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Fourteen Pages—Seven Cents

48 Firemen Battle Blaze Only Mill Walls Remain

Firemen and company officials are today sifting through the ruins of the 100-year-old flour mill at Robin Hood Flour Mills on Martin St., Milton, trying to find the cause of a fire that gutted the four-storey stone structure early Tuesday morning.

The fire that ravaged the interior of the mill, including the grinding mill and grain storage area, caused damage estimated "in excess of \$100,000" according to W. J. Kennedy, general manager of the company's Milton operations.

Was Third Mill
The historic old building is the third mill to stand on the

property. Jasper Martin, founder of the town, built the first mill in a frame building beside the Sixteen Mile Creek in 1822, and the town grew around it. The frame building was later removed and replaced by a large stone mill. This was destroyed by fire in 1855 and the present mill was built around 1857 at a cost of \$30,000.

The cause still remains a mystery and neither firemen or company officials would venture a guess on how it started. A night shift of employees left the building around 1.30 a.m. Tuesday morning.

Today, the blackened and ice-

covered walls of the mill still stand, although seriously weakened, and the smouldering interior remains a blackened remnant of the flames that raged through the mill Tuesday morning. The roof and the top two floors of the building caved in, as the fire weakened the supports and wooden framework.

Guess at Loss
Mr. Kennedy said the building contained the main grinding mill facilities and electrical equipment to operate the two mills, as well as grain, ingredient storage and bagged products storage. No immediate inventory was available and it was difficult to

estimate the actual amount of grain and feed housed in the mill until a complete audit has been made.

Among the contents was the original water-wheel that, until a year ago, was often used to power the flour grinding equipment. Housed at the rear of the building, the wheel was operated by water from the mill pond and creek, and drove the assembly of belts and pulleys to operate the entire mill.

Dr. C. A. Martin, great-grandson of the mill's founder Jasper Martin, sold the mill to Robin Hood two years ago.

A year ago the company discontinued the grinding of flour, and the wheel has since been used occasionally and was still in good operational condition.

Plenty of Water

It took an almost superhuman effort by the firefighters to put the raging flames under control. A total of 48 firemen from three fire departments fought the flames. Firemen Wilf Penson and Glenn Stringer, who are in charge of the town's fireworks system, estimated the firemen poured 1,500,000 gallons of water into the building, most of it from hydrants and some from the pond and creek. The fire lowered the water level in the town reservoir nearly a foot.

The 26 Milton firemen were on the job from 6.20 a.m. until 8 o'clock Tuesday night. Most headed right home for bed as soon as the fire hall was cleaned up and the pumps were prepared for the next fire call, as they were tired out from holding the large hoses and walking around all day in heavy rubber boots and ice-covered coats.

Policemen Spots It

The fire was first noticed by Constable Len Pickett of Milton Police, as he patrolled the area at 6.25 a.m. When he saw flames shooting from the southeast side of the building he notified Mrs. V. Cannon, who answers the telephone at the fire hall.

The town's water pressure was strong enough to pour several heavy streams of water to the roof and into the windows on upper floors. The building is over 60 feet from one ground level, and 50 feet high at the main level.

Acton and Georgetown Fire Departments assisted, under the Halton County Mutual Aid fire services network. The Acton

(Continued on Page Seven)

Praise "Excellent Co-Operation" Of Three Area Fire Departments

Tuesday's fire at Robin Hood Flour Mills in Milton was an "excellent example of the co-operation that is possible" through the Halton County Mutual Aid Fire Services Association, said Chief Douglas Wilson of Oakville, County Co-Ordinator.

Milton, Acton and Georgetown fire departments co-operated to put the large fire under control, while Oakville and Burlington firemen stood by at their home stations, ready in case another serious fire broke out while so much equipment (four pumps) was tied up in Milton.

Chief is Pleased
Chief A. E. Clement of Milton Fire Department, who called in aid when he feared the mill fire might spread to nearby buildings, was quite pleased with the co-operation of the neighboring fire departments.

"As soon as we arrived I realized we had to set up the large two and a half inch hose lines," said Chief Clement. His second concern was the people in neighboring buildings, and firemen were dispatched to make sure all were awake and ready to evacuate their homes and apartments if necessary. Police Constable Len Pickett had already awakened the seven residents in the two apartments over an adjoining mill building.

While firemen spread the main hose lines, Chief Clement realized more help might be needed to contain the fire if it threatened to spread. A nearby service station, hotel, town hall and a commercial section — plus the fire hall — were threatened as a light wind whipped the burning embers in a south-east direction. Some of the embers were found half a mile from the mill.

Calls at 7 a.m.
The Chief radioed from his car at 7 a.m. for additional help from Acton and Georgetown. The Milton radio operator, Mrs. V. Cannon notified the Halton Mutual Aid control centre at Oakville, and from there, pumps were

dispatched from the two northern towns. Acton's truck and 11 men arrived in 15 minutes; Georgetown's truck and nine men in 22 minutes.

"This was another instance when our Mutual Aid network really paid off," said Chief Clement. "It gives me a good feeling to be able to step into my car, speak a few words into the radio, and be assured that help will arrive so quickly."

Milton's two pumper trucks hooked onto hydrants and Acton's pumper was arrived to service as soon as it arrived. The Georgetown truck stood by, attached to hydrants and ready to protect area buildings in case the fire spread.

Co-Ordinator Helps
Chief Wilson, Co-Ordinator, rushed to the scene to assist Chief

Clement and direct the Mutual Aid efforts.

Acton firemen remained at the scene for four hours, while the Georgetown brigade stayed three hours. The three brigades used 4,600 feet of fire hose and played thousands of gallons of water a minute on the blaze at its height.

When Georgetown firemen returned home, Chief Wilson dispatched a truck from Oakville to stand by at the Milton Fire Hall in case of a second fire in Milton.

There were 26 Milton firemen, 11 from Acton nine from Georgetown and two from Oakville on duty at various times throughout the day.

Chief Clement expressed the thanks of the brigade to the neighbors and mill employees who supplied coffee and sandwiches throughout the day.

"Business as Usual"

Although Tuesday's fire in the grinding mill was a temporary setback, it will not seriously hamper the operation and service of Robin Hood Flour Mills' Super-sweet Formula Feeds Division in Milton, general manager W. J. Kennedy said Wednesday.

No decision has yet been made on the future plans for the building, but he seriously doubted the possibility of rebuilding the stone mill because of the weakened position of the structure.

Loses Mill, Grain

The grinding mill and several tons of stored grain and feed ingredients were lost in the fire, as well as some already-bagged feed.

There was some insurance on the building. Holding bins, pelleting and mixing equipment, and a store of antibiotics in the other mill on

the property were undamaged by the fire. The office, overhead apartments and a nearby garage and repair shop were also unscathed in the fire.

Need Storage
"The lack of grain storage is our biggest problem right now," he said, "but this will be straightened out before too long."

Many of the staff worked all night to catch up on the production time lost during the Tuesday morning fire, and regular shipments and deliveries were made on Wednesday.

The fire would cause no layoffs and little interruption of service to customers, Mr. Kennedy said.

"Some temporary arrangements will have to be made on grinding and storage," he added, "but as far as we are concerned, it will be business as usual."

Fire is Temporary Setback No Plans Made for Building

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Fire Breaks Out Again

Although it was believed to be out at 8 p.m. Tuesday when firemen left it, the fire in the stone mill at Robin Hood Flour Mills broke out again early Wednesday morning and firemen had to pour more water on the smouldering embers.

Night watchman John Veestra noticed flames in the debris around 5 a.m. Wednesday and called mill employee Perc Needham, who turned in the alarm. Mr. Needham told The Champion the firemen were just as prompt in answering the second call as they had been the first time on Tuesday morning, despite a grueling day of wearing heavy, ice-covered coats and wielding the heavy hose lines.

The firemen continued to play water on the debris most of the morning. There were a few stubborn piles of grain still burning hidden beneath debris and fallen floors.

THIS ISSUE OF THE CHAMPION 4,505 COPIES

Name Officers

Glyn Roberts Rotary Prexy

Glyn Roberts was named president of the Rotary Club of Milton for the 1963-64 term at a meeting of the club on Tuesday evening.

Other officers named were David Thompson, vice president; Chuck Copeland, secretary; Len McNeill treasurer; Don MacEachern director of club services; Bo Wheeler director of vocational service; Ken Campbell director of community service; Ray Olan, director of international service.

The newly elected officers will take office July 1. Paul Neilsen, industrial relations manager of Orenda Engines, addressed the meeting on the broad field of industrial relations and particularly on the elements of collective bargaining.

Mr. Neilsen outlined the relationship of industrial relations to the other segments of the company and detailed the items from personal records to employee safety that fall within that department.

The speaker outlined in detail the process of collective bargaining, the procedures involved in certification of a union, and the actual negotiations. He emphasized the importance of both union and management bargaining in good faith to conclude a collective agreement that takes into consideration the needs of the company and the employees.

The speaker was introduced by Howard Griswold and thanked by Jim Dills.



FIREMEN WORKED 14 HOURS TUESDAY before they finally left the scene of the \$100,000 fire that gutted the century-old grinding mill of Robin Hood Flour Mills, Milton on Tuesday. Mutual Aid helpers from Acton and Georgetown Fire Departments helped the Milton brigade to pour 1,500,000 gallons of water into the raging flames before they brought it under control. The fire started at 6.22 a.m. Tuesday and was under control

by 8.30 a.m., but firemen remained until 7.30 p.m. to extinguish smouldering timbers and stored grain. Then on Wednesday morning at 5 a.m. the fire broke out again, but was quickly confined. The loss is partly covered by insurance but company officials feel the stonework has been weakened too much to rebuild.

—Staff Photo

More Than Just Grants

Council Delays Hiring Rec. Director. To Study Arena-Recreation Program

Milton Council Monday delayed any action on hiring a full time recreation director. It was suggested a proposed program and the possibility of co-operation between the arena and recreation groups should be considered.

Councillors met with members of the local Recreation Committee and Lloyd Minshall of the community program branch, Department of Education, on the subject as well as the applicable grant structure.

"Any municipality that lays out a program based on government grants will be disappointed," Mr. Minshall warned. "I would hope the municipality would see more advantages in a recreation program than the procurement of a provincial grant."

For Leisure Time

Referring to the very broad term of recreation, Mr. Minshall suggested it was anything that any body or group might want to do in their leisure time. He suggested a library is a recreation service and a new building should ideally include display area and perhaps little theatre

or music appreciation accommodation.

He emphasized the importance of close liaison between all town boards and groups, so that all publicly owned buildings are available not only for their prime use but also for further recreational use.

"Should the Recreation Committee and the Arena Board be amalgamated?" Mr. Minshall was asked. He recalled his recommendation at the outset that the two groups be the same group of people but whether such an amalgamation would work now would have to be a local decision.

Cost \$3,300 to \$8,000

The salary range for a full time recreation director would be from a low of \$3,300 to a high of \$8,000, Mr. Minshall suggested, agreeing it would be logically possible to hire a man at \$4,500 to \$5,000.

"The town probably owns recreation facilities valued at a quarter of a million dollars. In a business would you consider operating it without a manager?" he wondered.

Mr. Minshall emphasized that there would be a need for the present volunteers to continue and the need for more would probably develop if a director was hired.

Job for Both

The role of the Recreation Committee in preparing its budget is to determine what is needed, while the role of the council is to review it in the light of municipal finances, Mr. Minshall explained.

Reeve C. A. Martin commented in conclusion it would be difficult to properly administer the existing facilities and the new swimming pool without a paid director.

Councillor C. Meney called for a survey of other municipalities before the town committed itself to a continuing expenditure for a full time director.

Information on the Recreation Committee's proposed program and the possibility of co-operation between the arena board and recreation committee was suggested.

Approve \$3,000 For New Dept. Physiotherapy

A \$3,000 expenditure to begin equipping a new physiotherapy department at Milton District Hospital was approved last night (Wednesday) by members of the Hospital Women's Auxiliary at their annual meeting.

Directors of the Hospital Board have felt the need for physiotherapy treatment in the hospital for some time and when the W.A. members approached the Board for ideas on a sizeable project, this was agreed upon. More money will have to be spent later to complete the department, but the W.A.'s generous grant will put a small physiotherapy department into operation.

Officers elected last night included president Mrs. T. Marsh, first vice-president Mrs. J. Conway, second vice-president Mrs. E. Joyce, treasurer Mrs. C. Anderson and secretary Mrs. G. Hamilton. New directors to serve three years are Mrs. J. Ostler, Mrs. R. Clements and Mrs. A. Berube, while Mrs. C. Service will fill a vacancy for a two year period.

Changes at Milton Post Office

Wm. Randell to Retire; W. Bell New Postmaster

By Roy Downs

William T. Randell, a veteran of 38 years in Milton Post Office including the last 10 as postmaster, is retiring on February 28. Named to replace him is Walter Bell, presently senior postal officer at the Milton Post Office, who has 21 years of service in Milton and other Post Offices.

Born in Milton, Mr. Randell

has spent all his life here except for seven years. For three and one-half years he worked in the Ford plant at Windsor, and for three and one-half years he served overseas in England, France and Belgium, as a soldier in the 20th Battalion during World War I. He was wounded during the war.

Postmaster 10 Years

Returning from overseas, he became a clerk in Milton Post Office January 19, 1925. He also served as caretaker of the building. About 15 years ago he was promoted to the position of senior clerk under Postmaster R. M. Clements, then when Mr. Clements retired Mr. Randell was named Postmaster and began this duty June 27, 1953.

During the years he worked under three postmasters, Robert Stewart, William Dewar and R. M. Clements. A member of Milton Fire Brigade for 29 years, he was Fire Chief from 1943 until 1951 when

he retired from firefighting. He has served 15 years on the Milton Cemetery Board, is Past Master of St. Clair Masonic Lodge, Past First Principal of St. Clair Chapter, and an honorary life member of Halton County Baseball Association.

Mr. Randell looks forward to his retirement but says he won't be quitting work completely. He and his wife have planned a trip for next summer, but other than that, his plans are indefinite.

People Helped

"I have enjoyed the work very much," he said. "The people of Milton have been most co-operative during my years here, and after all, you can use all the friends you can get."

Mr. and Mrs. Randell have three married sons and daughters, Mrs. Mac Smith (June) of Willowdale, Ken of Kitchener and Roger of Milton, as well as seven grandchildren.

Walter Bell, Post Office's new appointee, will take over the reins on March 1, the day after Mr. Randell's retirement.

Started Before 1940

He was born and raised on a farm on the outskirts of Barrie, and just prior to 1940 he became interested in mail work when he assisted a rural carrier with deliveries. In 1940 he was called in as a letter carrier at Barrie Post

Office, to help out during the Christmas rush.

When the war began Mr. Bell joined the Canadian Postal Corps and spent four years in England as a night dispatch driver. "I knew the city of London as well as I know Milton now," he said, recalling incidents when he drove

a mail truck through blackened streets with bombs falling all around him.

In 1946 he returned from the war and worked first as a letter carrier, then as an inside clerk at the Barrie Post Office. He relieved the Postmaster at R.C.A.F.



WILLIAM T. RANDELL Retires after 38 Years



WALTER BELL Milton's New Postmaster