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THE DURHAM CHRONICLE

VOL. 63.—NO. 3254.

DURHAM, ONTARIO, CANADA, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1929.

\$2.00 a Year in Canada; \$2.50 in U. S.

Fire Destroys Durham's Largest Business Block Early Friday Morning

McIntyre Block, in Main Business Section, Practically Totally Destroyed by Fire Which Started in Vollett's Grocery Store at Midnight—Assistance From Outside Fire Brigades Helped Save Surrounding Property—Six Stores, The Bank of Commerce, Telephone Office, Masonic Lodge Rooms, Three Residences Consumed.

The worst fire in the history of Durham's business section visited the town about midnight Thursday and in less than five hours the fine McIntyre Block was in ruins and damage estimated as high as \$200,000 was done. The fire started in the basement of W. J. Vollett's grocery store and to date there has been no solution as to the cause. At one time it was thought an overheated stove had caused the outbreak, but it has been stated that there had been no fire of this kind used in heating the premises since the steam heating plant had been turned on. Another theory is that defective wiring in the cellar set fire to the joists or boxes stored there and in the absence of any better solution this latter will have to be accepted. In any event the cause of the fire remains a mystery and will likely never be satisfactorily cleared up. Mr. Vollett and family were in Toronto at the time of the outbreak and could throw no light on the matter.

The fire was first noticed in the central office of the Bell Telephone Co. when operator one door east, when the night operator, a local manager, W. E. Saunders, smelled smoke and shortly after noticed it filtering through the wall. He immediately turned on the alarm and the chemical and steam engines were soon on the scene. For a time it was thought it could be confined in the building in which it started, but it made its way through the floors and the ceiling above, got a start in the telephone office and in the second flat and was soon beyond control of the local brigade. True to the tradition of the service the telephone operator stuck to his post and was successful in sending through a call to Owen Sound before the fire broke out in the garage and cut off the telephone communication. During all this time the streets were suffocating and with the coming of the last message the office was vacated. Subsequently, Hanover, Mount Forest and Harrison were communicated with by telegraph and sent for help.

The Durham brigade did good work in a time and it was thought they had conquered the fire but the absence of the Durham fire engine was a serious handicap. The fire worked its way through the partitions and underneath the stairs and there was a serious danger of the conflagration would spread to the remainder of the business section of the town and have it in its wake.

Owen Sound Brigade Arrives

Arrival of the Owen Sound brigade with their motor truck and pumps and the tide of the battle. With the Owen Sound brigade playing on the scene they took up their position on the opposite side to that taken by the Durham fire fighters and held the fire back in the building in which it had started. The loss was heavy, that on the building being considerably over \$100,000, while that of the merchants of whom lost their entire stocks together with that of the three families who resided in the building, will make a total loss run between \$150,000 and \$200,000. It was a hard fight and the men were pretty well fagged but on the arrival of the Mount Forest, Hanover and Harrison brigades was relieved. The former two brigades brought hose, but no engine, but Harrison arrived by special C. N. R. train with their engine and equipment. It was at the morning when they got to Durham, and though their engine was not taken off the car and the big damage was done, the men rendered valuable assistance in pulling off those already on the job. In addition to the McIntyre Block the building occupied by the Pentiac Sales was also destroyed. This was a brick building and could have been saved had the firemen not been too busy engaged with the main building. A frame building occupied by a laundry escaped.

The merchants losing stocks in the conflagration were the Misses Truax, milliners; W. J. Vollett, groceries, flour and feed; George Fine, men's furnishings; Alex. Aljoe and R. Burnett, general store, and J. H. Harding, hardware. The Burnett and Harding stores escaped the flames, though the roof above was consumed, but as tons of water were played on the flames the stocks were badly damaged by water. Other business places to suffer were the Bell Telephone office and equipment, totally destroyed, and the premises of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, which is also a total loss with the exception of the contents of the vault, which was opened on Monday and the contents found undamaged.

Business Slowly Reviving

The loss of the main business block is a severe blow to the town and much sympathy is felt for Mr. McIntyre, the owner of the building and the various business men. With considerable optimism, however, they are gradually working back to their usual efficiency and when the insurance adjusters have completed their work will be able to do something definite. Until this work is done everything will be at a standstill. R. Burnett was the first to secure an adjustment of his losses and has already opened up in the old McKechnie building, where the Bank of Commerce has also secured temporary quarters. The Aljoe loss has not yet been adjusted but will be this week when, we understand, he is to open up in the Middaugh House Block in the premises occupied by the egg grading station. Harding's Hardware loss is being adjusted as this is being written and he will carry on in his old premises, though a considerable inconvenience until the roof and the top floor is repaired. The Misses Truax have secured premises in the Middaugh House in the stand occupied by Mrs. Nichol and will be ready for business as soon as a new stock can be secured. W. J. Vollett on Tuesday, closed a deal with John Smith, the owner, whereby he takes possession of the premises occupied by Mrs. Begg & Son. Mr. Vollett has purchased this property and gets possession immediately, we are told. George Fine up to the present has made no arrangements for carrying off, and in conversation with us on Tuesday did not know for sure what he would do. He is endeavoring to rent a storebuilding in order to open up with a new stock but at time of writing we have nothing to disclose regarding his intentions. We have not heard of the plans of the Durham Pentiac Sales.

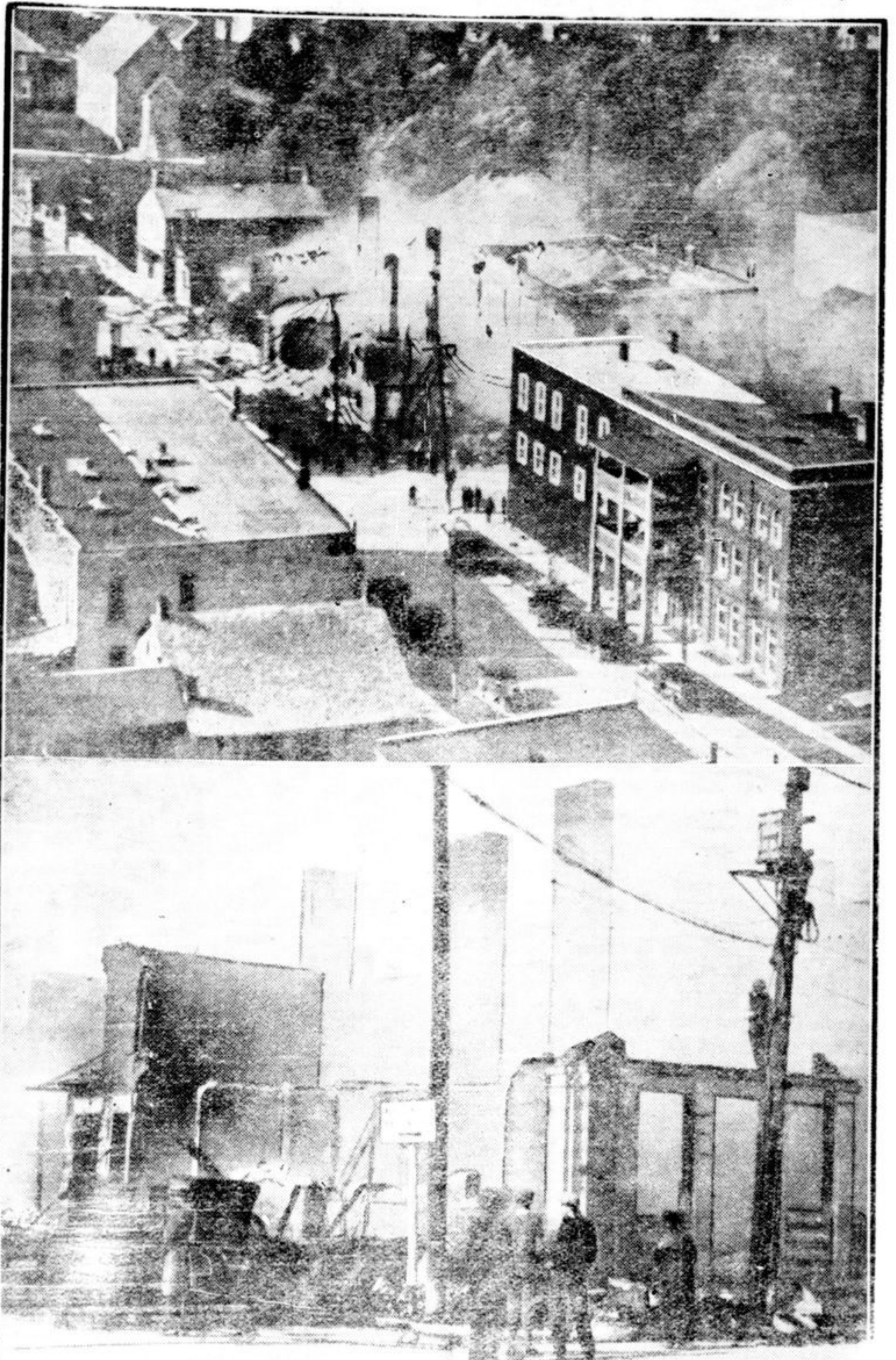
Prompt Telephone Service

Considering the magnitude of their loss, in which the switchboard and all the equipment was destroyed, the restoration of the telephone service was even more than was expected. Friday morning early the long distance lines out of town were working, though the service naturally was not up to standard, and by Monday morning quite a number of the local lines had been connected. By Tuesday noon the service was back to normal. This was made possible by the sending in of gangs of men and trucks and working night and day and Sunday. Temporary quarters have been rented in the Middaugh House and at time of writing, so far as the telephone service is concerned, the big conflagration of Friday might have been only a dream.

Householders' Heavy Loss

Those who occupied the top story as a residence, like the merchants, lost practically all their clothing and household effects. Mrs. McIntyre Sr. saved nothing, and neither did Mr. and Mrs. Stauffer, who lived in the apartment over the Vollett grocery. Mr. and Mrs. Stauffer and baby had a very narrow escape from suffocation from smoke and escaped only in their night apparel. Shortly after discovery of the fire at the telephone office Mr. Stauffer awakened. Continued on page 5.)

DURHAM'S FIRE LOSS FRIDAY MORNING IS ESTIMATED AT \$200,000



Through the courtesy of the Toronto Telegram, the publication of the above photograph of the burning of Durham's largest business block last Friday morning is possible. Early Saturday morning The Telegram got in touch with The Chronicle by telegraph and telephone, and we had the Kelsey Studios here take photos of the ruins. Later, a message was received telling us to be on watch for the Telegram airplane, which had left Toronto and was due to arrive in Durham about 11:30. The plane contained a pilot and A. Van, the Telegram's official photographer, and circled the town about noon, with the top picture of the fire was snapped. Landing in Young's field in Upper Town Mr. Van took the still picture of the main corner from the town square. This will give our readers some idea of the speed demanded of his employees by the modern newspaper. Leaving Lesaside at 10:45 the plane arrived in Durham at noon. It left Durham about 12:45 and, with the wind in its back, expected to make the return trip in less than an hour. The photograph reproduced above appeared in the 3 o'clock edition of The Telegram and arrives in Durham on the Saturday night train.

Oliver's Majority Reduced to 563

Former Majority of 1926 Was 1,160. But Yesterday's Polling Saw United Farmer Candidate Returned by Probably Not More Than 550.

The polling in South Grey yesterday resulted in the return of F. B. Oliver, the United Farmer representative in the last Legislature, but from the returns received up to midnight last night his former majority of 1,160 in 1926 has been reduced by about fifty per cent. According to the figures received at the Chronicle office the majority is computed at 563. This may be changed at the official count, but from the figures available at midnight the figures given below are correct. Following is the vote by townships and urban centres, the majorities only being given:

Township	Oliver P'due
Artemesia	436
Bentinc	307
Chatsworth	16
Dundalk	62
Durham	247
Egremont	337
Euphrasia	8
Flesherton	18
Glensel	240
Hanover	333
Holland	150
Markdale	138
Neustadt	139
Normanby	169
Osprey	91
Proton	252

Majority for Oliver 563
Features of the campaign were the increase in the majority in Egremont, where Oliver gained 17 votes over the last election, and the vote in Proton in which a majority of 482 in 1926 was reduced to 252 in yesterday's voting.

Conservatives Retain Power

Though Mr. Oliver retained his seat in South Grey this result throughout the province is a distinct victory for the Ferguson Government. So far as politics is concerned, all opposition is wiped out and with only 112 seats to be filled a Canadian Press bulletin at midnight stated that 96 Conservatives had been elected. This is even more than the most sanguine hopes of the party and the prediction of the Opposition that there was a chance for a Conservative

EDITOR TELLS HISTORY OF ICE CREAM TRADE

H. W. Huey Outlines Development of International Convention

Opposition to attempts to legislate standards for the whole ice cream industry of the United States in 1905 was the reason for the original organization of these manufacturers. It was learned from H. W. Huey, editor of the Ice Cream Trade Journal, attending the annual convention in Toronto.

Dr. Harvey Wylie, after enacting set standards for the whole union in connection with the passing of the pure food act at that time.

The manufacturers felt that this was unreasonable and immediately organized to fight it. The need of co-operation was also a contributing cause to the organization, as the demand for ice cream really began after the first of the century, but it was Dr. Wylie's action which gave the necessary impetus and hastened organization.

After several years of work, a uniform system of accounting was decided on and methods were drawn up so that the members could talk in a common language of "cost accounting." It is pointed out that this activity is quite within the bounds set by the Interstate Commerce commission. On account of the great number of members from outside the United States, from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and Germany, the national organization was changed two years ago to the present international Association of Ice Cream Manufacturers.

Two Good Dances Were Held Last Week

Red Cross Memorial Hospital and Fire Brigade Held Assemblies at Which Pleasant Time Was Spent—Inclement Weather Cause of Small Attendance at Latter Function.

The informal dance put on in the new show rooms of the Durham Furniture Company last Friday evening was well attended and as a result the Red Cross Memorial Hospital, under whose auspices the affair was held, will have added another hundred dollars or so to their treasury to be used in carrying on their work in this community. There is little doubt that the fire of the early morning affected the attendance of a number from town, but there was a large crowd present from outside towns and an excellent time was spent. The Wingham orchestra supplied the music and gave good satisfaction with their snappy and popular dance numbers. The hall, decorated in a very pretty manner with autumn leaves and flowers, looked most becoming and caused much favorable comment. General satisfaction is also expressed with the building as a dance hall and furniture display room. The statement that it was the "best dance floor north of Toronto" was not at all far-fetched, and being of generous size can accommodate a large crowd with little or no inconvenience.

We understand this is just the start and that an announcement of another dance in the same premises in the near future, and under the same auspices, need cause little surprise.

Firemen Held Dance

The dance under the auspices of the Durham Fire Brigade in the Town Hall Wednesday night of last week was unfortunately poorly attended. We can give no reason for this other than the poor night, and the fact that there was quite a lot of amusement on the board that week. Those who did attend had a good time to the excellent music supplied by the Durham Blue Bell orchestra. It is not right that the local brigade should not have received a more liberal patronage, as they are one of the town's best organizations, and when found necessary, a band of willing workers in the saving of property in case of fire.

LOCAL THEATRE HAVING NEW SEATS INSTALLED

Opera Chairs to Take Place of Those in Use Since Show Was Opened Some Years Ago

Workmen commenced yesterday to remove the old chairs that have been in use in the Star Theatre since it opened some few years ago. These are to be replaced by regular opera seats which arrived a few days ago from Toronto.

This improvement, under consideration for some months by the proprietor, R. L. Saunders, will no doubt be appreciated by the movie patrons, and the installation of the new chairs removes about the only objection that could be taken with the accommodations. For a good many years back the Star Theatre here has been second to none in Ontario in the class of pictures shown, many of them having appeared in town simultaneously with Toronto. It was the seating accommodation that was lacking, but with the installation of these more modern chairs, patrons of the show may now watch their favorite actors in comfort.

Winter Due Nov. 27 Says Chatsworth Sage

It Will Be The Coldest Christmas in Years, with Hard Winter Following.

It's going to be a hard winter. Such is the warning of James B. Bowers, 73-year-old "Sage of Chatsworth", and a long distance weather prophet, whose predictions are gospel to many in the district.

"A real Christmas, one of the coldest in years," is Bowers' outlook on the holiday season.

Winter, he told a reporter of a Toronto daily, will begin about November 17, and will start in earnest.

This grey-haired Scot will tell you that he is able to predict the weather, not only weeks and months but years ahead and do it in such a way that he is right 85 per cent of the time.

And what is more, he is able to back up his assertions by comparisons of his previous forecasts with actual records of the weather as it has occurred.

How does he do it?

Let Bowers tell you himself.

"It was way back in the summer of 1922," he began, "and a real warm summer it was, too. Things were parched pretty bad. The cattle, poor souls, hadn't had a decent green bite for weeks. My old dad was livin' then at Pinkerton, tip in Bruce county. Dad had learned a bit back in college about the stars and he started glibberin' and come to notice that the planets right at that hot spell were in a certain configuration—that's what them astronomer fellows call it.

And then next time the planets got themselves in the same position we had the same kind of weather.

"Well, the upshot of it was that dad began studying up a lot on the stars and pretty soon he could tell just what kind of weather it would be from the way the planets—Mercury and Jupiter and Venus and all those—were hangin' in the sky.

"And sure'n shootin', he was right. Not all the time but he hit it pretty well and after a while he got so he could make it almost a cinch.

"Before he died, dad taught me most all he knew about it, and I've kept pluggin' along, learning something new most every day.

"Here, I'll show you what I mean:

"Here's 1927," he pointed a wrinkled finger to a place on one of the British Government's "Nautical Almanac" issued annually, and containing in detail all the astronomical phenomena of the year. "Mercury and Jupiter came together then right in the middle of October and you remember all over the United States and Canada we had a heavy snow and wheat went up 17c a bushel.

"You can bet your money that just as soon as Jupiter and Mercury come close to one another (there's going to be something doing, and it will be a storm. Winter will come in strong about November 27, with deep snow and heavy winds. December will be cold and wintry, except maybe for a little lull from the third to the fifteenth. There will be heavy snowfalls at Christmas, and my word.

"It'll be a real, old-fashioned Christmas. Better start buying your coal now and tell the wife to get the fur out of the moth balls—for she's going to be cold.

FILES A \$10,000 CLAIM AGAINST BRANT TOWNSHIP

Widow of Accident Victim Starts Action for Damages Against County

Mrs. William Belbeck, widow of the late William Belbeck, who was killed some few weeks ago when his car went over the abutment on the 14th concession of Brant and plunged into the creek twenty feet below, has through her solicitor, Mr. O. E. Klien, K.C. filed a claim on behalf of herself and children of \$10,000 against the township of Brant. The tragedy, it is alleged, was due to the failure of the municipality not properly safeguarding with guard rails. As the insurance policy, the township carries liability only up to \$5,000, the township will share in the suit for the remaining amount it is believed.

TEMPERATURES FOR PAST WEEK

	8 a.m.	Max.	Min.	Rain
Thursday	36	44	34	22
Friday	40	50	37	05
Saturday	45	50	44	—
Sunday	40	48	40	—
Monday	28	37	28	—
Tuesday	30	39	30	—
Wednesday	40	48	34	—