

**FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 188: 1920
(FIRE RESISTANCE TESTING OF COLUMNS)**

By Richard Schulte

A presentation made at both the Annual Meeting of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the National Fire Protection Association in 1920 made reference to the fire resistance testing of columns by Underwriters' Laboratories. The following is the transcript of the text of this presentation:

"The Secretary: Our member the American Institute of Architects is not represented at this meeting because its fifty-third annual convention is in session at this moment in Washington. I have in hand the report of the Fire Prevention Committee of the Institute, not to the N. F. P. A., but to the Institute itself. This report is not properly before us, but I know that Chairman Davidson would not object to our reading it. I should like the privilege of including it in the minutes of this meeting, if there is no objection, just to show what the Institute would naturally report if represented here today.

The President: Proceed.

The Secretary: (reads)

Report of the Committee on Fire Prevention.

(To the Fifty-third Annual Convention, the American Institute of Architects.)

A "Fireproof" building does not exist.

Architects have learned the lesson of experience that it is better architecture and therefore, better business, to devote their attention to matters of fire prevention, rather than to systems of fire-proofing.

Notwithstanding all the propaganda of the best thought on the subject, the annual fire loss of the Nation is constantly increasing. If during normal times a dozen good reasons were given for preventing fires, a hundred may now be advanced. Our housing conditions are deplorable. The world is demanding all the food, all the clothing and all the structures that our bounteous Nation can produce, and when the surplus which may be spared for foreign nations is reduced by an annual fire loss of \$270,000,000, the loss falls not only upon our own industries, but must be paid by all the nations of the earth.

How, then, may the architectural profession perform its full duty to society in connection with the great problem of reducing the fire loss? Obviously, as an organization we can do but little, but if every architect would interest himself in the local work of the National Fire Protection Association, much might be accomplished.

Your Committee recommends that architects, as individuals, join this National Association, and assist in the movement recently started whereby it is proposed that every Fire Chief surround himself with a Cabinet of advisers, composed of architects, engineers, real estate brokers, bankers and others whose every interest lies in preventing their own city from being destroyed by fire, and its good name from the calamity of fire waste and carelessness, and who will stand back of the Chief in the enforcement of his fire prevention orders. With such a body of citizens back of them Fire Department heads will have little fear of interference with their plans for fire prevention.

Another reason why architects should affiliate with the National Fire Protection Association, is that by so doing they will regularly receive the publications of the Association which are worth many times the small cost of membership.

The Underwriters' Laboratories in conjunction with the Associated Factory Mutuals will, within a few days, publish its report of the tests of 105 different types of columns commonly used in building construction; columns being in some cases unprotected, and in other cases protected with the various systems of fire proofing.

This report, when completed, will show the safe fire protection periods of the various types of columns tested.

The Laboratories have recently completed the construction of two furnaces for testing various types of floor systems so that now it is possible to secure authoritative data upon any system of floor construction, as a whole, under any and all condition of loading, with any degree of fire hazard, and with or without the effect of water.

Respectfully submitted,

*Julius Franke,
Joseph Jacobberger,
Wm. J. Sayward,
F. E. Davidson, Chairman."*

With the construction of the two furnaces to test floor construction, UL was capable of testing all of the structural components of a building.

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