

FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 1: A TRIBUTE TO CHARLES C. LITTLE

By Richard Schulte

The following is an excerpt from the Executive Committee Report submitted for the first annual meeting of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) held in New York on May 19 and 20, 1897. The Executive Committee Report pays tribute to the first president of the NFPA, Charles C. Little.

“EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

To the National Fire Protection Association:

GENTLEMEN – Your Committee feel it fitting that we pause a moment before taking up matters of business and pay tribute to a deceased member and President of this Association, Mr. Charles C. Little.

We do we remember him as he appeared before us at our meeting last November. After his election as President of our Association he came into the room with the committee sent to notify him of his election, and although far from well and only partially recovered from a severe illness, yet he was erect as usual, bright and cheerful. In a few well-chosen words, he expressed his appreciation of the honor conferred by his election as President, gave voice to the special interest he always felt in our line of work and the conviction that through our Association much good would come to underwriting interests. In was the last meeting with his associates.

Mr. Little was recognized as a progressive, acute, far-seeing underwriter, yet it is not his ability, great as it was, that comes first in our thought or lingers longest in our memory. It was that broad, generous, human side of his nature, that something which went out to those with whom he came in contact. The elevator boy, clerks in the office, his associates in the field and in official position, to all alike he gave bright, cheerful, encouraging words, and the feeling that he was a friend ever ready to help and give assistance. His was a strong, cheerful, wholesome character, without a trace of selfishness or jealousy. He had a hatred of anything that was mean, tricky or underhanded, and his associates always knew where he would be found on all questions involving honor and good practice in the business.

Our ranks will close up, his name will no longer appear on the list in our social and business gatherings, but to many of us as we meet together, and in our quiet moments there will come the memory of this hearty, whole-souled business associate and friend who has gone from us. He will not be forgotten.”

Respectfully submitted,

U. C. CROSBY, [NFPA Executive Committee] Chairman”

Source: NFPA Proceedings 1897-1900

After the tribute to Charles Little, the Executive Committee Report addressed “*the circumstances and conditions*” which lead to the formation of the National Fire Protection Association. It’s quite an interesting story.

More of this story in another article on the history of fire protection.

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