

ARSON THEORY NOT ACCEPTED

Fire Marshal Heaton Rejects Alien Explanation of Abattoir Fire

Mr. L. P. Heaton, Provincial Fire Marshal, does not place much credence in the theory that the disastrous fire in the Harris Abattoir on Monday night was the work of enemy aliens. At present, he said yesterday, a thorough investigation is being made into the Thor Iron Works and the Harris Abattoir fires, and nothing but surmise as to the cause of either is possible. Since May, 1917, there have been six big fires which, it is said, had all affected war work. Mr. Heaton said that in four of these plants the actual aggregate loss had been fixed at \$435,282, whereas the former estimate was almost double that. And five of these fires were in no way connected with munitions or war materials.

The Provincial Fire Marshal said that it was only natural such a fire as that which occurred in the Harris plant should set people thinking, and their theory of enemy aliens is quite understandable. In four of the fires which have already been investigated two were found to have been due to natural causes, one was found to have been caused by excessive stupidity of a foreigner who was smoking, and the fourth is thought to have been started in the same way.

Mr. Heaton agreed with Chief of Police Grasett when he said that if an inferior class of foreign or domestic labor must be used the consequences must be accepted, and fires, the result of inexcusable carelessness will inevitably follow.