

ONE MILLION DOLLAR FIRE IN I. C. R. SHOPS AT MONCTON SATURDAY NIGHT; ONE LIFE LOST

Flames Raged Fiercely for Four Hours and Only Heroic Work of Firemen and Citizens Prevented a Greater Disaster

Machine Shop, Paint Works, Private Cars, Dinners, and a Great Quantity of Other Rolling Stock Licked Up—Abraham Jones Went Back After Personal Effects and Was Burned to Death—Hon. Mr. Emmerson Wires Sympathy and Starts for the Railway Town—Intimates That Works Will Be Rebuilt at Once—A Graphic Story of the Conflagration.

(By a Member of The Telegraph Staff.)

Moncton, Feb. 25.—(Special.)—The destruction of railway property valued at not less than \$1,000,000 and the loss of one life are the results of a conflagration at the I. C. R. car shops last evening. Practically half of the plant has been wiped out.

It has been established that the dead man is Abraham Jones, a painter in the employ of the shops. In an effort to carry from the burning paint shop certain personal effects he was overcome by smoke and flame. His charred body was discovered this morning, identity being made possible by his silver watch and a few coins found among the ashes.

Emmerson Notified.

When the fire was at its height and it was thought the entire works were doomed, J. T. Hawke sent a telegram describing the situation to Hon. H. R. Emmerson, minister of railways and canals. Within a few hours the following reply was received:

"To J. T. Hawke, Moncton:—
"I cannot find words to express my deep regret, which amounts to sorrow at the very great disaster, which comes so inopportunistically, but we must not despair. The I. C. R. employees and citizens can rest assured that no effort will be spared on my part to have the work resumed with all possible speed, in all interests. The I. C. R. will get through. Tomorrow, if necessary, I will be in Moncton Monday afternoon."
(Signed) "H. R. EMMERSON."

A little later a second telegram arrived, reading: "Am arranging to be in Moncton Monday morning, if possible; certainly Monday afternoon."
(Signed) "H. R. EMMERSON."

1,000 Men Affected.

The disaster is admitted to be the greatest in the history of the city. More than 1,000 men found employment in the works and what was yesterday one of the most flourishing and extensive industrial centres in the lower provinces, is now scarcely anything else but a few acres of smoking and wrecked ruins.

The fire started about two-thirds way down the length of the paint shop at the extreme north end of the works. The entire structure was destroyed; also valuable cars which were inside the paint shops.

The flames swept to the right car repair shop, then on to the car or brick shop, which included the electric light stations, engine and boiler rooms which supplied the power for nearly all the works. The fire then swept to the boiler shop, where boilers are made, burnt clear through and on to the east end of the machine shop, which it stopped at the turning shop. The office of the master mechanic, Archibald B. Macfie, was destroyed, and many papers of great value.

Buildings Saved.

The buildings saved were the tin department, turning shop, erecting shop, machine shops, round house and blacksmith shop.

To Moncton citizens the blow has been stunning. The works have been doing much to restore public confidence. They were read at service this morning in the Baptist church.

Mr. Pottinger, the general manager, told the Telegraph reporter today that in his opinion the loss would reach about \$1,000,000; certainly not much over it. "I think the works will be rebuilt," he added, "and the four or five hundred men thrown out of employment will not be idle any length of time, in fact we may keep them working right along." At this stage correct lists of the value of what has been destroyed in each shop is hardly available and these can be estimated only. The following are the cars destroyed in the paint shops:

Mr. Pottinger's private car No. 35, built at the works and costing about \$20,000; diner, Yanket, costing \$17,000; sleeper, Caspasia, cost \$10,000; first-class cars numbers 102, 110, 113, costing \$10,000 each; two second-class cars, costing \$8,000 each; dining car, costing \$8,000 each; baggage cars, Nos. 478 and 479; colonist car No. 328 and postal No. 634.

The wood working machinery in the car shop consisted of four cross-cut planers, three rip saws, a moulder, high-speed shaper and pulleys, a ten-horse machine, axle lathe, axle wheel press, three boring machines, a planer, a buzz planer, three drills, three wheel lathes, a new elevator, and band saw. All of this machinery was of the most modern and expensive type. Upstairs was a variety of moulder, two planers, a sand paper machine, wood lathe, pattern makers' shop, and carpenter benches.

On top of the electric light station were two blue printing frames used in connection with the draughting office. There were also very valuable drawings ruined by water.

In the boiler shop was a new rivetter with compressed air apparatus, a large pair of plate rollers run by electricity, large pair of shears, three plate trimmers, a travelling crane, bolt and threading machinery.

There was also a wheel lathe, a slotting machine and two boilers just constructed for the new passenger engines and three boilers and a 150-horse power engine. This section of the works was a small brass foundry, employing about six men and used for turning out bushes.

The loss upon all of this machinery is not regarded as total and pending a careful examination the exact loss will not be known. It is thought that the loss will be about 75 per cent.

The following figures will give an idea of the value of the machines that have been destroyed: The cost of a single lathe machine is \$2,000; planer, \$3,000; a slotting lathe, \$12,000; a slotting machine, \$2,000; a bolt cutter, \$1,000; and moulder machine, \$800.

In the freight car repair shop were from 20 cars under repair, a steam shovel and conductors' vans, all valuable stock. The paint shop was of wood, two stories

in height. The car shop was of brick and extensive additions, including a new two-story building was possibly \$100,000, but the other shops were of a much cheaper grade.

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How and where the fire originated has not yet been explained. Some assert it started in the mixing tank of the paint shop, others hold that it was first seen bursting through the roof directly over a small apartment known as the cushion room, which was used for the mixing room. The most generally accepted theory is that of spontaneous combustion. There was an abundance of waste and when burnt, sudden bursts of fire issuing from the upper end of the store also sent an alarm.

Apparently several men saw the flames at about the same time. James Moody, a locomotive driver, was walking past the paint shop when he saw a flicker of light up toward the northern end. He hurried across the yard and saw the flames and hurried to send in an alarm. At this time an old gentleman named O'Rourke was approaching the locality and seeing sudden bursts of fire issuing from the upper end of the store also sent an alarm.

Fire Spread Very Fast.

The swiftness with which the fire spread was appalling. Those who witnessed the beginning of it claim that fifteen minutes after the first alarm the flames had reached the boiler shop and the rest of the works was just a torrent of flames.

The buildings were saturated with grease and oil owing to the nature of the work performed in them and this served to increase the rapidity with which the conflagration spread.

Just as the alarm was being sent in the government house the works were sounded but there was no need of either whistles or bells to acquaint all Moncton with the fact that her very existence was menaced.

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