

Warton Town Hall Burns.

Early Thursday morning on January 19th the town hall at Warton was completely destroyed by fire.

Constable Allan Bristol of the Warton Police Force discovered the fire at 4:30 a.m. and sounded the alarm. Firemen arrived very quickly and made several attempts to enter the building to save any valuable records they could but were driven back-out by the dense smoke. They were unable to gain entry wearing the smoke masks.

It was reported by the firemen that the fire started in the backroom of the building downstairs. This area was the first the firemen tried to put out. At this point during the fire a window in the rear of the building broke allowing a strong breeze to carry the flames through to the front of the structure. It was a very short time until firemen realized the building would be a complete loss.

By 5:00 a.m. the fire had worked its way all through the tinder dry building. Upon discovery the fire siren was sounded for a short time but stopped working at which time one of the firemen rang the dingy on the town bell, that was used as an alarm before the siren was installed.

For a time firemen were concerned with the fire spreading to other buildings along the main street as the strong wind was carrying live coals to the north, they were landing on the roofs of the adjacent buildings. The recent snowfall still clinging to the roofs of the buildings prevented the coals from igniting. Fire Chief Harvey Gunnis sent for an aerial ladder from Owen Sound fire department but by the time it arrived the threat of the fire spreading was greatly reduced.

A large number of citizens got up in the 10 degree weather to watch the fire, the biggest Warton has had in many years.

The loss of the town hall is a bad blow to Warton, having lost everything that was in the building. The Bach-Simpson Company lost more than \$7,000.

worth of equipment they were using in the auditorium for the training of future employees, that will be working in the new plant now being built. It is not known if this set back will have any bearing on the starting date of operations which was to be sometime in Feb. All the instruments of the Warton Citizens' band were lost in the blaze and estimated to be worth \$5,000.

Many documents and records dating back before the turn of the century were lost as well as all the current records from the clerk's office, with one possible exception, the large vault that held currently important papers and money may still be intact, although the fire was extremely hot.

The Public Utilities office lost all documents and records, with a number of electric meters and other electrical equipment, and some water works tools, plans and documents.

The newly redecorated and installed part of the building that housed the library for less than two years, was a complete loss with all the books and paintings of local artists.

Mayor Clifton Taylor said the first concern of the council is to find quarters for the clerk to set up an office, as well as quarters for the PUC, to carry on business as usual.

Firemen poured tons of water on the blaze, water running away from the building soon froze on the street to a depth of about 4 inches. Dense smoke billowed from the fire and causing some unpleasantness to people along the main street.

At 8:55 a.m. the front wall of the building collapsed onto the street, at 11:30 a.m. firemen pulled about half the south wall down with an electric wire hanging from it. By the end of the day firemen had pushed all the walls down but the back one, eliminating any chance of them falling when not expected to do so.

The fire hall and police station recently erected against the south side of the building were undamaged except for water and smoke.

The Warton Echo, Jan. 19, 1967

"Uncle Ozzie's Philosophy"

By cracky, folks, Centennial Year, for Canada, at last is here - a land of opportunity, whose wings are spread from Sea to Sea. A vital fact we all should know is that a hundred years ago a great and noble statesman sought to mould a name we've near forgot. Sir John A. captained quite a crew - the first P.M. our country knew, and held the reigns of Government while watching o'er the efforts to build a Nation proud and strong, embracing right, however wrong. 'Tis true he liked his little drop which meant for him a sort o' prop to keep him steady on his feet while he was in the driver's seat. Sir John has gone long years ago, but one thing sure, we've come to know - great change is wrought by Governments, and some which make for little sense except to prove it's come to pass, the poor must give to them what has.

To-day, Sir John is "back with us" amidst our bickerings and fuss - Centennial Year has surely brought to light the name we near forgot. His monuments, again, are clean; make no mistake, we really mean to honour him this Expo-Year; what follows that, is not so clear. The while he's back he oughta see that place in Ottawa, by gee, and learn how smoothly it is run, and just how quickly things are done. A hundred years of ups and downs were climaxed with a pair of "clowns" as Dief and Lester went to bat - let's hope we've seen the last of that.

Big Pale Face squat on Red Man's soil, (a dish in which the Red Man boil), acquiring nearly all his land except for bits of swamp and sand. Of course, we let him hunt for game, but even that is not the same, for meat is scarce that's roamin' free, so now we've clipped his shootin'-spree. Perhaps we still can make amends to compensate our Indian friends for what appears a lethal blow - "Cape Croker's Chief could run the show".

Oswald R. Moore