

SCHULTE & ASSOCIATES

Building Code Consultants
880D Forest Avenue
Evanston, IL 60202
fpeschulte@aol.com
504/644-8900

FIRE PROTECTION HISTORY-PART 9: THE THIRD ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NFPA (1899) (The Need for a Fire Testing Laboratory)

By Richard Schulte

The 3rd annual meeting of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) held in Boston on June 13th, 14th and 15th, 1899, included a report by the Association's Secretary. The following is a portion of the Secretary's report at this meeting.

"SECRETARY'S REPORT.

GENTLEMEN: --

The active membership of this Association remains the same as at annual meeting of a year ago, consisting of 22 Boards and Bureaus having to do with the improvement of risks.

One application for active membership has just been presented to the Executive Committee and several applications for association membership. We expect this latter class to increase materially during the coming year.

Members have reported several topics for consideration by the Association which have been referred to and acted upon by the Executive Committee.

We have continued to receive publications from the British Fire Prevention Committee and note those placed on file since our previous report to indicate the scope of the investigations:

*"Cotton Fires and Cotton Bales."
"Fire Resisting Floors Used In London."
"Fire Service in Factories, Works, Etc."
"Lessons From Fire and Panic."
"How to Build Fire-proof."
"Tests With Unprotected Columns."
"The Effect of Fire"
"The Testing Station of the B.F.P.C."
"Official Fire Tests With Floors."
"The Tall Building Under Test of Fire."
"Experimental Fire Tests With Floors." (A) (B).
"Official Fire Tests With Ceilings."
"Official Fire Tests With Glass."
"Conflagrations During the Last Ten Years."*

The need of a testing station in this country where accurate investigation of fire resisting materials can be made is apparent to us all, and when the matter is taken up valuable experience can be obtained from the British Fire Prevention Committee who have provided extensive facilities for this purpose and are now making tests of much interest and value which are referred to in their publications. It seems somewhat strange that a prominent enterprise of this nature has not ere this been put under way in our country whereby we could gain absolute knowledge as to the endurance of the various materials often employed in endeavoring to reduce the fire waste, the value of which, however, is only estimated.

It wasn't too long after the NFPA Secretary's report was presented to the Association that the "*need*" for a fire testing laboratory in the United States was met. The laboratory, located in Chicago, would become to be known as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).

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