

The Prevention of Fire

BY F. W. FITZPATRICK.

IN AMERICA the prevention of fire is supposed to be the work of fire companies and special police systems.

The business man, when it comes to buying a lot, has the time examined, and investigated as to the price of contiguous property, what the increase has been, etc.

What little progress we have made in America toward incumberability in our buildings has been very largely a personal one.

Some states and communities have expressed a doubt as to their powers or rights to regulate building in all its minutiae.

Our larger cities are coming to realize the necessity of strict building regulations, little by little, but in most of the smaller towns people build as they please and what they please.

One would think that after such a terrible lesson as the San Franciscans received, they, at least, in not the entire country, would be so thoroughly weaned from the combustible that great things might be expected of them in the reconstruction of their buildings.

It resolves itself, therefore, very largely into what the intelligent individual can do for the preservation of his own life and property—for the present, at any rate.

The building regulations, save in the larger cities, are not very helpful to the individual, so let us see how much he is benefited by insurance regulations.

Individual initiative has given us the 6,000 buildings of most fire-proofing excellence that we have in this country.

There has been in most cities an unnecessary amount of agitation against the skyscraper, because of the high fire insurance rates.

Moreover, these tall structures have a very beneficial influence upon general construction. They have familiarized people, to a certain degree, with the salient principles of fire-resistance in buildings.

In the main, millionaires have been the first to see the advantage of fireproof construction and have built their houses in that manner.

Remember this, one of the great fundamental truths to be considered when you are thinking of building: That in no case will the interest on the additional amount that a first-class fireproof building costs, over and above the initial cost of ordinary inflammable construction, be greater than the yearly premium you will have to pay upon the insurance that it will be thought necessary to carry upon that aforesaid building.

With this fact well in mind, what think you of a people that not only complacently transacts its important business in, lives in, and worships in tinder-boxes, but continues, without the slightest excuse or restriction, to add combustible structures, combustible schools, combustible churches and combustible business blocks to what at any day may become a funeral pyre?

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LAND WASTE ON WIDE ROADS

Thousands of Valuable Acres Converted to Useless Purposes.

In the United States, public highways in the states given below may be conservatively estimated as follows: (Data for Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan furnished by state authorities.)

Table with 2 columns: State, Miles. Minnesota 7,000, Wisconsin 6,000, Michigan 6,000, Iowa 6,000, Kansas 6,000, Nebraska 6,000, Missouri 6,000, Illinois 6,000, Indiana 6,000, Ohio 6,000.

Reducing the width of these public highways, which now average sixty-six feet by thirty feet—leaving them still eight feet wider than the highways of Prussia—would give back to the farmers of those states for cultivation 2,500,000 acres of generally tillable land, which, at an average valuation of \$100 per acre, would mean the restoration to the producing values of the states named of \$250,000,000.

There is enough land, arable and capable of producing crops, in a half dozen of the northern middle states, set aside by law for road purposes and actually wasted, to amount in value (if returned to the farmer), to \$100,000,000, this on the present basis of land values which is calculated according to the annual profits in crops of the land per acre.

Respectfully yours, S. R. RUSH.

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