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Zero Weather Hampers Efforts As Week-end Fire Loss \$40,000

Week-end of Contrast for Firemen Strive to Maintain Fire Protection

It was a week-end of contrasts for Acton firemen. While most of the town slept, they were fighting two fires all night long for two nights in succession. From the icy cold of the street, they plunged into the holocaust of smoke and flames in their attempts, not only to extinguish the raging flames, but to save nearby buildings.

After hours of practice, they were faced with both their trucks out of order in one night. In their determined effort not to leave Acton unprotected, they encountered the most marked contrast of all when they went, at 3 o'clock in the morning, to Georgetown to arrange to borrow a pumper. From their garage beside the town hall, where they had been laying their ice-stiffened coats and waterlogged, dirty hose, in the only space available around the fire truck, they were being warmed from a space heater, they went to the modern, efficient Georgetown fire hall.

The next afternoon, they were called to assist in the saving of a house at Eden Mills. Then, late Sunday evening, the siren sounded again. Businesses and apartments on Mill St were ablaze, and firemen were up all night for the second night in a row.

The deal evening—New Year's Eve—was a most unusual one. While most people were gaily celebrating the arrival of 1957, most of the firemen were sound asleep, exhausted.

Four Hours' Sleep
Fire Chief Jack Newton didn't have a night's sleep from Saturday morning until New Year's Eve. He snatched four and a half hours' rest in that time.

The men of the volunteer brigade were looking back over their busiest week-end—and the coldest of the season—at their cramped quarters in the fire hall New Year's Day.

Their serious-of-emergency measures at the Jennings fire Saturday evening proved again the value of the mutual aid system. First, Acton's new truck went out of commission.

Then the old truck, brought out into the below zero weather, developed frost trouble. The Georgetown brigade was called upon—and that truck, too—was unusable in the run to Acton and was unable to pump. Finally, water, turning to ice on their coats, hats and boots, the firemen huddled up a portable pump to boost the pressure from the mains.

Shifts All Night
Firemen point out that some barn fires in the country might be left to smoulder. However, houses were nearby and the flames continued to break out, making it necessary for the chief and his men to arrange a system of shifts to watch the ruined, smoking barn all through Saturday night. They left hose lines laid in readiness until Tuesday.

While some men watched the barn, others went with the three disabled trucks—two of Acton's and one of Georgetown's—to Thompson's Garage where work on repairs and thawing began at once.

About 2 a.m., a group of firemen set out for Georgetown to arrange for borrowing one of the trucks to ensure the town protection until repairs were rushed through.

Hoop from Own Kitchens
After they picked up pointers on the operation of the Georgetown truck and received steaming bowls of soup from the brigade's own kitchen, the men brought the pumper back to Acton's garage and went back up to see how the Jennings fire was.

By then, it was morning. All day long, the tedious process of drying soaked hose in all available space began. It snaked through the unheated corridor of the town hall and all around the truck. Drenched clothes were dried out. The siren wailed again at 3:15 in the afternoon. Hose was hustled into cars, and the portable pumper was rushed to the scene of the blaze. As frequently happens, directions were not clear and the men had to search for the fire, at Eden Mills.

At home, the borrowed Georgetown pumper was on call for any town emergency, with the regular stand-by crew.

More Cleaning Up
The Rockwood brigade was called in to make sure there was plenty of opposition to the possibly serious blaze in Eden Mills. Acton men returned, the damage halted at the \$20 mark. Then there was more cleaning up to do. Equipment must always be left ready for another call.

And it came.

After midnight on Sunday, a 100-year-old building which has survived previous fires took fire again. And for the last time.

Its construction, its age and its materials were against it. In a swirling blizzard of snow, with the thermometers down below zero again, the firemen again put all their training and strength to work to save what they could and prevent the flames from spreading a few feet to the building next door.

Willing helpers hefted hose and brought sandwiches during the hours-long battle against the elements of fire and weather. As well as the two Georgetown trucks, the hydro truck with its aerial ladder joined the corps for the night.

Clothes crumpled and freezing stiff, the men dashed home to change and back again.

Searching for the cause of the third holocaust, as they arrived within minutes of the alarm, men sought to extinguish the source first without smashing windows and doors, causing flame-fanning drafts. The fire spread too rapidly, however. Water stained files were rescued and water soaked furniture was salvaged the next day.

It Was Dawn
It was dawn when the gutted building was safe to leave.

That day, back at the fire hall, hose had to be shifted in the long process of drying and finally loaded back on the pumps. Other equipment was again cleaned and readied.

That Night Was New Year's Eve
It's traditional to stay up almost all night—but not when you've done it the two nights before. Firemen slept.

New Year's Day, some of the men were naturally back at the hall again, checking that everything was alright. They thought likely the fire truck would be ready for service again by today.

Lodge Honors Two Brothers

Two brothers, both past masters of Walker Lodge, A. F. and A. M., were honored by the lodge at their meeting Thursday evening of last week. Frank McIntosh, of Acton, and Roy McIntosh, of Oshawa, both received 50 year jewels at a ceremony following the installation of officers.

H. L. Ritchie was installing master when A. C. "Pat" Patterson was installed as the new Worshipful Master.

W. Bro. Vic Rumley made the presentations of a 50 year past master's jewel to Frank McIntosh and a 50 year master mason's jewel to Roy McIntosh.

Both are past masters of the lodge and have been active in the work of the lodge during the past half century.

The brothers presented a Bible to the lodge, which was accepted by Mr. Patterson as Master and was installed on the altar by W. Bro. John Marr of Guelph, District Deputy Grand Master of Wellington district.

A number of brethren were present from Guelph, Erin, Georgetown, Toronto, Oshawa and Campbellville.

There has been skating on the pond this week, on a rink cleared of snow.

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Home Burns At Eden Mills Damage Slight

Firemen experienced difficulty in the location of a fire reported at H.H. 2, Guelph, about 9:15 p.m. Sunday evening. Source of the blaze proved to be an unoccupied new home on lot 31, line 1, Naama gawaya township at Eden Mills. The house under construction is owned by Pat Lindsay.

Efforts of the neighbors, Acton and Rockwood firemen, saved the building from destruction and cut fire loss to an estimated \$50 in walls and sheeting.

The fire was believed caused by a temporary heating installation.

Due to the shortage of fire fighting equipment and the firemen's decision not to leave the town without adequate protection, the already weary firemen loaded hose into cars and took a portable pump to the scene of the second fire of the week-end.

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New Year's Day Road Race Sees City Club First

Guelph Legion Track Club, with Acton members, won the junior team prize at the annual New Year's Day road race in Hamilton.

There were 43 entrants in the three mile junior road race, when Bruce Andrews of Acton placed fifth. Other Guelph runners who placed in their club's standing were Don Prosser who placed seventh, Art Hackett, eighth and Ron Nicol, tenth. John Brown of Acton was close behind in the large field of racers.

In first place was Jim Irons of Brampton, who beat the record by 10 seconds with a record time of 14:49 minutes. Ed Grayson of Delta club, second and Bill Reynolds of Oak third.

Car Misses Curve Smashes into Wall At Ajax Engineering Injured in Accident

A passenger was slightly injured and an estimated \$1,000 damage was done to a brick wall and street window sash on Monday, when a car travelling west missed the curve and crashed into the wall of Ajax Engineering on Young St.

Mrs. John H. Keast-Toronto, a passenger in the car driven by her husband, suffered a slight laceration to her head while the driver escaped unharmed.

Mr. Kent told police he applied the brakes to turn the corner. The brakes took hold suddenly and swerved the car into the building on the opposite side of the road.

A car from Alberta was in collision with the Symon car on Hill St. West.

Livestock Die In Barn Blaze On Cobble Hill

Wind lashed flames made rescue of a cow and pig impossible when the barn owned by E. Jennings west of Victoria St on Cobble Hill was completely destroyed Saturday evening. Firemen fought the blaze for 10 hours in a snow storm when temperatures dropped to six below zero during the night. Due to smouldering hay, they left their hose lines in readiness to battle further outbreaks until Tuesday.

Although a tractor was saved from the blaze, loss was estimated at about \$7,000 including 15 tons of hay, a cow, sow, pigs and piglets. There was no insurance.

Nearby homes were threatened as high winds carried heavy, billowing smoke and sparks in all directions. Cause of the fire was unknown.

Due to the proximity of homes, firemen stayed at the scene of the blaze throughout the extremely cold night.

Adding to the danger and cold was the break-down of the fire truck just as the blaze was being brought under control. Failure was due to flaws in the engine block casting, repairs revealed Acton's second pumper—the old truck—was rushed to the scene from its unheated garage and developed a frost ailment in its pump and brakes and, later, a broken steering wheel.

A mutual aid call brought a Georgetown pumper to Acton, but it too had suffered from frost.

Meanwhile, the fire was gaining headway. It was finally brought under control through the use of a portable pump boosting the pressure from the hydrant.

The three mobile pumps were removed to Thompson's garage for thawing and repairs.

Arrangements were completed about 3 a.m. for Acton to retain a Georgetown fire truck for protection here. Georgetown has three trucks in its heated, modern fire hall.

Neighbor Frightens Would-Be Robbers

Attempted robbery at the tool shed on the site of the new Bank of Montreal was averted Sunday when the intruders were frightened off by a neighbor.

Suspect were apprehended in Toronto on another charge later that day.

No Accidents No accidents were reported in town on the week-end or the New Year's holiday. Police were keeping a sharp look out for impaired drivers but none were stopped.

First License Number 859-001

Shining black license plates, bearing white numbers and letters, went on sale for the first time yesterday. With them, operators' and chauffeurs' driving licenses went on sale at the office of the dealer, R. J. Hargrave.

Mr. Hargrave took the first license plate himself, number 859-001—and put it right on his car, Orville Duffield was along soon to take the second—859-002.

The first truck license went to Gordon Gray of Rockwood. Mr. Hargrave reported sale of over 80 the first day.

The date for purchasing new licenses and car markers has been set at January 31. No extensions have been announced yet, as in other years.

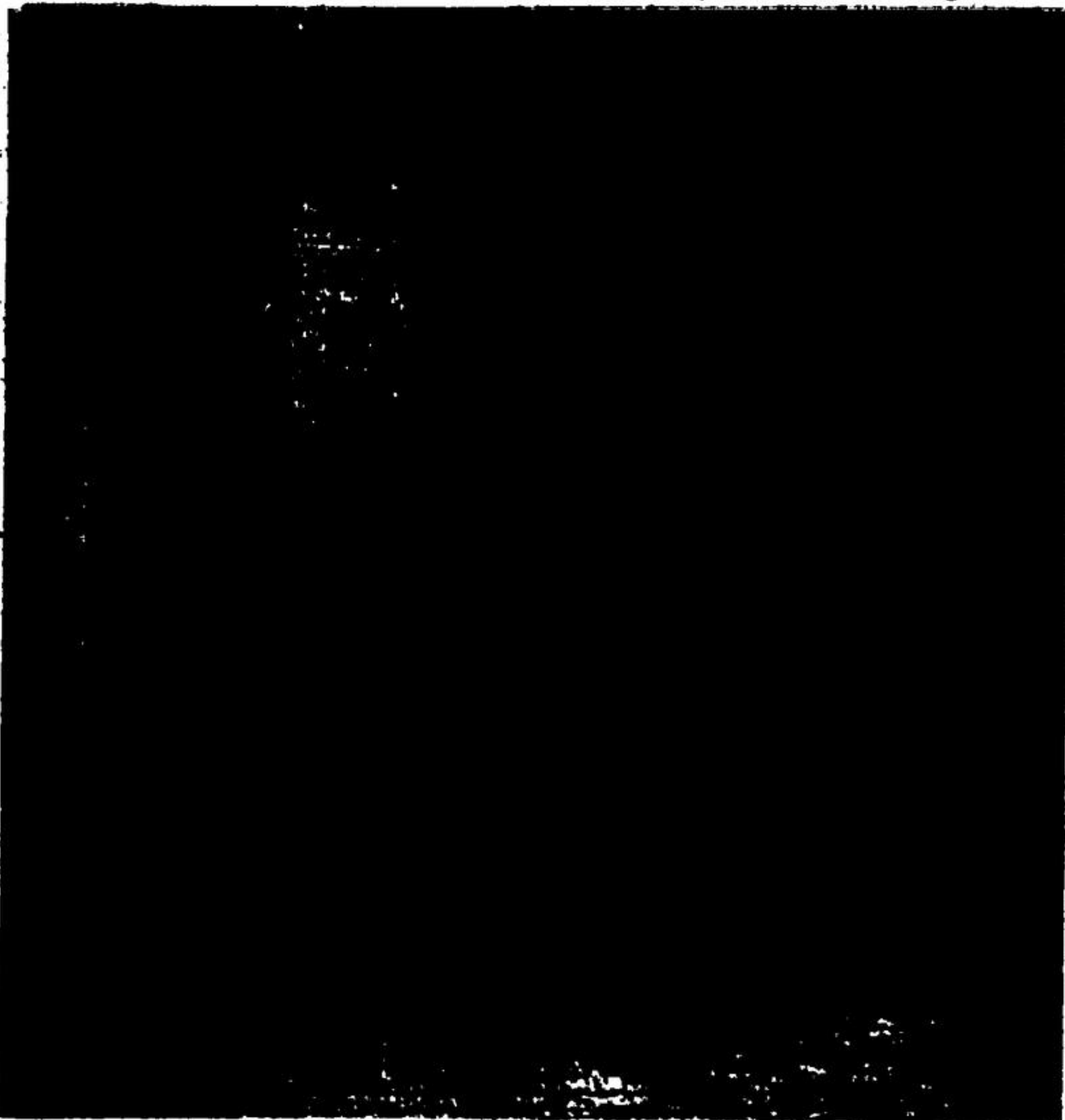
Post Office Reports Biggest Mail Ever

More Christmas cards than ever before were handled by the busy post office staff during the annual "Christmas rush" here. Despite the great influx of mail, handling and sorting were done promptly. The stamp cancelling machine helped speed the process for the regular and special staff.

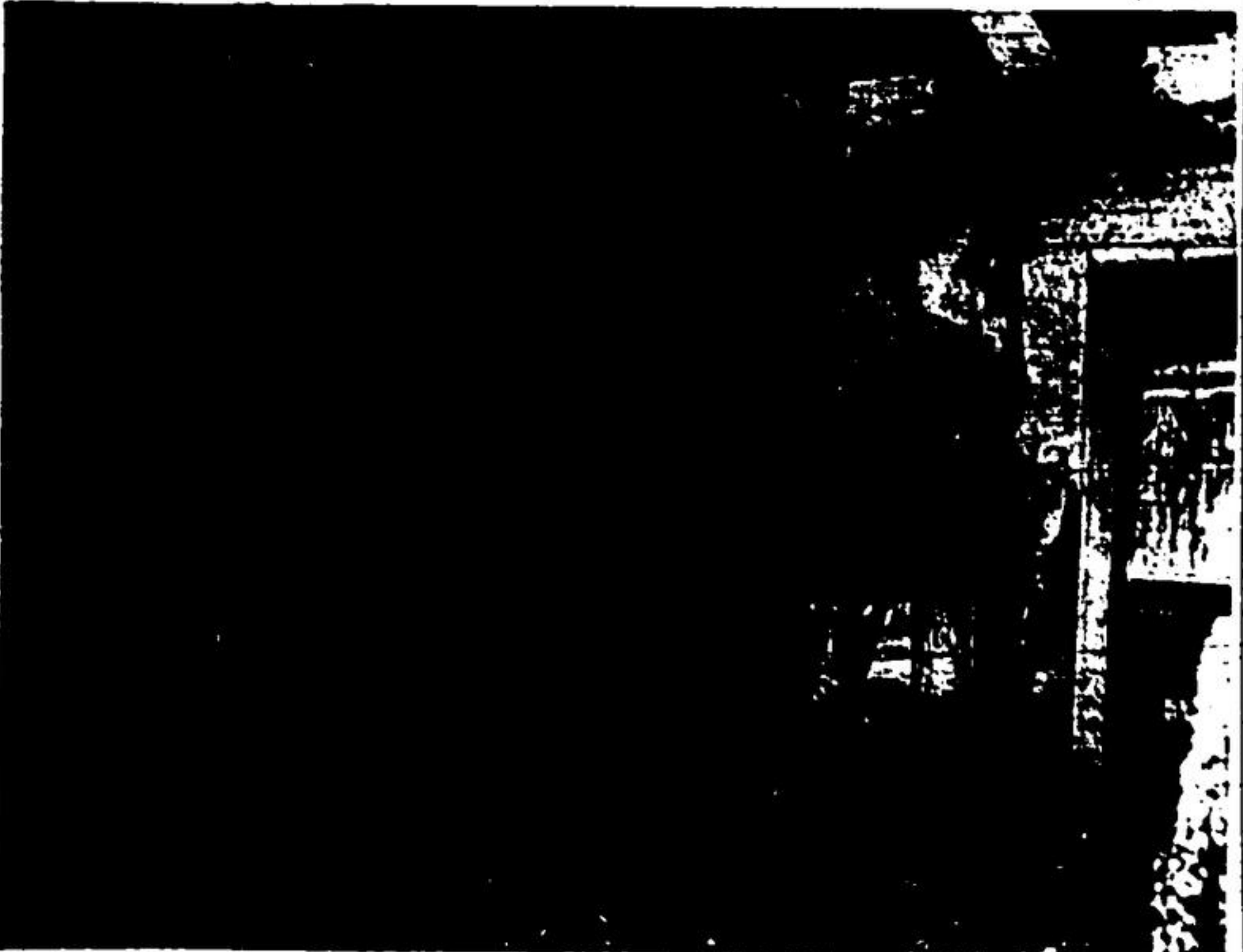
Slightly higher than last year was the number of two cent stamps sold—110,000.

Shots of the Sunday evening fire in Mill St. stores and apartments were shown on Kitchener television Monday.

Talk of the need for a new fire hall was general following the difficulties encountered by the firemen on the week-end.



SMOKE BILLOWED out of the Barr block as flames destroyed the building early Monday morning in a heavy snow storm and freezing temperatures.



CEILING COLLAPSED in one of the ground floor apartments during the fire and is shown here after the fire was extinguished by local and Georgetown firefighters.



SIX HOSE LINES poured water on the stubborn fire for more than three hours. White spots on the pictures are falling snow that continued throughout the fire.



TWO BROTHERS received their 50 year jewels from Walker Lodge A.F. and A.M. last week. Pictured from the left are Right Worshipful Brother John Marr of Guelph, District Deputy Grand Master of Wellington district, V. Wor. Bro. Roy McIntosh of Acton and V. Wor. Bro. Roy McIntosh of Oshawa, and W. Bro. Vic Rumley who made the presentations. Both are Past Masters of the Lodge.