

INCENDIARY STARTS FIRE BURNS MOHAWK BARN

Three Large Buildings Were Destroyed by Fire.—Many Fine
Cattle and Pigs Perished in the Flames.—Seventy-
Five Tons of Hay Burned.

Another disastrous fire occurred at the Mohawk Indian Institute shortly before 12 o'clock last night. The blaze broke out in one of the barns and the flames spread with the utmost rapidity, destroying three barns together with the granary, ice-houses, hay pens and a portion of their contents. The insurance on the property destroyed totals about \$8,000, and covers the loss pretty fully. The risk is carried by the Liverpool, London and Globe company.

Unfortunate District.

It is a peculiar feature to note in connection with the Mohawk district that during the past year there have been four disastrous fires in that vicinity—and three of them have occurred within the past month. On May 29th last, the Search Works buildings were burned to the ground. More recently the Mohawk Institute, Mr. John Alexander's barn, and now the Institute barns have fallen a prey to the flames. The loss in all four cases has been heavy. It is indeed a most apparent fact that the district has been most unfortunate in the matter of fires during the past year.

The Cause Unknown.

The fire last night broke out about 11 o'clock on the lower floor of one of the barns in the rear of the old Institute building. There was absolutely no cause, and it is generally conceded that the fire must have been incendiary in its origin. In fact there are unconfirmed reports in circulation that an unknown man was seen running from the scene of destruction a short time before the blaze was discovered. It will be remembered that there was apparently no cause for the fire at Mr. Alexander's barn and it is the prevalent opinion that some fire brand is at work in this particular section of the district.

The Buildings Affected.

In rear, and to the north of the old Institute building, which was recently destroyed, there are the barns, stables, hog pens and other buildings, which have always been maintained at the expense of the institute. Of these buildings, three barns, two 60x30, and the third 96x35 feet; two hog pens, each 60x20 feet; a granary and ice house 40x24 feet; and most of their contents, were destroyed. The buildings which suffered are all adjacent to one another. A fourth hog pen and the machine and drive house were saved, as well as several other small structures and the gymnasium and playhouse.

Two employees of the institute, who were on the Cockshutt factory site, saw smoke disengage from the corner of the blaze, made the discovery that the barns were on fire, shortly after 11 o'clock. They quickly ran to the spot but by the time of their arrival the building was in flames. From the rear barn the fire rapidly spread to the side and across until the entire line of connected buildings had been burned to the ground. The young Indian pupils, who were sleeping in the playhouse at the time of the outbreak were at once aroused, and all that was possible was done to save the contents. No water was used on the burning buildings as it was thought impossible to save them, so great was the progress which the flames had made. All efforts were concentrated on getting the cattle and horses out of the burning buildings.

The Loss of Cattle.

In their efforts the workers were partially successful. They succeeded in saving 22 cows, many young calves, 9 horses, several pigs and 200 pigs. But the spread of the flames played havoc with the work, and ere the rescuers could reach the inner apartments, large numbers of cattle were burned along with the general contents of the barns. A thoroughbred Suffolk cow, 3 horses, and 31 hogs, all fell victims to the flames. Among the contents burned were 800 bushels of grain, 17 tons of hay, cutting box, chopper, feed power, scales and fanning mill. A large quantity of iron still remains, although the heat all round it was intense.

Scene This Morning.

The scene this morning is one of desolation. The institute officials had just recovered from the shock of the first fire, and were hoping that from the ruins would rise a new building which would be an honor to the company carrying on the work, and a credit to themselves as instructors of the younger Indians, who are receiving such excellent training. The second reverse, however, has been a hard blow. But they have not given up hope, and already have made excellent provision for sheltering the remaining cattle and carrying to completion their plans for rebuilding. The barns with the one exception are in ruins and still send forth small ripples of incendiary cracks.

The Loss.

The loss may aggregate \$10,000. The three barns burned are insured for \$3,750. The granary and ice house is covered by \$360. On the contents of these buildings there is one policy for \$10,000. The hog pens are insured for \$400 and in addition there is \$1500 insurance on the live stock, and \$1,000 on farm implements. It is thought the loss is fully covered.



The Expositor.

T. H. PRESTON, Editor and Proprietor.

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 1903.

INCENDIARISM

It is very strongly suspected that an incendiary is responsible for the fire last night which destroyed the barns of the Monawk Institute, and for the blaze which destroyed the Alexander barns a few days since. If there is one fiend more than another who is feared in a community it is the man who deliberately sets fire to valuable property, thinking to satisfy some grudge in this manner. The police in this instance should not be slow to make a complete investigation, and if they find that the suspicions are well grounded, the offender should be punished to the full extent of the law. There are worse crimes, but few of them create the same degree of alarm as incendiarism. In the Canadian towns and cities that have had much experience in this connection the perpetrator appeared to have had a mania for the wilful destruction of buildings, continuing his mad practices night after night. If such a fiend is abroad in the county every effort should be made to locate and punish him instantly, and the outrages should be cut short.

INDIAN BOYS STARTED THE INSTITUTE FIRE

The Police Unearth Sensational Facts In Connection With the Recent Very Disastrous Incendiarism-- Several of the Perpetrators Arrested and Arraigned This Morning.

Most sensational facts were brought to light this morning in connection with the three fires that have occurred at the Mohawk Institute grounds in the past few weeks. In the first fire the institute was destroyed, in the second the barns were burned and last night all the out-buildings that escaped the first fire were consumed. They were all of necessary origin and have been traced to the pupils of the institute.

The story of the deeds of these boys, is such as to almost force one to the conclusion that they are not true, so impossible does it seem that they could have gone about their desperate work with so little thought of the consequences of it. At the police court this morning when they were arraigned before the magistrates the story was told with the utmost solemnity. What their object was it is difficult to understand. It does not appear that they were satisfying any grudge and apparently their only purpose was to see a blaze. It is strange, too, that they could so long have kept the facts from the police and others who suspected incendiarism from the first, and who have since been making the strongest effort to find out who the perpetrators were.

In the fire last night the playhouse was burned and a frame house was also destroyed. The contents of both buildings were lost and the loss will be in the neighborhood of \$1500.

After the fire the police authorities were notified and two members of the force were detailed to the scene and as a result seven youngsters averaging about 15 years of age, were arrested and charged with setting fire to Mohawk Institute on April 19, the barns and sheds on June 15th and the playhouse and adjoining buildings last night. The officers succeeded in tracing the guilty ones by severely questioning a couple of the pupils, and as the accounts of those who were since confessed to the charges had been very strange of late, information of a valuable character was soon received.

This morning four boys, Roy Wilson, Jesse Debs, Ishish Antime and Alexander Marck, appeared before Magistrate Woodgatt and each one admitted taking some part in setting

fire to the buildings. From their story it would appear that their actions were not intended as the result of any malicious intent, but simply a desire to see a blaze. They all stated that they had planned the burning of the buildings, but just decided to start the conflagration on few minutes before the blaze occurred.

Roy Wilson, the youngest of the boys, charged, at only 12 years old, took the initiative in lighting the match and collected the inflammable material which caused the burning of the barns on 19th April. And the playhouse last night. He denies, however, having had anything to do with the setting of the barns. His story about the institute fire is corroborated by the facts, and it agrees precisely with the time given, etc. About 9:30 o'clock, he says, he collected a couple of pair of old socks and an iron covered wire end, on which he took from one of the lanterns. He states that Debs and Antime cornered him and afterwards lifted him up through a trap door in the ceiling, where he placed the combustibles and kindled them. He descended into the dormitory, where he stayed for some time until the general alarm of fire had been given, when with the rest of the pupils, he rushed in saving the furniture and other valuables. It was just about 9 o'clock, Principal Ashton said, that the blaze was discovered, and it seemed at that time to be greatest just in the place where Wilson states he struck the match.

Jesse Debs, when questioned by Magistrate Woodgatt, confessed in more reserved the story told by Wilson, but he denies having any knowledge of the intention of Wilson when going up into the garret. It was, he states, that Wilson just took his work bag with him and then turned to him and Antime, asking them to lift him up through the trap door. By standing on the bed they did this and after Wilson had been in the garret for nearly five minutes, they assisted him in coming down. Debs affirms that he asked Wilson what he was doing up there, whereupon Wilson replied that he had just been looking around to see what he could find. Debs, according to his own story, went to bed, and was greatly surprised and frightened later when he was aroused by the cry of fire. Antime, corroborated Debs's story in every respect, also making it clear that he knows what Wilson intended to do when they were lifted through the trap door. Of the other

conflagration he said he knew nothing.

Wilson was also charged with the burning of the barns on June 6, but he pleaded not guilty, and endeavored to prove his innocence and loyalty by laying the blame on Frank Winnie. He said he knew that Winnie was going to do the deed, but that he did not assist him in any way.

Winnie was not present at the police court, but he will be arrested and charged with complicity in the crime.

Wilson figured prominently in last night's fire, but he endeavored to show every way to implicate Alexander Marck, etc. The two slept together, and Wilson says they acted jointly in setting the fire.

Marck was called and told a disconcerted story, the main purpose of which was to shouder the blame on Wilson. He says that he knew, as did also four or five more pupils, that Wilson was going to start the fire, but that he himself did not get out of bed and did, consequently, not assist him.

According to his story, Wilson collected some old paper, which was lying around, and rolling it in a small bundle, he stuck it into the air hole in the door, and as a match to it, and then came in and crossed at the door by crying "fire." Marck states he had nothing more to do with it, but Wilson denied this, part of it, and says Marck assisted him.

Chief Vaughan said there was considerable evidence which would substantiate the statements of the four boys and Magistrate Woodgatt accordingly committed them for trial. The boys did not seem to be in any way frightened over their predicament, and they realized the seriousness of their offence. Antime, the youngest and the smallest of them, were somewhat nervous, but he did not display any particular fear. Wilson, the chief perpetrator, conducted himself like a hardened villain, and it would appear that a mischievous instinct is abundantly developed in him. He told his story in a straightforward manner and did not appear as if trying to conceal anything. He says, however, that he only acted at the instance of the other boys, and that he would never have committed the mischief if he had not been called out into it by the other pupils.

Several more pupils will be charged with complicity in and knowledge of the incendiarism when next the case comes up for a hearing. Four others will go to hold as successful witnesses.

TO REBUILD INSTITUTE

Plans for the New Mohawk Institute Building Have Been Accepted

THE WORK WILL GO AHEAD

New England Company Decides not to Transfer the School to the West

The Mohawk Indian Institute will be rebuilt in this city. For some time there has been considerable apprehension lest the Institute might be removed to the West, where the growing demands of the work necessitate better accommodation. Some weeks after the disastrous fire that destroyed the old Institute a representative of the New England company was sent from London to this city to look over the local situation. After doing so he instructed Messrs. Stewart, Stewart & Taylor, architects, of this city, to prepare plans for a new Institute and forward them to England for the approval of the company. This the firm did with great care, and plans for a handsome \$30,000 building were forwarded about a month ago. Word has just been received from the New England directors that the plans have been accepted and the Institute will be rebuilt in this city on the site where the former building stood. The ground has been cleared and everything is in readiness for work to commence. Tenders for the work will be called for immediately, and it is expected that rapid progress will be made in the erection of the new structure, which will be modern in every detail.