

FACTORY REBUILT - COMMUNITY SPIRIT TRIUMPHS



St. Joseph de Beauce factory goes up in smoke.

The small town of St. Joseph de Beauce some 40 miles southeast of Quebec City was recently the site of an event that will remain in the town annals for years to come.

Last September 6, a fire completely destroyed the Glendale Company mobile-home factory, which had been operating in St. Joseph since 1966 and which had expanded considerably (its turnover increased from \$1 million to \$9 million in six years), to the benefit of several of the neighbouring municipalities. The factory represented the livelihood of 238 full-time employees and indirectly affected that of more than 500 workers. Thus the conflagration was a tragedy for the entire community.

During the first few days following the catastrophe the Glendale Company received from several other towns tempting offers of premises that would have spared the company the financial burden of a lengthy reconstruction period. But such offers didn't take into account the resolution and courage of the residents of St. Joseph!

SIX MONTHS TOO LONG TO WAIT

The people of St. Joseph did not intend to lose their industry. The day after the fire, they examined the possibility of rebuilding the factory. The townspeople met with representatives of the Quebec Department of Labour to obtain permission for the 238 Glendale employees to be hired to rebuild the factory; in this way the employees could continue to draw their salaries and reconstruction could be carried out as soon as possible. However, because of regulations governing the construction industry, permission was denied, which meant that it would take at least six months to do the job.



New building was constructed entirely by voluntary work.

EVERYONE PITCHED IN

Without further delay, and through the initiative of the Association coopérative industrielle (the Industrial Co-operative Association), the mayor and a few of the citizens, a community project was launched. In 21 days and 22,500 hours of voluntary work, 3,250 residents of St. Joseph, in a rare atmosphere of trust and co-operation, rebuilt their 90,000 square-foot factory. Everyone pitched in; from 8 a.m. until midnight, the work site was a hive of activity. Full-time employees were joined by engineers, architects, lawyers, notaries, judges and teachers; everyone helped out. People came from all over to watch admiringly or encourage the workers.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Governor-General Roland Michener, and Mrs. Michener visited the project and ate on the site with the volunteer workers. In a symbolic gesture, Mr. Michener climbed a ladder, hammer in hand, and nailed a board to the factory wall. The visitors said they were truly surprised by the atmosphere of co-operation that prevailed on the work-site, and that to the best of their knowledge, the project was without precedent.

A GESTURE OF GRATITUDE

As a sign of their appreciation and their gratitude to the townspeople, the company directors donated \$30,000 to the local arena committee and gave each employee a \$100 bonus and a 5 percent increase in salary over the salary rate in effect at the time of the fire.

By dint of their courage and resolution, the people of St. Joseph de Beauce rebuilt their factory