

# Immense Damage in One of Biggest Floods in City's History Buildings Crushed Like Match Wood in Shove of Ice Yesterday

## VARIOUS ESTIMATES OF DAMAGE; FOUR FEET OF WATER IN HOUSES

Various estimates of the loss caused to Belleville property in the flood have been made. One citizen today ventured the opinion that the total damage would approach one million dollars, another thought it might exceed five hundred thousand. Conservative estimates figure around a quarter of a million.

(From Daily Ontario of March 21.) In the biggest spring flood which has swept Belleville in a third of a century, thousands of dollars' worth of damage and great inconveniences were caused the residents of this city living or doing business in the vicinity of the Moira River by a shove which took place yesterday. The exact loss cannot be calculated. Thousands upon thousands of dollars worth of goods were in the basements of the westside of Front Street on shelves believed to be above the reach of the most serious flood. Barns, buildings and factories were demolished, crushed or slashed by the immense weight of the Moira River ice on the rampage. Hundreds of houses and stores in west Belleville had water in them to the depth of three feet or more on the floors. Besides loss of the comforts of home, these residents suffered irreparable damage to their homes and their furnishings. The loss the city sustained is as far as present knowledge confined to the footbridge, which is a total wreck.

**Break Away at Cannifton.**  
The river was in a menacing state for about two days before the great flood. Since noon on Tuesday the ice had been kept at the footbridge, a most unusual place, but a perfectly natural one in view of the immense thickness of the ice this year and the solid field in the river. The bright sun and the mild weather did effective work. The trouble was caused however by the breakaway of a field of ice at Lincolnton's dam at Cannifton which occurred about three thirty yesterday afternoon. The news was phoned into Belleville and many were in waiting for the big rush. It exceeded their expectations. It forced loose the ice in Lutzer's mill pond and down the rapids it raced. From Cannifton it came along at a greater rate than an automobile could travel at. Those citizens who were at the upper bridge saw a mist, then a stray cake pass under the appearance of white or grey horses in a charge. When the moving jam came within a third of a mile of the end of the stationary ice opposite Brown's Foundry, this suddenly showed a sign of restlessness and began to move, the water rising and the racking ice closing up the gap.

**Scenes at Footbridge.**  
The scene along the river was indescribable. The footbridge had some citizens on it although it was guarded at the approaches by boards. Some children to get a better view were perched on a small rise of ground behind Wallbridge and Clark's Front Street Store. Soon twenty or thirty regretted their curiosity as they found themselves marooned on a small piece of ground expecting every minute to find the ice knocking at their feet. The footbridge was lifted up and slung south and bobbed about like a drunken man, a punching bag or a cork. A few of such incessant blows assailed all the joints and broke away the bridge from its support. At the entrance the woodwork was smashed into kindling and the structure finally reposed broken and battered, about ten feet south of its place. The bridge towers and struts cables help up under the immense bulleting of the ice cakes. The top of the ice was three or four feet above the level of the town of Mayor Dr. Platt's. Some women were caught on the footbridge. One had her arm snatched by a man from the carriage in which she was wedging him and it was with difficulty that she reached terra firma.

**Ice Solid Below Lower Bridge.**  
Down the river many had gathered to see the sight. The lower bridge was crowded but as the ice sheet began to break under the immense pressure from behind, they ran to

their craft was damaged, as the current got control of it.

**Water Swept Across Coleman St.**  
Once the rush of ice was halted, the water at once arose and overflowed the river banks. On the west side it broke through near the footbridge, opposite Christ Church and ice cakes swept across Coleman street, almost as far north as Catherine street. In tons the water poured across the vacant lots, through the yards into Coleman, which became a torrent, water flowing down the walks and road to the depth of four feet, near the Bridge St. corner. Every house almost, had two feet or more on the floors, and McLaughlin's garage had three or four feet on the floor, invading the battery rooms and surrounding the automobiles. No chance was given to set things in order and the staff had to leave through the upper windows, by means of a ladder on Bridge Street.

The water poured through to Everett street and flooded Jane St. crossing so that traffic with Bridge St. had to go by Cedar and Catherine. Everett street residences were inundated. So quickly did the water rise that business on Bridge St. west was caught unprepared. McLaughlin's the Windsor Hotel, Diamond's the grocery and the Chinese laundry were four land marks in a sea. Water streamed four feet and more deep across this thoroughfare and extended from the lower bridge to almost the corner of James St.

**Customers were caught in the garage and visitors at the hotel. In Diamond's grocery, the water came in and there were many women customers inside who took to the counters and boxes, screaming with fear, as the flood kept increasing. Mr. Diamond and his son tried to restore order and kept the door closed with difficulty. There was danger of the ice breaking through the windows. People were caught on the street. Some ladies took to the snow banks, unable to get away, others jumped on ice cakes and awaited help.**

**Mr. Richard Arnot rescued a number of ladies in his buggy. It was with difficulty and great danger to himself and his little pony from large floating ice cakes that he was able to reach them. Although he got very wet in three feet of water, he effected the rescue.**

**Soldier Effects Rescue.**  
A returned soldier, a hospital case as shown by a blue band on his arm, did very noble work in rescuing women. He carried them to carriages or boats and one he carried on his shoulder across the street and landed her safely in a house, she being taken in by the window. De Vault's grocery and Kelloway's were caught in the full sweep and some of their stock was damaged. Barrels and other materials floated about the street.

**On West Bridge the water reached it is thought, high water mark for many years, going as far west as Corey's grocery and Mr. J. Coon's residence.**

**Murray Ward No. 8 Flooded.**  
All that part of Murray Ward lying south of Bridge St. and below the hill was in a short time a lake. Roads, gardens and in the lower part fences, disappeared and currents ran through the streets. Not a house but had its ground floor flooded with consequent loss to pianos, carpets and other household furnishings and effects.

**The employees of the Springer Brass Works had to rush down Coleman street to the C. N. O. R. track to escape the water which was pursuing them.**

**In Murray Ward No. 8, there are quite a few horses, cows and hens kept. Flocks of poultry which were in many cases allowed to go out were scattered far and wide, some floated on ice cakes, sat on boards perched on fences, hundreds of yards from home. Many were drowned. After the dark set in, boats were used to collect the living remnants of the flocks. Cows drowned in their sheds and had to be got out of the chilly water. Horses were hidden out.**

**Many Caught Away From Home.**  
Yesterday was such a fine day that no one in that section looked for a big flood to which they have not been accustomed for many years, so many women were caught away from home. Husbands were used to take them home when the current was not too strong and many boarders were taken home in stiffs for the first time in their lives.

**Some families suffered great anguish as they did not know where other members were. Inquiries flashed about as to whether they had gone to stay at safer quarters in town for the night and until the water should recede. Many stayed in their homes and moved upstairs. In cottages this was impossible and removal was obligatory.**

**The railway embankment kept the water at a great depth last night in the lower part of Murray subdivision No. 14. At the entrance to the C.N.R. and C.P.R. bridge the water in escaping formed a regular cascade. Part of the park was a regular waterfall for several hundred yards with water running from Coleman St. into the river.**

**The water ran across the R.R. track near the bay bridge or "Y" at the munition plant and wore away part of the road bed.**

**The basement of Boulter's garage on Upper Moira St. was a queer looking sight. The flood had forced open the doors and the ice floated in. The McLaughlin Co. had some seventeen automobiles stored there. McLaughlin's loss is problematical. If the buildings do not collapse and the flood soon subsides, it may not be great. Forty thousand dollars worth of new automobiles are in the floor in the two garages. If there is any loss it may reach many thousands of dollars.**

**Fears for the Night.**  
There were many fears entertained for what would happen during the night. If there is another movement of ice, it was predicted that the lower bridge would have to go as a wreck and that uncounted damage would result to buildings on the west side of the river. Some dwellings were thought to be in danger of collapse should another move occur and the inhabitants moved out to places of safety.

**The water last night could get no outlet in the river as an almost perfect dam had been made by the ice just below the lower bridge.**

**There was a constant rumour of another jam from Corbyville and Cannifton being on the way.**

**The movement of ice yesterday afternoon which meant such danger to himself and his little pony from large floating ice cakes that he was able to reach them. Although he got very wet in three feet of water, he effected the rescue.**

**Old Time Floods Recalled.**  
This flood in its magnitude harks back to the flood days of over a third of a century ago when a bridge would be swept away, a January rampage would tie up the west side of city for months, and necessitate the cutting of channels for driving through the western streets. These were the days when boats plied across the Moira in the spring and summer until the lower bridge was rebuilt.

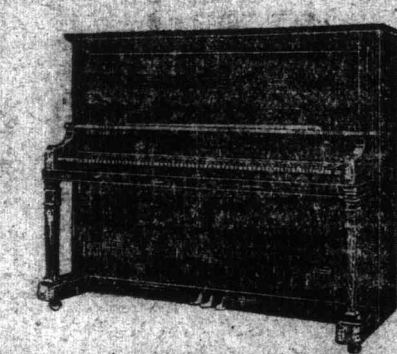
**Yesterday afternoon the traffic all fell upon the upper bridge. Bridge St. being impassable and the suspension bridge a wreck.**

**During the night and this morning there was no change in the situation. The water flowed through Coleman and Everett Streets as heavily as yesterday. Towards midday it looked as if the water had receded slightly.**

**Whether the ice will melt where it is, is a question that is being asked. Various answers are made. Some claim that nothing can save the lower bridge. Others state that as the water is finding its outlet down Coleman street, there is less pressure in the river and that there**

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Mr. D. V. Sinclair is hit very heavily by the flood. In the basement of his store was a stock of goods worth about \$20,000, all soaked at the bridge and the water flowed Ritchie's had five thousand dollars worth of goods in their basement. Mr. C. N. Sulman is a heavy loser. His stock in the basement comprised of wallpapers, wrapping paper, etc., to the value of \$5,000. Wm. McIntosh, Woolworth's and others are all sufferers.

**Wash Out on R. R. Track.**  
At the bay bridge crossing of the C. P. R. and C. N. O. R. the water washed away some of the ballast for a stretch of thirty or forty yards. The C.N.O.R. track was impassable but the C.P.R. operated trains with great caution. Large gangs of section men are working on the line depositing huge boulders to save the track. The C.N.O.R. trains could not operate over their line.

**Spectacle at Footbridge.**  
An eye witness of the marooning of women and children at the rock at the footbridge stated that the scene was beyond the power of pen to describe. Children yelling and screaming, surrounded by water, made bedlam of the air.

**Mr. Bell of Albert College did gallant work for fully half an hour walking through the water nearly up to his neck guiding a punt in the footbridge passage until all were rescued from the dangerous spot.**

**All last night and today skiffs plied near the C.P.R. track. People were taken at midnight out of their homes. There were many mishaps as the frail crafts were caught in the currents.**

**The McLaughlin cars were got out of the garage. Mr. R. G. Graham's large truck was used to shove the ice cakes from the road on Coleman and Bridge Streets to make way for the cars to be hauled out.**

## New Ice Jams Break Away

Every Morning and Afternoon Shores from North Cannifton (From Daily Ontario of March 22.) At one o'clock this morning the expected jam from above Cannifton came down the Moira. The damage

was not as great as anticipated. The ice shifted at the upper bridge at one o'clock this afternoon, the movement being for about 500 feet. This was due to setting of the ice. The water rose considerably on Mill Street as a result but the shove extended not much below Cooper's dam.

**When the rush of the flood came late on Wednesday afternoon Mr. James McGuire's little son was opening the door of his home in order to enter. He was carrying some apples. A wave of water struck him causing him to lose his balance and up setting the apples. Mr. McGuire's mother who was in an arm chair was swept back by the rush of water.**

**Had any children been on the streets at the time when the flood came, they would undoubtedly have been drowned in the current.**

**The ice below the lower bridge looked as if it might move soon, as it shows signs of weakening under the heat of the sun.**

**The Springer Brass Works will likely resume work tomorrow. An effort is being made today to get in touch with the men. Boats may be utilized to carry the men to the plant.**

**This afternoon at one thirty an ice field broke away from north of Cannifton. More will follow in the estimation of the residents of Cannifton.**

**Water flows deeper than ever over the west bank from Mayor Platt's residence southward, Coleman, Everett, James, Jane, Bridge, Colbourn, Mary, Dundas streets are covered with water as they have been for the past forty-eight hours. The prospects are that the water will stay for some days.**

**The ice will likely slowly melt and work down the river in the course of a week or so. Evidently the river throughout the city is solid with ice to the bottom.**

**The railway authorities yesterday afternoon used explosives north of the C. N. R. and C. P. R. bridges to blast open a running for the water to run off the land between the bay bridge and the river bank.**

**The merchants whose stocks are soaked in the basement of their shops and the people whose homes are under water are fearful of the permanent damage floors, plaster and furnishings, including pianos and carpets will be ruined they think. The longer the flood stays up, the greater the loss to the people and the greater the privations, which many of the citizens have to endure.**

**Besides the threatened loss of part of everything they possess, the fact that they are unable to pursue their usual work, that they are living either away from home or running dangers of starving in their own homes, made it a great hardship for them.**

**Too much praise cannot be given to Messrs Harry and Reht. Day for the gallant work they did in getting bread and other necessities to the sufferers on West Bridge St. and for scores whom they rescued.**

**Mr. Geo. Powell, the well known horseman equipped the Windsor Hotel with bread yesterday.**

**The city had a crew working on the west side visiting people's houses with the owners and getting out any money and jewellery left behind in the excitement.**

**Unusual sights were witnessed on the streets yesterday. People carried canaries in cages, squirrels and belongings, even to camp beds. Great difficulty was experienced in getting some people to leave their homes in the flooded district. A number even refused.**

**What will happen next remains to be seen. No one will venture to**

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## Obituary

(From Daily Ontario of March 22.) Daniel Pringle, a well known and highly esteemed citizen for many years, died shortly before midnight on Wednesday at the home of his daughter, Mrs. J. O. R. McCurdy, at 281 Church street. He had not enjoyed good health for some time and for eight months had been confined to the house.

The late Daniel Pringle was born on May 4th, 1843, at Smithfield, Ontario, and was a son of Caleb Pringle. In 1871 he came to Belleville to reside. For 50 years he was in the employ of the G.T.R. as section foreman and retired on pension 23 years ago. He was a Grand Trust soldier in the Fenian Raid days. Formerly he was a member of Belleville Lodge No. 81, I.O.O.F. of which he was a Past Grand and was also a member of Moira Encampment.

Mrs. Pringle predeceased her husband. Surviving are one daughter, Mrs. J. O. R. McCurdy, and one son, Harry. Mr. Pringle was a devout member of the Tabernacle Methodist Church.

**SCIENTIFIC DENTISTRY**  
An Irish maid in the service of a Manchester family recently visited a dentist. Upon her return her mistress said to her: "Well Bridget did you have the tooth filled?" "I did, Mum!" "And what did the dentist fill it with—gold or amalgam?" "I don't know just what it was, Mum, but by the way it felt I should think it was with thunder and lightning, Mum!"

**DIED**  
PRINGLE — At Belleville, on Wednesday, March 20, 1918, Daniel Pringle, in his 75th year.