

## LIGHTNING CAUSED FIRE.

### DESTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION.

#### Heroic but Ineffectual efforts were made to Save the beautiful Church Edifice---A Historic Structure.

The heavy downpour of rain on Wednesday afternoon probably saved destruction by fire the group of wooden buildings in the immediate vicinity of the Church of the Assumption.

As it is the church which has stood on one of the highest points of Lancaster towering above the surrounding structures and a landmark of about sixty years standing is no more, for almost at the commencement of an entirely unexpected thunderstorm the tall spire was struck by a bolt of lightning coming simultaneously with a monster thunder clap and within a short time the spire was wrapped in flames which gradually working downwards, obtained a grip on the main body of the church, which fell a prey to their greed.

For some reason or other the fire department was not as prompt as might be expected, some of the members saying that they had gone to the wrong box. The department's arrival didn't put a much better face on the matter, for the church, standing outside the city line, and on one of the highest points in Carleton, was most difficult to get water to and when it is considered that the fire was situated about one hundred and thirty feet up in the air, the difficulty of getting at it becomes more apparent.

The fatal bolt seems to have struck the spire about 3.45 o'clock, and to have been discovered simultaneously by several persons. Far up on the left side of this spire almost under the cross, was where the bolt took effect and it split the wooden steeple down for some length, bulging it out and allowing the fire to secure a hold on its dry wooden interior. Those who first saw the blaze say it works like the reflection of fire upon a glass, but its true nature soon became forcibly known. Alarms were sent in from boxes 112 and 113, while the big bell of the church rang out, mystifying the parishioners as to the reason thereof. The bell was kept going until it was dangerous to remain longer in the tower and the last to descend was the sexton, Mr. Frank Girouard.

The continuous downpour of rain throughout the fire didn't extinguish the blaze, though it probably was the means of preventing a more serious conflagration in Carleton.

The Carleton engine took up a position at the Martello Hotel corner, some hundreds of yards away and soon had a very long line of hose stretched, a fire was played on the church for a short time, but its effect was not noticeable. A siamese was put on and two lines thus obtained, one of which was played on the rectory, while the other was used on the church. Efforts to save the church proved fruitless and the attention of the firemen was then directed to the rectory which stood in great danger, as a very strong wind was blowing the fiery embers directly against it and the barn. If they had caught the fire would probably have been communicated to adjoining residences.

Meanwhile a big and ever-increasing crowd was collecting despite the rain, and volunteers were not wanting to help save the church property, parishioners and others lending an eager hand. The flames had by this time devoured the wooden steeple and seized upon the main church, working towards the altar and vestry from the entrance and the big doors and front was rapidly burning. The workers were zealous and the greater part of the church's fixings were saved.

Though all worked hard, special mention is deserved by some who toiled in this manner, and the actions of others may well be termed heroic. Of particular value, especially on account of it having been presented to the church as a personal gift by the late Father Dunphy, was the large painting on canvas of the "Descent from the Cross," which was directly over the altar. This picture is a copy of the famous original to be seen in Rome and was highly prized by the congregation, not only on account of its intrinsic value, but also because of its connections. A successful effort was made to save this by Messrs. John Tobin, of the C.P.R., Councillor J. W. Long, John Ganong, Chas. Russell, Edw. J. Connolly and P. Cormier. Despite a warning to the contrary, as the flames were burning almost overhead, these heroes entered the church and succeeded in pulling down the painting. Getting it out of the rear door, which was nearest, was an impossibility, and directly in the face of the advancing flames they succeeded in carrying it out through the front door to safety. It caught for a moment in the doorway and detained the party, but for a moment only and it was placed along with the rest of the church property in a place of safety.

Another feat worthy of mention was that consequent upon the saving of the marble tablet placed securely in the wall of the church by the congregation in memory of Father Dunphy. Messrs. Joseph Murphy and E. O'Brien entered to save this. The smoke was stifling and the heat intense. There was no time for formalities and with an axe the courageous young fellows freed the tablet from the wall and carried it to safety. Helpers were many, and prominent among them was Rev. G. F. Scovil, the Church of England clergyman, who dripping wet

lent willingly whatever assistance he could.

Among the things lost was the pipe organ, in the choir loft, the crucifix and forty tons of coal which had just been laid in the basement for the winter's use.

Once the fire got under way the spectacle from a spectacular standpoint was grand. The arcs of the church stood out boldly, silhouetted in a fiery red against the grim hills and the darkening sky which formed the background. The church was a staunchly built one, and took considerable time to burn, but once the flames got a grip there was no chance of saving it. Ravaged to the fullest extent by the flames until they stood out gaunt and bare, sad remnants of what once was, the big beams forming the supports of the church stayed but a moment in their upright position, when with a sounding crash they came groundwards, sending in all directions a shower of fiery embers, emitting volumes of smoke, and forming again a veritable feast for the flames, which seemed to spring forth with renewed vigour as if triumphing over the victim's fall. The steeple first toppled down, and in a series of crashes as the supports were weakened other sections followed, each making a loud crash, until by degrees the whole building was consumed, and lying a mass of sputtering ruins, upon which the pelting rain poured unremitted. One big mass, which seemed to have a greater amount of tenacity than the rest, stood for some time sending forth flames which threatened the rectory severely. It, however, came down, and the sparks it sent upwards for a time enveloped the workers in a grim pall. The big brick chimney stood for a long time, but it also finally succumbed. Its hard outlines were sharply defined in the burning mass, and faithful to its duty to the last it sent forth volumes of black smoke from its lofty mouth. Its downfall caused a scurrying of spectators, and left nothing standing but remnants of the vestry, which soon gave way, and at the present a mass of smouldering ruins marks the spot which for almost three score years has been occupied by the Church of the Assumption.

When efforts had been abandoned at saving the church, the firemen worked strenuously, keeping wet the roof and sides of the rectory and barn. The wind was blowing a mercy. The rain was coming down hard, but embers were blown rapidly, and in countless numbers across the intervening space and dashed against the sides of the rectory, which heated by the awful fire must soon have caught but for persistent efforts to put every ember out. With the clatter and rapidity of the burning embers, the flames struck the sides and roof. A hose manipulated from the epula kept playing on the roof, and embers lighting thereon were but short lived. Another hose played on the side, and men with water buckets and even a small garden hose worked rapidly. Time and again the opinion was expressed that the handsome and new rectory must go. The heat became so fierce that the firemen couldn't work between the burning mass and house. Protection against the heat in the way of wrenched off doors enabled the firemen to manipulate the hose under their shelter. The crucial moment came when about half of the church was seen to totter and sway, then crash to the ground. The flames were thus thrown in alarming proximity to the rectory, but all heaved a sigh of relief when they gradually died away. Similar difficulty was experienced in saving the barn. Sparks and embers lodged everywhere, and even threatening to ignite the structure and thus destroy the church property which had been placed therein for safety. At this juncture some more hose arrived from the Fairville department, and another line was stretched. This was of unusual length, extending from St. Jude's church corner. When the water was turned on it soon put out the fire on the barn. At this time the sparks and embers were being blown down Carleton in a courted mass, and the houses on the surrounding low grounds presented a scene of activity as men worked vigorously stamping out the sparks as they fell on the roofs, an occurrence of alarming frequency. A lady in the Western House told a News reporter that embers had come down as far as her house, which shows how far reaching might have been the flames but for the rain.

The church is a total loss, and was insured for \$11,050 as follows: Queen, \$7,000, North British and Mercantile, \$3,000, Sun, \$1,500. The latter company also had \$1,500 insurance on the church property, the loss of which, including the organ, will amount to considerable. The damage to the house and barn will be trifling. The Queen carries \$1,500 and the Guardian \$2,000 on the house. The Queen also carries \$300 on the barn.

The appearance of the burning church in the early stages of the fire as viewed from the city was curious, looking like a small ball of fire on the top of the steeple. Its subsequent development was rapid.

An unusual amount of hose was re-

quired. Carleton had twenty-seven joints stretched to reach the church, and Fairville and what came over from the city stretched about as many more for the second line after Chief Kerr had arrived and assumed charge.

A couple of drunken men, who insisted in handling hose made some trouble on the roof of the barn, but nothing serious resulted.

In addition to the hose of No. 2 cart, which was used in the fire, Chief Kerr ordered No. 5 cart to Carleton, and it stood in No. 6 house ready for any emergency.

Work was kept up on the ruins until late at night, and danger of further fire averted. Father O'Donovan's order for refreshments for the men was forestalled by Mr. H. Colby Smith, who lives opposite, and who served refreshments to the firemen.

The Church of the Assumption is almost three score years old, and its untimely end has caused sorrow to many a heart. It was first started in 1847 by Rev. Edmund Quinn, in accordance with the promise of Bishop Dollard, on land purchased from the Hon. John Robertson. It was at first only 54 x 60 feet, and was known as the "Little Chapel," and though small it was found sufficient for the requirements of the Catholic community. Father Quinn was transferred to St. Andrews, and was succeeded as pastor by Rev. E. J. Dunphy. Father Dunphy enlarged and extended the church, installing pews, etc. In 1855 he erected a tower on the church looking towards the bay and installed a bell therein, and the sum of \$855 being received to defray the expense. The first church picnic was held in Carleton with much success. Not satisfied with the interior, Father Dunphy engaged Mr. Swift, a competent artist, to fresco an ornament the interior.

A new Gothic altar was put in instead of the old one. The ceilings were paneled, and Father Dunphy from his own personal resources presented to the church a copy of Rubens' "Descent from the Cross," which was hung over the altar, costing over £200. This was completed in 1862. Father Dunphy was removed to St. Stephen, and was succeeded by Father Quinn, but was again appointed pastor in 1867. It was then that the present church came into being. Father Dunphy, a year after his return, conceived the idea of enlarging the church. The amount of \$2,156 was collected, and work was commenced in 1868 by constructing a new roof over the old one. The steeple was completed in the same manner under skilled artisans. The church was pronounced one of the most beautiful wooden structures in the Dominion. The plans were furnished by Mr. Stead, of St. John. It was built in Gothic style, and was 101 feet long. The transept was 42 feet deep and 62 feet 3 inches wide. The nave was 25 feet wide. The tower was 16 feet square and 75 feet high, while the spire rose 75 feet above this. In 1876 Father Dunphy, anxious to finish his work, procured the services of a first class artist, Mr. A. Pindelowsky, of New York, who frescoed and otherwise ornamented the interior. At the end of the work the church has cost \$19,000. The church was consecrated in 1871 by the late Bishop Sweeney, assisted by Rev. Fathers Michael, Wallace and Ouellet. Father Dunphy on his death was succeeded by the Rev. Thos. Connolly, and then by Rev. J. J. O'Donovan, the present pastor, who has added improvements to the church.

Two splendid statues and a new altar carpet, the latter costing \$300, were among the articles saved from the fire. Father Dunphy is buried in a vault under the vestry, and the tablet erected to his memory in the church was fortunately saved.

#### NOVEMBER CANADIAN MAGAZINE.

Like a breath of peace and tranquility is the November Canadian Magazine which shows no evidence of the political turmoil that is disturbing the country. The first article deals with "The Argentine Gaucho," a peculiar character who lives on the ranches and prairies of our great South American competitor in wheat-growing.

The illustrations for this article are exceptionally fine. A. Theodore Waters, a Canadian who has been a self-supporting missionary in British Tongaland, tells how he worked his way to South Africa via London, how he studied the Zulu language and how he fared there in wartime. There are some rare photographs with this article. The editor gives his impressions of Canada's display at St. Louis, and they are certainly not in harmony with the average opinion of other writers. This too is illustrated profusely. There is a short history of the Grenadier Guards, the oldest regiment in the British Army, with some more excellent illustrations. The Canadian Celebrity of the month is Mr. Robert Meighen, another man who has carved his way to prominence by native courage and ability. There are splendid portraits of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Mr. Borden, of Earl Grey and Lady Grey, and a new portrait of Marshall Saunders. The stories are worthy of the number.

## VOTE IN St. John's Interests

### REMEMBER

That taxation has decreased under Liberal Rule, and that trade has increased.

### REMEMBER

The years of prosperity under the Liberal Regime, and the years of adversity under Conservative Rule.

In 1900 the Conservatives said that the Winter Port business would be destroyed, if the Liberals were returned. The prediction was false, the Winter Port trade has enormously increased.

The Conservatives said in 1904 that the Winter Port trade will go to Portland. They were wrong in 1900. They are wrong now.

Vote for McKeown and O'Brien, the Candidates of Party which built up the Winter Port of St. John.

Vote for McKeown and O'Brien, and the Liberal Party, whose Railway Policy will largely increase the Winter Port trade.

The Grand Trunk Pacific will reduce the distance from Quebec to St. John by two hundred miles.

Vote for McKeown and O'Brien, and the Liberal Party, which is pledged to still send Canadian trade through Canadian Ports.

The Conservatives subsidized Canadian Steamships to run to American Ports. The Liberals withdrew the subsidies and compelled the Steamships to come to St. John.

Vote for McKeown and O'Brien, and the Liberal Party which has brought prosperity to Canada.

#### MISREPRESENTED.

MR. R. C. ELKIN IS WITH THE LIBERAL PARTY.

Conservative papers all over the country have been publishing the name of Mr. R. C. Elkin as one of those who is opposed to the government. Talking with the Globe to day Mr. Elkin said he was and always had been a liberal. The best evidence of my position in the present contest, he said, may be seen in the fact that I have signed the nomination papers of Mr. O'Brien and Mr. McKeown and will vote for them and do all they can to secure their election.—Globe, Tuesday.

#### MAJORITY WILL BE LARGE.

SIR WILFRID EXPECTS TO HAVE A LEAD OF FORTY-SIX.

Col. H. H. McLean returned on Thursday from a business trip to upper Canada. While in Montreal on Wednesday Col. McLean had two interviews with Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Col. McLean says that he found Sir Wilfrid not only in splendid health but in good spirits as well. In the course of the interviews the premier stated that there is no doubt whatever that after the elections the Liberal party will be forty-six seats to the good, and there is reason to hope that the majority will be even larger than this. Sir Wilfrid states that the reports from all over the country are satisfactory in the extreme. In Quebec the party will stand better than ever, and the same statement, Sir Wilfrid said, is true of Ontario. As for the west, the Liberals will undoubtedly be on top there as elsewhere. Col. McLean states that this view concerning the west was wholly concurred in by a well known western gentleman with whom he was recently in conversation. Sir Wilfrid looks to St. John to send two supporters in the next house, and expressed great interest in the contest here.

## Intercolonial Railway. FOR DOMINION ELECTIONS

Will sell cheap excursion tickets between all stations on the Railway

Thursday, November 3rd,

On TUESDAY, NOV. 1st or WEDNESDAY, NOV. 2nd, when necessary to enable purchaser to reach destination in ample time before polls close on November 3rd.

Good for Return until Nov. 4th.

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100,000,000 ACRES

Of splendid Farm Lands in the CANADIAN NORTH WEST and the Dominion Government Grant to each Adult who will work it

**160 Acres Free.**

You can buy the adjoining Quarter Section (100 acres) for \$4.00 to \$5.00 an acre, and pay One-Tenth a year, and thus for a very small amount secure a Farm that will pay from the start. Practically no Pioneer Work.

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