

Lindsay had not long enjoyed the status of a Town when a catastrophe occurred which threatened its very existence. In July 1861 fire broke out in a small frame cottage on Ridout Street and fanned by a strong wind, swept over the business section of the Town. The buildings were largely of wooden construction and were an easy prey to the flames.

In the space of four hours the fire had destroyed some ninety buildings, including the post office and customs office, and had burnt itself out. One-third of the residents were homeless and a great deal of hardship resulted. Fortunately there was no loss of life but the fire caused serious loss to the property owners and disorganized business to a great extent. It is interesting to note that there was no tax roll made out for the year 1862.

In reviewing the growth of Lindsay we can see that the fire was in reality the beginning of a vast improvement although at the time it doubtless assumed the proportions of a calamity. The business men showed the true pioneer spirit and immediately commenced to rebuild. In the place of the wooden stores and public buildings which had formerly fronted on Kent and William Streets, there arose fine brick structures.

Lindsay was well served with railways and was rightly known as a "Railway Town". The first line built to Lindsay was the old Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton Railway, afterwards called the Midland Railway, which reached Lindsay in 1857. For a number of years Lindsay was the terminus, but in 1871 the line was extended to Beaverton. About the same time the Toronto and Nipissing was projected and the year 1872 saw the completion of the road to Cobconk connecting with the Midland Railway at Lorneville. This brought the Townships of Eldon, Bexley and the northwestern townships of the county into railway communication with Lindsay.

In the same year the Haliburton branch was commenced but did not reach Haliburton until 1878 serving the Townships of Fenelon and Somerville and the Provisional County of Haliburton.

In 1877 the Whitby line was extended to Lindsay by way of Manilla and Blackwater, the erection of the present bridge over the Scugog and the inauguration of a through service from Port Hope to Toronto via Peterborough, Lindsay and Blackwater.

The construction of these lines gave splendid communication with the greater part of the County but the eastern portion was still more or less isolated. In 1904 the Canadian Pacific Railway Company extended their roadway from Burketon to Bobcaygeon and in 1912 the same Company built the Georgian Bay and Seaboard Line for the hauling of grain from Port McNicholl. Lindsay was the hub from which radiated eight lines of railway giving access to every point, local and foreign. The pay-roll for the Canadian National Railways alone was approximately seven hundred thousand dollars annually.

Living conditions have made great strides since the pioneer days and unfortunate indeed is the person today who does not enjoy privileges denied to the most favored a matter of sixty years ago. At that time they had no sewers, no water system or fire protection, no lighted streets, no paved roadways or granolithic sidewalks, no hospital accommodation, very poor schools.

Fire protection and the water system are closely re-

lated. There was practically no fire protection until the year 1892, when the Lindsay Water Works Company was formed and steps taken to provide the Town with a modern water-works plant.

An intake filter and pumping station were established on the Scugog River at Mary Street (the present location) and several miles of pipe laid down. A standpipe 110 feet high by 16 feet in diameter, was erected for the purpose of storing water and to provide pressure in case of fire. In a short time the company became involved in financial difficulties and the plant was taken over by the Town and placed under the control of a Board of Water Commissioners.

Since that time the system has been capably administered, kept up-to-date and efficient. An attempt was made to purify the water by "ozone" treatment but it did not prove satisfactory. The present method is by filtration and chlorination and laboratory tests show the result to be uniformly successful in securing water free from disease producing germs.

The members of the Board were as follows: Mr. James Boxall, Chairman; Mr. J. D. Flavelle; His Worship the Mayor; Mr. G. W. Hall; Mr. D. Ray, Secretary-Treasurer and Mr. G. Cuthbert, Assistant Secretary Treasurer.

In the year 1898, during the Mayoralty of the late F. C.

Taylor, the Fire Department was reorganized and placed upon an efficient basis. Later the force consisted of thirteen firemen under the direction of Fire Chief McCullum. In 1901 a modern brick firehall was erected on Cambridge St., north of the Market Square.

Since 1880 attempts have been made towards providing street lighting but it was not until the year 1890 that electricity was first introduced by the late B. F. Reesor. Power was generated from fuel. In 1899 electrical developments were commenced at Fenelon Falls and in 1900 the system was completed and Lindsay first benefitted by the use of hydro-electric power. On several occasions attempts were made to operate gas plants in opposition to Electric Power but they were not successful. The system was taken over by the Central Ontario Power System and at present is operated by the Hydro Electric Power Commission of Ontario.

Of all the civic improvements which have marked the growth of Lindsay none are more deserving of mention than the paving of the streets. From the time of the first settler until 1910, the streets of Lindsay were a byword. The ground was of a soft, springy nature and there seemed to be no bottom to the mud. Many stories are told of the condition of Kent Street, and other streets, in the earlier days when it was almost impossible to draw even empty wagons.

The Council made several experiments along the line of road improvement and finally the first permanent pavement was laid down on William Street North in 1910. that time an extensive program of permanent paving has been carried on.