

SEVEN FIFTEEN MINUTES OF DREADFUL DISASTER

Complete Death Roll Shows That Nearly a Score of Children Perished in Montreal School Fire.

Fire.

Montreal, Feb. 26.—Miss Maxwell, the principal, and 16 children lost their lives in a fire which occurred in the Hochelaga Protestant school on Prefontaine street this afternoon. Before the fire alarm was sounded, the men of the local station were on their way, as a passer-by had seen the smoke and dropped in to warn the brigade. Immediately Captain Carson and a number of his men started to the scene, and before the first alarm had finished sounding they were preparing to rescue the children.

So speedily had the flames spread, however, that even in these few minutes those children who had not escaped at the first call were

Pinned in the Upper Flats. of the school, with a seething furnace of smoke and flame beneath them. At every window were seen the imprisoned children and teachers, while from the windows on the lower flat nothing could be seen but evidences of fire.

Captain Carson at once organized his men to set up the extension ladder to the second story window, where Miss Maxwell was signalling for help. The ladder was promptly run up, and every man who could crowd upon it got in position to make a living chain to rescue the little ones. Captain Carson headed the ladder.

Inside the window was Miss Maxwell, surrounded by a swarm of children, excited almost to the point of insubordination. As soon as the firemen had formed their living chain to safety, Miss Maxwell handed her little pupils one by one to Captain Carson, who they were swiftly passed down the ladder.

From Hand to Hand to the ground. Thus the work went on until probably forty of the children had been saved and the others were left. Then Captain Carson called to Miss Maxwell to save herself.

"No, there are others inside, and we must save them," she said, and she backed to look for the other little ones who she knew must be on the upper floors. That was the end.

"Miss Maxwell, a woman would recognize the clothes on a shapeless bundle, and be led sobbing away. Finally the work of emptying the kindergarten room was completed, and it was hoped that the little ones were all told, when with great difficulty the body of the heroic Miss Maxwell was carried down the fire ladder from the upper window.

It was all we could do, and an hour later her body was carried through the window along with those of the children who were taken to the rescue room. That is the tragic story of the fire. It was confusion at a time when confusion meant death, and death to those who were taken to the rescue room, why they met it. From those other authorities who should have supplied the necessary means of escape, there was no help.

The fire broke out in the cellar, where there were two furnaces for the hot-air heating system, and large pipes for the children on the ground floor went out into the corridor and returned in excitement, and hurried to Principal Maxwell, without alarming her pupils, told them to get their clothes and hurry home. As a result every pupil on the ground floor got safely away.

Warned the Other Teachers, and the same order was given. But the fire spread more rapidly than the news. By the time that the upstairs pupils had been notified by their teachers to get their clothes and hurry home, the staircase was full of smoke, and the little ones were afraid to venture down. The kindergarten was on the upper floor, and most of the classes there were composed of very young children, and they all became so excited at the sight of the curling smoke that they were afraid to run to safety when they reached the stairs, and called the rest, many of whom followed, but in

The Terrified Confusion of the moment a great many of the others feared to venture downstairs, and stayed where they were. By the heroism of the teachers and the courageous work of the firemen, many of these were saved. The long line of over-weighted ambulances and the sad procession of tiny smoke-blackened corpses told the rest of the story.

A good deal of the loss of life was caused primarily by the lack of discipline for emergencies. There had not been a fire drill for months, and when the call came the little ones were alarmed. Some ran for their clothes in the dressing room, and most of these miserably died. Others ran for the stairway, but were afraid to go down, and as they hesitated the fire gained such headway that escape was impossible.

The firemen worked hard and devoted themselves absolutely to the work of life-saving, and it is certain that but for their splendid exertions the death roll would have been very much greater.

On the tops of ladders, where they had to be sprayed from the hose, they labored to get at windows and hand out children. With the Water Freezing on Them as it fell, they never stayed their work as long as it seemed possible that a living soul could be taken out. Several of them became exhausted by the cold and terrible work, while others were cut and hurt by the rough handling of hose and ladders and had to be attended to by the ambulance doctors.

Not one of the men gave a thought

for himself, and it is undoubtedly due to their splendid work that the mortality list was not much greater. Indeed, for some time it was thought that not less than forty children had been sacrificed to the flames.

Not a child was taken from the building injured. Either the survivors were taken out sound or the victims were carried down as corpses. The men were able to move removed before the flames drove them back. The ambulances later took the rest to the morgue. The scene as the firemen gradually gained control of the flames.

Was Most Pathetic. The firemen and police kept the crowd back by a cordon, so they could work without difficulty. As soon as the first signs of victory became apparent, ladders were placed against the walls and eager volunteers swarmed up to see if there were any left who might yet live. It was a forlorn hope, and a groan went up from the thousands gathered around as a huddled up bundle was first passed through an upper window. No one needed to be told what it was. Carefully the firemen carried the tiny corpse down the ladder and hurried to the nearest ambulance. His progress was stopped by an almost hysterical woman, who ran up, pulled back the blanket with which the body had been swathed, and examined it to see if it were her little boy. It was not, but later on her darling's body was taken out. Such scenes were repeated time and time again as the grim procession was continued, the little bodies being huddled through the windows hastily, wrapped in blankets and carried to the waiting ambulances. The ambulances, which would only take them to the morgue.

None of the smoke-blackened and soot-covered bodies could be identified in the hurry of the moment, and on all sides were

Agonized Mothers whose children had not returned with the others waiting to have their worst fears realized. That they were fulfilled was frequently most painfully apparent, as a woman would recognize the clothes on a shapeless bundle, and be led sobbing away.

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nesses and the real inquiry will begin Tuesday. The responsibility of the awful loss of life has roused the city, there were no fire escapes on the building. Chief Benoit says that had there been, the firemen could have saved all the children, and says that the school commissioners are criminally responsible as they had been notified to put fire escapes on the building a year ago.

The cause of the fire was the explosion of the furnace, which is a hot air furnace with a boiler attachment. The complete death roll shows that sixteen children and their principal, Miss Maxwell, lost their lives.

PRISONERS IN REVOLT. Number of Russian Political Offenders Have Been Placed in Chains.

St. Petersburg, Feb. 27.—Disorders have broken out among the convicts at the Akatui silver mines, Southern Siberia. The prisoners were placed in chains, and many, including Maria Shridon, who killed Chief of Police Polozov, and Luchonofsky at Tambou, and other women have been removed to prisons.

FATAL LAMP EXPLOSION. St. John, N. B., Feb. 26.—Mrs. Amelia O'Connell, wife of a prominent grocer here, was burned to death in a horrible fashion on Saturday night. She was in the upper flat of the house, when a lamp exploded.

MR. BRYCE PRESENTS HIS CREDENTIALS. New Ambassador to the U. S. Cordially Welcomed By President Roosevelt.

Washington, Feb. 26.—The Right Hon. James Bryce, the ambassador from Great Britain to the United States, was presented to President Roosevelt yesterday by Secretary Root, when he was presented Mr. Bryce said:

"Mr. President—I have the honor, by command of the King, my august sovereign, to deliver to you a letter, accrediting me as his ambassador to the United States of America.

When he entrusted to me this high mission, His Majesty directed me to assure you of his earnest wish that cordial relations which happily exist between Great Britain and the United States should be maintained, strengthened, and has impressed upon me the duty of doing whatever may be in my power for the attainment of that end.

"No one can be more sensible than I am of the responsibility which such a mission imposes, and I am fully unequal to so great a task I may feel myself to be, it shall be my constant effort to discharge it in the spirit which I trust will be met by you, and in which my three last predecessors, all distinguished men and true friends to the United States, have so ably discharged it.

"It has been my good fortune to have been frequently in this country as a private traveller and student of its institutions, to have been received in it with unfailing kindness, and to have learned not only to admire the untiring energy and the intellectual ardor of its inhabitants, but also to appreciate their devotion to the cause of moral and social progress, and their passionate desire to make the wishes of the people worthy of the material blessings which Providence has bestowed upon them with so bountiful a hand. Observing how much they have in common with the nation to which I come, and how similar are many of the problems which lie before each for the solution of the people, I am deeply interested in the fortunes of the other, and that their reciprocal goodwill for the benefit of the world at large.

"I may perhaps be permitted to add that in expressing my sincere respect for you personally, I am expressing the sentiments of the sovereign and of his subjects generally."

The President responded as follows: "Mr. Ambassador—The excellent relations which have long existed between the governments of the United States and Great Britain offer a conspicuous assurance that in the fulfillment of the important duties with which you are charged, you will find agreeable the task of contributing to the maintenance and strengthening of the relations between the people of the two countries. The responsibility rests upon you, and I trust you will rest no less upon the officers of this government with whom you will have interests. Our two countries being inspired by the same cordial purposes, I doubt not that your mission will be as successful as I trust it will be agreeable to you."

"You come among us, Mr. Ambassador, not as a stranger, but as one whom our people know and esteem through long previous acquaintance with your country and our own. The high destinies of self-governing communities, and as a friend of moral and social advancement in the paths trodden by your country and our own. The aims of the Anglo-Saxon race, wherever established throughout the world, are akin in the furtherance of the great principle of representative government and of that community of material interests whereby the most complete stability, individual development, and national prosperity may be achieved. In coming among us, you but transfer your life-work to new fields of practical opportunity, those for which you have labored constantly and honorably through a useful lifetime, and I trust the continuation of your efforts in the mission to which you are called will be as congenial to you as they are acceptable to us."

"Be yourself, Mr. Ambassador. I bespeak a no less cordial welcome by our community than your distinguished predecessors received.

"Be you to convey to your honored sovereign my cordial wishes for his personal welfare and for the prosperity of his country and people."

The ambassador and the members of his suite wore uniforms.

ALIBI ON WITNESS STAND. EXPERTS EXAMINED IN THE THAW CASE. May Mackenzie Will Probably Be Called By Counsel for the Defence.

New York, Feb. 27.—When the Thaw trial opens to-day District Attorney Jerome will begin the cross-examination of Dr. B. D. Evans, of the insane hospital of Morris Plains, N. J. Dr. Evans is the principal insanity expert for the defence, and not only proved an excellent witness on his direct examination, but while on the stand enriched the English language with a number of such expressions as "brain storms," "mental futilism" and "psychic explosions." Dr. Evans will be followed on the stand by Dr. Charles G. Wagner, superintendent of the insane hospital at Binghamton, N. Y., who has also testified to examining Thaw several times in the tomb.

Dr. Evans will be followed by Drs. Demar and Binghamam, who, it is asserted, will testify as to strains of insanity in Mrs. Thaw's family. Mrs. William Thaw will be the last witness to tell of the young days of her son, and it is expected that May Mackenzie, the chorus girl friend of Evelyn Nesbit Thaw, will testify as to her husband's character, which she is said to have had with Stanford White and repeated to Thaw, in which it is claimed White laughed at the love of Thaw for his wife, and said it would not be long until she returned to him.

Evelyn Nesbit Thaw left this stand yesterday with her story practically unbroken. Whether her credibility has been sufficiently attacked to create doubt in the minds of the jury as to her telling the story to Thaw, she is said to have unblinking his mind is a matter that only the verdict can decide. The verdict also can only decide whether the jury will be influenced by the Thaw and Evelyn Nesbit, after she told him her story, were such as to raise a question regarding the sincerity of his feelings for her, and as to whether he intended to marry her, as to the result of constant brooding on her wrongs.

Mrs. Thaw Recalled. New York, Feb. 27.—Five minutes before court opened this morning for a day's session, Evelyn Nesbit Thaw entered the court room, accompanied by D. M. Delmas, counsel for the defence. Her husband's attorney, who had occupied by the defendant's counsel. While waiting for the trial to go on, she chatted with Dr. Hammond, the deputy coroner, who had been called to her husband, Mr. Jerome then stated that he had overlooked one point in his cross-examination of Mrs. Evelyn N. Thaw, and he asked the jury to consider a question, stating that it was not merely a matter affecting the credibility of the witness, but a matter which might be of great importance to her husband, Mr. Jerome then stated that he had overlooked one point in his cross-examination of Mrs. Evelyn N. 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