

the fire, the manager of the Electric Steel Elevator Co. of Buffalo went to Fort William to make a personal examination; and on his return submitted to his Co. the following report:

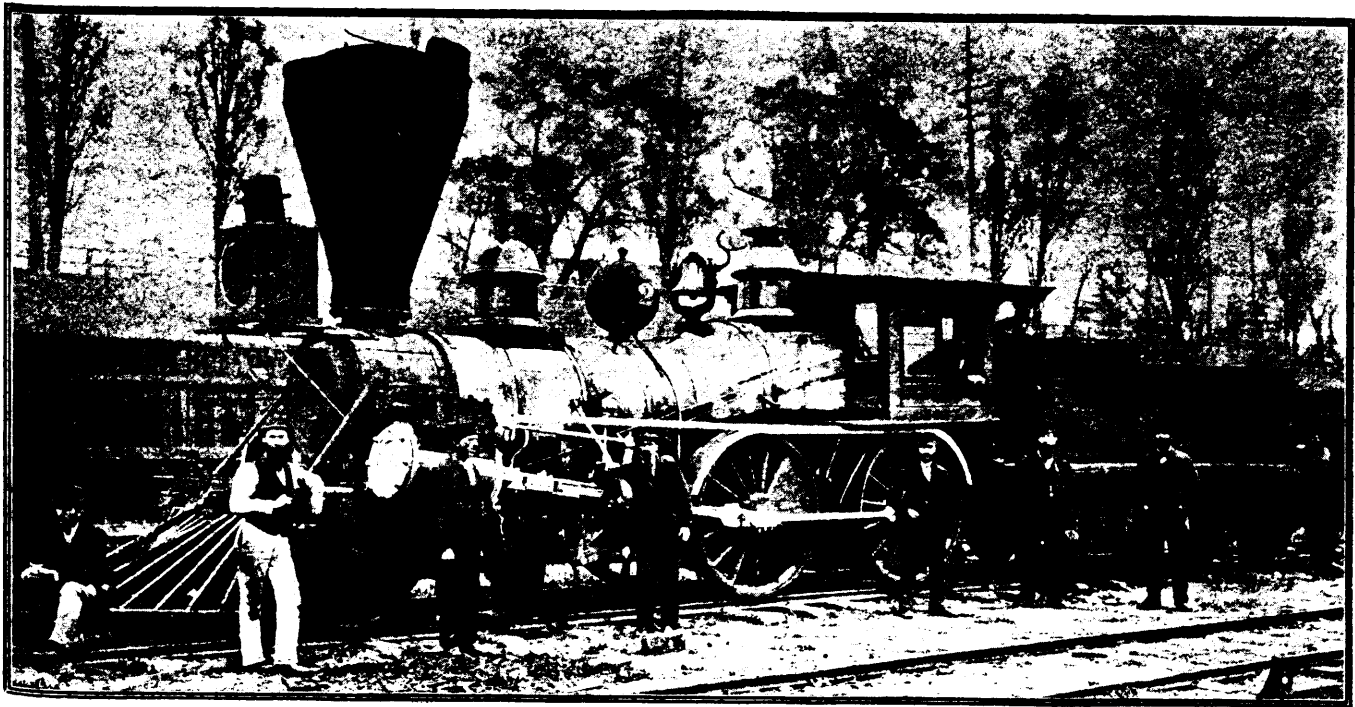
"The plant consisted of a light skeleton frame working house covered with corrugated iron, which contained two elevator legs, cleaning machinery, scales, garners, etc., in combination with a number of steel storage tanks. The receiving house was about 90 ft. long, 36 ft. wide and 150 ft. high. Through the house lengthways was a car track. At the side of the house and extending its entire length was a shed of like construction as the house, in which was a second car track. The elevator legs were between the tracks, and the arrangement was such that four cars could be set in at one time, two on each side of the elevator legs. There was no basement and the floor of this working room was of wood. Wooden strips were also used throughout the entire structure on which to nail the corrugated iron sheeting. About 22 ft. above

out of doors. There was no fire pump, fire hose, water barrels, hand grenades or device of any kind for extinguishing a fire.

"Owing to the fact that two of the other elevators at this place belonging to the C.P.R. were not in working order, this plant, known as D, had for some days previous to the fire been run almost constantly day and night. There was an accumulation of screenings, estimated by the Manager at 20 tons, on the cleaning floor. These screenings were to some extent prevented from occupying too much floor space by some boards. Testimony differs as to the amount of lumber used, varying from regular wooden bins down to a few loose boards. The house was in operation up to 10 o'clock of the night previous to the fire. The crew then quit, leaving the watchman in charge. Three loaded cars and one empty car were left inside the house and four more empty cars were left standing just outside of the house. The elevator doors were not closed. The watchman on his rounds at 12 o'clock found everything all right. Fire at

to warp the columns and bring down the building. The cleaning machines especially could not have been better arranged to produce this result, as they were very close to two or more of the supporting columns.

"The tanks were not greatly damaged. The two small tanks nearest the working house were the only ones hurt at all. The two large tanks, although only a few feet from the fire, appear not to be injured. The plates of the two small tanks for about one-third their circumference show the effects of the fire, and a number of these plates ranging from 15 to 30 ft. high, are ruined. With these plates replaced these two tanks will be as good as ever. A seam in one of these tanks opened during the fire and some of the wheat ran out into the burning building. The power house was not damaged, so they expect to get the wheat out soon. The tunnels under the tanks do not appear to be damaged, but the galleries overhead were badly hurt. It is the belief of Mr. Thayer that the two tanks adjoining the working-house would



THE TORONTO, THE FIRST LOCOMOTIVE BUILT IN ONTARIO. (See October issue, page 331.)

the working floor was a floor of light steel plates; this floor, called the cleaning floor, extended the entire length and breadth of the working house, but had openings through it for a stairway and hatchway, spouting holes, etc. Above this cleaning floor were three parts of floors for convenience in reaching machinery, but none of these upper floors extended the entire length of the building. Practically everything above the cleaning floor was open to the roof. On the cleaning floor were two wheat separators, and on a wooden platform directly over these two machines were two more separators, making four cleaning machines in all, so arranged that when desired grain could be spouted from the upper two machines directly to the two lower machines. Wooden spouts, lined inside with iron but exposed outside, extended upwards from these machines to each of the two scale hoppers. These scale hoppers were of wood, lined inside and outside with light iron, and the garners above the scale hoppers were of like construction. There was no dust-collecting system about the plant; the cleaning machines discharged

1 o'clock was discovered by the watchman on the cleaning floor. At this time the machines and the boards around the screenings were ablaze. The origin of the fire is not certainly known. \* \* \*

"At no time during the conflagration was any fight worth mentioning made against the progress of the fire. The head of the fire department says that they did not get to work for more than an hour after the alarm; the elevator Manager says after 3 o'clock. Long before the firemen reached the place the working house was burning like a sheet-iron stove full of kindling. Every window belched smoke and flame. The supporting columns collapsed, the roof fell in and the wreck of the working house was complete. All testimony agrees that the cars burned fiercely after the roof fell in.

"The elevator was dirty and dusty, and every plate, crack and crevice was as full of dust as it would hold. This accumulation of dust, together with the four cleaning machines and their wooden platforms, and with the wooden spouts, hoppers and garners, contained fuel enough to generate sufficient heat

have been damaged but slightly had it not been for the cars which were close to them."

Commenting on the foregoing, the American Elevator & Grain Trade says:—"These details complete the demonstration that no steel house that contains wood in its machinery, elevator legs, platforms, etc., can be justly called or is a fireproof structure. In this case, in addition to the wood actually used in construction, a material quantity was used incidentally in the course of the operation of the plant, and this caused the destruction of the house—not by burning it, but by melting it down, the structural iron work not being protected by fireproof material. Another fact brought out was the unreasonable accumulation of dust and debris in the house as the result of extra heavy run of business, which supplemented the disproportionate amount of wood in and about the premises to make a most destructive fire. Naturally the fire has called into question the character of all so-called fireproof elevators and alarmed the banks and loaners in those states of the Union where the banking laws require grain used as collateral to be