

**Mr. Laidlaw's Paper  
before the N.F.P.A.**

The National Fire Protection Association is holding its 11th annual meeting in New York this week. Committee reports and contributed papers are to cover the following among other most important subjects: Special Hazards and Fire Record; Nitro-Cellulose Products; Devices and Materials; Automatic Sprinklers; Open Sprinklers; Fire Protection Coverings for Window and Door Openings; Standard Hose Couplings and Hydrant Fittings for Public Fire Service; Automobile Garages; Pneumatic Conveyors for Stock and Refuse; The Cotton Bale as a Source of Loss by Fire; Car Houses; Factory Standards; Fire Proof Construction; Roofs and Roofings; Small Reservoirs and Valve Pits; Cement for Building Construction; Steamship Piers; The Compilation of Conflagration Records; Pumps; Private Fire Supplies from Public Mains; Signaling Systems; Theatre Construction and Equipment; Vaults and Safes; Lightning; Artificial Refrigeration; Tin and Terne Plate; Non-Freezing Compounds for Portable Extinguishers. Of special interest to Canadians will be the paper on "The Compilation of Conflagration Records." No more important topic can engage the attention of fire underwriters, and no one is better qualified to open the discussion than the author of to-day's convention paper—Mr. John B. Laidlaw, of Toronto, manager for Canada of the Norwich Union Fire Office.

**Management of  
Manufacturers' Life  
Assurance Company.**

Mr. George A. Somerville, manager of the Huron & Erie Loan & Savings Company of London, Ont., has accepted the management of the Manufacturers' Life Assurance Company, Toronto. Mr. Somerville's career has been characterized by marked success, and both by experience and personality he is considered well qualified for the important position he is to occupy. In addition to earlier experience along life insurance lines, Mr. Somerville was for a time a director of the Mutual Life of Canada. His well-known success as manager for eighteen years of the Huron & Erie Loan & Savings Company gives full assurance that to the all-important investment phases of a life company's management he will bring thorough knowledge and practical experience. The best of wishes are extended for the success of Mr. Somerville and the Manufacturers' Life.

**Gas and Light Problem.** The City Gas and Light problem still remains unsettled. There has been a great waste of gas and oratorical power, but not much light thrown on this rather mixed proposition. To change the metaphor, it looks as if the aldermen would now have to do the courting. In the meantime the company remains in possession.

**Crop Prospects.**

Crop reports more or less (probably less rather than more) reliable, from Germany, France, Bulgaria, Roumania, Russia, and India, report weather conditions unfavourable to the crops. The reports from Argentina and Italy, are of a more satisfactory character. The only thing certain about crop prospects in the Canadian and American west at this time of the year, is their absolute uncertainty, combined with the equal certainty that entirely disinterested reports on this subject are exceedingly hard to get. Whether the larger area under cultivation will make up for other drawbacks remains to be seen.

**Winston Churchill  
on the Preference.**

Mr. Winston Churchill, under-secretary for the Colonies, suffers from a fatal propensity for saying smart things. He seems to attach less importance to what he says, than to the way in which he says it. If he is correctly reported as saying that the Campbell-Bannerman Government has not only shut the door against imperial preferential trade, but has bolted and locked it, his colleagues must deeply deplore that the brilliant young orator's sense of responsibility for his utterances is not equal to his eloquence. If these oratorical outbursts of the Colonial Under-Secretary are continued it is to be feared that he will soon become *persona non grata* to the colonies.

**The Longshoremen's  
Strike.**

A great deal of harm is being done to the Port of Montreal by these periodic strikes of the ship-labourers. They are calculated to injure the port permanently and in so doing to injure the condition of the men themselves. Any little increase of wages they may get, will not make up for the loss incurred during their period of idleness. If the laws now in existence providing for arbitration, are not strong enough to be effective they should be made so. It is a very serious thing for a young country, just starting in its growth, to be hampered at every turn by senseless and wasteful strikes which do not benefit any person and seriously injure the whole country.

**Mr. G. B. Burland.** Our readers will have learnt with much regret of the recent death at Los Angeles, California, of Mr. G. B. Burland, who has for so many years filled so large a place in the financial and industrial life of Montreal. The pluck and determination which had enabled him to bring so many great business enterprises to success, also stood him in good stead in his long and painful sickness.