

Man in Burning House Committed Suicide

Roger Lapointe, R.R. 4, Acton committed suicide by shooting himself on July 10 a coroner's jury said Tuesday Oct. 13. There was no suicide note or hint to friends that he had decided to kill himself.

Presentation of the facts surrounding the death involved 25 witnesses and 2 exhibits. Lapointe's body was found in his burning house as a barn, separated from the house, reduced itself to ashes in another blaze. He was 32.

The jury evidently accepted the belief of pathologist Dr. V.R. Waldorf that a bruise on the back of the head had been caused by Lapointe's fall against a reaser after he shot himself. The body was partially propped up by the dresser when first seen.

The jury, John Dunlop, 1 many Charles, Thomas Oliver, William Gage and Robert Lawson, all residents of Esqueating Township, said that death occurred between 1:30 a.m. and 5:00 a.m.

The inquest evidence revealed: James Hibbard, Frank Jones and their wives left the farm of Onli Levasseur about 4:45 a.m. Both men had finished working the afternoon shift at the Ford plant, picked up their wives and drove to the Levasseur residence.

As they drove east on a concession road to Highway 25, they were startled to see a barn completely engulfed in flames and a house starting to burn.

At the same time OPP Corporal Jack Froesch was returning to the Milton detachment from the scene of a fatal accident. At 4:50 a.m. he drove into the detachment yard and then noticed a "red glow in the sky" towards Acton. He decided to check it out.

Hibbard and Jones reached the Lapointe residence and quickly went to the house. The flames were coming out of the corner of the house three feet — like a blowtorch," said Hibbard.

Hibbard smashed the glass in the front door window. With no response to his shouts and eyes watering from the smoke which belched through the broken window, Hibbard told Jones to go and get the fire brigade. Jones left.

Hibbard went back to the windows but could see nothing inside. He broke a storm window, which was in Lapointe's bedroom. He could see no movement and no one answered his shouts. There were no flames in the room but there was some smoke.

The body of Roger Lapointe was lying 10-15 feet from the window although he was not to be discovered for about 20 minutes. Jack Tatton had been awakened by the continuous blaring of a car horn.

He opened the door and Frank Jones told him to call the fire brigade. No explanation was needed because Tatton could see the fire when he opened the door.

Called Brigade He dressed, went back outside, and saw his neighbour, Lloyd Foster, who had also been awakened by the horn.

With no sign of the brigade, Foster, at Tatton's urging, called again. Foster then went to the fire where he found Hibbard trying to get the half-ton pickup truck away from the house. Hibbard had a cut in his arm from breaking windows.

As soon as the truck was away from the house, Foster ran to the bedroom window. With no sign of Lapointe outside, Foster was sure that was where he was.

He called and got no answer. He could see the bed which looked slept in, but was empty. Cpl. Froesch and P.C. Pringle had arrived at 5 a.m. When he arrived the barn was a mass of flames, a small shed near the barn was smoking and the south corner of the house was burning. The fire brigade arrived at 5:07 a.m.

Frosch had looked in the bedroom window but the smoke was too dense and he could see nothing.

SAW BODY Then Foster looked in again, about 5:20 a.m. and saw Lapointe lying on the floor. He called for the police and firemen.

Norman Price, a member of the Acton brigade, tried to get into the room through the window but his oxygen tanks made it impossible. He went through a rear window instead.

Crouching low to stay in cooler air he had difficulty hoisting Lapointe onto the bed. As the heat got to him, he tied a rope to Lapointe's arm, passing the other end out of the window.

Price's son, Nobert, also a fireman, came in and managed to get Lapointe to the window. While going to the bed he had tripped on something on the floor. He didn't know what it was but he later saw a rifle on the floor.

The firemen had ignored the burning barn as beyond saving and concentrated their efforts on the house. The flames were almost out.

Roger Lapointe arrived home sometime after 1:30 a.m. He shot himself before any smoke from the house fire got into the bedroom because there was no carbon monoxide in his blood as there would have been.

CHEERFUL Pathologist Dr. V.R. Waldorf said his autopsy of the body revealed that Lapointe's breathing had stopped at the same time as the bullet fractured his skull although his heart continued to beat for a few moments.

He had been outwardly cheerful with everyone he met the previous day, although considering bankruptcy because his continuing efforts to run a profitable farm had failed.

At some point that morning someone decided to burn the barn and the house. In view of his suicide, it must be assumed that Lapointe set the fires before shooting himself.

Whoever set the fires, was in a hurry. Rather than uncouple a hose from a sink faucet in the garage he cut it with a butcher knife and left the knife on a window sill.

He went to the truck in the driveway and dropped the truck's gas cap and the cap of a five gallon can into the grass. After siphoning gasoline into the can he dropped the hose beside the caps.

No evidence was shown on how the barn fire started but it was after 4:00 a.m. Fire investigator Terry Murray estimated the barn fire started 15-30 minutes before discovery.

SPRINKLE GAS In the house he sprinkled gasoline around the kitchen. Another fire in the living room may have been started with gasoline although no evidence of it could be found. Traces of gasoline were found on the boots Lapointe was wearing.

As the flames took hold after

ignition, Lapointe presumably stepped into his bedroom, closed the door and picked up the rifle. A live shell found on the floor may indicate haste in loading the gun. He jammed three shells in, turned it on himself and fired.

Before 2 p.m. on July 9, Roger Lapointe called Lloyd Young, a chartered accountant in Guelph, Young, who never saw Lapointe, told him that his description of his financial problems might indicate that he could declare bankruptcy.

LEASED FARM The Lapointe farm was leased. His livestock, equipment and the truck were under chattel mortgages to the Bank of Montreal in Acton with three loans totalling almost \$11,000.

Bank manager Edward Pratt said that Lapointe was behind in his payments but technically not in arrears because he was keeping the bank fully informed of his financial position.

Young told Lapointe he would need \$500 cash to file for bankruptcy. Lapointe then asked if, having filed the papers, he could leave to go to Eastern Canada where he had a friend who would give him a job. He could.

Lapointe told Young he had three alternatives: 1. shoot or kill himself; 2. run away; or 3. declare bankruptcy.

Young trying to humour Lapointe, said, "Come and see me; you'll still have the other two alternatives left to try."

LET'S PLAY BRIDGE

By BILL COATS

Would you be any better a defender if you knew what high cards your partner held? Sometimes you do know and it doesn't make the defense any easier. The times that you know are the times when your partner has no high cards at all. Here is an example from last week at the Acton Bridge Club.

North dealt with North-South vulnerable.

NORTH S-KQ53

WEST S-A 9 6 2 H-K Q 7 5 D-Q 10 4 C-A 8

EAST S-10 8 4 H-10 8 4 3 2 D-8 6 5 C-4 3

SOUTH S-J 7 H-A J 6 D-A K 7 3 C-Q J 7

H-9 2 D-J 92 C-K 10 6 5 2

The bidding: NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
PASS PASS 1 N T PASS
2 C PASS 2 N T PASS
3 S PASS 3 N T ALL PASS

Opening lead—5 of hearts.
Personally I would open South's hand one no trump. It is balanced and contains 16 high card points. However, the sequence at the table was interesting especially after West bid no trump and then North-South played the hand in three no trump.

West can be almost positive that his partner has no high card points. South has bid strongly and North came into the auction freely at the two levels. The entire defence is up to West. Fortunately the bidding has indicated the best opening lead.

LOOKS IT OVER
On the heart lead, dummy contributed the nine, East covered with the ten and declarer won. While declarer was deciding how to play the hand, West was looking at his hand and at dummy. West knew that his partner could not help. Since declarer had opened with one diamond, declarer probably did not have four hearts. Therefore East should have five hearts or

more and if one of them was the eight maybe the defense could do something.

Declarer decided to tackle the club suit first. West ducked once but had to win the second lead. West led the heart king and after a brief hesitation, declarer won.

Declarer ran off his three club tricks. West discarded three spades and East parted with two diamonds and a spade.

CASHED IN
Declarer had to lead a spade and West won with the ace. He cashed the heart queen and led the seven to his partner. East overlooked with the eight and took the setting trick with his last heart. If all this looks easy, tell me how come three declarers made ten tricks with the North-South cards at no trump. Only one declarer was set on the defense described here.

Last week's winners at the Acton Bridge Club were: Mrs. Kay Campbell, Bart Fisher — first, Harry Arbie, Jack Greer — second, Mrs. K. Coats, Ivan Harris — third.

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MRS. G. DOYLE, Coles Court, Toronto 14

"I shop Loblaws every week," says Mrs. Negoski, who buys food for four. "I don't always shop the same store. There are two Loblaws stores that I go to regularly and I like them both. Most of all, I like the meat department. The meat manager in both stores is extremely willing to help me about the different cuts and about different ways of preparing them. And they're always willing to cut meat to order. Another thing, Loblaws is one of the few stores I've shopped where the meat manager will give me reasons for my dog."

"I shop Loblaws regularly—mainly because of the fresh fruits and vegetables, the meat department and the excellent service," says Mrs. Ferguson who shops for five. "You feel you're getting the best choice available wherever you come here. Same thing at the meat counter the butcher is always happy to provide special cuts and that's a service I use quite often. And the prices at Loblaws are well in line with the other stores. I've done a lot of comparison shopping and I find Loblaws prices compare quite favourably—even on the shell goods, soups and things like that."

"I used to go to another food store," says Mrs. Doyle who shops for four. "But now I come to Loblaws all the time because I really prefer Loblaws to the other stores. For one thing, I find it much cleaner and brighter and I like the large selection of products. I can always find what I want. As far as prices are concerned, I'm quite surprised. When I came from the first time I thought Loblaws prices would be very out of reach—but they aren't at all—I've checked and found out that Loblaws prices compare very well with prices at the other big food stores."

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