

FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 257 (THE TERMS “FIREPROOF” AND “FIRE-RESISTIVE”)

By Richard Schulte

The twenty-second Annual Meeting of the National Fire Protection Association was held in Chicago in May 1918. Among the various topics discussed at this meeting was the Report of Committee on Nomenclature. A portion of this Committee’s Report addressed the terms “fireproof” and “fire-resistive”. The following is an excerpt of the Committee’s Report addressing these two terms:

“Fireproof.– *The use of the term "Fireproof" is recommended to be discontinued. This general term has been erroneously applied to buildings and materials of a more or less fire-resistive or incombustible nature. Its indiscriminate use has produced much misunderstanding and has often engendered a feeling of security entirely unwarranted.*

Fire-resistive.–*The term "Fire-resistive" indicates materials or constructions which will satisfactorily resist fire in accordance with the specifications established by the Joint Conference on Fire Tests.”*

It had generally been acknowledged prior to 1918 that there was no such thing as fireproof building construction, however, the Report of Committee presented at the NFPA meeting held in 1918 makes this understanding explicit.

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Source: “*Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual [NFPA] Meeting*”, Chicago, Illinois, 1918.

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