

Don't YOU Be the Cause Help Prevent Fires Now

As we once again observe Fire Prevention Week, we are reminded that last year, Canada racked up yet another set of sorry statistics. Why? Why did FIRE cause a property loss total of almost \$150,000,000? Why did FIRE snuff out the lives of over 500 Canadians? Why were there well over 80,000 FIRES in Canada? Why were most of these FIRES in homes? Why? Why? There is a simple answer to this question and a simple solution to the problem of FIRE in Canada, and it is the common, three-letter word YOU!

Three out of every four FIRES are the result of human carelessness! They should never have occurred, but because someone was careless, they did! Those persons that experienced these fires, if they survived, won't have to learn their lesson again.

But how about YOU? Are YOU prepared to profit from the sad experience of others and really do something about fire prevention? Or are YOU going to insist, as do most Canadians, on waiting until you learn your own bitter lesson? Over and over again, we see headlines that read something like this: "Children Die as Parents Unable to Enter Burning Home". Why were the parents away from the home in the first place? And, if they simply had to go next door to play cards, why wasn't a competent baby-sitter hired and told what to do in case of fire?

Expansive Wall
"Frayed electrical appliance cords are dangerous," repeat the fire prevention experts, but what have YOU done about the frayed cord on YOUR electric kettle, steam iron or toaster? If YOU are waiting just a little

longer, until it really needs replacing, it could be the most expensive wait YOU will ever experience!

"Clean out attic and basements," say the experts, so what about YOUR attic or basement? All that junk that has been lying around for a donkey's years is nothing but a perfect breeding place for FIRE. Those old books and magazines, for instance, when do you think you are going to read them? That old chest-of-drawers and those boxes of baby clothes, to say nothing of the old window blinds and lamp shades that have been in the attic for the last ten years?

Quit Junk
Stop kidding yourself! If an item has been dumped in the basement or the attic, and has not been brought out or looked for in over a year, the odds are 10 to one that it never will be, so do yourself a favor and get rid of it! It will do away with a serious fire hazard, and besides, it will give you more room for this year's accumulation of junk!

Finally, let's mention smoking. Every smoker has, at one time or another, experienced drowsiness while smoking, and has usually suffered minor singeing as a result. They are the lucky ones! Our cemeteries are filled with others who didn't wake up in time and became charred victims in our FIRE record.

Nobody could help these people, the responsibility was theirs and theirs alone. They had most certainly heard all the warnings, just as YOU have. They chose to ignore them, so why in the ridiculous assumption that "it can't happen to me." Just for the record, it can happen to anyone, anyone that is who is foolish enough to ignore the warnings and who considers fire prevention as something strictly for others!

"We Left Them Alone Only a Few Minutes" If Fire Destroys Plant

This newspaper has said before and it says it again: for a compassionate community there is no sadder news than the death by fire of children in the home.

And the shadow deepens when the headlines read: "We left them alone only a few minutes."

For the stricken family, the shadow of its wanton neglect will last for a lifetime. Fire is no accident. Fires are caused by stupid, unthinking carelessness.

Criminal Code of Canada
To parents and guardians of

the young, let it be known that, besides various provincial laws, the Criminal Code of Canada (section 189) reads: "Everyone who unlawfully abandons or exposes a child who is under the age of 10 years, so that its life is or is likely to be endangered or its health is or is likely to be permanently injured, is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for two years."

People have a duty to their children, to the community and to themselves, to see that the youngsters are properly looked after.

"Fire swept a portion of the main street section of one of our towns. Not only were the 42 employees made jobless, but the loss of the buildings and contents had a serious effect on the income of the town."

This terse remark in the annual report of the Fire Commissioner of a Canadian province is illustrative. "Good job, bad fire people out of work."

If the factory is the only one in town, every citizen, directly or indirectly, suffers if it permanently folds.

Look at the history of a factory fire in a Canadian community of 25,000. Workers thrown out of work numbered 350. A few (mostly women) were absorbed elsewhere, as the management pondered rebuilding, and decided to go ahead, though it would take at least a year.

In that time, some were relocated even if it meant daily travel of 80 miles. For the rest, it was a painful experience, living on the avails of unemployment insurance, digging into savings, trying to learn new job skills and always, the worry of home responsibility and a whole way of life uprooted. For a handful will enter the prime, the

ing labor authority, is not the least of life's disasters, perhaps because the situation seems so meaningless.

The plant we are talking about is now back in business. But with new machinery, automated production, the plant employs 100, not 350.

Fire is a job robber.

easy way out was to accept management's offer of early retirement pension and called it quits.

Not the Least of Disasters
The morale factor of jobs suddenly lost by fire, says a lead-

Fire Prevention Reminder

Colorful posters, displayed across Canada, are asking, in big black letters—WHY? As next week is Fire Prevention Week, it is a good time for this journal to ask its readers, and for all of us to ask ourselves the same question—WHY?

WHY did almost 600 Canadians die in fires in 1944? WHY did last year's fires in Canada destroy property worth almost 150 million dollars? WHY have almost 2,500 Canadian children died in fires in the last 10 years? WHY did Canadians have well over 80,000 fires last year? WHY did most of these fires occur in homes?

Why indeed! Such a simple question deserves a simple answer and, just as the question is posed by a single three-letter word, the answer to the problem of fire in Canada can be found in another common three-letter word—YOU!

Carelessness
Why you? Because it is a simple fact that over 90 per cent of all fires are caused by human carelessness! Either someone does something that he or she shouldn't do, or neglects to do something that he or she should do and, quicker than you can say "Fire Prevention," we have a new set of statistics.

Why, oh why, in the face of rising levels and standards of education, must Canadians continue to be so stupid when it comes to the elementary principles and practices that are all that good fire prevention requires?

WHY do Canadians persist in leaving children unattended? WHY do Canadians insist on hoarding combustible junk in quantities that stagger the imagination? WHY do Canadians persist in overloading and overfusing electrical circuits? WHY do Canadians resist buying fire alarm systems and extinguishers? Sure, Canada holds the world record for the highest per capita fire loss record and has held it for many years now. But isn't it about time that Canadians do something about this national disgrace and let someone else have the record for a change?

High Cost of Fire
Experts estimate that the annual cost of fire in Canada, both direct and indirect, is not less than \$750,000,000, and that each citizen's share of this ridiculous figure is \$18.99!

Who among us would turn down a cash gift of \$40, and yet millions of Canadians do, so year after year, simply by insisting on the foolish belief that fire prevention is strictly for others.

Well, folks, while it may come as a surprise to many, fire prevention is everybody's business and the sooner we all realize and accept this fact, the better off we will all be.

Fire can only continue to hit "the other guy" for so long! Sooner or later, the law of averages is bound to make your home, your business, or your family a possible target, and whether the question "WHY?" then comes to your lips or not, is obviously up to YOU!

Learn all you can about fire prevention and put what you learn into practice—every day!

Close the Door to Fire Open it to Prevention

Close your door to fire, but keep it open for fire prevention. This neatly describes the philosophy of Canada's campaign for greater fire safety in the home, on the job and everywhere.

Close your door to fire. In plants, office buildings, stairwells, fire doors must be kept closed. Why? To shut off live air (oxygen) from fueling a fire. In the home, too, a closed door will slow down the spread of fire.

Open your door to fire prevention. Don't "slam it" in the

firefighter's face if he shows up suggesting a look-around for possible hazards. Shame (over an untidy house), fear (of consequences), ignorance (of what it's all about) — forget these things, if you have an ounce of common sense.

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Don't Overfuse!
What is over-fusing? It is the use of a 20, 25 or 30 ampere plug fuse in an ordinary household branch circuit. Such a circuit is one serving lamps, radio, TV and other small appliances.

Why is the use of a 20, 25 or 30 ampere fuse in an ordinary circuit a fire hazard? Because it engenders a sense of false security. It does not "blow" when the "load" is dangerously increased. The wiring heats. Heat plus fuel plus oxygen means fire. If the wiring is concealed, fire can start in the wall. In minutes, it may be out of control, perhaps tragically.

Because the fuse is the electrical watchdog, over-fusing is akin to muzzling the watchdog. Or cutting out the safety valve.

Says the fire chief of a large "prairie" city with 25,000 homes: "In most older homes where we found overloaded circuits, practically all were using 30 ampere fuses and even pennies and tinfoil behind the fuses!" The fire service director of a Quebec city of 35,000 people reports 80 per cent of homes are overfused.

About 20,000,000 fuses are made each year in Canada. Of these, 15,000,000 are 15s. The 5,000 of the 20, 25 and 30 ratings are designed for use with stoves, dryers, sump pumps, home workshop, water heaters and special installations.

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Be a Rug Roller
Clothing fires are a terrifying personal experience. Roll the victim in a rug or anything that will help smother the flames.

If you are the victim, try to remember not to rush to the door. The outside air will fan the flames.

A cook stove flare-up is a case in point. Smother the pan. The writer, once frying over-wet potatoes, was lucky to get the pan into the warming oven, slamming the door to contain the sizzling outburst.

When the moment of panic was over, it brought a good cry and a thankful one. Her story could have had quite a different ending.

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