

# Serious Loss of Life and Property Through Fire in the Dominion

Royal Proclamation Details the Losses Through Fire and Urges All to Co-operate to Reduce the Loss. Week of October 8th to 14th Proclaimed Fire Prevention Week.

The following is the complete text of the royal proclamation naming the week of Oct. 8th to 14th as "Fire Prevention Week." The front page of this special section of The Advance gives a reproduction of the front of the Canada Gazette in which the proclamation was published. Below will be found the proclamation with its many striking facts and figures and good counsel beneath the legal phraseology:—

TWEEDSMUIR, (L.S.)

CANADA  
GEORGE THE SIXTH, by the Grace of God of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the Seas KING, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India.

To All To Whom these Presents shall come or whom the same may in anywise concern,

Greeting:

A PROCLAMATION

W. STUART EDWARDS, Deputy Minister of Justice, Canada.

Whereas authoritative statistics compiled and published by the Dominion Fire Commissioner show that during the past eighteen years, seven hundred and seventy-one thousand fires in Canada have destroyed insurable property valued at more than seven hundred and two million dollars and that during the same period seven thousand four hundred and sixty-three persons have lost their lives and over twenty-three thousand others have been seriously injured as the result of fire;

And Whereas the waste thus occasioned, represented in terms of human life, money, labour, time and natural resources cannot be re-created but is an absolute and irrevocable loss largely distributed over the entire population through the agency of fire insurance which imposes an inescapable and burdensome tax upon industry and thrift and substantially adds to the cost of living;

And Whereas it is shown by reliable statistics that at least eighty per cent of the fires which occur originate either directly or indirectly through inexcusable ignorance and neglect and are

therefore preventable and that the exercise of reasonable prudence and proper carefulness on the part of responsible individuals would substantially reduce the losses occasioned by fire;

And Whereas economic and humanitarian considerations imperatively demand that human life and material resources in Canada be so far as possible conserved in order that the general welfare of the people may be measurably increased;

And Whereas it is desirable that the attention of the public be directed to the extent and underlying causes of the preventable loss of life and property by fire and to the best and most practicable means for its control and that a specific period of the year be set apart and properly designated for the dissemination of such information;

Now Know Ye that We, by and with the advice of Our Privy Council for Canada, have thought fit to appoint and do appoint the week commencing Sunday, the eighth of October, and ending on Saturday, the fourteenth of October, in the present year as "Fire Prevention Week," and we do recommend to all Our loving subjects that at some time during that week as may be found most practicable,—

1. All dwellings and their surroundings be carefully inspected by their occupants and all conditions likely to cause or promote the spread of fires removed, including: (a) defective stoves, furnaces, pipes and chimneys; (b) improperly installed electrical cords and appliances; (c) inflammable rubbish in attic, basement and closets; (d) gasoline or other dangerous volatile liquids used for cleaning purposes in the home; (e) the careless disposal of cigarette and cigar stubs and ashes from pipes; (f) ashes in wooden boxes instead of in proper metal containers; (g) the practice of allowing small children to play with matches.

2. All public buildings, stores, warehouses and factories be inspected and cleaned of rubbish in order to reduce fire hazards and maintain health and safety.



Here is a picture that indicates the reason for the well-known "good luck" of Timmins in the matter of fire. In front of the fire hall is assembled the chief and members of the department, together with the equipment of the brigade. Standing in front from left to right:—W. Liberton, P. Eckert, O. Gerard, Jos. Gratton, W. Martin, F. M. Wallingford, J. McKinnon, Fred Somers, Art Eby, Albert Audet, J. Cronmiller, W. Boyd, Gordon Pooley, Chief A. Borland.

## Guard the School Children Against the Fire Menace

Some Startling Facts and Figures About School Fires.

It is only fair to preface this article from the Ontario Fire Marshal's office with the fact that not only are all the schools in the town of Timmins and the adjoining township of Tisdale as near fire-proof as possible and as free from fire risks, but that fire drills are carried out regularly and effectively.

In Timmins and Tisdale there is no chance of the tragedies suggested in the article. There are schools in the North, however, and in many other parts of Ontario, where this article may apply with tragic force.

The following is the article sent out by the Ontario Fire Marshal's office:—  
"To All School Authorities in Ontario: Fire Prevention Week—Oct. 8-14, 1939  
"Is your Child's School a Fire Trap?—Startling photographs and data on school fires, all prepared in co-operation with the National Fire Protection Association and the National Board of Fire Underwriters, appear in a recent issue of a national pictorial magazine with wide circulation in Canada and the United States. Illustrating one school fire in which 36 persons lost their lives at a Christmas Eve party when Santa's cotton suit caught fire from a candle, the article tells how the occupants were trapped in the one-room school with the single door opening inward and the seven windows covered with steel wire screens, bolted and stapled. With the figures being those from the United States, some of the other items in this article are:

"There were five schoolhouse fires yesterday. There will be five today, five tomorrow. Five schoolhouse fires a day is our national average in the United States. Will your child be involved in one of the five today—or next month? The odds are against it, as the odds are against your child's dying in one of them. But 10.9 persons die in each serious school fire, and 4 out of 5 who die are elementary school children. They die because they are housed in unsafe buildings; because lacking proper drill, they go insane with fear, jam doorways, stairs and vestibules. Mercifully, most children caught in such traps die of suffocation before fire reaches them. But such mercy is small comfort to the stricken parent. And, today or next month, that parent may be you.

"Are there guide rails in the halls of your child's school?—or any sort of barrier to keep children from straying into forbidden territory? Such rails may contribute to the orderly marching of children under normal conditions, but they constitute a vicious fire hazard. Fear-crazed children do not march normally. A cardinal rule for every school should be that nothing (other than approved fire doors with panic locks) be allowed to obstruct any corridor or doorway.

"Fire drills may save your child's life. Records of school fires present convincing evidence that drills make for coolness, lessen panic, speed evacuation and save lives. If you child's school cannot be emptied in two minutes, and without panic, your child is in danger. The Texas system, an example of excellent training in school drills, gives all pupils fire drills twice a month. Every room is organized with leaders, door tenders, aides for the crippled. Larger children act as fire marshals and captains, check all cloak-rooms and toilets to see that no one is overlooked. Students often call drills themselves. A roll-call to discover stragglers should be held as soon as each class assembles outside. Drills also should call for use of different exits in case the usual one is blocked.

"No school of two stories or more should be without outside fire escapes unless interior stairways are totally fireproof. Whether the escape shall be of the tubular type, or of some other

In the trucks (left to right): A. Ayette, Capt. J. Morton, Deputy Chief W. S. Stanley, F. Culhane; M. Dahar, Ed. McCabe.

The trucks, left to right:—Ladder truck, Metropolitan pumper; Combination hose and chemical; fire chief's car.

Fireman A. Cooper is not included in the above picture, having been off duty at the time the photo was taken.

## Efforts Being Made to Prevent Fires at Settlers' Homes

Many Lives Lost Through Fires at Settlers' Homes.

For years past The Advance has been urging the adoption of some plan or another whereby there would not be the tragedy and loss from fires at the isolated homes of settlers. Every year there would be several fires of this kind, very frequently with loss of life, children especially suffering. When fire starts at one of these isolated homes, the situation is dangerous indeed. There are no means of fighting the fire—no fire brigade to answer the call—possibly not even a supply of water near. If the fire starts at night or early in the morning, the chances for loss of life are very serious, indeed.

Too often there is only the one door in

the cabin and the fire may cut off access to that. Often, too, windows are not placed to the best advantage. The burning home too often is truly a death trap.

Mr. E. R. Tucker, of Cochrane, as chief coroner for this part of the North, was impressed with the serious loss of life involved. Case after case came before him where as coroner he conducted inquest into deaths from such fires. His usual procedure in regard to inquests is to conduct them with a view to finding the facts and learning ways and means to prevent similar tragedies. He followed this course in regard to inquests into deaths in fires at settlers' homes. The result was that he learned that the great majority of the fires were caused by defective chimneys, pipes passing through flimsy partitions, or similar cause. In most of the cases safety might have been assured without serious cost had the settler only known how to arrange things. The Chief Coroner urged upon the government the necessity for an inspection of settlers' homes to avoid these tragic risks. The reply to this, of course, was that the cost would be prohibitive. Coroner Tucker overcame this suggestion by pointing out that the work could be done without additional staff or cost by the existing fire rangers. The fire rangers had to inspect every farm and homestead for fire risks to avert disastrous bush fires. The trouble was that their inspection stopped at the outside of the settlers' home, though fire risks in that home might easily lead to bush fires. All that was necessary was that the fire rangers should inspect the settlers' homes as well as their other premises for fire risks. Recommendations could be made for minor changes that would add to safety. More than one coroner's jury brought in verdicts incorporating this logical suggestion and Mr. Tucker personally took up the question with all the departments concerned. Eventually he was successful and now fire rangers have added to their other duties the inspection of settlers' homes with recommendations that will make for greater safety. Already, The Advance understands that in the area west of Cochrane many settlers have been shown how fire menace may be lessened, and they have gladly accepted the chance to make their homes safer for themselves and their families. It seems fitting that special mention should be made of this particular matter in this "Fire Prevention" section.

GOVERNMENT BLUE BOOK  
SELLING AT 2000 AN HOUR

London.—The "Blue Book" on the dramatic diplomatic exchanges that preceded the outbreak of war became a best seller in London today. At His Majesty's Stationery Office, the Blue Book today was selling at the rate of 2000 an hour. It is priced at one shilling.



## FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

October 8th to 14th

Next week is set aside by Royal Proclamation to consider means of reducing Canada's great fire toll. Pause for a few moments and consider your own duty in this regard. There are two vital points to decide. Ask yourself these questions.

### 1 Are All My Personal Belongings and PROPERTY INSURED?

If my home or business should be damaged by fire have I enough insurance to cover the loss? Can I afford to stand the loss myself? If not, I must call A. Wilson Lang, and see about more insurance protection!

### 2 Am I Doing All I Can To PREVENT FIRES?

Is my furnace and chimney in good order? Is my home free of inflammable rubbish? Am I careful of cigarette butts, matches, etc? Do I handle gasoline with care?—If not, I must attend to these things at once! Care can prevent fires. I'll do my part.

**A. WILSON LANG**

INSURANCE

Gordon Block  
Office Phone 295

Timmins  
Residence 662

### Careless Smokers Cause Loss of Property and Lives

In 13,719 instances last year, smokers were careless and caused \$242,000 worth of property to go up in smoke. Fires from this cause are top ranking in the list of causes, as reported to the Dominion Fire Commissioner's office for 1938. Ten years ago this type of fire numbered slightly less than 3,000 for the whole of Canada. But with a steady increase in the number of smokers, principally among the fair sex, there appears also to have developed an indifference to the hazards of fire from carelessly disposed cigarettes, tobacco and matches that is hardly imaginable. With an increase of 430% in the number of fires from this cause, "smokers' carelessness" can now be classed as Public Enemy No. 1 as far as fires are concerned. The question arises, are women more careless than men in the matter of smoking? Unfortunately, there are no statistics to enlighten us on this score, but the fact remains that far too many fires are started through the carelessness of smokers and only a careful disposition of cigarettes, matches and tobacco can stop it. Perhaps if these nearly 14,000 people responsible for this loss could be gathered together in one place and could witness nearly 2½ millions of dollars worth of property go up in smoke with the cries of several entrapped persons mingling with the crackling of the flames, they would exercise more care in their smoking habits.

## LOST: Another Home!



## QUESTION: Are They Insured?

Crackling flames... charred ruins... as another home goes up in smoke. The question is asked, "Do you think they had insurance?" In so many cases the answer is a woeful negative. "Meant to, but never got around to it."

Don't forget that fire strikes without warning! Be prepared. Practice safety methods—but be sure you are insured! Be completely covered with COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE... the wise protection against complete ruin.

## Play Safe - Insure Your

BUSINESS CAR HOME FURNITURE CLOTHING  
AND ALL VALUABLE POSSESSIONS

With

**Simms, Hooker & Drew**

INSURANCE IN ALL ITS BRANCHES

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