

# SCHULTE & ASSOCIATES

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## **FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 29: 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL NFPA MEETING-1904 (THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT- IROQUOIS THEATER FIRE/THE GREAT BALTIMORE FIRE)**

By Richard Schulte

The eighth annual meeting of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) took place in New York against the backdrop of the fire at the Iroquois Theater in Chicago and the Great Baltimore fire. Given that, these two events were certainly on the minds of those who attended this NFPA meeting and served as an impetus for changes in the Association.

The following is the text of the Executive Committee's report presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> annual meeting:

### ***“REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.***

*Mr. Everett U. Crosby, acting chairman of the Executive Committee, presented the following report:*

*Your Executive Committee has found the past Association year of unusual interest in its suggestions for the increased usefulness of this Association, and in the opportunities for advancing the work of the National Fire Protection Association.*

*Never before has this country give such serious consideration to the protection of life and property against fire.*

*The inevitable, but usually slow, movement to this end has been hastened and made conspicuous by the Baltimore, Toronto and Rochester conflagrations, and the Iroquois Theater disaster.*

*This interest is not merely on the part of the insurance fraternity and such engineering and commercial people as come in contact with fire prevention and protective problems, for the intelligent public is awakened to the need of radical betterment of existing conditions.*

*While the economic interests of the public would alone warrant this attention, in order to reduce the insurance tax and lessen the interruption of their affairs by fire, they also are influenced by the ever-present menace to life.*

*They need and wish a thorough, honest, and unbiased investigation of these subjects, with practical but authoritative recommendations and specifications to minimize the dangers, as made by those in whom they have confidence.*

*Thereafter the carrying out of such improvements will rest to a large extent, with the public, the proper tools having been fashioned for them and placed in their hands.*

*To this end, we have prepared and lay before you, for action at this meeting, proposed amendments to our Articles of Association, intended to broaden our membership, that the way be opened to have with us in this work all interested engineering and technical associations.*

*Such co-operation, if it can be secured, will be of utmost assistance, not only in the preparation of our standards and recommendations, but in their subsequent adoption in practice.*

*Similarly, we would widen our Associates Membership and extend our literature to anyone desiring it through Subscribing Membership.*

*A most important duty has been the appointment of Special Committees and assignment of subjects. **There is apparently no end to the number of subject worthy of our attention, and we are only limited by the number of available working committee members and the capacity of the Underwriters' Laboratories.** Both have been over-taxed at times, and either or both will need enlargement or other facilities should be added, if any greater quantity of work is to be required.*

*At the commencement of our year this Committee found the Steam Fire Pump Standard unsettled, and the subject was taken up in conference with the Associated Mill Mutual offices, which for a number of years have issued the well know Underwriter Pump Specifications. This resulted in the adoption of a National Standard for Steam Pumps, in which work most valuable aid was furnished by the representatives of the Factory Insurance Association.*

*In calling this year's meeting in New York, the Committee has recognized a growing sentiment in favor of alternating our annual gatherings between New York and Chicago. These cities seem to be centrally located for the largest number of those who attend.*

*Our presence in either city is no longer a novelty; and, while in the earlier years of our growth we have with profit and pleasure enjoyed hospitable entertainment at the hands of the local fraternity during many of our annual gatherings, it is felt that now, with our increasing numbers and work, and with frequent evening committee meetings, such entertainment is no longer feasible.*

*We have been requested to consider a uniform phraseology for all Boards and Bureau reports in grading sprinkler installations. This subject has been referred to the Committee on Uniformity of Requirements.*

*The Hose and Hydrant Committee has been asked to report on means for restoring frozen hydrants to service.*

*The question of the Association giving attention to the most common causes of fires has been referred to the Secretary.*

*Issuance of a diagram showing characteristic sprinkler equipments for the guidance of Fire Chiefs and others, was assigned to the Automatic Sprinkler Committee.*

*The Lightning Hazard – recognized as causing a notably large number of fires – will be reported upon at this meeting by three of our Associate Members.*

*The issuance of an elaborate Certificate of Membership, which has been suggested, we report upon as inexpedient at the present time, due to the considerable cost involved.*

*In concluding, we wish to favorably mention the large amount of faithful labor gratuitously rendered by the many members of your Special Committees, in work for the National Fire Protection Association, and the constant assistance of the men at the Underwriters' Laboratories.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.*

*On motion of Mr. Fiske the report was accepted, to take the usual course.*

**Source:** *Proceedings of the National Fire Protection Association, Volume 1904-1906*

With the Iroquois Theater fire and the Great Baltimore fire, the work of the National Fire Protection Association acquired a new urgency and a fresh impetus to expand the work of the organization.

The proposed changes to the limitations on the membership of the NFPA were intended to not only expand the membership of the Association, but also to expand the influence and effectiveness of the Association.

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