

# SCHULTE & ASSOCIATES

Building Code Consultants  
880D Forest Avenue  
Evanston, IL 60202  
fpeschulte@aol.com  
847/866-7479

## **FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 40: THE NINTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NFPA-1905 (THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S REPORT)**

By Richard Schulte

The ninth annual meeting of the National Fire Protection Association was held in New York on May 23, 24 and 25, 1905. Following the President's Address, the Executive Committee's report was presented. The following is the text of the Executive Committee's report:

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

*Mr. E. U. Crobsy, Chairman of the Executive Committee, present the following report:*

*Gentlemen – The growth of this Association, which has been so uniform since organization, has continued in a steady manner during the past twelve months.*

*We attribute this to the fact, that our membership is broad and representative. Our work has been confined to a consideration of the subjects of chief importance before us from time to time, and our findings have been of material assistance to those engaged in fire prevention.*

*Our best wish for the Association in the future is that it may continue to develop along these same lines and earn a position as one of the chief factors in the reduction of fire cost.*

*All evidence points to this country being on the threshold of a serious investigation of fire causes, and many trade and manufacturers' associations are awake to the need of giving attention to this subject. **All are beginning to appreciate that, to accomplish the desired ends, work must be begun at home and the unnecessary defects and hazards of individual fire risks eliminated or reduced to a minimum. No form of insurance constitutes a panacea for such ills.** The individual or the trade or manufacturers' association has not the experience on which to develop the best **fire protection engineering** or the statistics. Our Association, however, with its organized membership in all parts of the country constantly studying this problem, should be able to provide just the information desired.*

*We have therefore, to suggest a future broadening of our sphere of influence by direct co-operation with such organizations. In fact, where such trade and manufacturers' interests have national association, we wish to cordially invite their joining in our movement as active members, and that individual affiliated with them be welcomed to associate membership.*

*The adoption at last annual meeting of changes in the Articles of Association, advocated by this Committee, has resulted even more favorably than we anticipated. The Secretary's report will show you that a large number of the national institutes, associations and organizations, identified in some way with fire protection engineering, have joined our Association, and a very considerable increase in the number of associate and subscribing members evidences an increasing interest in our work on the part of individuals.*

*Referring to the resolution in relation to installation of automatic sprinkler equipments, adopted as the sense of this Association at Chicago annual meeting two years ago.*

*It seems unnecessary at the present time to amplify this resolution, which, after all, is but a mere expression of majority of opinion, and even to this expression no member is bound, according to our Articles of Association.*

*The resolution in question recommends the installation of automatic sprinkler equipments by those regularly engaged in such work, and advises against selling sprinklers to those inexperienced in sprinkler practices, unless the work is guaranteed as correct by those selling the devices.*

*It can be clearly understood that there is nothing in this resolution advising members against any course of action which would give them the equivalent sprinkler installations.*

*We are pleased to report that the National Board of Fire Underwriters, who are themselves—with a large corps of engineers—undertaking an investigation of city fire protection which must prove of importance to the public and is receiving the sanction of the United States government, also continue to endorse our work, as indicated at their last week's annual meeting.*

*The further change which we recommend in the Articles of Association – proper notice of which was given members in Secretary's Bulletin of March 30, 1905—contemplates an enlargement of the Executive Committee.*

*The various detailed matters referred to our Committee at last annual meeting have received our attention during the year and we trust they have been disposed of in a manner to meet your satisfaction.*

*Referring particularly to the recommendation of the Device and Material Committee, that a channel be established through which the results of its own and the Laboratory's work could be put more promptly and in greater detail before all of our active members. We have assurance that the card cabinet system, devised for this purpose, has been well received. This is shown in the fact that the number of cases originally estimated as likely to be required had to be increased 100 percent.*

Contrary to intention a year ago, New York has been chosen for this meeting, instead of Chicago, because the representatives of our new active members, enrolled after changes in the Articles of Association adopted last May, are resident east of the Alleghenies, and it was especially desired to have these gentlemen present at the first meeting following the admission of the organizations they represent. *Consideration was also given to the fact that the Chicago representatives were especially desirous that the 1906 meeting be held in their city, in order that our members might have opportunity to carefully inspect the new plant of the Underwriters' Laboratories, which by that time will be completed and in full working order.*

Our chief work still continues to be done by Committees made up of our members whose gratuitous efforts in this work is to be specially commended.

Beside the continuation of most import special committees, the following subjects have been assigned, which are just now of particular interest:

#### **[Trolley] Car Barns.**

*It is generally felt that scant consideration has been given to this class of property from a fire protection viewpoint. Not only is it important for us to consider the newly proposed system of placing additional sprinklers at a low level in the alleys between cars, but the entire subject of car storage house construction, hazards and occupancy demands precise investigation.*

#### **Standard Thread for Fire Hose Couplings.**

*This old subject, but brand new or us, is taken up with the enthusiasm of youth, and with the hope that, in spite of past experiences, something practicable can be accomplished in the way of the adoption of a national standard hose thread.*

#### **Private Fire Service Connections to Public Water Supplies.**

*Much discussion has taken place outside our ranks in relation to this matter. We believe that the Committee having it in hand are confident or [of] reporting solutions satisfactory to all interests.*

#### **High Pressure Systems for Fire Service.**

*Many of our members are now seeking information as to such systems, what they are intended to accomplish, and the means to be employed. It is proper that the functions of a high pressure service be reviewed in a report to be laid before this Association.*

#### **Hose and Hydrants.**

*Linen hose is a branch of this subject which has never received a detailed investigation by us, and the Committee is now offering specifications to supply this need.*

### **Centrifugal Fire Pumps.**

*This type of pump has not in the past been regard by the fire protectionists or the pump people as suitable for fire duty. However, such pumps in revised form, are now called to our notice as supplying all our wants for fire service, and in some respects, in a manner superior to other types. It is proposed to equip the two large high pressure fire pumping stations about to be erected in Manhattan with pumps of this type. This Committee has a most interesting and important subject in hand.*

### **Cement for Building Construction.**

*This is a subject very much discussed at the present time. Nevertheless, we believe that most of the investigation and discussion overlooks the fire protection viewpoint; hence, the need of this Committee.*

*While, therefore, our growth and work during the past year may be regarded with fair satisfaction, we wish to point out that we are as yet beginning of our labors. Unlimited fields of usefulness spread out before us. Fire protection in its broadest sense means something to every one, and all interests should here in our Association find common meeting place for united effort where we are not disturbed by the conflicting influences of commercialism.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE."*

There are a number of points of interest included in the Executive Committee's report at the ninth annual NFPA meeting. The first point of interest is the reference to studies of various occupancies to identify hazards and to mitigate the hazards. The second point of interest is the discussion of the resolution adopted which indicated that sprinkler installations are specialized work and should be done only by those experienced in this type of work. The third point of interest is the reference to the fact that the National Board of Fire Underwriters was working on a project to improve public fire protection in large cities. The fourth point of interest is the reference to the testing and listing of equipment by Underwriters' Laboratories. The fifth point of interest is the reference to new facilities being constructed for Underwriters' Laboratories. The sixth point of interest is reference to the hose coupling standardization project. The seventh point of interest is the reference to high pressure municipal water supply systems. The eighth point of interest is the comments on the use of centrifugal pumps for fire protection service. The ninth point of interest is the reference to the use of concrete in building construction and the need of standards to address fire protection issues (structural fire resistance) for concrete construction.

Even though the Executive Committee's report at the meeting in 1905 was brief, the number of topics addressed in the report shows the scope of the technical work being done by the NFPA at this time in the history of the Association.

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Richard C. Schulte