

cause and progress of the calamity so much deplored, they, nevertheless, have agreed upon the principal facts as recorded below.

On the evening of the 12th June last, at the close of an exhibition at the Theatre, of Chemical or Dissolving Views, an awful calamity—and one which can never be forgotten in Quebec, already twice visited in 1845 by conflagrations of fearful extent—was occasioned by the explosion or ignition of a camphine oil lamp, used on the stage or amongst the side scenes. The fitting up of the stage, and the properties belonging thereto, being all of very combustible materials, the Proscenium was immediately in flames, which spread with extraordinary rapidity to the body of the Theatre. Although the larger portion of the spectators had at this time retired without interruption—so that for some time after the alarm of fire was given, it was erroneously supposed by the sentry and others, outside the building, that no one was within—it appears that about seventy persons, as far as can be ascertained, had remained behind from some unexplained motive.

Immediately on the alarm being given, the citizens, many of the Brothers of the Albion Lodge, the military and police, hurried to the scene. From the impression which prevailed that the spectators had left the Theatre, attention was at first drawn to the safety of the adjacent buildings. But the work of destruction within, and that of the most appalling nature, had not been protracted. It is supposed that in less than fifteen minutes every part of the interior was on fire; and, on the arrival of the firemen and citizens to the rescue, the victims were seen in the passage and staircase, vainly extending their arms towards the impassable gulf of flame and smoke. The unfortunate spectators, who had remained behind in the Theatre, terrified by the approach of the devouring element from the stage, and nearly insensible from panic and the suffocating vapour of the camphine, which had exploded, rushed to the staircase by which they had entered, and precipitating themselves into the confined passage at the bottom, there became hopelessly jammed in the narrow space—and the outside door having, by some unexplained accident, become closed, they were soon suffocated and consumed!

It was only possible for those outside to rescue a few persons, who, when the door was forced open, were nearest to the place of exit. The other sufferers were seen crowded one upon another, their limbs so entangled and interlaced, that no human efforts, even with the risk of dislocation—which, it is believed, did actually occur—no intrepidity, and no personal hazard, on the part of the bystanders, could avail to save them. An awful and portentous silence reigned over this scene of terror—the victims were entirely resigned to the fate which they saw was inevitable; and a very few minutes now terminated the sufferings of about fifty individuals!

It is supposed that about twenty persons succeeded in making their escape by the pit door, which mode of egress was only known to a few—and which, after some delay, had been broken open. The number of bodies recognized in the morning was forty-six, and there were three or four besides, supposed to be those of strangers to the city.

It is consolatory to reflect that many of our citizens, together with several officers of the garrison, distinguished themselves on the melancholy occasion by the greatest zeal and presence of mind. Their names will ever be gratefully remembered by the survivors and their relatives, but it is beyond the scope of this report to introduce them here.

Your Special Committee have to report, that amongst the sufferers by this calamity, which has deprived Quebec of many most useful and respectable citizens, it is with grief they have to enumerate three lamented Brothers of Albion Lodge, namely—the late Alexander

Stewart Scott, H. Carwell, and Richard Atkins. The first of these gentlemen was an advocate of the Quebec Bar, and worthily filled the office of Clerk of the Court of Appeals. He died esteemed and lamented by a large circle of friends and acquaintance. With him perished his eldest daughter, in her fifteenth year; and he has left a bereaved widow and seven children, viz., four sons, of the ages of 14, 11, 9, and 4 years, respectively; and three daughters, respectively 7½, 6 years, and an infant under six months. The eldest son attends the Seminary. Two other sons have been at Mr. Jenkins' school, and one was at home for the holidays. The eldest daughter is at Miss Malone's seminary; the four younger children have not yet been at school. Mr. H. Carwell has long been favorably known as an importer of dry and fancy goods, and died highly respected on the fatal night, together with two of his children. He has left a widow and three children. Mr. R. Atkins was a very respectable grocer in the Upper Town, and on the night of the fire was accompanied to the Theatre by his mother, who also perished. He has left a widow and two children—one born since his decease.

Immediately after the fatal occurrence, the Albion Lodge, mindful of the duties which devolved upon it by the decease of their lamented Brothers, was called together by the N. G., and resolutions were passed to attend the funerals in a body, with the usual ceremonies and emblems. It was remarked with thankfulness that this was the first occasion since the formation of the Lodge, on which these funeral ceremonies had been required. A very large attendance was the result, and a long line of Brethren, linked together, each with a Brother of the Mercantile Lodge, preceded the funerals, respectively, to the places of interment, and presented a gratifying spectacle of that union of Friendship and Love, in life and death, which distinguishes the Order.

Your Special Committee has further to report, that letters of condolence were addressed respectively to the widows of the deceased Brothers by the Noble Grand, to which feeling and appropriate answers were returned, and are on the files of the Lodge. The usual benefits on the decease of Brothers, were received by the widows; and the last duties of sympathy were paid at a meeting of the Lodge, on the 22nd ultimo, when the following Resolutions were unanimously passed:—

Resolved,—That this Lodge receives with heartfelt satisfaction, the letters from Prince of Wales' Lodge, No. 1, Queen's Lodge, No. 2, and Commercial Lodge, No. 5, expressive of their sympathy and readiness to lend any assistance in their power to the widows and orphans of our lamented Brothers, who perished in the awful fire of the 12th instant.

Resolved,—That this Lodge recognises in the offer of assistance made by Prince of Wales' Lodge, No. 1, Queen's Lodge, No. 2, and Commercial Lodge, No. 5, a carrying out of the real principles of Odd-Fellowship, which reflects honor upon the Order in general, and upon these Lodges in particular.

Resolved,—That although the recent calamity will cause a heavy and continued drain upon the funds of this Lodge, still a hope is entertained, that by strict economy it will be able to meet the demand upon it, so far as after having paid the funeral benefits, to give a suitable education to those of the orphan children who come within the Bye-Laws of this Lodge.

Your Special Committee cannot conclude this report without expressing their great gratification at the receipt of letters of condolence from the various Lodges of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in Canada, which have been received, addressed to the Noble Grand of this Lodge, on the melancholy subject of this Report. All which is respectfully submitted.

J. C. FISHER,

Chairman of Special Committee.

Lodge Rooms, }
Monday, July 6, 1846. }