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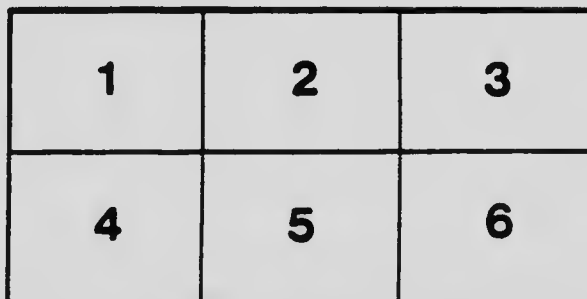
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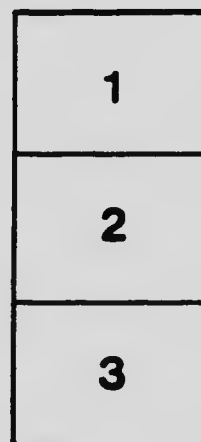
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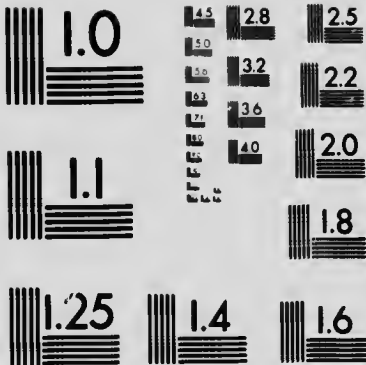
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WINNIPEG AFFAIRS
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***YOUR GROWING
FIRE TAX***

BULLETIN No. 12 of
THE CITIZENS RESEARCH LEAGUE
OF WINNIPEG

FROM THE
CITIZENS RESEARCH LEAGUE OF WINNIPEG

To the Citizens of Winnipeg and the City Government—

THE City's experience during the fortnight in May last when the Fire Brigade was on strike, made it clear that greater carefulness on the part of the public would largely reduce Winnipeg's fire wastage. Owners and householders were for once impressed with the absolute necessity for carefulness. The result was that in place of the 127 fire alarm calls made during the corresponding two weeks of 1917 there were but 56 calls, of which only 17 were actual fires. Particularly noticeable was the circumstance that the cutting out of fireworks on Victoria Day (usually a fruitful source of fires) resulted in no alarms for fire being received on that day.

The Citizens' Committee of One Hundred (formed to help in settling the strike and in keeping civic activities running) has gone on record urging the public to continue its strike-time vigilance in fire prevention. It further asked the Citizens Research League to bring to date and re-issue its Bulletin No. 4 of last year: "That \$2,000,000 Fire Tax."

Canada has the greatest fire loss per capita of any country in the world from which statistics are available. In the quarter century preceding the war its annual fire losses (according to the Conservation Commission) had increased by 290 per cent, while the Dominion's population had increased by only about 67 per cent. Canada's per capita annual fire loss of nearly \$2.75 is inexcusable at any time. It is criminal under war conditions when conservation is a prime duty.

Winnipeg's annual fire losses, as given by the Chief of the City Fire Department, show a considerably higher average than that of some 300 leading North American cities. In 1916 this city's losses ran to practically \$3.75 per capita. In 1917 losses of almost \$675,000 amounted to about \$3.69 per capita. The five-year average approximates \$3.00 annually, as against about \$2.25 for 300 United States cities, 74 cents for the whole of France, 64 cents for England and 13 cents for Switzerland.

As Robert Adamson, former Fire Commissioner of the City of New York, said recently: "Fire prevention can only be made really effective when the people co-operate with the officials. The fact that we have five or six times as many fires here as occur in European cities is not so much due to the nature of our building construction as to the careless habits of the people."

Out of 518 fires occurring in Winnipeg last year, almost one in five began through "carelessly using or throwing away matches, cigarettes, etc.," or through "children playing with matches, etc.," according to the annual report of the Chief of the Fire Department. And these are but examples of prevailing carelessness all along the line.

On behalf of the Citizens Research League.

July, 1918

S. R. TARR, President
R. P. FARLEY, Secretary

WINNIPEG'S ANNUAL FIRE TAX OF OVER \$2,000,000

Insurance Premiums Paid in 1917 (approximately)	-	\$1,600,000
Expenses of City Fire Department, etc. (over)	- - -	500,000
Total	- -	\$2,100,000

And the above does NOT take into account the expense of
private fire protection by occupants and owners

PART I, THE WINNIPEG SITUATION PAST AND PRESENT

WINNIPEG'S comparatively dry climate, the high winds, the long winter months when buildings must be heated, the large number of fire escapes and the prevalence of shingle roofs all contribute to make the fire situation abnormally high, and this year conditions will be aggravated by the accustomed general use of soft coal. Only if its Fire Department is kept up to the highest level of alertness and efficiency can it cope with such unusual risk.

Fire Department Enlistment and Training

Every Winnipeg fireman has the chance of rising to become the Chief of the Department. The present Chief, who has been President of the Dominion Fire Chiefs' Association, has been 35 years with the city and has risen from the ranks. A candidate for enlistment is tested as to his physical fitness. The only formal tests of character and intelligence are that he should not have been convicted of a crime, that he can read the English language and write it legibly, and that he is not addicted to the use of intoxicating liquors. A candidate who is admitted is put on probation for 6 months. If accepted after this trial period, he becomes a full-fledged fireman and starts at a remuneration of \$92.00 per month. A fifth year man now receives \$121.00 per month as a maximum, unless he becomes an officer.

Expenditure of the Fire Department, etc.

The Department consists of 1 chief, 1 assistant chief, 3 districts chiefs, 1 secretary, 2 clerks, 1 stenographer, 1 motor mechanic, 16 captains, 15 lieutenants, 4 engineers, 4 assistant engineers, 171 firemen, making a total of 220 officers and men. The fire area covered is 29.9 square miles. The complete cost to the city of fire fighting and fire prevention is as follows:

	Expenditure 1916-17	Per Capita	Expenditure 1917-18	Per Capita
Fire Department	\$359,079.98	\$1.78*	\$399,038.05	\$2.18†
Fire Alarm System	22,585.00	20,771.81
Fire Hydrants	69,660.00	70,650.00
Fire Service Water Works Operating	66,029.74	63,960.15
	\$517,354.81	\$2.56*	\$554,420.31	\$3.03†

*Population (1916) 201,981

†Population (1917) 182,818

Estimate of City Assessment Department

With these the expenditures on the fire departments of Vancouver and of certain United States cities of somewhat similar size as to population may be compared though there is, of course, the possibility that some of the cities in their departmental reports do not include all the items enumerated in the case of Winnipeg. Also, it is to be taken into account that certain materials and supplies are considerably lower in cost across the line.

Name of City	Population	Fire Dept. Expenditure (1916)	Per Capita
Vancouver	95,922	\$233,501.10	\$2.43
Toledo(Ohio)	187,000	385,374.04	2.06
Oakland (Cal.)	200,000	422,583.00	2.11
Columbus (Ohio)	209,722	335,711.09	1.60

The salaries paid to the members of the Winnipeg Fire Department (with the exception of the Chief and Deputy Chief) have run higher than those for instance, of Toronto. But living costs on the whole have been greater West than East. The recent Winnipeg increases were granted chiefly in view of materially greater living costs since the outbreak of war. For example, first year Fireman now receive \$1104 per annum, as against \$840 two years ago. Fifth-year Firemen receive \$1452 as against two years ago. Lieutenants receive \$1518 and Captains \$1,897.50. Increases in the salaries of these officers are now under consideration.

Inspections as now Made

During 1917, according to the Fire Chief's annual report, 1843 fire prevention inspections and (during a two weeks' Clean Up campaign) 3,200 special visits were made by the Fire Department*. After inspection of any premises, notes are made as to plan of action in the event of fire at specially hazardous places. But the fire department as such, has not as it should have, the power to compel the owner of a property in hazardous conditions to take steps to remove the risk. In practice, however, the fire department advises the owner. If he does not take the hint, the building inspector is informed with a view to formal prosecution. It is stated that, as a rule, the hint given by the fire department is taken. The Building Inspector's department made during the year (to quote from its annual report) "interior inspections of all business premises, hotels, apartment blocks, theatres, garages, and all buildings of a public or commercial nature, and found it necessary in 3,742 cases (out of 10,637 inspections in all) to notify the owners or occupants of defects or conditions that were dangerous or liable to cause or promote fires, and which were contrary to the provisions of the city by-law." Moreover the Provincial Fire Department, the Provincial Labor Bureau, and the Western Canada Fire Underwriters' Association undertake inspections. From the point of view of the average citizen, whose only concern is that there should be in operation an agency or agencies capable of preventing fires, if possible, and possessing the maximum of efficiency with the minimum of cost, there appears here the possibility of overlapping unless these various activities are intelligently co-ordinated.

Reports and Records

An improved and detailed inspection report form has recently been introduced. It is still felt, however, that the department's reports and records generally are not so numerous or detailed as desirable. With regard to the

*These inspection figures for 1917 are exactly the same as those furnished the League a twelve-month ago covering the year 1916. On enquiry the Chief of the Fire Department states that the 1917 figures are correct and that their exact correspondence with those of 1916 is only a coincidence.

men, derelictions from duty are entered on each fireman's record, but there are no written reports to note the fact if he has paid special attention to duty or tried to make himself master of his craft as it is practised now-a-days in up-to-date cities. Again there is no annual published report of the work of the department, so that it is difficult for even the most interested citizen to get a clear idea of what the department has done during any given period of time. The Fire Chief presented a report for 1917 to the Fire, Water, Power and Light Committee, but this has not, as might well have been done, been issued to the public, even in abstract.

PART II, SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

It is obvious that allowance must be made for the fact that war-time demands on man-power make it increasingly difficult to insist on as good a standard of intelligence and physique as would have been practicable and necessary before the war. Nevertheless, this fact makes it all the more imperative that the existing staff should be as well trained as possible under the circumstances.

The Winnipeg Fire Commission (instituted by the council in 1912 to enquire into and investigate the origin of fires occurring in the city) in its report on the Savel fire in 1916, made these four among other recommendations which should have more careful consideration from citizens as well as from the civic government.

Recommendations of Fire Commission

That the fire brigade should make closer and more detailed inspections.

That owners of buildings should instruct employees as to promptly calling the fire department.

That display cards should be placed in every building giving location of nearest alarm boxes.

That in the interest of public safety, it may be advisable for the city to get legislation requiring old as well as new buildings of hazardous occupancy, especially where large numbers of people are employed or congregated, to be safeguarded against fire by the installation of automatic sprinklers, the enclosure of vertical openings or such other methods as are deemed necessary.

That the domestic water distribution system should be the subject of an investigation by engineering experts.

It would seem desirable that as soon as possible after each important fire a full report upon it should as a matter of course be made out by the Fire Chief, submitted to the Fire Commission and made public. It is recommended further that there should be representatives of the general citizen body on the commission.

The following suggestions, which are in line with present practice in various progressive cities on this continent, are put forward by the League. In considerable part, at least, their adoption by Winnipeg is worth careful consideration.

Enlistment and Training of the Staff

1. A more exacting test of general intelligence would seem feasible. Candidates for the position of firemen are in several cities (after newspaper notice of vacancies has been given) chosen by open competitive examination of the civil service sort, aimed at discovering general intelligence and special aptitude.

2. In its report of a year ago the League urged the instituting within the Fire Department of a regular School of Instruction. On this point the

Chief's report for 1917 says: "The School of Instruction is maintained during the year for five days in the week, weather permitting, and members from each station are drilled two hours each day and instructed in the use of scaling ladders, extension ladders, laying of hose and the use of all tools used in fire fighting so that all unnecessary delay, excitement and confusion are eliminated at fires; and by this constant training the men are kept in such a physical condition that they are at all times able to cope with the most strenuous work that is expected of a fireman."

3. It was further recommended by the League that the instructor or instructors in the department's "school" should have available a library of up-to-date fire-fighting and fire-prevention literature, which should also be accessible to the men and which they should be encouraged to read. Evidence of familiarity with this should be counted to a man's credit and entered on his record as contributing to promotion.

Recent enquiry among the men of the brigade seemed to indicate that most of them were desirous of benefiting from regular expert instruction, though the opinion was expressed that instead of the same teaching for all grades as at present, the School of Instruction should make provision for junior, intermediate and senior classes. It is the opinion of the League that some official of the brigade specially possessing qualifications for an instructor should, in company with the chief, be given an opportunity of visiting the larger American cities for a month or two with a view to acquiring the most up-to-date methods of instruction in standardized fire-fighting procedure.

Fire-Fighting Methods

Any technical discussion of fire-fighting methods or apparatus is a matter beyond the scope of this report. There might well be considered, however, the advisability of the city's consulting independent outside fire-fighting engineers from time to time in order to ascertain the adequacy of equipment and the proper proportion between motor and horse-drawn apparatus, with due regard to local conditions and experience.

Written reports from the Fire Chief to the Fire, Water, Light and Power Committee as to important fire-fighting methods discussed at conventions attended by him, would serve a useful purpose.

A Salvage Corps Urgently Necessary

A Salvage Corps, to save life and preserve property at and after fires, should be organized under a competent superintendent and equipped with adequate apparatus. In order to secure prompt and efficient action, the superintendent and corps should be empowered, subject to the control of the Chief of the City Fire Department, to enter any building on fire or which may be exposed to fire or in danger of taking fire from any other building, to proceed at once to endeavor to save the property in it, and to remove such property from the premises during or after a fire.

The establishment of such a Salvage Corps would have immediate and striking results. It would:

- (1) Minimise the destruction of food-stuffs, indefensible at any time but nothing short of a crime under the present war needs;
- (2) Reduce the damage to valuable property, such as machinery and stocks;
- (3) Reduce the deterioration frequently caused to salvage after the fire is over by bad weather acting upon roofless property or through broken windows or doors;
- (4) Reduce the losses on use and occupancy, leasehold and profit insurance policies by, for example, greatly shortening the time spent in adjusting claims;

(5) Lessen the risk of exposure fires by preventing the flames spreading from one floor to another or extending in frame-dwelling districts where the danger of conflagration is very great;

(6) Protect furniture and household goods from damage by fire, smoke, and water.

The corps might be organized by the city as an integral part of the existing Fire Department, or it might as in some other places be established by the Fire Underwriters, who could manage the corps on a business basis and defray the cost of wages and upkeep by a system of fixed charges upon the insurance companies. In the first case reduction in insurance rates should compensate property-owners for any increased taxation involved. In either case the cost of establishing and equipping an efficient corps would be trifling in comparison with the saving that would be effected, for it is quite clear that a very large proportion of the loss at fires is due not to the flames, but to water and exposure.

Citizens' Share in Fire Prevention

The great majority of fires are due to preventable causes, in most cases to mere carelessness. An enormous proportion of North America's fire losses, which on an average are nearly ten times as great as those of Western Europe, is directly traceable not to the incompetence of fire departments but to the heedlessness of individual citizens. A remarkable local corroboration of this fact is to be found in the experience of the two weeks in May last when most of the fire brigade were on strike and the citizens took unusual care to prevent outbreking of fire. The most economical means, therefore, of reducing the present enormous and largely unnecessary expenditure upon fire losses, insurance premiums and the upkeep of the fire departments is carefulness on the part of each individual citizen, supported by a policy of prevention, planned with forethought and carried out with impartial rigor by the city and provincial authorities.

In Winnipeg the first-class fire limits should be extended. Shingle roofs, a most fertile cause of fires, should be much further safeguarded in their use. In his report (1917) to the Fire, Water, Power and Light Committee the Fire Chief calls attention to the serious danger to life and property caused by overhead wires in the city, especially in the congested districts. In the recent Telegram fire the overhead wires seriously interfered with effective work by the brigade.

Fire Prevention Bureau

During the past twelve months a Fire Prevention Division has been started which undertakes more detailed inspection than was previously the case. If the new method of inspection be continuously checked, the Division may tide over the war-period. As soon, however as normal conditions return, a fully organized Fire Prevention Bureau should be established, on which should act the Fire Chief, the Building Inspector, the City Electrician, the head of the Department's School of Instruction, and a representative of the Fire Underwriters. The Fire Chief should be the executive officer of the bureau, which should have power to enforce regulations respecting fire-prevention and to make systematic and rigorous inspection of all business and public buildings. Consideration should also be given to some method of inspecting private houses from time to time. The methods in use at the Fire Prevention Bureaus of New York, Philadelphia and Columbus (Ohio) are most instructive, but a most remarkable example of immediate results is that of Portland, Oregon, where the bureau began to work in 1915. In 1916 there were only 802 alarms, as compared with 1854 in 1914, and the per capita fire loss for 1916 was only \$1.00, compared with \$6.78 in 1914.

It is interesting also to note that in 1916 Toronto inaugurated a Fire Prevention Staff of three (later to be increased to five) experienced men. "The establishment of a fire prevention division," says a report of the Toronto Bureau of Municipal Research, "will not detract from, but rather add to, the fire-fighting efficiency of the department, and is a recognition of the rapidly growing emphasis placed on the importance of stopping fires before they begin."

Co-ordination of Inspections

At present inspection is carried out by different bodies, which do not always act in co-operation with one another: the City Fire Department, the Provincial Fire Commissioner, the City Building Inspector's Department the Provincial Labor Bureau and the Fire Underwriters. Moreover complaint is made that such inspection as there is is often perfunctory and inadequate. In order gradually to raise the standard of inspection, to prevent overlapping and to enable the responsibility for fires to be definitely placed, it would be better (and cheaper) that the city system of fire-prevention, as well as of fire fighting, should, as already indicated, be under the direction of the Fire Chief. The work of inspection might then be apportioned somewhat as follows:

1. The Building Inspector's Department as such would be responsible for the inspection of buildings until they are occupied. In the interest of the insured public, the city might, in consultation with the underwriters, agree upon revised compulsory standards of buildings construction.

2. As soon as a building is occupied, the responsibility for fire inspection should forthwith fall upon the Fire-Prevention Division, which would have power to (a) inspect the installation and maintenance of fire escapes and auxiliary fire appliances, including automatic sprinklers, standpipes, tanks, extinguishers, etc.; (b) to regulate the manufacture, sale, use, storage and transportation of combustibles; (c) to carry on a systematic inspection of premises for determining whether or not all regulations which may be enacted for the prevention of fires are being observed. Inspection should, to an increasing extent as time went on, include domestic houses as it is perhaps in private houses that the greatest carelessness occurs. The New York Bureau of Fire Prevention finds it possible to make systematic dwelling-house inspection, and in the work of inspecting residences the services of women might well be used.

3. To compel observance of the proper precautions, a method which has been applied in the city of New York and other places across the line is worth consideration. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court decided that the cost of extinguishing fires might be assessed on negligent property owners. One corporation was compelled to pay \$1,500 to the Fire Department for neglecting the order of the Bureau of Fire Prevention to install automatic sprinklers. Cincinnati is the latest among American cities to pass an ordinance fixing individual liability for fire loss where culpable carelessness is the cause.

In the event of arrangements not being immediately made to place entire responsibility for fire prevention inspection on a Fire-Prevention Bureau, the work should at least be more systematically and rigorously carried out by co-operation of the City Fire Department, the Building Inspector the City Electrician, the Provincial Fire Commissioner, the Provincial Labor Bureau and the Underwriters. The League has reason to believe that all of the bodies mentioned would be willing to act in co-operation. It should be possible for them for instance to have report forms which would follow the same order where they cover the same points. The forms when filled in by one agency, could be manifolded and supplied to the other

a method which would facilitate filing for reference. It should also be possible for all these bodies to arrange with each other so that the work of inspection could be distributed more evenly over the entire year.

Educating the Public

Still further effort is needed to bring the importance and necessity of fire prevention before the public. The Canadian Credit Men's Association some months ago offered prizes to school children for essays on Fire Prevention and during the past winter talks were given by various speakers in the city schools on the subject in this connection. Lectures might be given or leaflets distributed to civic societies, Young Men's and Young Women's Associations, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and other similar organizations. It is worthy of note that the Boy Scout organization already gives training in this regard. The Chief of the Fire Department of Murphysboro, Illinois, distributed among children in the public schools from the third reader to the sixth, inspection blanks to be used in making inspections of their own homes, and offered prizes for the best inspection reports. Essays were called for on Fire Prevention Day and a great amount of valuable information was obtained from them about bad construction, defective flues, careless placing of rubbish and other causes of fires. The Kansas State Fire Prevention Bureau distributes literature through the public schools.

It ought also to be possible in Winnipeg to have periodic fire drills in all industrial and manufacturing establishments and to make use of the moving picture houses to educate the public in the importance of fire prevention as is done in the City of New York.

Rewards for Heroic Service

As another means for making it clear that the main business of the men of the brigade is fire fighting, and as a merited recognition for services the importance of which is admitted by everybody, the Chief acting in conference once a year with the Assistant Chief and one District Chief should have power to confer a medal or honorable mention upon the firemen who had at risk of life performed the most heroic acts in extinguishing of fires, and firemen thus distinguished should be allowed to wear suitable decoration on the sleeves of their dress coats.

More Adequate Records and Reports

For its own information and effective administration, the Winnipeg Fire Department might well have a more detailed system of records, covering not only inspections, but fire-fighting work, equipment, daily work and training of the men (giving them "credits" as well as the "demerit marks" now alone entered). The plan is now followed in other cities of having at each station card records with a description of all important buildings in the district—duplicates being filed with the chief at headquarters.

A published analytic annual report of the Fire Chief should include the following among other items: Comparative figures over a period of years of total fire losses, total number of alarms, causes of fires, value of property involved, total insurance carried, total insurance paid, total per capita expenditure on the department and so forth.



**Illustration of Back-Yard Fire Danger taken from Last Year's Report of Winnipeg
Citizens Research League, and still Unremedied.**

The Object of The Citizens Research League of Winnipeg:

THE BETTERMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

- (1) by systematic study of civic problems, by disseminating accurate information concerning them, and generally by promoting in a practical way, better civic, economic, and social conditions;
- (2) by co-operating with city officials in securing efficient administration of civic interests and with other organizations which represent movements concerned with citizen welfare.

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47 Aikins Bldg. Phone Garry 3320

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- No. 1—Keeping Track of Citizens' Business.
- No. 2—Bird's Eye View of City's Budget.
- No. 3—Civic Assessment and Property Values.
- No. 4—That \$2,000,000 Fire Tax.
- No. 5—Problem of Street Transportation.
- No. 6—Your Forgotten \$700,000 Pension Liability.
- No. 7—Jitney or Street Car?
- No. 8—Has the Jitney a Place?
- No. 9—A Year's Effort. (Annual Report of League for 1917.)
- No. 10—Plan for Reorganized Board of Trade.
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WINNIPEG AFFAIRS
ARE *YOUR* AFFAIR

Rev. Dr. John MacLean,
719 Pacific Ave,
City.

***YOUR GROWING
FIRE TAX***

BULLETIN No. 12 of
THE CITIZENS RESEARCH LEAGUE
OF WINNIPEG

