

BIG FIRE IN BARCALDINE.

The Ill-fated Western Section Again.

Damage Estimated up to £25,000.

**Commercial Hotel and Six Business Premises
Totally Destroyed**

The western section of the business centre of Barcaldine in Oak-street was again the scene of a disastrous fire early on last Sunday morning, and so sudden and rapid was the outbreak and its progress that there is much to be thankful for that the conflagration was not attended with fatalities. It was about 2.20 a.m. when the fire bell pealed out its terrifying alarm, rousing residents from their slumbers. The bell's sonorous tone seems to have a nerve-shattering effect on one, and householders jump out of their beds as if in a horrible nightmare. A huge fire in Oak-street west was immediately observed and this proved to be the Commercial Hotel, which by then appeared to be almost wholly in flames. Excited people commenced to rush townwards from all over the place, and soon Oak-street was crowded. Mr. Sam Hoy was first to reach the fire station after the alarm had been sounded, and he quickly pulled out the fire reel. Constable Campbell soon afterwards came along, and he and Mr. Hoy ran the reel to Oak-street, where members of the Fire Brigade had commenced to assemble, and they then took charge of operations.

Mr. Bert Norgett, who was driver-in-charge at the Power House on the morning of the fire deserves a word

in-charge at the Power House on the morning of the fire, deserves a word of commendation for not only his promptitude in turning on the tower tank water into the mains, and setting the pumps going, but for his presence of mind in improvising an alarm for eastern residents. Mr. Norgett happened to walk outside to see if the sump was full, when he noticed the glare in Oak-street. No message had up to then been 'phoned to the power house. This is explained by the fact that Mr. O'Connor did not ring up the telephone attendant, but went direct to the station. Mr. Norgett then rushed in and, actually before the firebell rang, he had the tower tank on, the pumps going, had rung up the Engineer, and by means of hanging the steel uprights of the water tower and calling out "Fire!" he created such a pandemonium as would awaken the dead. The banging of the tower could be heard all over the town, and Mr. Norgett is to be commended for his thoughtfulness. We have heard instances of the soundest of sleepers, residing at some distance from the power house, having been awakened by this impromptu alarm. Mr. E. Hill rushed to the Power House to tender any assistance if required, and the Engineer, Mr. J. Terris, too, was quickly at his post where he remained until the fire was effectively checked. So far as the Power House is concerned there can be no cause for complaint. Everything was kept going there tip-top, and an excellent supply of water maintained throughout. During the early morn Mr. R. A. Parnell, Chairman of the Shire, visited the Power House to personally see how things were going. Mr. Parnell felt annoyed that the Power House had not been notified of the fire by 'phone, but now knowing the actual circumstances the Chairman will understand that

the Chairman will understand that the telephone attendant could not notify the Power House of something of which he had not been notified himself. However, Mr. Norgett saw the fire himself and he acted with most commendable promptitude.

There was a nasty choppy wind, but this for a while blew directly in a northerly direction, blowing the flames towards the railway line. As showing the great heat, a couple of parcels in the railway fence were ignited and burnt, while grass in the railway reserve was also set alight, and also the electric light cable poles lining the railway fence. When Plumb's and McBride's were burning the heat was intense. The wind veered to a south-westerly direction, and the flames were driven furiously towards the western properties. Mr. C. Heumiller's "White Rose Cafe" and Messrs. C. B. Plumb & Co.'s large drapery establishment were soon raging furnaces, nothing at all being saved from either of these properties. As a matter of fact, Mr. Plumb did not arrive at the scene of the fire until his place had been practically demolished; the alarms had not awakened him, and the rest of the family thinking Mr. Plumb had already gone, had rushed away to the fire, leaving him asleep at home. By this time the fire was burning vigorously at both ends. Westwardly, Mr. J. Catip's drapery emporium had caught, and Messrs. Wah, Sung & Co.'s (recently taken over by Mr. C. E. Glasson) general store soon followed in the sequence of demolition. The flames were reaching to a great height and the wind was blowing strongly towards the west. At the moment that Plumb's was about doomed there were hopes that the fire might be stopped at the Lyric Pictures, and thus Mr. F. A. Mc-

Pictures, and thus Mr. F. A. McLean's fine new refreshment rooms saved. But nothing was done in the way of organising a bucket brigade or even pulling down the front wall of the Lyric which connected Plumb's and McLean's. The whole of the Fire Brigade's apparatus was engaged at Colman's and it was impossible to transfer a hose to the Lyric. Yet, had a hose or bucket brigade been organised McLean's might probably have been saved. Still, considering the greater risk at the other end—there were two hotels and seven business places weighing in the balance—we think the Brigade Superintendent acted rightly in concentrating all his forces at Colman's. If a bucket brigade had been organised at the Lyric no doubt good work could have been done, but the wind

had changed again and the flames were rapidly driven across the Lyric on to McLean's, both places succumbing. When the roof of McLean's fell in the fire was practically ended, as the blank corner (excepting for the small tin humpy standing thereon), on which the West End Hotel had once stood acted as a dead end. One could not help thinking how fortunate the one responsible was in not having re-built the West End Hotel, for this would assuredly have been demolished on Sunday morning, and with the wind blowing as it was it is probable the Shakespeare would have ignited. However, all's well that ends well. The disaster was quite serious enough. A short while afterwards it was apparent the fire had been checked at Colman's, and the hundreds of spectators heaved a sigh of relief that the fire was in hand. It was really heart-rending to see the piles of debris lining the street. The eyesore of the West End corner

The eyesore of the West End corner has been bad enough for many months, but now the scene is a desolate one in the extreme.

Mr. McLean, fortunately, had had ample time to remove the greater part of his stock and fittings. Even the mirrors, pictures, and linoleum had been removed. A quantity of the kitchen fittings and stock, however, **could not be removed and were destroyed.** Mr. McLean's huge stacks of furniture, stock, &c., were piled in the corner of the West End block, but a great deal of it was subsequently removed into the centre of the road as it was considered less likely to catch alight there, and not be a source of probable danger to the Shakespeare. Mr. McLean suffered no little loss in breakages, &c., while a couple of hams and several boxes of chocolates (valued at £2 a box) were actually stolen. It is hard to imagine anybody having the heart to pilfer under such circumstances. Mr. McLean had the sympathy of many. It was awfully stiff luck for him being

books were destroyed. Mr. H. Urquhart informs us he lost about £300 worth of goods which he had placed in Mr. Plumb's shop for safe-keeping just the day before. Mr. Plumb had successfully weathered two previous fire disasters, and on these occasions he had managed to salvage a fair quantity of stock with which to restart business. On this occasion, however, it was a clean sweep and he was left absolutely with a bare cupboard. Miss A. Robertson, one of the firm's staff, was unfortunate enough to lose some valuable personal belongings which she had left in the shop. Mr. Plumb's insurances amount to £3900.

Mr. and Mrs. C. Heumiller are deserving of much sympathy in their

servicing of much sympathy in their loss and misfortune. Only in our last issue had we an article describing the up-to-datedness of Mr. Heumiller's "White Rose" Cafe, and so soon has it been laid in ashes! Nothing at all was saved from the premises, and although the stock and fittings were insured for £275, there will be a substantial loss. It was a tip-top refreshment room, if on the small side, and its demolition is a public loss. The shop was portion of the Commercial Hotel.

The loss sustained by the McBride family is very great, as practically everything was lost. Mr McBride estimates his loss at £7000. The insurances were £1500 on the building, and £600 on the furniture, stock, contents of billiard room, &c. The Commercial has always been one of our leading hotels, and was run on excellent lines. It was well-known throughout the Central-West, and the family have long been associated with the town and district. Mr. McBride and the other members of the family will have the sincerest sympathy of all in their misfortune. Many valued personal effects were lost in the fire.

Mr. J. Catip's luck, is dead out. Coming so soon after his West End loss Sunday morning's disaster is just enough to knock all heart out of him. Mr. Catip will undoubtedly be a heavy loser on the present occasion, as nothing, beyond a cash register and a few papers, was saved. Mr. Catip, in fact, had not much time to spare in getting out of his premises. It was really Mr. J. Ivers who roused Mr. Catip, who appeared to be quite oblivious of the fire which was rapidly overwhelming him. He heard some noise going on, but thought it was merely a row in the

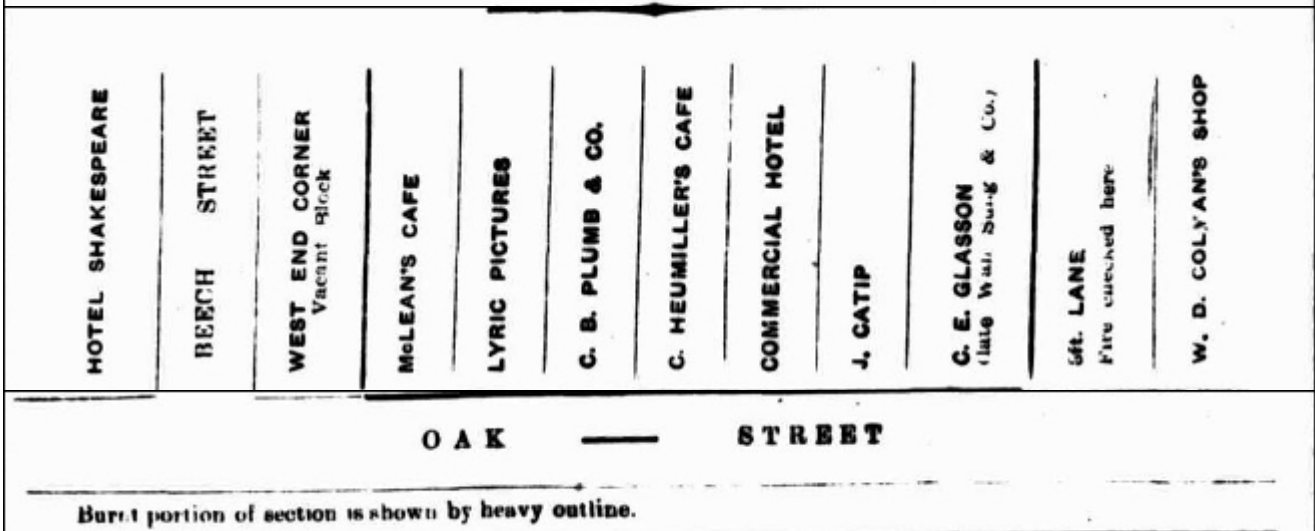
thought it was merely a row in the

fortunate part of it was that the money was mostly other people's property, including £50 belonging to his sister in Jericho, and H.A.C.B. Society contributions. There were several substantial individual losses at the Commercial. Mr. O'Connor, in addition to losing the whole of his extensive wardrobe (for it is well-known Mr. O'Connor had a good stock-in-trade of clothing) lost some £20 in cash which he had in his room. Messrs. Grell and Les. Bowden lost practically all their clothing and the latter, also about £30 in cash, which he had just received that day. Mr. Alf. Hannay, too, suffered a loss of about £150 in clothing, books, and a valuable opal tie pin. Included in Mr. McBride's loss were the whole of the B.C.R.C. and H.A.C.B. Society (of which he was secretary) books and documents. Most of the house books were lost.

Of course it is not known how the fire originated. Mr. McBride said he was a very sound sleeper when he once went off, and rarely woke during the night. On Saturday night he read in his room until about 12.30, then put out the light and retired. Some time later something awakened him—he knows not what; possibly it was a presentiment. He then noticed a flare through his eastern window and jumping out of bed to investigate he looked through the window and saw the ground plate immediately underneath him burning for a length of about twelve feet in from the front footpath. He quickly awakened Mr. T. O'Connor, who was in an adjoining room, and then dashed the contents of a water jug over the flames. He then told Mr. O'Connor to rouse the inmates and ring up the fire station. In-

and ring up the fire station. Instead of ringing up, Mr. O'Connor rushed round to the station and gave the alarm to Mr. Hopkins, who rang the bell. Mr. O'Connor then raced back to the Commercial to try and save some of his effects but it was too late. The fine building was then beyond all hope of saving, and Mr. O'Connor could not approach it to save anything; hence he lost everything. The jug of water which Mr. McBride threw over the fire, appeared to him to extinguish the outbreak, but the fire was apparently burning under the building. Mr. McBride then rushed downstairs to rouse his sisters and other inmates, and to procure some buckets and an extinguisher. Then he remembered his safe keys were in the pocket of a pair of trousers in his

Location of Fire, Dec. 4th, 1921, 2.20 a.m.



Part portion of section is shown by heavy outline.

turned out so unmercifully from the beautiful new premises in which he took such pride and in the fitting of which he had laid out so much capital. The building was only recently erected by Mr. W. J. O'Regan; actually only one month's rent had been received. In our issue of Nov. 26th we had a detailed account of these

we had a detailed account of these up-to-date premises, which were second to none in the Central-West. In view of the approaching festive season Mr. McLean's loss will be substantial. He had made special arrangements for a big display, and in the capacious Central Cafe, just laid to ashes, he would have had ample scope for an attractive show. The building was insured in the Commercial Union Company for £1000.

At the Lyric Picture Theatre there was but little saved. In the early stages of the fire, Mr. O'Regan and assistants had removed the piano, and a few canvas chairs to safety, while a quantity of films (two complete programmes) were also rescued. The whole of the machinery and operating plant was totally destroyed. The building and most of the operating machinery was the property of Mr. W. J. O'Regan, while the electric motor, and fittings were the property of Mr. D. Stibbards, who also lost a number of canvas chairs, valuable lenses, and a case of picture fans which he was presenting to his patrons. Mr. O'Regan's losses include a dynamo, bioscope machine, and all necessary operating box fittings, in addition to seating accommodation, &c. As Mr. O'Regan had an insurance cover of only £525 on the Lyric building and fittings his loss should be heavy. Mr. Stibbards' estimated his net loss at about £300. He had his portion of the plant insured for £100, and he estimates it will cost £400 to replace it. The whole of the enclosure, with exception of the western wall and the screen, was totally destroyed. As showing the great heat the glasses in the condenser (which are about two inches in thickness) in the lamp house of the bioscope machine had melted and ran through the bottom of the brass

through the bottom of the brass holders.

Messrs. C. B. Plumb & Co. will be heavy losers as nothing in the way of stock, &c., was saved. Mr. Plumb stated he carried a big stock, and in addition to losing this he had a fairly large amount of money in his safe. For the purpose of completing some accounts, as he often did, Mr. Plumb had the previous day taken home his day book and ledger. All the other

street created by quarrelsome drunks. Mr. Catip carried a big stock, representing some thousands of pounds. Mr. Catip's shop was the property of Mr. R. Park, and was insured for £500 in the Lancashire Co. Mr. Catip estimated his interests at £3000, and the insurances amounted to £1500. Mr. Catip, therefore, estimates his loss at fully £1500.

Mr. C. E. Glasson, who only took over the business of Messrs. Wah Sung & Co. on Nov. 28th, indeed struck bad luck. The business was secured on a walk-in walk-out basis—a cash sale—and only on the last three days of the week preceding the fire Mr. Glasson had landed about £500 worth of new goods; in fact, all of these had not been opened up at the time of the fire. Nothing was saved beyond a few papers, invoices, counter-books, &c., and the loss sustained will be heavy. The total insurances amount to £1100—£600 on the building and £500 on the stock.

Naturally the telephone wires in the line of fire became much disorganised, and there were tangled wires and cables all over the street. Several of the large poles were badly burnt—in fact, one or two were completely burnt through and were pull-

pletely burnt through and were pulled down for safety. The large shade trees running down the centre of the street received rather a severe mauling and were charred badly.

Mr. W. McBride, who occupies a balcony room, and who was the first person to discover the fire, had a very trying time—in fact, he is fortunate in getting out so well. As it was, Mr. McBride was somewhat badly burnt about the face and hands. These injuries were sustained in an endeavor to procure his keys after an initial push downstairs to rouse the inmates. His hair was badly scorched, tufts of hair burnt out of his moustache, his eyebrows more or less burnt off and his ears badly blistered. Mr. McBride was, however, unable to get his keys, and saved nothing beyond a waistcoat (which he grabbed when first awakened) in which was a valuable gold presentation watch and chain. Subsequently he was able to save, from the safe in the bar, a parcel of private papers, documents, deeds, &c. In another safe was a large quantity of valuables, money for safe-keeping, &c., and books, and all these were burnt beyond recognition. There was over £150 in notes and cheques in this safe, and everything was found to have been destroyed when the safe was opened next morning. The un-

room and he rushed upstairs again to procure these, but when he reached the room it was a mass of seething flames, and though crouching low the heat and flames were so intense that he could not fully enter to get the keys. It was while on this errand that Mr. McBride got so badly burnt. He again rushed downstairs and found his sister, Miss Annie McBride, trying to save some things

Bride, trying to save some things from a safe in the bar. Miss McBride happened to have a duplicate key of this safe. The building by this time was practically in full blaze, and after grabbing up a bundle of private papers out of the drawer in the safe Mr. McBride just about had time to literally pull his sister from the burning building.

An amazing feature was the marvellous rapidity with which the fire burned up the Commercial. The fine building was a seething mass of flame almost before the firebell had ceased ringing. From Ash-street a peculiar effect was noticeable. The walls and iron on the roof had all burned, but the massive hardwood framework was slower in burning, and the outline stood conspicuously as if picked out in silver.

Mr. McBride could assign no cause for the outbreak. He mentioned that a number of boys were discharging crackers in the locality on the night before, and it was quite possible that some of the burning fragments may have lodged under the building.

Mr. W. Grell, who was acting as assistant to Mr. C. Heumiller, and who resided at the Commercial Hotel, had rather an exciting time, and he states he really owes his life to Messrs. W. McBride and Lea Bowden, who roused him when the flames were practically all round him. He had just managed to get out with a pair of trousers, and for a moment or two owing to the suddenness of the whole thing, he was quite dazed when first awakened. Mr. Grell says he closed up the "White Rose Cafe" premises at about 1 o'clock when he turned into bed at the Commercial. Everything was all right at the restaurant when he left. He put the stove fire out (according to his instructions), turned off all lights, &c.

structions), turned off all lights, &c., and then retired. He noticed no sign or smell of smouldering fire. He seemed to have been in bed only an hour or so when Mr. Bowden was endeavoring to rouse him, which he did after a few seconds, and then Mr. Grell said he was so staggered that all he could do was to sit on the bed for a second or two and look in amazement at the flames which

seemed to be all round him. The staircase collapsed just after he had descended to the basement.

The members of the Fire Brigade turned out promptly and the Superintendent, considering that there was no immediate danger to the eastern block and that probably the fire would be checked at Plumb's owing to the open space of the Lyric Picture Theatre, concentrated his full endeavors and the whole of the Brigade's apparatus at Mr. W. D. Colman's buthery and ice works. Here there was a lane about eight feet wide separating Wah Sung & Co.'s store from Colman's and it was determined to make a stand here to endeavor to check the fire if possible. A hydrant had been sunk in front of the Lyric and hosing run out, but the heat was so terrific that the men could not work on Plumb's or McEride's; as a matter of fact the hydrant subsequently could not be approached for removal owing to the heat. Another length of hose was then attached to that already in commission and the scene of operations transferred towards Colman's. Here Mr. Jones had 1300 feet of hosing in commission and was utilising four jets. There was a length of hosing running from the hydrant at Devery's corner, one from Fong Sang's, and a length from Ash-street, the latter

length from Ash-street, the latter feeding "Redwings," the manual pump. There was ample water and good pressure. The Engineer at the Power House advised us that a pressure of 50lbs. was maintained throughout.

Would it be possible to block the fire at Colman's butchery? All depended on the wind; if the moderate breeze then blowing maintained from the south-west there was a chance for the fire-fighters. But as a rule the wind often changes to the north-east at sunrise, hence the most strenuous exertions were made to confine the fire to the western end of Wah Sung's store. The passage between it and the iron wall of Colman's was only eight feet. While the brigade with four hoses were steadying the flames several firemen and civilians were on the roof of Colman's and a couple of hoses were carried there. Conspicuous were Jack Ivers, Tom Lennon, and Sam Walker; the men literally carried their lives in their hands—they were hidden now and again by the smoke. One man vigorously plied his axe and cut away the connection between Wah Sung's and Colman's the debris falling away from the passage. When Wah Sung's was catching, Supt. Jones sent half-a-dozen men for the pumping manual, known as "Redwings." This pump was not used in the previous fire, the light hand reels being substituted, but on this occasion every appliance was in commission. "Redwings" was connected with the plug in Ash-street known as Colman's, and 100 feet of hose ran across to the back of the butchery, where splendid work was done. There were plenty of sturdy young chaps as pumpers, and the stream of water was equal to that from the other jets. Several firemen were not in the limelight; in-

men were not in the limelight; indeed few knew what was being done at the back of Wah Sung's. Several firemen were on the roof or in the bakehouse itself until the reception became too friendly. There was every chance of the flames working round the back to the rear premises of the Federal Hotel, and Mr. T. McPffer noting this organised a bucket brigade. Each of the two 1000-gallon tanks used by Mr. Colman in connection with his ice works were carefully pierced in three places and thus very little water was wasted. The men worked coolly and collectively, with the result that the back premises were considered safe by the time the tank water supply was exhausted; and by this time it was pronounced the fire fiend had been conquered, provided the wind did not change and blow with strength. While Wah Sung's was in full blaze the position appeared dangerous in the extreme. Not only were there fears that the fire would extend to Devery's but some anxiety was felt about the eastern block. Happily the wind had changed more northerly, with the result that the grass at the railway fence caught fire and even the fence itself in one panel. As showing the direction of the wind it is noticeable that the iron on the southern side of Colman's is scarcely tarnished, while the 'phone post on the street at the corner of the shop is badly charred. Mr. Jones, benefitting by the experience at Fumba's, where the plug could not be approached, and fearing the fire might extend to Fong Sang's connected a hose with the plug at Devery's corner and ran out 300 feet of hose from there. It took a long length of hosing to do this, but the end justified the means, for the fire travelled with such rapidity that the flames could

such rapidity that the flames could be upon the fire-fighters before they had time to uncouple.

When the close proximity of Mr. Colman's shop to Messrs. Wah Sung & Co.'s and the intensity of the fire is considered, the checking of the conflagration at this point is almost incredible. It points to the almost superhuman efforts that were made by the firemen and their voluntary assistants. The name of Mr. Jack Ivers was freely mentioned for his heroic endeavors here, and speaking to this young man subsequently, he says he does not know how they were able to stick it. Several times the position appeared hopeless, but they were determined to do or die, as the saying goes, and eventually won through. Colman's caught alight a couple of times, but it was managed to squelch the flames. The whole of the fire-fighters worked in a most commendable and heroic manner at this locality and they richly deserve the thanks of the property owners of the other portion of the block. Those engaged at this point are unanimous in stating that it was absolutely impossible to spare even one hose to transfer to McLean's; if this had been done the rest of the block would almost certainly have been demolished, especially if the wind had not changed. Every available piece of apparatus was

needed to check the flames from spreading to Mr. Colman's property.

Meanwhile the business people west of Fong Sang's commenced emptying their premises. Literally everything was removed from the Federal and although there is a big break between it (where Mr. Vesper's hotel once stood) and Mrs. Williams it was thought the position in view of a

thought the position in view of a change of wind, warranted the removal of goods and chattels to a supposed place of safety. The contents of Miss Marron's, Mrs. Williams', Mr. W. J. Lamont, and Mrs. Jenben's premises were speedily removed, but not for long, for as soon as safety was assured the goods were restored to their former quarters.

The task of removing Mr. R. Park's large stock of books, stationery, tobaccos, and fancy goods, was much more formidable, and it was not until "Dick" saw the railway fence burning merrily 66 feet away from the seat of the fire that he thought it wise to remove. This was done most methodically; there were plenty of helpers, and everything was carried out, even to a newspaper, and taken to safety across the street. When we looked in there were portions of counters and shelving only. The stock was later taken back, and on Sunday afternoon no one would have thought anything had been removed save for gaps here and there representing tins of tobacco, &c., missing. Mr. Park states that some of the goods were injured by being trodden on; someone had "pinched" a guinea champion cricket ball and a box of cigarettes, while sundry tins of tobaccos, stationery and fancy things are missing—such as a spoon, a fork, or a knife from cases. Altogether, at a rough calculation Mr. Park suffered to the extent of from £20 to £25.

During the height of the fire the buildings on the north side of Ash-street would have been in extreme danger had the wind been a westerly one. As it was those portions of buildings facing the fire became very hot. The secretary of the Oddfellows says he went along to see if the grass round the hall had ignited, and found he could scarcely hold his hand

found he could scarcely hold his hand against the iron walls. All the places, however, were safe.

Both Mr. Catip's and Mr. Colman's motor cars were removed to a place of safety; also a few articles were rescued from the rear of the burning places and lodged in Ash-street, but the heat was so great that the whole lot could be placed on a dray.

Mr. W. Fothergill informed our representative that he could smell burning flour and pollard from his store.

Mrs. Lamont has a strange premonition. She predicted the previous fires, and on the present occasion when Mr. Lamont last week stated he was going to Aramac on business she urged him to pack his best jewellery so as to be handy for removal, as she felt there would be a big fire before Christmas.

At Devery's Hotel all wearing apparel and personal effects were collected ready for removal. Mr. Devery would not allow any of the furniture to be removed until the fire had advanced further, towards his property.

At the Brigade Board meeting on Tuesday night, Mr. Supt. Jones said he never expected to have 1200 feet of hose out. This caused a contrast to be made with the appliances in the early days of the Brigade, the plant consisting of a small hand pump known as "Gentle Annie," and 150 feet hose. "But it helped save my place (in 1896)," remarked Mr. Meacham.

A visitor to town suggests that ferro-concrete should be employed in restoring the buildings in the burnt-out area. It would cost but little more than timber and iron, and would materially reduce the rates of insurance.

As the fire extended into Mr. W.

SURVANCE.

Had the fire extended into Mr. W. D. Colman's the loss would have been a very severe one, there being an up-to-date ice and refrigerating plant with recently installed electric motors of 5 h.p. and 20 h.p. respectively. The fire would have burnt fiercely, the building being lined and celled. The scales, cash register, mincers, and other apparatus had been safely removed, but much damage was done through windows being broken and gauze doors wrenched from their hinges; also the telephone. At one time a hose was taken from the back, through the shop, and the jet operated on the flames through the broken windows, the wall keeping the firemen fairly cool. All damage was restored during Monday, even the holes in the tanks being repaired.

It was a wise dispensation of Providence that the West End corner had not been built upon. With the breeze when the fire was at its height, and the fire-fighters all employed at the western end, the eastern block would have been in grave jeopardy.

Many telegrams of sympathy and offers of financial assistance were received by business people. Mr. Catip informs us he received sixteen messages from Brisbane and Sydney business firms offering to start him again.

There are some enterprising people in Brisbane. Mr. D. Stibbards at 10 a.m. Monday received a telegram from Brisbane offering to supply him with a new biograph and all electric accessories. This was followed by four others. "Dave" happily has a splendid apparatus at the Glideo-graph.

Mr. James Arthur, of Braeside, was a passenger by mail train from Brisbane, and on reaching Bundaberg purchased a

Brisbane, and on reaching Bundaberg early Tuesday morning purchased a "Daily Mail." His heart nearly stopped beating when he read a four line telegram to the effect that a disastrous fire (are fires anything but disastrous) happened in the main street of Barcaldine, and that the damage was estimated at between £25,000 and £30,000. "Jim's" feelings may be imagined. He had interests in the main street of Barcaldine. He said he couldn't sit down or contain himself in any way until the train arrived at Gladstone when the "Morning Bulletin" enlightened him.

At the risk of missing his train Mr. Arthur sent a telegram of sympathy with the sufferers.

Two small boys watched the arrival of Wednesday's mail train, and observing two rather pompous looking gentlemen one asked the other, "Wonder who them blokes is, Bill?" "Oh, I expect they are the excessors in the fire; I heard the old man say they would be up to-day."

All business firms received the first of their Christmas supplies towards the end of last week. Only on Saturday Mr. McBride landed a cask of whisky worth about £130.

Mrs. L. Walker, Boggabri, states that she saw the glare of the fire almost from the start. She knew the fire was somewhere in the main street in town, and it looked like a huge bush fire.

It is difficult to credit it, yet there were townspeople who knew nothing of the fire until advised by the milkmen early next morning.

The "Daily Record" (Rockhampton) on Tuesday states:—"Someone must have put the hoodoo on Oak-street, Barcaldine. Every fire of size that has occurred in the western township

has occurred in the western township in recent years has kicked off from some hotel or business premises in this thoroughfare. Saturday night's flare was a first division blaze. Thirty thousand pounds is a lot of money to see go up in smoke on one night, even for a much bigger town than Barcaldine. But they are not easily beaten in the western country, and it is safe to say that whether the Indian sign is on Oak-street or not, it will be rebuilt again next year or the year after."

BUILDINGS DESTROYED.—

F. A. McLean's "Central Cafe," (W. J. O'Regan owner).

Lyric Picture Theatre (W. J. O'Regan owner).

C. B. Plumb & Co., drapers and outfitters.

C. Heumiller's "White Rose" Cafe
McBride's Commercial Hotel.

J. Catip's drapery establishment.

C. E. Glasson, General Merchant
(late Wah Sung & Co.)

ESTIMATED LOSSES.—

C. Heumiller	£800
F. A. McLean	1000
W. J. O'Regan	1250
C. B. Plumb	5000
W. J. O'Regan (Lyric)	800
D. Stibbards	400
Trustees McBride Estate	7000
J. A. Catip (stock)	3000
R. Park (building)	500
C. E. Glasson (late Wah Sung & Co.)	3000

Total £22,250

INSURANCES.—

The insurances, totalling £11,925, on the destroyed buildings were as follows:—

F. A. McLean—Mercantile Mutual

F. A. McLean—Mercantile Mutual Co., £400 on fixtures, stock in trade, floss machine, and utensils; £100 on furniture, £250 on catering plant; total insurances, £750.

C. Heumiller—Northern Insurance Co., £200 on fittings and fixtures; £75 on kitchen (loss about £500); total, £275.

D. Stibbards—State Insurance Co.—£100, dynamo (loss about £400).

W. J. O'Regan—Commercial Union—McLean's shop, £1000; Pictures, £600; total, £1600.

C. B. Plumb & Co.—£1200 on building, £400 on fittings, fixtures, cash register, &c., with Northern Assurance Company; £1300 on stock with Northern Assurance Company; £1000 on stock with Phoenix Company; total, £3900.

Joseph A. Catip.—£1500 on stock, &c. Mr. Catip estimated his loss at £1500.

R. Park (Catip's premises).—In Lancashire Company, £500.

W. McBride, Commercial Hotel.—Royal Insurance Co. — Household furniture, billiard table and room fittings, £500; stock in trade, bulk store, £100; hotel premises, £1300; building No. 2, £160; kitchen, £40; total £2100.

C. E. Glasson.—New Zealand Co.—Building £600, Queensland Co.—Stock £500; total, £1100.

Oak-street west next morning presented a scene of desolation, such as only a disastrous fire can create. The long line of burnt debris was all that remained of the fine array of buildings which just a few hours previously had been standing as an integral part of the business centre of the section, and the sight was a melancholy and sickening one. The

anxiety and sickening one. The greatest sympathy was felt on all sides for the sufferers, and this feeling of regret was freely and sincerely endorsed by large numbers of the excursionists who arrived at 10 10 a.m. from Aramac, and who were astounded as the panorama of desolation was unfolded to them as the train came in. Mr. W. D. Colman's shop bore ample evidence of the close shave from demolition it had had, and a survey of the locality where the fire was checked impressed one as to the great work which had been accomplished by the fire-fighters. Mr. F. A. McLean and assistants were busy straightening out the salvaged stock and effects from the Central Cafe and a temporary stand was erected in the open enclosure of the Lyric. Here Mr. McLean has been carrying on since à la fresco. Mr. D. Stibbards immediately overhauled his Glideograph picture plant, and a programme was shown that night to a fair attendance of spectators. On Monday morning Mr. Plumb started fitting-up a portion of Mr. R. Park's shop, which had been offered him, and very soon Mr. Plumb hopes to be in full swing again in his temporary premises. Mr. J. Catip secured the Oddfellows' Hall, and doubtless when new stocks arrive Mr. Catip will be pleased to see all his old friends at the M.U. Hall until he is able to move into more commodious quarters. We understand Mr. Heumiller intends erecting a large marquee adjoining Mr. R. M. Quinn's grocery establishment in Ash-street, nearly opposite the Glideograph, and here he

will carry on temporarily the business he had just so well established in Oak-street. We understand that arrangements have been made for the re-erection of the Lyric Picture

arrangements have been made for the re-erection of the Lyric Picture Theatre.

On Monday morning quite a number of Kodakists were in evidence in Oak-street taking "snaps" of the ruins. Master Alf. Fisher took some excellent views of the scene of desolation, and he had these on sale on Sunday evening—pretty smart work. We acknowledge with thanks a series for our gallery.

MESSAGES OF SYMPATHY—

The Chairman of the Shire Council Mr. R. A. Parnell, has received the following messages of sympathy:—

From T. J. Hannay, Rockhampton: "Deeply sympathise with Council and sufferers in their great loss."

From Mr. J. A. J. Hunter, M.H.R., (Maranoa), Sydney: "Southern papers report disastrous fire, heavy damage, your town. Please convey my regrets for loss to sufferers."

From Mr. R. H. Edkins, Brisbane: "Very sorry hear sad blow to town. Kindly convey my sympathy to sufferers."

From Hon. A. H. Parnell, Brisbane: "Please convey to the sufferers by the disastrous fire my sincere sympathy."

From Messrs. Denhams Ltd., Rockhampton:—"We very deeply regret hear disastrous fire your town, and sympathise very keenly with all sufferers."

From Aramac Shire Council: "My Council sympathise with your town in the destruction of portion thereof by disastrous fire on Sunday morning and with those who have suffered by the conflagration."

From Clerk Longreach Shire Council: "The Chairman, acting on behalf of this Council and the public generally has instructed me to ask you

of this Council and the public generally has 'instructed me to ask you to extend to the residents of your Shire, and more particularly the chief sufferers, the greatest sympathy in the loss and inconvenience occasioned by the late fire."

A Rockhampton man wrote on Monday to a member of the "Champion" staff as follows:—"I have heard about the fire in your city. That block seems to be like the northern section in Longreach, damned unlucky. It is very bad luck for McBride and the others who have been burnt out, especially at this time of the year. It must also be a severe blow to the town. Still, I feel sure, knowing what fine citizens they are, that this section will rise up again from the ashes, even though the old West End ashes are still there." The writer conveys his sympathies with the sufferers by the fire.

Mr. W. D. Colman received the following telegram from the manager of the Primary Producers' Agency, Brisbane:—"Sorry to hear of fire. Congratulations to yourself."

Mr. D. Stibbards was the recipient of several messages of sympathy on Monday morning.

Mr. H. J. Peut, Sandgate, wrote us under date December 5th:—"I was very sorry to read by yesterday's paper of the big fire in Barcaldine. Please convey my sympathy to all who suffered"