

Oak-Street East Again Swept by Fire.

Disastrous Outbreak in Business Centre

Railway and Exchange Hotels and Parnell & Sons' Store Demolished.

Meacham & Leyland Heavy Losers.

J. S. Jackson Again Suffers Total Loss.

Fire Brigade's Exemplary Work in Saving Royal Hotel.

£12,000 to £15,000 Damages and Loss.

Origin of Fire a Mystery.

Last Tuesday morning, Oct. 29th, a disastrous fire in Oak-street East, starting in the recently erected Exchange Hotel, which was unoccupied, did damage estimated at £15,000.

The Railway and Exchange Hotels, Parnells' general store, and Meacham & Leyland's furniture store were totally destroyed, while Mr. J. S. Jackson lost all his stock in trade, fittings, &c.

The exemplary work of the Fire Brigade undoubtedly prevented the fire spreading to the Royal Hotel, and thus a good save was effected.

The origin of the fire is a mystery.

Once again has the eastern portion of the business section of Oak-street suffered in consequence of a disastrous outbreak of fire, which occurred

street suffered in consequence of a serious outbreak of fire, which occurred early last Tuesday morning, October 29th. On November 3rd,

October 29th. On November 29th, 1927, this particular portion of the same area was engulfed by the Fire Fiend when the Railway and Exchange Hotels, occupied respectively by Messrs. E. Fuery and W. Moore, were totally destroyed and much damage was done to the premises of Messrs. Meacham & Leyland and Arthur Parnell & Sons. On that occasion the fire started at about 3.30 a.m., and last Tuesday morning, judging by the strong hold the fire had when it was first discovered, it must have been somewhere about that hour that the fire also started, for it was about 3.45 a.m. when the siren sounded its dread warning and the two two-storey hotels were then raging furnaces. That is one outstanding feature of Tuesday morning's fire—the rapidity of the conflagration, and the hold it had before anybody was aware of the fact.

In the 1927 fire the outbreak was stopped at Parnell's, on the west side of the Railway Hotel, and at Meacham & Leyland's, on the eastern side of the Exchange Hotel, but on this occasion more disastrous results unfortunately occurred, and it was only owing to the almost super-human efforts of the Fire Brigade that a more serious demolition did not occur.

The sight of the Brigade at Parnell's to prevent the Royal Hotel igniting, will long be remembered by the hundreds of people who witnessed the determined and dogged efforts of the Brigade. Happily their good work was not in vain, and once again they crowned themselves with glory as fire-fighters.

The fire undoubtedly started in the recently-erected Exchange Hotel, and this appears to have burnt like matchwood, and notwithstanding a laneway of about 10 feet between, and the supposedly fire-resisting fibrolite walls of both hotels, the Railway Hotel was soon ignited and

HEROIC WALLS OF BOTH HOTELS, THE Railway Hotel was soon ignited and demolished; likewise Meacham & Leyland's fully-stocked furniture store, on the east, and Parnell's general store on the west.

The total damage wrought is estimated at between £12,000 and £15,-

000, and once again there is a nasty gap in our main business centre. The fire is a catastrophe to the town, as things were bad enough with the present adverse conditions owing to the continued drought.

The work of re-erecting the Exchange Hotel, which was the old Coronation Hotel, transported from Rockhampton, had just been completed on the previous Saturday, the contractor for the work and his men having taken their departure for Rockhampton that day. Mr. C. L. Scott had been engaged on plumbing work during the previous day up till about 5 p.m., but he says he had no fire about the place in connection with his work, and everything appeared quite all right when he left. Constable Chamberlain, who was on duty till about 1 a.m. on the morning of the fire, says he was in the vicinity of the new hotel at about that hour and he noticed nothing to cause any suspicion of smouldering fire. The outbreak, therefore, remains a mystery. The new hotel had been swept out on the Monday, and there was no rubbish or scrap timber lying about the premises. The Exchange was a two-storey commodious building, the outer walls being of fibrolite, and it seems to be the hand of Fate that after so much delay in erection, and the numerous adjournments of the application for renewal of license, &c., that the building should be so ignominiously destroyed before it could be occupied.

The buildings destroyed in Tues-

The buildings destroyed in Tuesday morning's fire were:

Arthur Parnell & Sons, General Merchants.

Railway Hotel.—E. Fuery

J. S. Jackson, Hairdresser and Tobacconist, &c. in Railway Hotel building.

Exchange Hotel—(Unoccupied).

Meacham & Leyland's Furniture Store.

From what can be gathered, it appears Mr. F. Balderson, one of the boarders occupying an upstairs room at the Railway Hotel, was among the first, with Mr. E. Fuery, to be awakened by the fire. Mr. Balderson quickly raised an alarm, and then did his best to gather a few of his personal belongings together. In the meantime, Mr. C. Fisher, who occupied a room at the Royal

Hotel, had been awakened by the calls of "Fire" and also the big reflection and he rushed down and promptly switched on the siren alarm situated in front of Messrs. Meacham & Leyland's. At this time the fire was a big blaze—the Exchange Hotel was burning furiously—and very shortly afterwards the Railway Hotel, too, was well alight. Mr. Fuery says he and others had hardly time to get out, and he only had time to grab a few personal effects.

With the sounding of the siren, residents started to pour into the main street from all directions, and soon there were several hundreds watching the progress of the fire as it ate its way both ends. Meacham & Leyland's furniture store was soon alight, and efforts were then made to stem the fire from catching the main building, which was separated from the furniture store by a laneway. Many volunteers were

available and fortunately, with a change of the wind, which had been blowing from a south-easterly direction, the main shop was saved, but not without a great fight on the part of employees of the firm and others, in conjunction with the Brigade.

The Fire Brigade turned out with commendable promptness when the alarm sounded but the men were faced with an Herculean task owing to the start the fire had on them, but never daunted they got into their well-known stride and within three-quarters of an hour they had the progress of the fire checked.

Mr. H. J. P. Williams, Chief Officer, was awakened by the siren at about 3.45 a.m., and when he arrived on the scene the fire engine was coupling up in Oak-street. The Exchange and Railway Hotels were well alight then, and a fairly strong south-east wind was blowing. Six hundred feet of hoisting attached to the Morris engine and a Jale pump were run out in Oak-street, and 700ft. from two hydrants in Ash-street, Deputy Chief Officer E. Vale having charge of the Ash-street operations.

Seeing that Parnell's was doomed, the Chief Officer gave orders to concentrate on the western wall of Parnell's to try and save the Royal Hotel and the row of buildings running westwardly of this fine two-storey building. Parnell's was a single-roofed old iron building and a laneway of about 10ft. separated it from the iron wall of the massive two-storey Royal Hotel. Here was witnessed one of the greatest fights the Fire Brigade has ever been called on to endure. The heat was intense, and it is wonderful how the men stood to their guns in the manner they did. It was a very anxious time, but the

was a very anxious time, but the dogged tenacity of the experienced young fellows, who were borne up by the orders and assistance of their Chief eventually won through, and an excellent save was effected. Time after time vicious flames licked ominously near the Royal, but an occasional sweep of the hoses on the wall and curtain boards would quickly squelch the flames. Hoses were played through the windows of the office portion of Parnells, while at the rear of the premises firemen and others were having a particularly strenuous time. How the men stood up to the intense heat and dense smoke was wonderful, and too much praise cannot be given them. Once again they had achieved what appeared to be the impossible. It would be quite unfair to individualise in such circumstances for all did the work of Trojans.

During the work at Parnells, Fireman Alf. Walker was overcome for a while, but he soon rallied and determinedly re-entered into the fray. Fireman L. Vale and D. McQuaid also received some nasty burns, but they were not incapacitated from duty.

The Morris engine and Hale pump, in charge of Fireman D. Devery, again did excellent work and the water supply was all that could be desired. We are assured that 2,000,000 gallons of water were pumped at the Power House during the fire-fighting operations, and the pressure was high, as was evidenced by the numerous leaks apparent in the hosing after the fire had been checked.

As showing the tremendous heat, it may be stated that at one stage the goods shed caught fire, but it is thought that the outbreak was

thought that the outbreak was caused by a piece of burning celotex falling into a spouting gutter and igniting some dry rubbish. The tarpaulin covering of a truck of wool just loaded the previous day—Mr. P. Manning's, by-the-way—was also ignited. Both these incipient outbreaks were quickly subdued by volunteers. The wool was undamaged but the tarpaulin was somewhat burnt.

When burning at its height, the fire presented an awesome spectacle. To say it was a fierce fire is but putting it mildly. The flames from the two two-storey structures rose to a great height, and sparks were showered away over on the north side of the line. The fibrolite walls appeared to burst into small pieces, sounding like the discharge of bullets. Pieces of this material were found as far away as in the station house grounds, and when picked up fell into powder. The reflection of the fire was plainly observed at Curlew and Lochnagar, while Mr. R. A. Parnell, of course, could see the fire distinctly at Brackhill.

It was truly heart-rending to see the wilful destruction of the fine new Railway Hotel, and much sympathy is felt for Mr. E. Fuery, the licensee, and Mrs. M. Lannon, who owned the building. Mr. Fuery was wiped out in the 1927 fire, and had only taken possession of the new building on January 28th this year. The Railway Hotel was a very fine and well-furnished two-storey building. There were 16 rooms upstairs, with a capacious lounge, while downstairs there were four bedrooms, pantry, kitchen, large well-appointed dining-room, bar, and three private parlors. The whole place had been well furnished and lined throughout by Mr. Fuery, who was just beginning to

Fuery, who was just beginning to re-establish himself in his business, and who was looking forward to recouping some of the big loss he sustained in 1927. The building was mostly built of celotex, with outer walls of fibrolite. A feeling of some security was naturally held by Mr. Fuery, and now all his hopes have been shattered. The cuisine and attention given by Mr. Fuery was all that could be desired, while his genial disposition, and excellent refreshments always dispensed, had won him a popular clientele. Mr. Fuery had just landed fresh stocks on the previous Saturday, and his loss will be heavy. The insurance cover of £800 on his furniture, stock and fittings, cannot possibly recoup him, and he is deserving of the sympathy of all. He estimates his stock value at the time of the fire at £800. In addition, he lost all his personal effects. Altogether "Ted" has been hardly hit, but we trust he will pick himself up and in the future reap a greater success and more encouragement in life than he has experienced during the past two years. Mr. Tim Fuery suffered a loss in the total destruction of his 6-valve A.W.A. Radiola Wireless outfit, which unfortunately was not

insured. This outfit was the young fellow's chief hobby and delight in his sad affliction of eye trouble, and it is a very unfortunate circumstance. "Tim" also lost practically all his personal effects. A pathetic incident was the incineration of Mr. Fuery's cage of canaries. These were forgotten in the hurry of exit, and the sweet little whistlers were burnt.

Mr. J. S. Jackson, who had re-established himself in a snug little hairdressing and tobacconist business in the Railway Hotel building, was unable to save anything, and he suffered a total loss. Mr. Jack-

son had a very well-appointed saloon, and carried full stocks of tobaccos, cigarettes, cigars, fancy goods, &c. He was totally cleaned-out in the fire of 1927. We hear he will be starting business again in the near future. Mr. G. Andrews, bookmaker, whose office was in Mr. Jackson's shop, also lost personal effects, being unable to save anything.

The destruction of Messrs. Arthur Parnell & Sons' general store removes one of the oldest landmarks of the town, the building having been erected in the early 80's. This old iron low-roofed building has weathered the fire-storm on two previous occasions, and although doomed this time it was the means of preventing the spread of the fire to the further western portion of the section. Messrs. Parnell carried very heavy stocks, and the stock insurances cannot possibly cover the loss sustained. In the big fire of 1896 it was at Parnell's that the outbreak was stopped, and again in 1927 it was here that a halt was called in the progress of the fire. On this occasion the bulk store and other premises at the rear of the main store were saved. The Oak-street building was packed with stocks of all kind, and the fire burnt furiously for a great time—much longer than most people would have thought. Although greatly damaged by water and fire, portion of the office—that portion adjoining the laneway near the Royal Hotel, where the big fight was put up by the Brigade—remained, and it was gratifying to Mr. Parnell to find, on opening his safe later in the morning, that all the firm's books and papers, &c., were quite intact and undamaged. The inside of what remained of the store presented a sorry spectacle, and one could not help lamenting the loss of such

sorry spectacle, and one could not help lamenting the loss of such a valuable stock as was carried by this firm. With the arrival of fresh stocks, and those on hand in bulk, Mr. Parnell has re-commenced business in temporary premises adjoining Messrs W. D. Colman & Co.

It is noteworthy that the two petrol bowsers erected in front of Parnells were practically undamaged.

Naturally, when the fire was threatening the Royal Hotel so viciously, Mrs. A. Murnane had an anxious time, but beyond personal effects she removed nothing from the building. The precaution exercised by Mr. J. P. Vesper, late owner of the Royal, in having the outer eastern wall covered with galvanised ripple iron proved very effective on this occasion as a fire resister. Mr. S. Farrington, men's mercer, occupies the shop in the Royal adjoining Parnells', and he, too, had an anxious time until the fire was checked.

In course of a chat Mr. Meacham said Mrs. Meacham called him and said "The shop's on fire!" and he noticed the hands of his watch marked 4.30. When he saw the Exchange building was well alight he lost no time, with assistance, in emptying his office of books and papers, which were conveyed to safety by the firm's motor vehicles. At this time there was no chance of saving anything in the furniture department, adjoining which were double doors and a passage way dividing off the main shop from the building, which was in a way isolated, a large yard space being in the rear, on which, fortunately, no timber was stacked. The fire burnt vigorously and soon licked up the valuable furniture, of which there

was a large assortment, including Lincoln goods, just to hand, and ice chests. The Fire Brigade put in excellent work here and made the utmost use of the passage, with the result that the fire proceeded no further in this direction. Mr. Meacham estimates his loss at between £1100 and £1200, and the total insurance on the furniture, building and stock was only £400 in the Norwich Union Fire Office, England—which did not cover invoice cost of the lino. and other goods just installed. Nothing in the large retail premises was injured in any way. The fire removes another of the old Central Line buildings. We understand the premises originally belonged to Francis Tagg (formerly Fox & Tagg) and Arthur Parnell, who carried on a mixed store and forwarding agency business, and were moved along the line as it advanced to Bogantungan. When the line advanced over the Ranse Fred Jungmann, who did a lot of building contracting in those days, and for whom Mr. Meacham worked, removed the building to Pine Hill from which it was taken as it stood, on wheels, further along the line. The building was eventually removed to Barcaldine, where it was occupied by Mr. W. Eastlake, solicitor and later by Mr. R. F. Lyons, solicitor, when he commenced the practice of his profession in Barcaldine.

The destruction of Parnells' store removes another old-time warrior, and indeed Savage's stores are the only business buildings left of the early days of settlement along the Central Railway line. Parnells' was a household word from Copperfield days; indeed, the old "Champion" office was Parnells' store at Clermont. The buildings escaped the big Pine Hill fire, but had a narrow escape some ten years after Barcaldine.

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Lincoln goods just to hand.

escape some ten years after Barcaldine blossomed forth as a town. About 2.30 on the afternoon of Boxing Day, 1898, a fire broke out in the Railway Hotel, kept by the Lennon Family, caused by a man throwing down a lighted match which caught a quantity of paper and rubbish underneath the building, and a big fire-up was the result. Most of the residents were away at Lagoon Creek at the time, taking part in the first Salvation Army picnic but there were enough people in the street to fight the fire until assistance arrived. In those days there was only 100 feet of fire hose and a small manual engine, but an old Berlin fireman named Harry Grimm took charge of affairs, and although he gave his orders in German, everybody appeared to understand them and obey them. Harry sat astride the roof of Parnell's and prevented the fire going west. As a further precaution a small shop adjoining the Royal Hotel was pulled down. Eastwardly the fire burned, snapping up Bancke's hall, a couple of shops, a small two-storey hotel kept by Mr. E. A. Peel, and Dick Hoskin's saddler's shop. The detached dwelling house occupied by the Hoskin Family, was quite close to Messrs. Meacham & Leyland's workshop, and was destroyed. Between Mr. Hoskin's and Messrs. Meacham & Leyland's was a space, and here a determined fight was put up, the fire being successfully stayed by the use of French garden sprays, which threw quite a force from a bucket of water. In due time the ground was again built on, being occupied by two two-storey hotels and shops. It was just at about 4 a.m. on the 3rd November, 1927, when a fire broke out in the storeroom of the Exchange Hotel, and it and the Railway Hotel adjoining, and Mr. J. S. Jackson's shop were destroyed. Parnell's had a particularly close shave, as the flames had actually

shave, as the flames had actually entered the store from the south-eastern corner. Meacham & Leyland had bed linen and furniture destroyed, chiefly by smoke and water. And now, as detailed at length, comes the greatest disaster of all in this block, by which two hotels, a store and two shops were burnt out. The Royal Hotel undoubtedly escaped destruction due to the outer walls of this massive wooden

building being externally sheathed with iron.

Mr. W. Lamberton, manager of Lamberton & Co., Rockhampton, who had been inspecting the Exchange Hotel, only left Barcaldine for Rockhampton on last Monday's mail train. The Exchange Hotel had been rebuilt to the order of the firm, and it had been intended to furnish and put it into commission as soon as possible.

The scene of the fire when daylight broke was truly one of desolation. Firemen were playing hoses on the debris all day and throughout Tuesday night a man was on duty. A strong breeze was blowing during the night and several piles of debris were fanned into flame. The demolished area presented a mass of burnt twisted iron and fragments of fibrolite, while the limited badly charred remains of Parnell's store stood out in vivid contrast to the Royal Hotel alongside. Most of the rear premises of the fire-swept area were intact.

During the fire, and after, Serjt. Davis and his men kept a watchful eye over everything. The Sergeant says everything was quite orderly, and he had no complaints of pilfering, &c. When passing through a side gate leading from Parnell's to the lane running between the Railway Hotel and Parnell's the Sergeant states a piece of the fibrolite

geant states a piece of the fibrolite from the hotel wall burst out and narrowly missed his face. The Sergeant says if the piece had struck him "he would have been going yet!"

For the third time Parnell's white corella parrot was removed to safety on Tuesday morning during the fire. This parrot is a regular fire veteran now.

With further regard to Messrs. Arthur Parnell & Sons' store, Mr. R. A. Parnell advises us that the building was brought along the Central line. In 1883 it was in Bogantungan; in 1884 it was transferred to Pine Hill, then to Jericho, and in 1886 it was brought to Barcaldine, where it has done good and faithful service ever since. So may it now rest peacefully in its ashes!

It is pleasing to know that Messrs. Parnell & Sons intend rebuilding on their old site, and Mr. Parnell states he will make sure the building will be built of fire-resisting material, probably brick.

During the burning of Parnell's last Tuesday morning the splendid standing quality of the galvanised iron was very noticeable. On inquiry we ascertained that the brand of this iron was "Gospel Oak," an imported commodity—from England we understand, and unprocureable, unless at great cost at the present time. There is no doubt the iron is composed of tough material all right. It could get red hot without any apparent deterioration, and most of the burnt iron from Parnell's will be usable again.

Mr. Fred Lawrence, our local photographer, took some excellent photographic views of the fire, and will be pleased to receive orders. Samples may be seen in Mr. F. P. O'Reilly's show windows.

In the course of an interview, Mr. H. J. P. Williams, Chief Offi-

Mr. H. J. P. Williams, Chief Officer, says the fire on Tuesday morning was the hottest and fiercest the Brigade had yet to contend with. The heat was so great that the water was thrown back on the firemen like spray. With a pressure of 20 lbs. behind it, it was some task to stand up to it. Mr. Williams was always in fear of the goods-shed igniting from the intense heat. If such a thing happened he says the Brigade would have been in a very precarious position between the two fires. Fortunately, such an eventuality did not occur.

An unfortunate incident happened at Meacham & Leyland's end when some volunteers were endeavoring to run a hose out. The hosing became locked against a veranda's post, and in endeavoring to chop down the post the willing hand might and almost chopped the hose in half. However, another length was procured and beyond a few minu-

tes' delay nothing serious happened from the accident.

As on previous occasions, there were several generous-hearted people who supplied the firemen with welcome refreshments during their strenuous fire-fighting activities, among these being Mesdames C. Fawkes, B. Mahoney, and A. Murlane, and Messrs. Kuder Bros., and others. The officers and members of the Brigade appreciate very much this thoughtfulness. The Brigade also appreciates the assistance rendered by the numerous volunteers.

INSURANCES.—

The insurances, so far as we have been able to procure them, were:—

Messrs. Arthur Parnell & Sons—£850 on building and £1940 on stock and fittings with the I.O.A. Company.

J. S. Jackson—£260 on stock-in-

J. S. Jackson—£260 on stock-in-trade with the State Insurance Co.

E. Fuery (licensee of Railway Hotel)—£800 on stock, furniture, &c.

Railway Hotel building (Estate J. J. Lennon)—£3000 with the I.O.A. Company.

Exchange Hotel (Lamberton & Company)—£2000 in the New Zealand Insurance Company.

Messrs. Meacham & Leyland (furniture store)—£400 on building and stock in furniture store with the Norwich Union Insurance Co. Messrs. Meacham & Leyland estimate their loss at between £1100 and £1200.

Messrs. Parnell & Sons will also be heavy losers.

MESSAGES OF SYMPATHY.—

Messrs. Meacham & Leyland received messages from the following:—Shell Company, Brisbane; Walter Reid, Rockhampton; P. Rasmussen Rockhampton; Williams Ltd., Rockhampton; Thos. Brown & Sons Brisbane; Arthur Cocks, Brisbane; Norwich Union Insurance Co., Brisbane; A. M. Hertzberg, Brisbane; Laycock & Littledike, Brisbane; Wilson Hart, Maryborough; White Pertrie, Brisbane; A. L. Perrie, Toowong; John Tichborne, Thornhill; Rev. D. Fletcher, Roma. Thomas Brown & Sons, Rockhampton.

Mr. E. Fuery has received messages of sympathy from the following:—Tim Fuery, Chinchilla; Headricks, Rockhampton; P. Rasmussen (Rockhampton); Ted Smith, Brookstead; Cawsey's, Brisbane; Ted Wright, Warwick; Bill Moore, Rosewood; Jim Watts; R.S.S.I. League.

Messrs. A. Parnell & Sons received messages from the following: R.S.S.I.L.A., Barcaldine Sub-Branch; Oddfellows Lodge, Barcaldine; Mr. W. H. Rudd, Rockhampton; Mr. J. M. Kerr, Rockhampton; Mr. C. L.

W. H. Rudd, Rockhampton; Mr. J. M. Kerr, Rockhampton; Mr. C. L. Harden, Brisbane; Mr. A. W. Shields, Blackall; Mr. Gordon Hughes, Blackall; Mr. P. Rasmussen, Rockhampton; Mr. J. S. Jones, Clermont; The Shell Co. of Australia Ltd., Rockhampton; Messrs. Mederaf's Ltd., Rockhampton; Messrs. Walter Reid & Co. Ltd., Rockhampton; Messrs. Thos. Brown & Sons Ltd., Rockhampton; Messrs. Williams Ltd., Rockhampton; The Shell Co. of Australia Ltd., Brisbane; Messrs. A. M. Hertzberg & Co. Ltd., Brisbane; Messrs. Fognitt Jones Pty. Ltd.

At a meeting of members of "Loyal Barcaldine" Lodge, M.U., I.O.O.F., held on Wednesday evening, October 30th, reference was made to the great loss sustained by Bros. Parnell in the fire on Tuesday morning, and a message of sympathy with the firm was unanimously carried. In conveying the resolution the secretary wrote that members hoped like the Phoenix Parnells' would rise from the ashes more prosperous than ever before, and that the "auld hoose," with its old associations, would give place to a modern building worthy of such an important centre as Barcaldine.

Mr. H. J. Peut wires us from Sandgate conveying the family's sympathies with the sufferers through the recent fire.

Mr. S. H. Fraser, Chairman of the Aramac Shire Council, sent a wire of sympathy to Mr. R. F.

FRASER, CHAIRMAN BARCOLDINE SHIRE COUNCIL.

We cannot let the occasion pass without complimenting the Chief Officer (Mr. H. J. P. Williams) the Deputy Chief Officer (Mr. B. Vale) and the members of the Fire Brigade on their excellent work on Tuesday morning. There is no

on Tuesday morning. There is no doubt Barcaldine has every reason to feel proud of the personnel of the Brigade, and in Mr. Williams we have a Chief Officer who would be hard to replace. We trust that nothing will happen to displace him from this position. He has everything necessary in the way of qualification for the holding of such a responsible position in case of fire, and he has proved his worth on several occasions in recent years. His commanding voice, initiative, and all-round general ability for the job entitles him to full recognition as Chief Officer, and the men under his command follow his instructions implicitly and without demur. It is by having such confidence in their "head" that the firemen are able to accomplish so much.

We also take this opportunity of extending our sympathy to all those who have suffered in this fire.