which public sentiment is rapidly becoming more favourable. To do it is made effective, there can never be full safety for the lives and property of settlers, nor can the non-agricultural lands have full opportunity for the production of a new crop of timber on the cut-over areas, which are increasing rapidly from year to year.—C. L.

The first thing necessary in breaking a bad habit is to want to break