

**“Neither Day Nor Night”:
The 1960 West Prince Forest Fire**

**A Scrapbook Kept by
Vivian Phillips of
Freeland, Prince Edward Island**

🌀 Notes On A Scrapbook 🌀

I was born 6 years after forest fires swept through this part of Prince Edward Island in 1960. As a child, the 1960 West Prince Forest Fire (or The Fire, as it was usually called) seemed to be an event as unconnected to me as anything else that happened before I was born, but it was always clear that it had been an important marker in the history of my family and community, events being referenced as happening “before” or “after” the fire.

Of course, it really wasn't that long ago. Even now, 50 years later, there are reminders around our home in Foxley River of the great effort that went into fighting the fire: the diminished remains of burned stumps, fire breaks (now in our woods, then in a field that had just been harvested) built to save our neighbour's house, melted glass and metal items abandoned after the sheds they were in burned to the ground. Even one small corner of our 1930s log cabin caught fire as the devastating sparks flew over and around it.

My parents, Harold and Vivian Phillips, ran a busy Lucky Dollar general store in neighbouring Freeland. When the fire started in August, my mother remained at the store while my father helped the firefighting and evacuation efforts. During this confusing and busy time, my mother had the great foresight to save newspaper clippings of stories related to The Fire. The following winter she glued them into a scrapbook that was stocked in their store, one with a nice photo of Princess Margaret on the front, price 25 cents. In the back of that scrapbook, she also glued mementoes from a trip she took later that same September to visit her aunt in New York City, a much-needed break after a very hectic time.

The Fire was actually a number of separate fires that started the week of August 21, 1960. The fires were not considered very serious at first, but the wind picked up on August 28 and those smaller fires suddenly became out of control blazes that destroyed acres of woodland, homes, barns and livestock. Volunteers carried out firefighting duties at first, with help from the RCMP, who assisted with communication between the fire front and operation headquarters at the Ellerslie Legion.

As the fires increased in severity and more homes and villages were in danger, airmen from RCAF Station Summerside arrived, bringing with them a field kitchen to help feed the firefighters. By September 2, there were approximately 500 men fighting the fires over 200 square miles, employing 15 tanker trucks, 12 pumps, and countless backpack sprayers. 75 dump and transport trucks were moving people and their belongings. Bulldozers worked steadily to cut firebreaks.

Firefighters ate and slept at the Ellerslie Legion. Women and girls from the area provided meals around the clock, using local donations and ingredients provided by the Red Cross. A new well had to be dug at the Legion to keep up with the huge demand for water. Donations then came in from across the Island. Even the Lieutenant Governor's wife brought food when she visited the area with her husband.

At the peak of the firefighting efforts, there were 1,000 men at work and 2,000 meals were served at the Ellerslie Legion over a 24-hour period. By September 7, an estimated 6 miles of fire hose was deployed in the fight, some having been flown in from as far away as Montreal. The newspapers at the time considered it to be the largest firefighting effort in Island history, as well as the largest army manoeuvre, with 500 troops from Camp Gagetown, N.B. camped in a field between Ellerslie and Tyne Valley through September. I imagine those two records probably still stand today.

Somehow life went on as best it could during the disaster. A new school year had already started to allow for a potato harvest break later in the fall. Businesses tried to remain open although, as in the case of my parent's store, often with dwindled supplies as transportation became difficult. Farmers hurried to bring in crops before their fields were consumed by fire, sometimes with firefighters wetting the edges of their fields while they combined.

The tales that are told of this time are mostly about the panic and destruction that occurred, but here on the Island, people tend to ease their sadness with laughter, and the funny things that happened are also remembered.

One such tale involved our neighbour, Ida, who, like everyone in the area, didn't want to leave home. It wasn't until the fire had almost reached her house that she reluctantly agreed to leave. Being a widow without a truck or car, volunteer forces swooped in to move her belongings to a safer location. The moving service was rough by necessity, things thrown onto a dump truck as quickly as possible. Ida had watched all this frenzied activity with concern and the occasional sharp comment. One of the last things to go on the truck was a wind-up Victrola, which she asked the volunteers to treat carefully. Finally loaded, the truck lurched forward and the Victrola flew off the back of the truck and smashed in our lane. I still have a piece of the Victrola's mechanism that was recovered later, but Ida's colourful comments on seeing her prized possession ruined have, unfortunately, been lost to history.

In reading these newspaper stories, it is clear how things have changed since 1960. Two-way radio communication was not widespread, so RCMP officers drove messages to the fire fronts. Meals and hot drinks were provided free of charge to the firefighters, but it's unthinkable to us now that cigarettes were also made available and thought to be as necessary as food and drink. The firefighters were mostly adult men, but teenage boys from as far away as Summerside donned backpack sprayers and joined the battle. Trains moved water tankers between Portage and Eilerslie. Electricity only arrived in our area around 1959, so there isn't any mention in the articles about power cuts because, of course, people hadn't yet begun to rely on electricity and were well prepared to live without it.

The transcription of these articles was certainly time consuming, but it was also a joy to get to know the articles so intimately. Newspaper deadlines can be unrelenting, so reporters can usually only tell the basic facts of a story, but many of the articles written about The Fire contain very moving and poetic prose. The reporters were able to put themselves in the stories, more so than they can today, giving us an intimate impression of what they experienced.

I found some images from these stories difficult to forget: a woman standing in the ditch outside her home trying to save the preserves she had probably finished bottling just before the fire began; animals blinded by smoke and heat; smoke from the fires thick enough to bring tears to the eyes of Charlottetown residents 60 miles away; the Premier and his officials, on a tour of the fire area, stopping to help save a house on the Murray Road; a small girl with her hair in curlers swinging in her yard while the fires burned in the woods nearby.

Of course, all the credit and thanks for what was in this scrapbook goes to the writers and photographers, who included:

| | |
|--|--|
| John Bond, <i>Guardian-Patriot</i> | Jim Kennedy |
| Ralph Cameron, <i>Guardian-Patriot</i> | Elmer Murphy, <i>Journal-Pioneer</i> |
| Hartwell Daley, <i>Journal-Pioneer</i> | Arthur Pratt, <i>Journal-Pioneer</i> |
| Ron England | Roy Turner, <i>Guardian-Patriot</i> |
| Heckbert Studio | George Wotton, <i>Guardian-Patriot</i> |

As I write this introduction, there are massive forest fires in British Columbia, and I can only imagine the turmoil and danger those people are facing. I grew up to be accepting of a rainy summer day because I was always reminded of what could happen if a hot, dry summer were to occur, so I am keeping an eye to the sky in the hopes that rain will come.

Thelma Phillips
Foxley River, PEI
August 23, 2010
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🌀 Transcription Notes 🌀

This scrapbook my mother assembled 50 years ago became a popular reference for school projects and history buffs, but time has not been kind to this poor book. The pages are now ripped and brittle, the cover has come off and the double layer of acidic newsprint and glue, combined with less than archival storage conditions, has made the book very fragile. I wanted the scrapbook to be preserved, but recognised that the information was of interest to others and

needed to be shared. I decided to transcribe the articles and reproduce them as best I could so as to be available in a fully searchable document.

The pages are formatted for printing on legal size paper (8.5" x 14") and set up with mirrored borders to allow for double-sided printing and binding or hole punching. I have only made changes to the text to correct three problems: obvious typos and misspellings; to standardise spellings of names within an article; and punctuation to make the text easier to read. I have noted where a few articles suddenly end because of an unfortunate scissor cut or printing error.

In many ways, reading this scrapbook is similar to reading 3 daily newspapers as information is often repeated and, in some cases, the same articles appeared in more than one paper. I kept all the articles that were included in the scrapbook in this transcription in the interest of preserving a complete historical record.

Most of the articles were not dated, and in many cases I don't know in which paper they appeared, but they would have all been from one of three daily papers published on PEI at the time - *The Journal-Pioneer*, *The Guardian* and *The Evening Patriot* - and all rights remain with them.

As the articles and photos are not necessarily in chronological order, I've included calendars for August and September 1960 as a reference for readers.

| AUGUST 1960 | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

| SEPTEMBER 1960 | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|---------|---|----------|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 Labor Day | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 Rosh HaShanah begins at sunset | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 Yom Kippur begins at sunset | |



Woodland Holocaust Out of Control, Fight to Save Homes, Farms

Woods fires that had been burning for more than a week in Prince County flared into violent activity yesterday and today are still out of control in an area between Mount Pleasant and Portage, north of the Western Highway.

A fire that was burning yesterday in the Port Hill area, and was threatening the C.N.R. station there, this morning had changed direction and was burning in scrub toward Ellerslie, and at press time was not considered a serious threat.

Most seriously threatened of the inhabited sections in the fire region is the tiny settlement of North Enmore, where several homes were evacuated yesterday and which was still ringed by fire this morning. A crew of Indians from the Lennox Island reservation are working in this area, keeping the woods around the settlement wetted down by using a portable pump drawing from the nearby streams, and were able to save the houses last night by this method.

With a change of wind direction at dawn today, the big blaze shifted direction and was burning this morning towards the western highway. The most serious outbreak was located south of Inverness. Last night the woods were burning as far west as Portage but this morning this settlement was at least temporarily out of danger, with only smouldering trees in the burnt-over section.

While covering a huge area, the fire is a comparatively slow-moving one and is burning mainly among deciduous trees. It appears to be travelling extensively underground, causing isolated outbreaks at a number of spots which sometimes burn themselves out and sometimes continue on to join the main body of fire.

The only method of control at present is to protect buildings in the area and to try to check small outbreaks as they start. Aiding in this work is a 1,000-gallon tank truck equipped with a portable pump, which is being despatched to areas where needed. The truck and crew are under supervision of Frank Gaudet, chief forester with the department of industry and natural resources.

The big blaze apparently started last Thursday in the vicinity of West Devon, and has been smouldering since then, sometimes breaking into fairly serious proportions. Not until yesterday, however, did it reach a size which many people say is the biggest forest fire ever experienced on P.E.I.

Yesterday afternoon the entire horizon over the Gulf of St. Lawrence was filled with dense smoke, and on the roads in the burning area visibility was practically zero. Hordes of terrified rabbits and other small animals were fleeing the woodlands and were to be met with everywhere scurrying across the [clipping ended here]

Residents Flee Homes In Prince As Raging Forest Fires Threaten

BY GEORGE WOTTON
Guardian-Patriot Staff Writer
SUMMERSIDE BUREAU
OF THE GUARDIAN

Fires raging out of the control are destroying hundreds of acres of woodland between Portage and Tyne Valley, in an area about twenty-five miles west of Summerside, causing evacuation of homes in their path, with the thick smoke reducing visibility to a few feet in some places as it drifts over the area, billowing skyward in a thick cloud that can be seen for about forty miles east and west of the area.

The fires, which are spreading by sparks carried through the air, are located in three separate areas, one in Inverness, just east of Portage, and another in the adjoining district of North Enmore, while the third is running through woodland between Ellerslie and Tyne Valley.

Fanned by a strong breeze yesterday, the fires, which have been burning for a week or more in some sections, developed rapidly into serious threats to the communities. As flames leaped from tree to tree, inching closer and closer to their buildings, residents were seen evacuating their homes while wild rabbits, bewildered by the fire and blinded by the smoke, hopped around the feet of fire fighters, seeking shelter from the smoke and heat in the lee of buildings, or cars on the roadway.

GRAIN THREATENED

As falling embers continuously set a pattern of new fires in woods and grassland, farmers with grain crops threatened were hauling in their cut grain from the fields, and one man was busy cutting a large field of grain in an effort to save it from the fire, a team of horses was led to safety through thick smoke, and two cows had to be hastily saved from being barbequed when their pasture field took fire.

Two men were observed chasing and capturing a goat that had become terrified by the approaching roar of the fire. R.C.M.P. who were directing the efforts being made by local fire fighters, a couple of pumper trucks, and a few bull dozers, had a busy time trying to control traffic on dusty clay roads close to the fires as sightseers attracted by the smoke converged on the area from east and west.

The fire in the Inverness area is said to have started a week ago on the estate of John Durant, and yesterday was burning fiercely in woodland owned by Charlie Milligan, and threatening woodland on the farms of Ernest MacDonald and Jim MacKinnon and others in the area.

1500 ACRES

In the next district of North Enmore alone, the loss was estimated by one property owner at more

than 1500 acres, with the largest single loss said to be on the estate of William Bryant, where 517 acres of woodland had been destroyed.

Fire fighters had hoped to control the fire at the Mill Road in North Enmore, but even before it reached the road area, it had been carried into the woods separated by the road, and was continuing eastward towards Mount Pleasant, northward towards the Western Road.

Early in the afternoon, residents in the Mill Road area including those of Charlie Shaw, Bill Gillis, Mamie and Millie Stewart, Harry Bryant, Fred Coughlin, Hack Ballem, Fred Ballem and Wilfred Campbell were in grave danger but were still intact last evening.

On the Western Road the homes of Winfred Bridges, William Shaw, Reg Campbell, James Bridges, and Wendell Phillips service station were being approached by the fire west of the Mill Road, while homes on the Western Road east of this point were endangered by the fire moving towards Mount Pleasant, and included the homes of Peter LeClair, Bayfield Shaw, Alfred Murray, Wilfred Campbell and John Adams.

The woodland that is being devastated by the two fires East of Portage has already covered an area of five or six miles, and it appeared that only a heavy rain could prevent it spreading in any direction the wind might blow.

STATION THREATENED

The fire in the Ellerslie area is said to have started in woodland on the farm of Alvin Waite almost two weeks ago and this weekend was also fanned into more rapid spread by the breeze yesterday and was burning in thick woodland between Ellerslie and Tyne Valley. Yesterday it was reported to be threatening the Port Hill railway station located about a mile west of Tyne Valley village.

An unconfirmed report also indicated the fire in swamp woodland on Lennox Island had also sprung up again over the weekend.

In mid evening Sunday residents of these areas were preparing for an anxious night of fire watching, as smoke continued to make eyes water, breathing difficult, and an eerie glow reflected from the low smoke clouds drifting across the sky as the fire intermittently flared into brilliant flames and subsided in smoke, roaring through the tinder dry woodlands leaving the brilliant green landscape blackened, burned, and completely devastated.

["Aug 29"]

Many Homes Destroyed in Roaring Fire Inferno

BY GEORGE WOTTON
Guardian-Patriot Staff Writer

SUMMERSIDE: An uncounted number of homes and hundreds of acres of woodland fell in a roaring inferno of fire that yesterday swept the area between Portage and Mount Pleasant.

About noon the fire leaped the Western Highway and continued to spread and grow in intensity as it swept along a new path into Foxley River, Freeland, Conway and MacNeill's Mills. Another fire was burning briskly in woodland between Ellerslie and Tyne Valley and further east, fire was sweeping through heavy woods on either side of the Western Highway between Victoria West and Northam Corner above Richmond.

Thick grey smoke blanketed the whole area as residents worked frantically to evacuate their homes.

In haste, or without transportation, they merely moved furniture and household appliances outdoors.

At one time in mid afternoon six properties were on fire at the same time in the Inverness and north Enmore districts, and last evening at ten o'clock many others seemed certain to be destroyed by the raging fires.

At dusk last evening a Guardian reporter found one of these homeless people, Mrs. Jane Brown, a 73 year old lady, crying sadly as she stood in a ditch in front of the still burning embers of her house and barns. Her plight was similar to many others in the areas swept by fire yesterday. Her home was gone, and with it everything she owned except the smoke-blackened clothing that she wore.

As she cried in sorrow, Mrs. Brown described her personal losses in addition to her buildings: 22 cases of home-canned food products that she had prepared were lost in the fire.

Finding some unbroken bottles of preserves as she walked along the smoke filled ditch, she expressed heartfelt appreciation to volunteer workers who had thrown them from her burning home, as she clutched them tightly and cried aloud "God bless the hands that saved even these."

With nowhere to go and almost reluctant to leave, Mrs. Brown at dusk had no idea where she might spend the night or how she would get along in the future, with nothing saved from the past, and no insurance on the property.

At times during the afternoon and evening travel on the Western Highway was extremely dangerous and difficult due to smoke and flames, and as the fires spread northward the road between Portage and Foxley River became impassable.

In an unsuccessful attempt to reach Freeland from Portage, a Guardian reporter found the way blocked by fire at Foxley River at 5 p.m., and along this road observed five homes all blazing fiercely.

CATTLE PERISH

Cattle, pigs, and poultry which had to be left behind survived or perished depending on where they sought refuge, and rabbits which dazedly fled from the woods to highways seemed completely bewildered.

Fanned by winds of 30 miles per hour which frequently gusted to 50 miles per hour, the flames spread so rapidly that some persons barely had time to get to safety, and many more took great risks to protect their houses and barns. Embers from fires sailed through the air setting new fires often a mile distant, which repeated the process that kept turning the whole tinder-dry countryside into a flaming mass of destruction.

VILLAGE IN PERIL

The wind direction during the afternoon that carried the fire from the south to the north side of the Western Road, also kept the drifting embers just a few hundred yards east of the Portage Village, but only a slight shift in wind would send sparks raining down on Sharbell's store and the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Dalton which are located close to the burning woodland, and the whole village seemed in imminent danger.

Light and power poles were destroyed by fire along the western road, cutting off communication and electricity into the area last evening.

ACROSS ISLAND

The seven-mile fire front between Portage and Mount Pleasant last evening was burning virtually across the entire width of the Island for a depth of about ten miles, and covering such a vast territory that it became almost impossible to establish the names of property owners whose homes kept going up in flames.

With the situation changing and developing new fronts continuously, a conservative estimate of homes and barns that were already laid waste before midnight could total twenty-five.

The fire located between Northam and Springhill is said to have originated yesterday afternoon in woodland belonging to Ken Williams, and was burning fiercely on both sides of the Western Road at ten o'clock last evening as bull dozers worked against time to throw a fire break around the residents of Mr. and Mrs. George Paugh which was almost surrounded by fire at that time.

Traffic congestion caused by carloads of sight seers caused tie ups in the area, and motorists trying to further west were diverted through Northam and Ellerslie because of the fire danger beyond Northam Corner.

[“Aug 30”]

Five Homes And At Least Seven Barns Known To Be Burned

As far as could be ascertained this morning, five homes were lost and six or seven barns in the fire which last night burned out much of the area between Foxley River and Portage.

Mrs. John Lynch and Alfred Culleton lost homes on the Rafferty Road between Portage and Foxley River.

At Foxley River, Hugh Bulger lost a house and barns. He has a family of 20 children.

Arthur Adams, Conway, lost a house and barn and Mrs. Jane Brown, Inverness lost a house.

Barns lost belonged to Mrs. Robert Skerry, Foxley River; Thomas MacKinnon, Inverness; John Paugh, Western Road; George Coughlin and Peter LeClair, Portage-Inverness district.

A more serious loss was a large barn and a quantity of farm machinery owned by Kevin Kilbride, Foxley River.

Disaster Fund Is Established

The Ellerslie branch of the Canadian Legion will establish a disaster fund to assist those families burned out in the recent forest fires which have already left an Island-wide path of death and destruction across Western Prince Edward Island.

Cyril Williams, Ellerslie, zone commander for that area of the Prince County branch of the Canadian Legion, and Dean Crosby, manager of the Royal Bank at Tyne Valley, who is also a Legion member, will accept financial contribution at any time.

At a date to be announced later contributions of household equipment and possibly clothing will be accepted at the legion branch in Ellerslie.

The branch will appoint a committee to administer the fund.

Police Curtail Area Travel

An RCMP spokesman stressed last night that concerted effort is being made to curtail all unnecessary travel in the fire stricken areas of the province.

This is being done, it was explained, as a safety precaution to the motorists as well as to help make the task of the fire fighters less difficult.

They are asking the co-operation of all motorists.

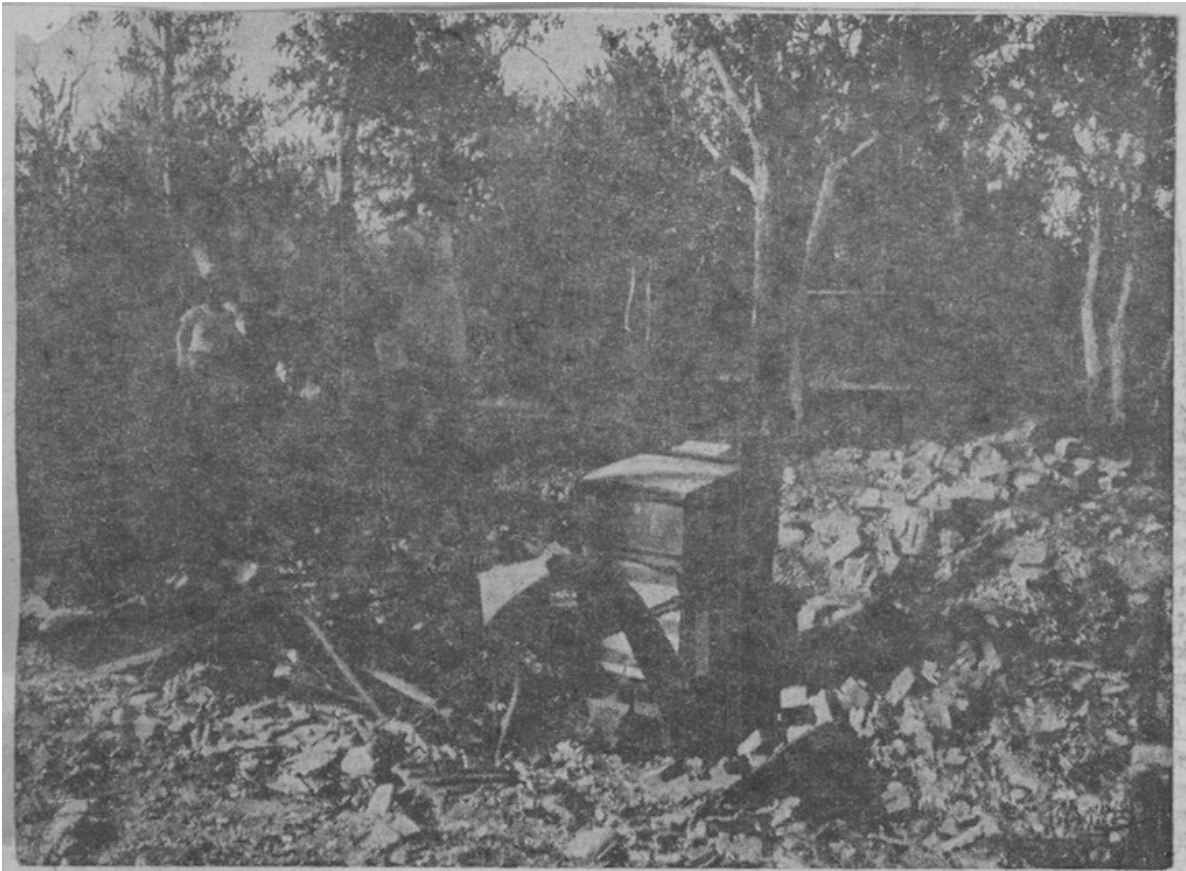
Alberton Boats Called On Evacuation Mission

Responding to a report that a number of people were trapped by fire in the Foxley River area and were unable to escape by road, two Alberton fishing boats and a cabin cruiser left Alberton South at 6 p.m. yesterday and sailed across Cascumpec Bay and up Foxley River.

The three boats cruised up both branches of the river but were unable to locate anyone looking for evacuation by water. In conversation with Frank Bulger of Foxley River, the fishermen were told that 15 homes had been destroyed by the bush fire.

While they were on the shore they saw a barn go up in flames and cattle running across the fields.

The boats were operated by Charles and Roy Fraser, Mont Hutt, Bryden Smith, fisheries officer Ron MacKinnon, Myrl Basil, and Silas Mathews.



SAD SURVEY

Relatives and neighbours sadly survey the smoking ruins, all that remains of the homestead and farm buildings of Mrs. John Lynch near Foxley River. The property was

destroyed last night in a freak burst of flame from the forest fire in that area, while surrounding woods were not burned. — (Journal-Pioneer photo by Art Pratt).

FIRE DANGER DECREASES



FIRE'S AFTERMATH

Smoking ruins of home, barn and automobile remain on the property of Harold Bridges, Inverness, after fire swept across the Western Highway borne on the wings of gale winds against which ordinary fire

fighting methods could accomplish nothing. This home was burned although other nearby properties and woods were untouched as the fire roared along a rapid, erratic course. — Journal-Pioneer staff photo).

New Outbreaks Feared If Wind Increases; Heavy Rain Is Only Solution

By Arthur Pratt

It looked this morning as if the worst was over for weary residents of the fire-ravaged sections of Prince County, but resumption of dry, hot weather and a freshening northerly breeze renewed fears that the forest fire which has been raging fiercely since Sunday would sweep through remaining timber towards the settlements of Freeland, Conway, Ellerslie and Port Hill railway station.

Rain showers which occurred shortly after last midnight aided the fire fighters considerably in dampening down the blaze, but were not sufficient to extinguish it. Both fire fighters and residents of the affected areas are of the opinion that nothing less than a downpour of tropical proportions will completely put out the fires, since they are burning underground.

In the vicinity of Inverness and Portage the fire assumed terrifying proportions last evening as it was born on the wings of a south-westerly gale across the Western Highway and through the bush toward Foxley River. Residents said the flames came soaring through the air in "huge balls of fire high over the tops of the trees," setting homes and barns alight and burning the woodland in an erratic pattern of

intensely burning spots with strips in between untouched.

Five homes and a number of barns were burnt during the height of the gale, but fortunately no lives were lost and the number of livestock destroyed was limited, as far as was known this morning, to about 10 pigs and half a dozen sheep. The latter, in the Foxley River section, had had their eyes burned out by the flames, and had to be killed by fire fighters who took pity on the plight of the animals.

The rain that came during the night had been prayed for and fervently welcomed by residents of the threatened areas. People told this morning of hearing the first rain drops on the roofs of their houses and of coming out to stand in the open to receive its blessing. With the rain, the fierce winds died down, and the fire was cut to proportions where

it was burning in isolated pockets which are very easy to control.

At North Enmore, which has been surrounded by fire since Saturday, the situation eased this morning. Fires were all out in all directions except west of the small settlement, and residents were cutting fire breaks to prevent the flames from reaching houses which they say have been saved "only by a miracle."

Yesterday afternoon practically all homes between Mount Pleasant and Portage were evacuated as the flames swept down on the Western Highway, but only one house and three barns were destroyed, and today people are moving back. A tank truck and pump operated by the forestry division of the department of natural resources performed great service during the night in wetting down the houses and was able to prevent

far greater loss. Near Inverness, the fire crew pumped a stream completely dry, so that small fish were left without water to swim in. They saved the home of Thomas MacKinnon, although his nearby barn was destroyed.

Fire fighting operations today are being highly organized under the supervision of Provincial Fire Marshal MacLeod and all available equipment in the way of bulldozers and earth-moving machines, owned by both government and contractors, is being used to cut fire breaks. Pumpers at Summerside, Kensington, the RCAF Station and O'Leary are standing by for instant response if they are needed. Robert Grindlay, MLA, schoolmaster at North Enmore, has closed the school for the day and is acting as liaison between the fire fighters and residents generally. He told the Journal-Pioneer that there is still a definite threat in the Tyne Valley and Conway areas and there is some fear that the Roman Catholic Church at Foxley River may be in the path of the flames. All precautions are being taken to prevent the flames from reaching the settlement, however.

At press time the situation was this:

Fires were still burning in a roughly triangular section bounded by Portage at the apex, Foxley River to the west and Freeland to the east. However they were burning in pockets and

crews were standing by to prevent their spreading.

Fire was still burning west of North Enmore but was not considered serious and the pumping crew had been removed to a more vital area, subject to instant recall if the situation worsened.

At Springhill, east of Mount Pleasant, a fire apparently unrelated to the larger blaze had started south of the Western Highway, crossed the road last evening, and this morning was burning slowly in scrub growth toward Grand River.

Residents of Conway, Freeland, Ellerslie and Tyne Valley were apprehensive that the freshening wind would bring the flames across the woods from Foxley River and strong patrols have been set up with about a dozen bulldozers cutting fire breaks.

There is no fire beyond Portage and Foxley River to the west, or beyond Springhill to the east.

The most seriously hit area is the Rafferty Road between Portage and Foxley River. This morning residents had returned to this section and were sadly viewing remains of homes and barns that still smouldered along the road.

For those burned out of their homes, help was forthcoming from various agencies last night. The Canadian Legion at Ellerslie opened their hall to receive homeless persons, and the parish hall at Wellington was also open

for them, as well as private homes everywhere out of the fire zone.

Wind Gusts To 57 M.P.H. Last Night

The meteorological section at RCAF Station Summerside reports that from three o'clock yesterday afternoon to 11 p.m. winds were blowing in the vicinity of 35 miles per hour with gusts to 57. These winds were from the south west.

The winds began to diminish at midnight and there was a rain shower. While not much rain fell it amounted to half the quantity that has come down in this area in the month of August. Last night's fall amounted to two-tenths inches.

The average for the month of August in a ten-year period is 3.5 inches. The rainfall this year is the lowest in that period.

Premier Visits Fire Area

Premier W.R. Shaw, Highways Minister Philip Matheson, Welfare Minister Henry Wedge and Deputy Minister of Highways Gordon White are in West Prince today inspecting the fire area.

Last evening Mr. Wedge and Dr. O.H. Phillips, M.P. were very busy in the area helping to organize fire fighting services, obtain equipment and help those who lost their homes.



FIRE PUMPER

This is one of the several fire pumpers being used to quell the blaze which raged at Inverness yesterday. Firefighters are forced to the ground by the searing heat.

— Photo by Heckbert Studio



MAKE EFFORT TO SALVAGE HOUSE

Fire fighters at McNeill's Mills, R.R. are showing making a desperate effort to save

this dwelling by having it water soaked before it is reached by the oncoming flames.

— Photo by Heckbert Studio



RESTORE LINE

Linemen from Maritime Electric are shown as they try to upright a pole at In-

verness. The base of the pole had been burnt in the sweep of the flames.

— Photo by Heckbert Studio.



FIRE SITUATION REMAINS STATIC

Forest fires are still burning steadily in the West Prince area and due to the calmness of the last twenty-four hours the situation remains pretty well the same.

Fires which are most threatening are located north of Foxley River and south of Ellerslie. Fire breaks are being cut in the Foxley River district by two bulldozers and fire fighting equipment is standing by. There is quite a bit of equipment standing by at Ellerslie and the men have reported that they are getting along pretty well with the fire in that district.

The Civil Defence have set up headquarters at the Legion home in Ellerslie as well as the Red Cross and anyone wishing aid can contact officials of either organization there. Mjr. Orin Simons is acting as civil defence coordinator.

Mr. G. Kerr is despatching fire fighting equipment and co-ordinating all transportation in connection with the effort to subdue the fires. Dick Found of the Biological Station is in charge of field operations, Gordon Bell is in charge of operational fire fighting.

Fire fighting equipment from Alma, O'Leary, Alberton, National Park, RCAF Station, Tyne Valley, Wellington, Miscouche and Kensington is all standing by or in use. Some of the people in the Foxley River area who vacated their homes during the gale on Monday are moving back while others on the Rafferty Road are moving out because of the closeness of the fire.

Several army personnel from Charlottetown are also on hand. The ladies auxiliary of the Legion

and the Women's Institutes are serving meals to the fire fighters, the food being provided by the Red Cross.

Mass. Woman Offers Help to Fire Victims

In connection with the fire disaster in Prince County Mrs. Carolyn Emery of Massachusetts telephoned the Summerside Branch of the Red Cross of her intention of collecting blankets and other suitable articles through her local Red Cross and forwarding them to the Summerside branch for distribution.

She said she would make this collection immediately and forward the articles as soon as possible.

Men injured

Three men suffered injuries last night in fighting forest fires near Tyne Valley. Two of the men were treated at the scene while a bulldozer operator was taken to Stewart Memorial Hospital for treatment to undisclosed head injuries.

Legion Votes \$1,000 To Fire Fund

A generous gift of \$1,000 to the fire disaster fund has been donated by the Canadian Legion, George R. Pearkes, V.C. Branch, Summerside, it was revealed last evening after a meeting of the executive presided over by president Mercier Mullin.

The fire disaster fund has been set up by the Ellerslie branch of the Legion and the Red Cross.

The fund will be used for the rehabilitation of residents of Prince County who lost their homes or other properties in the fire.

It is hoped that other organizations and individuals will follow the lead of the Summerside Legion Branch in giving to this fund, in order to give assistance to residents of the county who have suffered heavy losses during the past few days.

R.C.A.F. Station Giving Valuable Assistance

RCAF Station Summerside is playing a big part in fighting the forest fires.

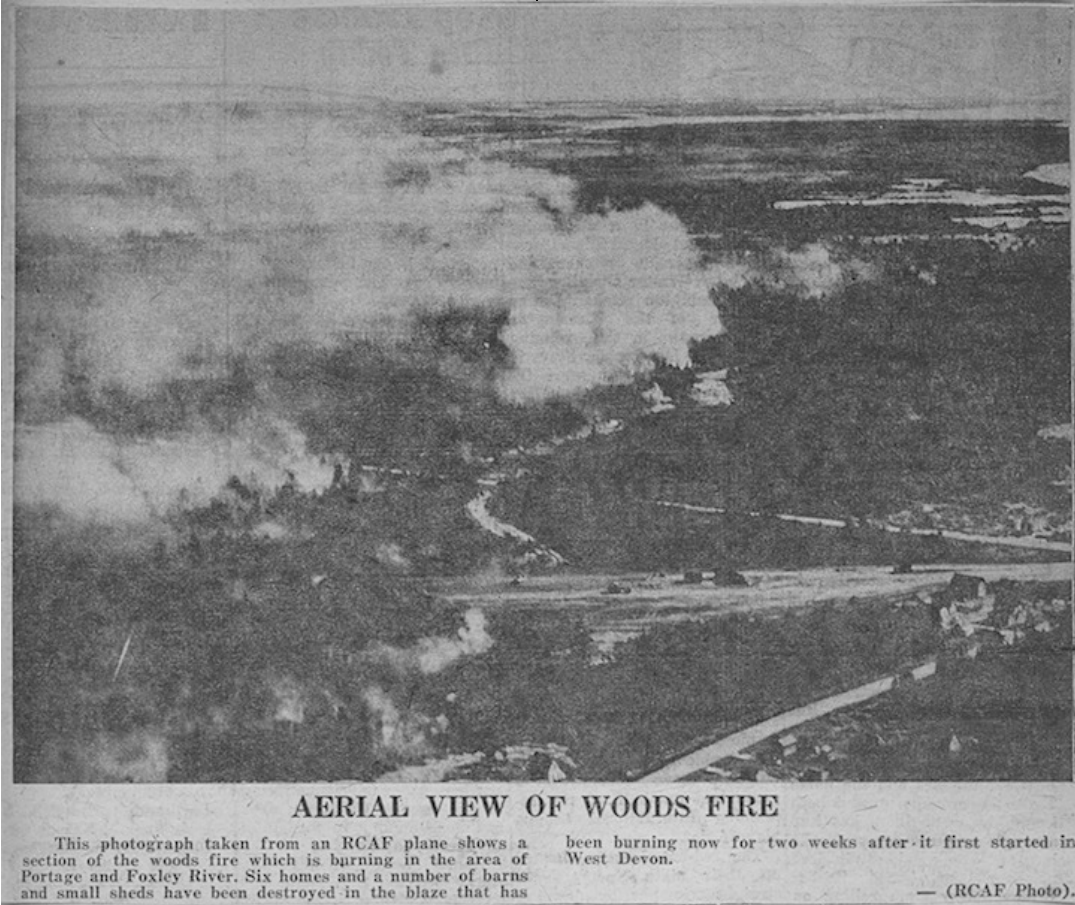
A detachment of 60 men under Fire Chief Warrant Officer Somerville has been on duty since yesterday morning. They are operating three forestry pumps and hoses and operate 24 hours a day on 12-hour shifts. They take responsibility for certain sectors and operate as six crews.

In addition a pumper truck from the fire department stays on duty all day under civilian control.

This morning on short notice four trucks and a bus were sent up to help in evacuation operations and several other trucks are constantly on the job.

The Red Cross report that yesterday tanks of hot stew were sent up from the station and distributed to the men on the lines.

It is understood that even more help will be given if required.



Premier And Party Fly Over Fire Areas

By Elmer Murphy

Yesterday afternoon I accompanied Premier W.R. Shaw and a party of Government representatives on a flight over the burned out and burning area of West Prince. The flight was made through the courtesy of the commanding officer, Group Captain J. E. Creeper, DFC, who piloted the plane.

On such a beautiful summer afternoon this could have been a most enjoyable pleasure flight if it were not for the grim sight below. Smoke was billowing up from six main areas of fire and all around, gaunt and black, stood areas of bare tree trunks where the devouring flames had passed. In some of these burnt-over areas no vegetation of any kind lived but in other places certain types of trees remained almost untouched in the midst of desolation and ruin.

In several places we could see the blackened remains of what had once been a home. What was more cheerful was the fact that many more homes had obviously been in great danger during Monday's gale and had remained untouched.

Clearly visible from the air were the fire breaks which had been slashed through the trees. These in places had been most effective.

Squadron Leader George Dennison used a map to help the party pinpoint the areas of fire. These total about 25 square miles of fire area. S/L Dennison located six main fires which areas follows:

No. 1. The Northam area. This is about a mile and a half long and a mile wide and is on both sides of the Western Road from Northam to Victoria West.

No. 2. The Mount Pleasant area which is about the largest area, measuring four miles by two. (All these figures are approximate.) It is on both sides of the Western Road and is bounded by the Mount Pleasant Airport, the MacNeill's Mills Road and the Percival River Road.

No. 3. The Portage area. This is a large wooded area about six miles long by about a mile wide. It is also on both sides of the Western Road.

No. 4. Conway Station area, about a mile square.
No. 5. Woodbrook area, about two miles by one.
No. 6. Foxley River area. This seemed to be the most vigorous fire yesterday. The area measures about two miles by one, north east of the river.

There are also several small fires between Conway and the Western Road.

In addition there are two relatively small fires burning near Tignish in the Peterville area.

Looking down from the area it could be seen that under certain circumstances the Catholic Church and parochial house at Lot 11 could be in danger. However, a fire break had been constructed and yesterday there was no fire burning in the immediate area.

It is necessary to fly over the area to realize the immensity of the woods in this part of the Island. Although the fires have so far done great damage to the woodlots, not one-twentieth of the woods have yet been touched.

While there was a considerable quantity of smoke billowing up from the fire areas yesterday there was not much movement to the fires, and they pose very little threat to buildings unless the wind rises when the situation would again become serious.

Also in the party yesterday were the Hon. Henry Wedge, Minister of Welfare, the Hon. Philip Matheson, Minister of Highways, Mr. Gordon White, deputy minister of highways and Ron MacArthur, Journal-Pioneer photographer.

Early in the day the government party had visited the fire area by car and had spoken to most of the people who had lost property. Mr. Wedge told The Journal-Pioneer that three welfare workers of his department are in the area interviewing these people to determine what their needs are and what can be done to help them.

At the conclusion of the flight Group Captain Creeper assured Premier Shaw of his desire to do all he can to help in this unfortunate situation.

RCAF And CNR Helping With Equipment And Men to Fight Fires

Both RCAF Station Summerside and the Canadian National Railways are making important contributions to fighting the fires raging in West Prince.

This morning the RCAF flew over from the supply depot at Moncton two Wajax forestry pumps with 5,000 feet of hose. They also brought over 59 back packs which consist of four-gallon cans and a pump, and are worn on the back of a fire-fighter.

This morning a group of airmen left the station with this equipment for the fire area.

The Canadian National Railways has a shuttle service going between Foxley River and Ellerslie, bringing water to the RCAF and other fire-fighters.

A special train left Charlottetown last evening with seven tank cars filled with water. Today this train is travelling back and forth between Ellerslie and Foxley River bringing water.

The Regional Supervisor of Fire Protection, A. I. Atkinson, is directing the CNR operations on the scene.

Yesterday Mr. Dave Blair, general superintendent for the Maritimes, called Premier W. R. Shaw and offered the assistance of the CNR which was gratefully accepted.

S'side Legion Gives \$1,000 To Disaster Fund

The Summerside branch of the Canadian Legion has started off the drive to raise funds to re-establish the burnt-out people of West Prince by making a donation of \$1,000.

A committee to organize the drive has been set up as follows: Honorary President, Lieutenant-Governor F. W. Hyndman; Cyril Williams, past president and zone commander and includes the branch president Earl Colwill, Harold Phillips, Bud William, Carmen MacNeill, D. R. Montgomery and William Noye.

To Remove Children From Fire Area

The forest fire area of West Prince has been declared a "Health Hazard Area" by the Minister of Health, the Hon. Hubert McNeill. The purpose of this declaration is to give the department authority to remove infants and small children from the area who may suffer from the effects of smoke and gas.

It is expected that many of these children will be evacuated today. This work will mostly be done by the staff of the Prince County Catholic Welfare Agency and the agency reported this morning they believed they have sufficient homes ready in Miscouche and Summerside to house all the children that will be brought in. Many people have volunteered to look after these children.

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FIRE SITUATION AGAIN CRITICAL

Freshening Winds Are Fanning Fires to Life

Just before noon an appeal was sent out for vehicles to evacuate families from the Foxley River area and it was expected that about forty trucks would be needed. The RCAF Station was sending four trucks and a bus and government trucks were being mobilized as the situation has once again become critical.

As a Journal-Pioneer reporter checked the area about 11:30, volunteers were spraying the home of Doug. Milligan on the Rafferty Road, near Portage, while flames across the road were mounting to the height of his home.

The forest fire situation this morning was unchanged but the immediate outlook is not good. The meteorological unit at the RCAF Station said at 11:30 that winds are blowing from the south-west at about 20 miles per hour, gusting to 33. The forecaster said this condition would pertain all day but they would diminish some this evening. There is no rain in the offing, he said.

Mr. R.H. Found of Bideford Biological Station said that when the dew dries out the situation will become dangerous.

Headquarters for the fire fighting effort is at the Ellerslie Canadian Legion Home and the atmosphere there is almost a wartime one. An RCMP radio equipped patrol car stands by at all times for communication purposes and other RCAF cars are constantly on patrol. A squad of army vehicles and drivers are on hand and the RCAF and volunteer civilian fire fighters also go out from this point. The fire fighting equipment is also dispatched to strategic areas from here as well.

The building is equipped with bunks where weary fire fighters can rest and in the basement meals are constantly being served. In addition snacks are prepared and sent out to the men in the field.

Appeal Made for More Volunteers to Fight Fires in West Prince

An appeal for more volunteer fire fighters was issued this morning through The Journal-Pioneer by Mr. Gordon Bell, director of fire fighting operations. He said that volunteers are greatly needed and they can report at any time to the Ellerslie Legion Home.

Fire Chief Heath Warren of the Summerside Fire Department said that his department is organizing a fire fighting crew to leave Summerside at six o'clock for an all-night stint on the fire lines and he is appealing to the civilian population to join this group.

All who are interested in helping in this emergency should report to the fire hall before six o'clock.

Mr. Bell also said that he could use more tanks on trucks and pumpers. At present he has under his command eleven bulldozers, eight tankers and four pumpers, also seven CNR tank cars are stopped at strategic spots.



West Prince Fire Region Termed Disaster Area

Bronchial Smoke Injury Brings Evacuation Order

BY GEORGE WOTTON
Guardian-Patriot Staff
Writer

SUMMERSIDE — The section of Prince County swept by fire was declared a disaster area from the medical aspect yesterday afternoon. Evacuation of residents suffering from smoke was authorized by Dr. Hubert McNeil, minister of Health.

Dr. McNeil took the action because of bronchial congestion caused by smoke in the fire area. Young children are especially affected, Dr. McNeil said, and Major O.R. Simons, civil defence co-ordinator operating from the Co-ordination centre at Ellerslie, has been authorized to evacuate any and all persons who are now or likely to be affected by the smoke.

Two nuns from the Prince County Welfare Agency in Summerside, Sr. Mary Eugene and Sr. Mary Eleanor, who have been in the area since Tuesday, distributing food, clothing, and providing assistance to burned out families, yesterday made a house to house survey of most of the area, and last evening requested transportation from co-ordination headquarters for women and children to shelter accommodation that they have arranged at Summerside for those who had to be evacuated last evening.

SMOKE SICKNESS

The survey they conducted yesterday revealed a number of cases of sickness from the smoke, also indicated that many residents of home threatened by fire and smoke were reluctant to leave, and that most of them had arranged for their own transportation in the event of emergency.

Watchful concern for those who are without transportation, however, is being maintained by RCMP and personnel at the coordination centre.

Many homes are located in or along wood-lined roads, and some are situated in places where the

only escape route could be cut off by sudden fire.

Typical of these persons is the family of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Kelly situated between Portage and Foxley River. Their 17-year-old daughter Reby, returning home from grade 12 classes at O'Leary high school for the past two days, has found the woodlined driveway to their home blocked by smoke and fire, and has had to reach her home by a longer detour.

She arrived yesterday to find her father desperately extinguishing a ring of grass fires a few yards away from their home.

Several miles distant, on the Mill Road, a fire center five days ago, Charlie Shaw was still lugging hundreds of pails of water daily to control new out breaks which continue within a few yards of his home, and the nearby home of a neighbour, Mildred Stewart.

Mr. Shaw said he has probed the earth to a depth of four feet in the surrounding woodland swept by fire, and found fire burning to almost that depth in thick peat-like topsoil.

The Summerside branch of the Canadian Legion made a \$1,000 donation to commence a rehabilitation fund that the Ellerslie Legion organized, and to which the Ellerslie branch and the ladies auxiliary have donated \$500.

A dozen or more women and children were being evacuated from areas of danger from advancing fires, and many others were keeping watch ready to leave their homes during the night if fire nears.

Weary fire fighters, bull dozer operators, pumper tank crews, RCMP, and co-ordinating officials were working late last night with plans made to continue in some area all night, and to start in others at daybreak.

With priority fire emergencies developing constantly over the entire area from Northam to Portage, every available RCMP

car assisted by two from the biological station at Ellerslie, patrolled roads and provided communication links that kept 12 bulldozers and 14 pumpers and tanker trucks in action which prevented destruction of any homes or buildings yesterday.

The Ellerslie Legion Disaster Fund is being directed by a committee composed of Lieutenant-Governor F. Walter Hyndman, as honorary chairman; Cyril Williams a past president of the Ellerslie branch, and the Legion zone commander, as chairman; Earl Colwill, Harold Phillips, Budd Williams Carmen MacNeill, D.S. Montgomery, and William Noye.

The donations, which may be made direct to the Ellerslie Legion Branch or to any branch of the Royal Bank of Canada, will be used to assist in the rehabilitation of homeless persons and others who suffered personal losses in property, machinery, furniture, and household effects destroyed or damaged in the fires.

Forty members of the RCAF yesterday joined local volunteer workers, bull dozer operators, and tank truck crews in the front line of fire fighting which helped contain the fires from spreading in several danger spots.

Red Cross disaster services and civil defence volunteers workers continued the co-ordination of the fire fighting activities from headquarters established Tuesday at the Canadian legion home. Here ladies from the district worked steadily in preparing and serving food and coffee supplied by the Red Cross, and hot beef stew sent from RCAF Station Summerside by the commanding officer, Group Captain J.E. Creeper, who also sent an RCAF bus, 57 back pack fire extinguishers, a pumper truck and a portable pumper.

Other pumper trucks and pumpers were in the area from the Dept. of Forestry, Alma, Tyne Valley, Kensington, O'Leary and Coleman.

The main fire areas last evening, from east to west, were located in the area between Springhill and Northam, in the area between Ellerslie and Port Hill Station, in the areas along the Western Road from Mount Pleasant through North Enmore, and Inverness to Portage; in the Conway area, in the area between Portage and Foxley River, and in the Black Banks area.

Extensive fire breaks were established yesterday by bull dozers working along the barren road between Foxley River and the Murray Road, and in the Springhill area, while fire breaks of smaller proportions were thrown up around woods and buildings in many areas where they were needed.

While the fires burned above ground and through tree tops in the areas named above, other fires smouldered at and below ground level in hundreds of other spots where the heat underfoot was too intense to stand or walk on for more than a few minutes.

At the co-ordination center in Ellerslie, Red Cross disaster workers have been working round the clock, and have supplied food which has been

prepared and served by lady volunteer workers from the Ellerslie area to the fire fighters and other workers in the fire fight, some of whom have worked without sleep for more than twenty four hours in the seemingly endless battle.

As the wide spread area of fire fronts necessitated co-ordination of all fire fighting units and relief volunteers, disaster service workers yesterday were working under the direction of civil defence co-ordinator Major Simons, doing everything possible to aid in the battle.

S'side Legion Votes \$1,000 To Fire Fund

A generous gift of \$1,000 to the fire disaster fund has been donated by the Canadian Legion, George R. Pearkes, V.C., Branch, Summerside, it was revealed last evening after a meeting.

It is hoped that other organizations and individuals will follow the lead of the Summerside Legion Branch in giving to this fund, in order to give assistance to residents of the

county who have suffered heavy losses during the past few days.

Fire Fighters Sustain Injuries

Mr. Kendall Godkin of Summerside who has been one of the volunteer fire fighters in West Prince severely burned both hands on Saturday while fighting a blaze in the Foxley River area. He is taking treatment daily at the Prince County Hospital.

Kendall is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Heartz Godkin.

Yesterday an RCAF member, Walter Marchbank, fell off a fire truck and sustained injuries to his back. He is in hospital in Summerside.

One other person was reported to have suffered burned hands but his name could not be ascertained today.



EVACUATES HOME AT MURRAY ROAD

Volunteer workers are shown yesterday afternoon removing the possessions of Mrs. Michael MacDonald on the Murray Road. A short distance away the greedy fire was gutting the homestead of George Tuplin. — Journal-Pioneer Staff Photo.

Ellerslie Village Peril Eased As Rain Showers Check Blaze

Fire Fighting Gear Massed For Effort

BY GEORGE WOTTON
Guardian-Patriot Staff
Writer

SUMMERSIDE — Following an afternoon of uncontrolled fire, and the greatest concentration of fire fighting facilities ever seen on P.E.I., tension on the fronts in Prince County eased when scattered showers crossed some of the districts at 6 p.m. last evening. They checked a rapidly advancing fire that during the afternoon threatened to destroy Ellerslie Village and the co-ordination centre located there.

The most devastating fires yesterday were located in the Black Banks, Foxley River, Portage and Ellerslie districts.

Families were hastily evacuated from several homes between the Western Road and the North Shore, and the number of property losses included the residence, barn, garage, and one other building of George Tuplin, on the Murray Road; a barn and machine shop of James Gain, on the Murray Road; a barn of James MacDonald on the Black Banks road; the residence of Hattie Bell, on the Western Road in the Mount Pleasant area.

OTHER LOSSES

Other property losses were reported but not confirmed last night, and at a late hour, fire fighters were continuing the battle to save the residence of Lowell Matthews whose house is situated on the shore line of Cascumpec Bay, where a portable pumper had been landed by a fisheries boat from Alberton when the only road to the home was cut off by fire which was surrounding the area.

Four other homes on this road, upwards of a dozen more on the Murray Road, and the village of Portage were all in danger last night, but fire pumper trucks and fire fighters were being sent into each area to look after all properties.

Reminiscent of Monday's spreading fire, the winds reached peak intensities about 3 p.m. as fierce fires roared through woodlands in 80 degree temperatures until rain fell in the evening. It gave relief in the

Ellerslie area and permitted fire fighting forces on stand-by duty to be diverted to assist in other areas.

An efficient communication station was established by RCMP radio cars strategically located and patrolling the entire area, giving steady reports of conditions and the needs and deployment of fire fighting equipment within their districts.

An emergency appeal, shortly after noon, brought volunteer assistance pouring into the area in greater numbers than could temporarily be dispatched.

EQUIPMENT MASSED

A count of available equipment included 15 tanker trucks, 12 pumper trucks, approximately 12 bull dozers, 75 dump and transport trucks, and about 500 men, which included two shifts totalling 120 men from RCAF Station Summerside.

During the day contributions to the disaster relief fund established by the Ellerslie branch of the Canadian Legion were received at the Tyne Valley branch of the Royal Bank of Canada to which the Ellerslie Legion and Borden Legion have each donated \$500 and the Summerside Legion had contributed \$1,000.

This money will be used in the rehabilitation of persons who suffered losses of property, household furniture, machinery, and livestock in the fires.

GREATLY EASED

Heavy rainfall about 10 o'clock last night confined the fire at Palmer's Road and greatly eased the situation in the area.

The Alberton Fire Department, aided by two bulldozers, water tankers and volunteer workers, worked for the past three days to confine the fire to an area between Peters Road and the DeBlois Road.

A mile-long fire break was cut by bulldozers and steady patrols were kept on the cuts. Back-firing was carried out under the direction of Alberton fire chief Stephen Burke and former chief Perley Hardy.

This fire zone was visited yesterday by Dr. O.H. Phillips MP and Henry Wedge and Dr. Hubert McNeil, MLAs from the

area. They were guided by Herbert Lovatt of Alberton.

Two homes in the area were threatened at one time but fire breaks prevented the flames from getting too close. The Palmer Road church was out of immediate danger last night but a constant fire watch at the building was being kept.

OPERATORS PRAISED

The bulldozer operators are being highly commended by local residents for the fast and continuous work they are doing in establishing fire breaks, in the face of great personal danger. Yesterday 4 of these operators, Alcide Gallant, Lawson Oatway, Lester Silliker, and Arnold Culleton, barely escaped the fire which roared across the Black Banks Road where they had been constructing fire breaks.

Unaware of the approaching danger from the flames which raced through the woods in that area, the men were notified just in time by an RCMP car, and flames sealed the road in fire just feet behind them as they raced for safety through this long, narrow, heavily wooded road.

Two other bulldozer operators suffered minor injuries and were brought into the co-ordination center for first aid attention last night.

2 ARE INJURED

One of these was Harold Clements who was struck by a falling tree he was bulldozing out of the fire path, and resulted in a minor cut to his face. The other operator, unidentified, received a minor cut to the back of his head.

Local ladies under the direction of Mrs. Budd Williams of Ellerslie have worked in shifts which are on continuous duty in a well-organized program of preparing food and hot drinks supplied by the Red Cross and RCAF station Summerside for thousands of sandwiches and other food items served to hungry fire fighters and volunteer workers.

Six girls from Summerside and St. Eleanors arrived at the centre last evening to assist or provide relief for the Ellerslie ladies in kitchen duties throughout the night.

GAS TRUCKS HELP

Oil tanker trucks from Summerside and other areas changed their loads of oil or gas for loads of water and answered the call for water carrying vehicles yesterday afternoon to feed the portable pumpers fire fighting in areas where no sources of water are available.

Almost every single volunteer fire department west of Charlottetown was represented in the area with men and equipment, and a large water tanker owned by the city of Charlottetown was also sent to assist.

Communication lines were out at Portage late yesterday afternoon as the fire in that area temporarily blocked the Western Highway.

Most of the water supply used by pumper trucks who needed to

re-fill tanks was obtained from the biological station at Ellerslie, where furniture from homes being evacuated was also taken for storage, while evacuees needing shelter and food found these facilities readily available to them at the co-ordination centre in Ellerslie.

An RCAF bus was available to transport them out of the area to Summerside where accommodation was ready for them.

Dispatching of fire fighting equipment and personnel was directed throughout the day by Cnst. Ronald Pettit of the Summerside RCMP detachment, and Richard Found, local co-ordinator.

MOVED 5 TIMES

The twenty members of the Bulger family whose home in Foxley River was destroyed on

Monday, yesterday made their fifth move in four days as fire forced them to move from place to place in the area during this time. Four members were evacuated out of the smoke and fire-filled area in Foxley River by a Guardian-Patriot staff car to the control centre in Ellerslie about 2 p.m., and other members were preparing to leave for Summerside with relatives at that time.

While the state of emergency that existed through the area seemed slightly relaxed just before midnight, the direction and intensity of wind was still the major concern until heavy rain can fall on the districts, and the outlook as expressed by an official at the control centre was summed up in his words that “anything can happen tonight.”

Red Cross units give disaster aid

Red Cross Disaster Units from Summerside, O’Leary and Charlottetown have been on duty since last Monday bringing aid to the disaster struck area of Western Prince County where forest fires have been raging since last week-end.

Robert Younker, chairman of the Red Cross disaster services reported that units from Charlottetown, O’Leary and Summerside have been on duty at the Disaster Center at Ellerslie since Monday, and that at least three other units have been on the job in their own areas.

Frank MacDonald of Charlottetown, vice-chairman of the disaster committee, was in Morell yesterday afternoon to confer with James Jay, chairman of the disaster committee in that area in connection with the fires in this section of the province. Mr. Jay reported that a committee of women had been organized to prepare sandwiches and coffee for distribution to fire fighters who have been battling recurring flare-ups in Kings County.

In the Western section of the province the Red Cross are doing all possible to provide assistance to families who have lost their homes to the raging fires.

“Action will be taken as soon as possible to help those in such distress”, the Premier said feelingly.

Discussing the matter during a brief stop in Portage two senior members of the Cabinet fully agreed on making help available. “It has got to be done,” they said as they unofficially discussed methods of providing aid.

One of them noted “it makes no difference that we will be over our budget.” The other remarked, “we will have to create a special fund. There is real justification here for it.”

The Cabinet, whose regularly scheduled meeting yesterday was cancelled in order to visit the fire area, will hold a meeting this afternoon, the Premier announced. It is expected much of the discussion will centre around aid for the disaster area.



PREMIER SHAW is looking at the home of George Tuplin, shown on this same page, and coughing as he is choked and red eyed with smoke from the fire and forest blazing nearby. “Terrifying saddening” was his observation.

A WARNING

Police officials again warned sight-seers and the curious to stay away from the fire area in Prince County. These people, police say, will only hinder the fight by adding to the confusion and may endanger their own safety. No one who is not part of the fight will be allowed at the scene.

EARLY AID SEEN FOR FIRE AREA

The possibility of early government aid for the hard hit people in the province’s fire area was seen yesterday when Premier Shaw and most of his cabinet toured the Prince County sector.



‘Terrifying, Saddening’ Is Premier’s Comment

“It was a terrifying and saddening spectacle,” Premier Walter R. Shaw said late yesterday as he finished an exhaustive tour of many fire-blackened sections of Prince County.

Accompanied by all members of the cabinet excepting Highways Minister Matheson and Attorney General Bell, the Premier drove through dense black smoke and along back roads where flames almost reached the cars as he saw for himself the terrifying extent of the catastrophe which hit the areas.

His tour ranged widely through central Prince from Ellerslie as he crisscrossed the country through Tyne Valley, Portage, Foxley River, Conway and countless small settlements.

“Action will be taken as soon as possible to help those in such distress,” he said as he saw the tremendous losses in homes, crops, farmlands and woodlots.

Of the work being done Premier Shaw said “I cannot too highly praise the efforts of the men in charge and the wonderful support given by local residents, the RCAF, the RCMP and all towns and villages which provided equipment.”

SPLENDID EFFORT

“I found a splendidly organized fire fighting effort,” he stated.

He noted units of the Army has supplied men and equipment “to take part in the difficult job of control and protection,” and regretted that further homes and buildings have been destroyed.

The Premier said one of the gravest dangers was the threat posed to larger community centers.

He was pleased when rain started to fall at six o’clock. “I hope it will continue as nothing but heavy rain can stop the progress of these fires.”

“I am sure the sympathy of all the people of the province will go out to those who have suffered such losses,” he said, “and action will be taken as soon as possible to help those in such distress.”

Just before leaving Ellerslie last evening the Premier received a message that fires in the eastern part of the province were again breaking out beyond control. He said that Hon. R.R. Bell, attorney general, and Hon. J.P. Matheson, minister of highways, were in that section of the province to assist wherever possible.

Mobilization, Protection Effort Mounted in P.E.I.

With the fire situation in Prince County rapidly deteriorating Thursday, a super mobilization and protection effort was made throughout the province.

All woodlands in the province have been closed to travel. Hon. Leo Rossiter said yesterday that campers in provincial camping grounds and trailer parks would have to vacate immediately. National Park forests are also closed but campers will not

have to vacate. Open fires, even on the beaches, have been prohibited.

FIRE CREW SENT

Eric Kipping, superintendent of National Parks, ordered a fully equipped firefighting crew in to the area to help fight the blaze. The two men, park warden Al Murphy and foreman Reg MacDonald, brought with them a highly mobile trailer pumper of 250-gallon capacity; a Wejax centrifugal fire

pump; a jeep; 2,000 feet of forestry fire hose, several back-pack pumps and a 10-man fire tool kit.

The mobile fire pumper is one that Murphy designed and has been brought into general use by the National Park Services.

CITY SENDS AID

Mayor A.W. Gaudet ordered the city water tanker and two operating crews to the fire area in Prince County. The truck has an 1,800-gallon water capacity and is suitable for fighting ground fires or carrying water to the scenes of large fires.

The mayor also said that city mechanics and mechanics from Maritime Motor Supply would work round the clock to get the two disabled city pumpers back in action. They are expected to be ready early this morning.

If the fire situation has not improved after the pumpers are repaired, the city will consider sending one of the machines to Prince County.

DEVISED MACHINE

The city has also devised a machine to at least partially relieve the regular pumpers from answering calls to grass and brush fires in the city.

It consists of a 250 gallon tank loaned by an oil company mounted on the back of a light truck. Firemen equipped with back-pack stirrup pumps can effectively fight grass fires, taking their water from the tank. The truck can be taken through fields and rough country to the scene of fires.

The CNR has said that no more tank cars will be sent into the fire zone immediately. Division Superintendent G. R. Greenough said that a check with the senior railroad man in the fire area has shown that no more tank cars can be handled above the seven that are already there.

Mr. Greenough said however that he personally would make an inspection of the area and plan the railway course of action in regard to more equipment.

MILITIA GROUP

No. 2 Militia Group in Charlottetown has joined the fight in the Prince County fire area, supplying mainly transportation equipment.

In the area are four heavy trucks, four light trucks, and three jeeps all with army drivers. Also in the area are three members of the Provost Corps, equipped with motorcycles.

Brigadier A.W. Rogers said last night that regular troops of the militia group will not be called into action until the RCAF base in Summerside is no longer able to supply men. Brig. Rogers said the reason for this is because the No. 2 group is not a regular Army unit.

Chief project of the No. 2 group at present is the establishment of a field kitchen that will soon be ready for action, the brigadier said.

‘Unbelievably Bad’ Is Word On Prince Co. Destruction

BY RALPH CAMERON
Guardian-Patriot Staff
Writer

The fire destruction in Prince County is unbelievable unless witnessed.

Miles of burned out stretches; forests and fields just blackened ruins. Houses and barns left smouldering wrecks. Whole districts evacuated.

Women and children sitting dazed by the disaster which struck so swiftly.

All types and makes of trucks hauling people away from the path of the flames; more trucks loaded with a few pitiful belongings saved.

UTTER DESOLATION

Yesterday afternoon mile after flame-filled mile it was the same picture of utter desolation.

“This is awful. It is just awful”, Premier Walter Shaw muttered time after time as he saw the extent of the disaster.

With all members of his Cabinet excepting Highways Minister Matheson and Attorney General Bell he toured the stricken area.

A five-car motorcade drove over interminable miles through smoke so dense at times the side of the road could not be seen.

Over one terrific stretch of road with fires blazing fiercely on both sides the Press car

accompanying the officials was able to get through even with headlights blazing only by following the big white truck which the City of Charlottetown uses for watering the streets. It was in service carrying badly needed supplies of water to aid embattled firemen.

Countless other trucks, mobilized from all parts of the Island, hauled water in casks or tanks or any other container available.

One fire-blackened and smoke-filled driver from Kensington said he had come to Ellerslie on Monday to help with his truck. He had been there ever since.

PLEADING FOR HELP

Exhausted operators of bulldozers were pleading for help so they could get some rest.

On a side road in deep back country a lone Holstein cow wandered over blackened fields looking for grass. Nearby a battered stove was all there was to be seen where a home had once been.

A few miles further and within a mile of one of the fiercest blazes, an elderly woman slowly drove four cows down a road leading nowhere but to the shore.

On the Murray Road another blaze had destroyed a barn and was just beginning to catch on a

beautiful two-storey house owned by George Tuplin.

Headed by the Premier the entire official party left cars and ran to man a bucket brigade. Almost every man in the group had a farm background and the action was instinctive. But it was a wasted gesture.

HOUSE DESTROYED

Before available buckets could be reached, the house itself became a raging inferno as it burst into flames in all sections at once and the heat was so intense it was impossible to get near it.

The fire raced through the nearby orchard and jumped the road to start a terrific blaze in deep woods opposite. Car owners ran to get their autos turned around as it rapidly became impossible to go ahead on the road. Within minutes the house was gone.

Its owners had left and moved out his furniture only a few hours before.

Along almost every roadside bulldozers and grading machines were cutting away shrubs creating ditches in an effort to help halt the rapid advance of the flames.

Ellerslie was the never-centre of fire-fighting activity with communications centres set up by civil defence units under co-

ordinator Orin Simons at the Ellerslie Hall.

TRUCK CONTROL

Outside on the roadway an RCMP car maintained radio control of truck movements in the area. Mounties were to be seen everywhere helping or directing traffic. Inspector A.S. McNeil was in personal charge on the scene.

He recalled similar battles with brush fires in Western Canada and remarked on the, for this country, unusual sight of a 'crown' fire racing over the tops of trees 60 feet high while leaving the lower parts relatively untouched.

Along one road where the homes were as yet not affected by fire, one farm home was noticed with outbuildings crowded nearby. Jammed against one wall of a barn was a towering hay stack which seemed to offer an invitation to disaster.

Down one of the roads leading to Portage a deserted farm home was seen with doors open as the family had apparently departed hurriedly. On the porch was a large console radio and a washing machine obviously left to their fate.

FIRES EVERYWHERE

It was not just one fire the tired people had to fight. There were fires everywhere. On the road approaching Ellerslie fires burned stubbornly on both sides.

Only a short distance away children casually strolled home from school along the same road.

Approaching the village huge columns of smoke could be seen in at least three main areas.

What had been a beautiful summer day in Queens County became a nightmare in Prince. There was neither day nor night, only an in-between smoke-filled eternity.

Heavy gusty winds fanned embers into roaring fires all over again in countless valleys and along hillsides.

Only occasionally could anyone get a lungful of clean air.

Small animals and insects were particularly noticeable through their complete absence. Not a cat or dog was seen.

Scattered across the deserted country were many rural churches, many in the path of the innumerable fires raging on all sides.

DESERTED VILLAGE

As one settlement after another was passed there came a strong reminder of the famous poem by Goldsmith "The Deserted Village."

In one such, apparently devoid of life at first, some activity was seen. A small girl with her hair done up in curlers was calmly enjoying herself on a common rope swing.

Some areas were used as concentration points of standby trucks so they could be rushed where needed. The drivers, weary and fresh alike, sat on the roadside munching sandwiches supplied by Red Cross workers.

In Ellerslie Hall women volunteers provided refreshments and welcome hot coffee to all workers.

Late in the afternoon segments of the military units based in Charlottetown arrived with huge trucks and a spokesman said by today there would be 100 Army men in the fight.

One sergeant approached Premier Shaw and said he was a government employee in civilian life and asked permission to stay to help in the fight. "Son, you stay here as long as you are needed," the Premier told him.



THE BEAUTIFUL residence of George Tuplin, Murray Road is shown as it burned yesterday despite the efforts of fire fighters which included Premier Walter Shaw and most of his cabinet members. The fire caught as the cabinet members were nearing the area and they turned in to join in the hopeless battle.

Co-ordination Seen Brighter

Red Cross and Civil Defence units, working in close co-operation from their Ellerslie headquarters reported last night that the co-ordination picture in the Prince County fire areas was looking brighter.

Communication, traffic, welfare, feeding and equipment dispatching are being controlled from the joint headquarters, set up in the Legion Hall.

Food and drink is being distributed by mobile units to the men on the fire lines. Much

of the food is being prepared by the ladies of Ellerslie, and one hot meal per day is prepared by the RCAF at their base. The Prince County Catholic welfare agency is also aiding in looking after refugees.

RCMP are looking after all fire area communication with the dispatcher working in the headquarters building, Civil Defence is handling traffic control.

The refugee problem was not as great as first indications showed, and only 15 people had yet to be moved early last night. Many others had stayed temporarily at the headquarters but later moved

in with friends, or were able to return to their homes.

Plenty of space had been prepared in advance for any who might not have been able to find lodging. Grocery stores in the area distributed groceries to some of the disaster victims.

Red Cross units from Charlottetown, O'Leary and Summerside are in the area, under the immediate direction of Miss Ephigenie Arsenault and Gordon MacDonald. Civil Defence and militia personnel are under the command of Major O.R. Simons. Dick Found is headquarters dispatcher.



SHOWN HERE are sergeant "Chuck" Martin briefing Corporal J.H. Brown and Leading Aircraftsman I.B. Ruthven on the mysteries of the Wajax forestry pump. The three airmen are part of a 21-man group of RCAF Station firefighters detailed to help fight Prince County forest fires under the direction of Officer G.L. Som-

erville, Station fire chief. On August 29 the team fought fires in the Inverness and Foxley River areas, and five minutes after this picture was taken on Wednesday they were off to Ellerslie to be given the day's directions. New equipment was specially flown in from No. 5 Supply Depot in Moncton, comprising two Wajax forestry

pumps, fifty-nine backpacks (4 gal. tins with hand pumps) and 5,000 feet of hose. The furniture shown in lower picture, was piled on the bank of the Foxley River, mute witness to the fear that the destructive West Prince forest fire struck in the hearts of residents. The owner's name was not available at press time.



Hope Is Held For Tyne Valley Although Partially Evacuated Fire Demon Halted On Village Doorstep

By **GEORGE WOTTON**
Guardian-Patriot Staff Writer

SUMMERSIDE — Partial evacuation of Tyne Valley village, the largest community in the Prince County Fire area, was hastily conducted yesterday afternoon in the front of advancing fire that last evening appeared in check within yards of homes in the village.

Only the presence of sufficient fire fighting equipment and volunteer fire fighters saved all homes yesterday in this and other districts in the area.

Rising winds in excess of 40 miles per hour stirred new fires that were heaviest in the Tyne Valley, Conway, and Mount Pleasant areas, and still burning in threat to residences in every district in a twelve-mile belt extending across the full width of the Island in the area between Northam and Portage.

For the second day, an emergency call for assistance brought trucks and volunteers pouring into the area to assist in fire fighting and evacuation.

1,000 MEN

A complete army mobile field kitchen arrived from Camp Gagetown, N.B., with food supplies sufficient to feed 200 men for four days. Food donations arrived from many parts of the Island to feed the working force that grew to upwards of one thousand men during the day.

In the worsening situation, 10,000 feet of fire hose was flown in from Montreal.

Inspector A. S. McNeill of Charlottetown reduced every detachment on the Island to an absolute minimum staff and moved every available officer and radio patrol car into the area, under his personal direction, in continuing the communication network in all areas that kept the fire fighters, machines and evacuation trucks moving to urgent positions.

In Tyne Valley the four patients from the Stewart Memorial health centre were moved to Prince County Hospital because of the dense choking smoke that blanketed the area most of the afternoon and evening.

The area around the control centre at Ellerslie assumed an atmosphere like a wartime battle front as priority requests were supplied for everything from bandages to bull dozers.

Heroic feats of courage and narrow escapes from flames were heard of from all fire fronts.

ESCAPED BY RAIL

A dozen men, trapped on a road in a wooded area near Port Hill station, with every escape route cut off by fire at 3 a.m. yesterday morning, slacked the front tires on their army panel truck driven by Ken Ford of No. 5 Signals Regiment, Charlottetown, lifted the vehicle onto the railway tracks, and in their "automotive train" drove out of their trapped position to safety at Ellerslie Station where the truck was lifted back to the highway and the twelve men drove down the road to the control centre.

The Summerside RCAF Station yesterday sent 133 men who worked a twelve hour shift, and were relieved by another 133 men at midnight last night. In addition to the many ways the RCAF station has already assisted, they sent in six more forestry pumps yesterday, complete with crews.

The personnel from the RCAF station are under command of F-L Mel Gilmour, with W-O Somerville as fire chief, and W-O Mitchell as deputy fire chief.

PROVOST CORPS

Members of the army provost corps, assisted by two members of the Summerside Police department, were on traffic control duty at all intersections in the area.

A number of the homes in the village and vicinity were evacuated, along with household effects, and librarians arrived from Charlottetown to direct the removal of the books from the public library.

A receiving center for evacuees was established at the Canadian Legion home in Miscouche, from where accommodation was arranged in Summerside or Miscouche for any who had not made other arrangements, and when storage facilities were exhausted at the Ellerslie biological station, household effects were diverted to the Legion Home in Miscouche for temporary storage.

DETERMINATION

With almost fanatical determination to save properties, the volunteer fire fighters from scores of Island districts are becoming familiar faces each day on the fire fronts, and in many cases work almost any length of time, regardless of fatigue, until replacements arrive.

Grim also are the faces of the men, women, and children whose homes and buildings, representing a life time of work in almost every instance, cling tenaciously to hope that seems futile, as they climb to rooftops to pour buckets of water on roofs soon to be scorched, or throw water to dampen the sides of buildings situated in what previously had seemed beautiful green woodland shelter that is now being transformed into heat waves of flame and frightening clouds of dense smoke.

On this Labor Day weekend holiday, the last of the summer season, the long made plans of residents of West Prince fire fronts are forgotten by men and women so busy they are scarcely aware that the weekend has arrived.

After a full seven days of fire fighting, the concentration on the job at hand, which has no ending in sight short of prolonged and heavy rain, will continue today, and until residents of these fire stricken areas can return to their homes, and under less tension than now exists, the work of rehabilitation can't commence for those whose homes are in ashes, and for all those who have suffered unprecedented losses by fire in this area of more than one hundred square miles of Prince county farm and woodland districts.

More Equipment Going To Prince

Sorely needed help in fire fighting equipment is on its way to the embattled Prince County area, Premier Walter R. Shaw said last night.

The aid is coming from Sackville and Fredericton, N.B., and from the Canadian National Railways on the mainland.

Premier Shaw said yesterday's meeting of the cabinet was largely taken up with discussion about the fire situation in the province as late reports at that time indicated matters were serious in Tyne Valley, Conway, Enmore River and Mount Pleasant.

He said even further organization of the fire fighting system was underway for the weekend

holiday and made a plea for all and men machines to stay on the job.

As an additional aid to workers, he said the Department of Public Works office would remain open 24 hours a day and when workers needed either information or additional material they would only have to call Charlottetown 4111.

The Premier also announced Hon. Henry Wedge, minister of Welfare and Labor, had been appointed to set up a special 'disaster' committee which would receive any donations made to residents of the burned out areas. This committee, he stated, will function entirely separately from the Red Cross or other organizations now taking part.

Disaster Fund Made Official



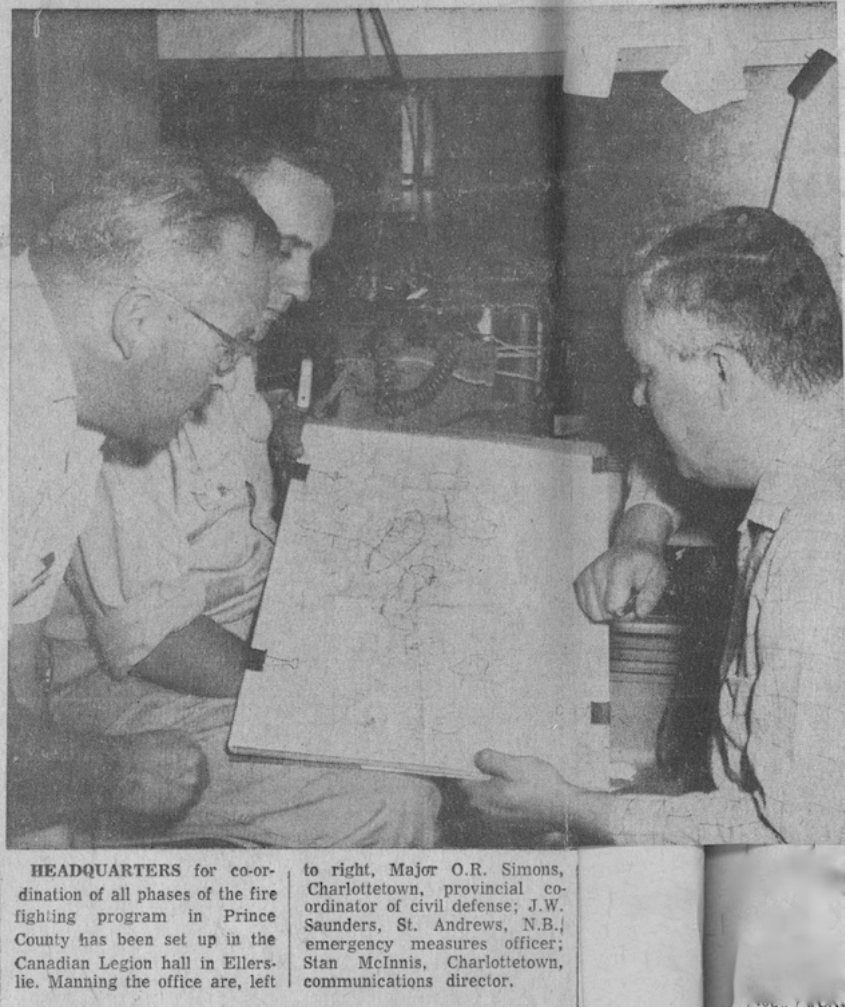
Welfare Minister Henry W. Wedge said last evening the government recognizes the Ellerslie legion disaster fund committee as the official disaster fund committee for Prince County and that

Cyril Williams, the legion zone chairman has accepted the chairmanship.

Mr. Williams said the committee will be enlarged shortly. The provincial welfare department will work in close conjunction with this committee, said Mr. Wedge, and will provide social assistance to the needy families.

People have been requested to make their cash donations to any of the chartered banks in the province who will in turn transfer the contributions to the official committee.

The announcement was made to clarify earlier reports that another committee was being set up under Mr. Wedge to administer [clipping ended.]



HEADQUARTERS for co-ordination of all phases of the fire fighting program in Prince County has been set up in the Canadian Legion hall in Ellerslie. Manning the office are, left

to right, Major O.R. Simons, Charlottetown, provincial co-ordinator of civil defense; J.W. Saunders, St. Andrews, N.B., emergency measures officer; Stan McInnis, Charlottetown, communications director.

Weather Change Saves 5 Villages

By THE CANADIAN PRESS

A shift in the wind and light rain were credited Friday with saving five Atlantic provinces' villages from destruction by ravaging forest fires.

But other villages lay in the paths of some of the 100-odd fires, many of them still out of control. The forest fire situation in Prince Edward Island is the worst in memory.

Rain fell on the lobstering village of Garnish 100 miles from St John's Nfld. checking the flames less than half a mile away while most of the 900 residents fled with bits of personal belongings.

In northern Nova Scotia where a mile-wide fire roared over a hill less than half a mile from the lumbering village of Collingwood, 10 miles from Springhill, the rain had little effect. But the winds switched as the 300 residents prepared to move out and drove the fire into a 10-mile stretch of spruce and maple.

WIND CHANGES

The 300 residents of Ellerslie, civil defence co-ordination centre for a 100-square-mile disaster

area in western Prince Edward Island, had been preparing to evacuate when a wind change came. But more than 100 trucks, mostly privately owned, continued to move families from the threat of a dozen fires burning in the area since Sunday.

Winds were gusty, raging from 15 to 50 miles per hour, and humidities were low as Thursday night's scattered rainfall disappeared and fires sprang to new life.

The western Prince Edward Island village of Tyne Valley was thrown into confusion during most of the day as mass evacuation began while two fires bore in.

Men, women and children were seen on the streets carrying everything from dishes to ice boxes.

Prime Minister Diefenbaker sent a message of sympathy to the area and offered aid. Premier Walter Shaw, who visited the area Thursday with members of his cabinet, described the situation as "unbelievable."

Murray Road Fire Victim Leaves Home Reluctantly

SUMMERSIDE BUREAU OF THE
GUARDIAN

The story of Mrs. Beatrice Bulger, Murray Road, a widow with an 11-year-old daughter, could well be one of many residents of the fire stricken area of Prince County, who had to evacuate their homes because of the potential fire threat.

Mrs. Bulger, like many other residents of the area, was reluctant to leave her home and possessions behind. "I had a feeling I wouldn't lose my home," she said.

She told a Guardian reporter last evening that it was only upon the advice of the RCMP, who reminded her of the danger of bronchial congestion caused by the smoke, that she finally decided to leave her home on the Murray Road.

She said that with the help of neighbours, she gathered up what possessions she could Thursday morning and that night stayed at the home of Mrs. Mickey MacDonald, located about a mile from her home.

"My furniture is scattered all over the place," she said. "I have a stove in one place, my couch is in a field."

'OUTRAGEOUS FIRES'

She described the fires as being "something outrageous" and stated that firefighters were doing a wonderful job.

Yesterday morning Mrs. Bulger and her daughter were taken to the Legion home at Ellerslie, where they were fed and later taken to the Prince County welfare agency in Summerside.

She said she was so bewildered that she never once thought of her relatives in Summerside, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Bulger, 67 Central Street, with whom she is now staying.

"It was only late this afternoon (Friday) that I thought of them" she said. She had been placed with another family in Summerside prior to going to her relatives' home.

Also staying at the Bulger home in Summerside are three of Mr. Bulger's young sisters, who were also taken from their home in the fire area.

Mr. Bulger stated that his parents were still living in their home at Foxley River, from where the children were taken Wednesday, and that he plans on going to visit them today.

Determined to visit her home on the Murray Road, Mrs. Beatrice Bulger remarked that she was going with him to see if her home was alright.

"I don't know if my house is still standing or not but I am going to see. I won't be staying there. I just want to see if everything is alright."

S'side Council Makes Donation To Fire Fund

SUMMERSIDE — The Summerside Town Council has approved a donation of \$1,000 to the fire disaster fund it was learned yesterday from His Worship Mayor W.A. Currie.

At the same time Mayor Currie expressed deep regret at the terrible catastrophe that has struck Prince County and extended sympathy to those who have lost their homes, crops and farms and woodlands.

Another cash donation reported yesterday was that of \$50 from the New Annan Women's Institute who have also pledged a box of clothing and other useful items.

Cash donations to the disaster fund may be left or sent to any chartered bank in Summerside or to the Royal Bank in Tyne Valley, fund headquarters.

Smoke Is Seen In City Streets

Smoke from the West Prince County forest fires was thick enough in Charlottetown streets shortly after midnight to bring tears to the eyes, and car lights cut through as late motorists returned home.

This was in spite of the fact that the wind was down to a mere six miles per hour at the time, according to the meteorological station at the airport near the City.

The weather predictions, unfortunately, are for clear weather with no trace of rain, although the wind was expected to be much lighter at a predicted 15 miles per hour.

FIRE FIGHTERS FACING NEW PEAKS OF PERIL

Weather outlook has little promise

SUMMERSIDE BUREAU OF THE PATRIOT

Bone-weary firefighters faced new peaks of danger today as their grim battle against wild forest fires in West Prince County moved into its sixth full day.

Forecast of a rainless, hot, sunny week-end with winds up to 20 mph this afternoon brought renewed fears that the flames would again rage out of control. Preparations were being made to completely evacuate the stricken village of Tyne Valley should the necessity arise.

Last night the firefighters aided by heavy dew and a decrease in wind velocity managed to contain the fire just outside the village that had been partially evacuated in the afternoon. But with the dry weather and winds again forecast to blow up this afternoon fighters are uncertain of what the outcome will be.

"If we get more wind," Communications Director Stan McInnis said this morning, "we can't be sure what will happen."

NINTH HOUSE BURNED

Authorities say that they can only hope to fight a holding battle against the flames. Any hope of controlling and mastering the fire will only come with the first heavy rainfall.

Firefighters fought valiantly to save the Lot 11 Catholic Church and managed to contain the flames just short of the building. When the winds increase today, however, the church will be in jeopardy again.

Friday the second emergency call for assistance in two days brought trucks and volunteers pouring into the area to assist in fire fighting and evacuation.

1,000 MEN

A complete army mobile field kitchen arrived from Camp Gagetown, N.B., with food supplies sufficient to feed 200 men for four days. Food donations arrived from many parts of the Island to feed the working force that grew to upwards of one thousand men during the day.

In the worsening situation, 10,000 feet of fire hose was flown in from Montreal.

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BIRD'S EYE VIEW of disaster on the march is shown in this aerial picture of multiple fires as they advance in the Conway region. The picture is by Bob Hambly.

Buildings start fire in woods

ALBERTON — Fire of unknown origin destroyed a house and barn near Miminegash shortly after 8 a.m. this morning.

Nothing was saved from either of the two buildings owned by Glen Costain. At the height of the blaze two exploding gasoline drums blew through the roof of the barn and spread the fire into the woods nearby.

The Alberton fire truck was called to the scene and two hours later O'Leary fire truck came up from Tyne Valley to assist in preventing the bush fire from reaching major proportions.

The Kensington pumper arrived at 5 this morning to lend assistance. A large fire party remained at the scene and although the fire is under control, a close watch is being maintained today.

Western Fire Is Controlled

ALBERTON BUREAU OF THE GUARDIAN

The woods fire in the Leoville-DeBlois area near Tignish is believed under control but a constant watch is being maintained in case the blaze breaks out again. The Alberton fire truck left the area Saturday night for the first time in four days.

The Alberton men were joined Sunday by the Tignish fire truck and a number of volunteers from Tignish and Palmer Road.

A minor fire in a swamp about a mile from Elmsdale and sealed off yesterday by a dozer and is not considered dangerous. The fire was reported to have been burning for some days but it was decided to have it eliminated as a possible fire hazard.

Fire bugs suspected by minister

By THE CANADIAN PRESS

Forestry officials today said they "couldn't hazard a guess" on the amount of destruction caused by 100-odd fires burning through Atlantic provinces' forests.

In southern Nova Scotia, near the Shelburne County lumbering community of Jordan, flames approached through pine forest and bushland. The 100 residents packed their belongings and waited.

Forests Minister E.D. Haliburton termed the situation "desperate" and said an immediate assessment of the damage would be impossible.

"It is unbelievable that all these fires could have started in the same week by coincidence. I hate to think anyone is setting them...but they must be," he said.

A total of 63 fires were recorded in the past seven days in Nova Scotia.

Newfoundland's worst fire was being contained near Garnish after a province wide appeal was issued for assistance. Eight others were burning in spruce and scrub but none was out of control.

New Brunswick's 30 fires were under control, mostly in jack pine ridges in the northern part of the province.

The Evening Patriot

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SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 3, 1960

Prince County won't suffer through lack of assistance

It is six days today since billowing clouds of grayish-white smoke began rising lazily into the air a few miles from the McNeill's Mills area as the sun started climbing over the eastern horizon on a Sunday morning that was as lovely as any of the lovely mornings the people of Prince County have experienced in this loveliest of summers.

Residents in that immediate area could tell by the height of the towering clouds of smoke that this was not a small fire, but as they idly watched the slowly moving clouds, there was not thought in their minds of organizing themselves into a fire-fighting body. They had seen such high clouds of smoke before, and they had no reason to believe that, since there was but the slightest of breezes, this fire would not burn itself out as so many others had done in the past.

But the billowing clouds of smoke did not decrease in volume. By three o'clock on that warm, sunlit Sunday afternoon, the breeze had noticeably increased and the great volumes of smoke now began to move with a speed that was easily perceptible. By five o'clock, the smoke, now visible forty miles away, was making visibility difficult for motorists ten miles from the area in flames.

For six days now, and five nights, the fires have been burning while outside help from the mainland and from other parts of the province has been pouring into the county. With no hope of rain for the next forty-eight hours, the people of Prince await the coming of the grimmest Labor Day they have ever experienced.

Meanwhile, the battle against the devouring flames goes on with men and women fighting against weariness and loss of sleep to save something from a life's work. But they are not alone now, and the help that has been pouring in will continue to come until the long battle is over and the smoking, charred ruins of a lovely countryside are surveyed and plans made to begin life anew.

Fortunately, all resources of assistance are not exhausted in this province. Yesterday, Lieut.-Colonel J. A. Macdonald, M.P., called on this newspaper. With his own worries over the fire threats in his own county, Colonel Macdonald expressed the utmost concern for the people of Prince and informed The Evening Patriot that the P.E.I. Regiment, of which he is Commanding Officer, is ready upon receipt of orders to move into the fire-endangered areas of Prince County to render all assistance it can.

Evacuees stunned by fire threat

SUMMERSIDE — A story that could have come from any of the residents of the fire stricken area of Prince County was yesterday related by Mrs. Beatrice Bulger, Murray Road, a widow with an 11-year-old daughter, who had to evacuate their home because of the threat of fire.

Mrs. Bulger, like many other residents of the area, was reluctant to leave her home and possessions behind, "I had a feeling I wouldn't lose my home," she said.

She told a Guardian reporter last evening that it was only upon the advice of the RCMP, who reminded her of the danger of bronchial congestion caused by the smoke, that she finally

decided to leave her home on the Murray Road.

She said that with the help of neighbors, she gathered up what possessions she could Thursday morning and that night stayed at the home of Mrs. Mickey MacDonald, located about a mile from her home.

"My furniture is scattered all over the place," she said, "I have a stove in one place, my couch is in a field."

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"It was only late this afternoon (Friday) that I thought of them," she said. She had been placed with another family in Summerside prior to going to her relatives' home.

Also staying at the Bulger home in Summerside are three of Mr. Bulger's young sisters, who were also taken from their home in the fire area.

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Many Problems Involved in Fight

By JOHN BOND
Guardian-Patriot Staff Writer
SUMMERSIDE - Living memory cannot recall a greater effort in the province than that being made by Prince County firefighters.

The effort is being made by a great number of people under strain and hardship that quickly crushes the weak.

Fire is not the only problem workers must face; they are called upon to endure smoke, wet, cold and extreme fatigue in combating the red menace.

Smoke is probably the most crushing problem at hand. Thick and black and often lying nearly on the ground it chokes the lungs, inflames the eyes and parches the mouth.

Hundreds of smoke masks have been issued but many firefighters must still walk barefaced into the sickening clouds.

ADD TO MISERY

Wet and cold combine forces to add their bit to the misery. Warm days are followed by crisp, cold nights. The breath turns to vapor as it leaves the nose and the cold combined with wet clothes had knocked more than one good man off his feet.

Sleeping accommodations for the bone-weary men is for the most part where they find it. Only at the general headquarters at Ellerslie are there prepared sleeping places. On one floor of the two story building Red Cross people have placed mattresses in all available floor space and have provided blankets and pillows.

The emergency feeding measures are now done by an amazingly well organized system.

Sandwiches, drinks, cookies and cigarettes are placed in the hands of men on the firelines. Volunteer workers in cars are on the access roads making continuous circuits of the fire area with food.

3 HOT MEALS DAILY

At the base station three hot meals a day are served, one meal frequently overlapping the other between breakfast and supper.

There is no real beginning or ending of the job.

The hot food is prepared in military field kitchens near the building and served by local ladies who work round the clock in shifts. From one room in the hall emerges an unending stream of sandwiches, also made by shifts of Prince County women. Hot coffee, tea and chocolate is available by the gallon.

MASS OF EQUIPMENT

The mass of equipment at the fire scene is astounding. Dozens of heavy trucks line the road at the headquarters, ready to move at a moment’s notice.

Bulldozers are everywhere in almost uncounted numbers. To the observer, many are only a noise in the forest. These machines, some rubber tired some crawlers, are operated by steel nerves ‘cat-skinners’ and have counted unmeasured miles of fire breaks, sometimes through walls of flame and frequently in blinding smoke.

Motor graders, floats, welding machines and light trucks appear and disappear periodically. Regular fire engines and dressed firemen are a common sight. In addition to these are dozens of small portable pumps and miles of hose.

Machines are repaired and serviced on the site. Mechanics are on constant call and welders are readily available. Government trucks carrying tanks of gas and diesel fuel maintain a 24 hour patrol of machinery.

Another instrument in extensive use is the often cursed but proved useful ‘back-pack’. A small water tank and a piston hand pump it is carried on the back of the firefighter. Deep in the woods men toil with the heavy packs cutting deep scars into their shoulders.

WATER SOURCE

Water is being taken from every available source, with Tyne Valley and Foxley River the main supply points.

Tank trucks are loaded by pump at the water sites and

shuttled at high speed to waiting pumpers on the fire lines.

The Red Cross is constantly administering first aid both at the Ellerslie headquarters and in the field.

Burns, cuts and cinders in the eye are the most frequently treated injuries. Aspirins are handed out by the dozen.

Most vital machinery are of course men. And at the fire zone they are machines. And there is an estimated 1,200 men in the area.

Working fantastic hours without sleep, they are still ever ready to answer calls for volunteers. A call for volunteers might send them to work in a danger area, to ride the back of a tanker in the freezing night air or relieve a fire crew even more weary than themselves.

Sometimes relieved crews pull into Ellerslie only to volunteer for work elsewhere.

ONLY LUXURY

The men work without regard to food or sleep, aware that they are doing the most important job in the province at the moment. The only luxury they allow themselves is a constant grumbling about lack of food and sleep.

The message and dispatch centre located in front of the headquarters is a masterpiece of organization. Information is fed to the centre, an RCMP radio car, from an unknown number of police cars that constantly patrol the entire 80 square mile area.

Radio equipped Army and Air Force vehicles on patrol each feed information to their respective headquarters, and the information is passed on to the dispatch centre by intercommunication boxes and field phones. In formation also comes by runner from the message centre in the headquarters.

From the dispatch centre, men machine and everything going into or out of the fire area is given orders. The dispatcher is never idle and a cluster of workers is always at the car window awaiting briefing.

Terrific Fire Fight Seen As Enemy Held in Check

Buildings Saved Monday By Super-Human Efforts

By **GEORGE WOTTON**
Guardian-Patriot Staff
Writer

SUMMERSIDE – Entering the tenth day of fire swept fury in Prince County, residents and fire-fighters look back with satisfaction on a Labor Day weekend on which their almost super-human efforts saved every home and building in the paths of fires that continue to sweep the area without any sign of abatement, that now appears possible only from heavy rain, not yet in sight.

As dusk fell last evening on the smoke shrouded countryside, firemen in smoke masks, with water “back packs”, climbed from transport vehicles parked beside a “welcome to Freeland” sign barely visible in the dense smoke, and disappeared into the rolling grey mass of hot choking smoke to join pumper truck crews already pouring water on buildings which stood only yards

from the fire front rolling forward through thick timber from the barren road.

HOMES SAVED

At the same time, residents along the road from Conway to the Western Highway were barely discernible in smoke, atop roofs on which they poured water to save their homes from a similar destruction of a neighbour’s who, along with six others, lost his home last week.

In a telephone call to The Guardian from Ottawa yesterday, Hon. J. Angus MacLean expressed concern about the fire situation on the Island, and said his colleagues in the Federal Government were also concerned. Any co-operation the Government can give in meeting this emergency, he said, would be gladly forthcoming.

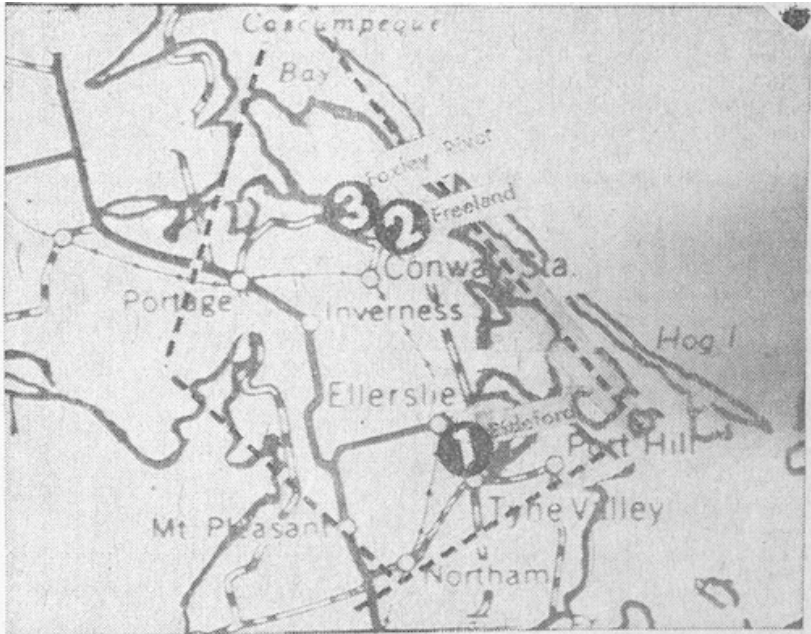
The advance of fire south of Portage, noticeable for the first time in several days, was

developing new life as it sent smoke billowing in the air.

East of Portage village, along the Western Road, fire burned briskly in and at woods edge, on the north side of the highway, and grass fires were running freely towards fire breaks that seemed capable of retaining them.

On the south end of MacNeill Mill’s road, about a half mile from the Western Highway, bull dozers could be heard but not seen, as their truly fearless operators cut new fire breaks in burning timber on the west side of this road.

In the woods of Inverness, North Enmore and Mount Pleasant, fire in greater intensity than seen for a week was fanned to new activity, with the setting sun reflecting a reddish glow from smoke clouds that took on a spectacular reddish glow.



MAIN AREA in which Island woodland fires are raging is outlined by broken lines on this map. With some 600 men battling the outbreaks, which by now encompass upwards of 200 square miles, numbers indicate

key points where the struggle was at its peak yesterday: 1—Bideford, the close neighbor of Ellerslie which is the headquarters of the fire fighters; 2—Freeland; and 3—Foxley River, a centre which has been hit by some of the heaviest losses.

TYNE VALLEY MENACE

North of Port Hill Station heavy timber fires added new danger to the village of Tyne Valley, while fire that had Sunday crossed the paved highway between Tyne Valley and Ellerslie roared on toward the eastern end of Bideford District where neighbours helped Stenning Williams combine a

huge field of grain in the path of the fire, while tanker truck crews faced the smoke at the edge of the field to wet down the trees at woods edge.

The fires at Freeland and Bideford presented the greatest threats to property yesterday.

The concentration of organized assistance took on added efficiency over the holiday

weekend, in the co-ordinated effort of RCMP, fire fighters, Air Force, Army, bulldozer operators, tank and pumper truck crews, civil defence, Red Cross committees, and local volunteer workers.

An army mobile field kitchen unit produces hot cooked meals for the weary fire fighters who find Red Cross sleeping facilities

and first aid post in the Ellerslie Legion Home, which has become command headquarters for co-ordinating the entire fire fighting program.

Never was a Legion home in P.E.I. more literally a "Home" for the hundreds of persons who seek temporary rest and food within its walls, and never has any Legion home on the Island seen so many people enter its doors in a ten-day period.

From the small kitchen in the basement, meals and hot coffee are served continuously by women under direction of Mrs. Budd Williams of Ellerslie, who have volunteered for kitchen duties from points as far distant as Summerside and yesterday included members of the Summerside Legion Auxiliary and Girl Guides.

300 AIRMEN

The Red Cross committee in charge of food supplies are active in transporting and serving food to workers right at the face of the fires, and the RCAF yesterday started serving at least one hot meal daily to the upwards of one hundred and fifty personnel from the Summerside RCAF station who are constantly on duty at the fire fronts on twelve hour shifts, making a total of about 300 airmen active on the fire fronts each day.

The RCAF, rendering magnificent assistance not unlike what would be expected from them in time of war, have entered the Prince County fire with as much concern as any local property owner.

Over the weekend they established headquarters in an Air Force mobile trailer located beside the Ellerslie control centre, and have radio links with their vehicles, their headquarters at Ellerslie, and the RCAF station in Summerside, as well as maintaining constant liaison with the civil defence control centre and dispatch car.

PROVOST CORPS

The Army, in addition to providing a mobile field kitchen from which hot meals are served, have relieved the RCMP from traffic control duties in the area, enabling the police to concentrate on the important task of maintaining radio control from all fire areas, with the dispatch

car at Ellerslie, from where the fire fighting forces, heavy equipment, tanker trucks, and evacuation vehicle can be quickly deployed to the areas of greatest hazard.

The provost corps members include eleven men from Camp Gagetown and twelve from Halifax, all under command of Lt. R.W. Parker.

These very efficient and courteous traffic officers have a busy task in turning back sightseers who still continue to seek entry to the area already dangerous from a motoring standpoint of dusty roads and limited visibility in smoke. Road blocks were established at Northam Corner and at Portage Village to control this traffic on the Western Road and provost members are located at all intersections leading into the fire area.

The dusty, bearded faces, the smoke-sore throats and eyes of the weary men at the fire fronts are borne without complaint by these men who have voluntarily worked far too long in these conditions which have, for some, produced fatigue that has caused medical concern.

Men who came into the area to work a shift come face to face with the gravity of the fire situation and find themselves staying on in the area to continue their assistance. Particular sacrifices in personal comfort and family plans for the Labor Day weekend holiday became unimportant to all who were working in the area, and almost every person there put self second in the struggle, and became part of a team that faced overwhelming opposition with a confidence of winning that rivalled anything ever seen in such proportions in this province.

Men like Lawrence Brazel, an employee of a Charlottetown wholesale firm, who reluctantly missed a long-planned birthday party for his nine-year old daughter, to assist at the fire front, felt, like others, that it was almost a duty to stay on longer at the fire front to help in any way possible.

SPIRIT OF HELP

Incidents like these revealed the spirit of assistance that has readily been offered from many sections of the mainland, where

fire pumper trucks and crews were on the scene from Sackville, Dieppe, Port Elgin, and army and Air Force units from Halifax and Moncton.

In the fire area the spirit of determination was expressed in such sights as the continued construction of a wooden shed by Thomas Coughlin of Inverness, on a site where fire has twice already approached the very foundation of the shed he is building, and even some of the new boards on the building caught fire and were extinguished by the owner.

In Freeland, fresh milk from a Summerside dairy was delivered to the modern new store of Harold Phillips, as smoke brought embers over his house and store from fires that seemed destined to destroy almost every building from the Anglican Church in Lot 11 eastward to the store.

In an almost predictable pattern the fires began to subside as night fell, and strong winds of the afternoon became a light breeze. A beautiful, full harvest moon rose brightly over a large section which remains a blackened mess of tree trunks standing grimly in blackened soil where, in some sections, even the tree roots are burned to exposure and trees topple over in disordered fashion.

With nighttime came the glow of fires from many directions, intermittently flaring against the black horizon, as smoke in the area seemed to thicken with dampness as it saturated the fire area and drifted eastward to and beyond Summerside, while firemen move into nighttime positions on all fire fronts to protect any homes or buildings, as other firemen slept on Red Cross mattresses in rows on the floor of the control centre, or in trucks, cars or any convenient location where they would be readily on call for action this morning on the eleventh day of fire fighting.

Weather forecast last evening held no promise of relief in the form of rain, that must come before this fire peril can end and the weary residents and firefighters can return to normal activities.

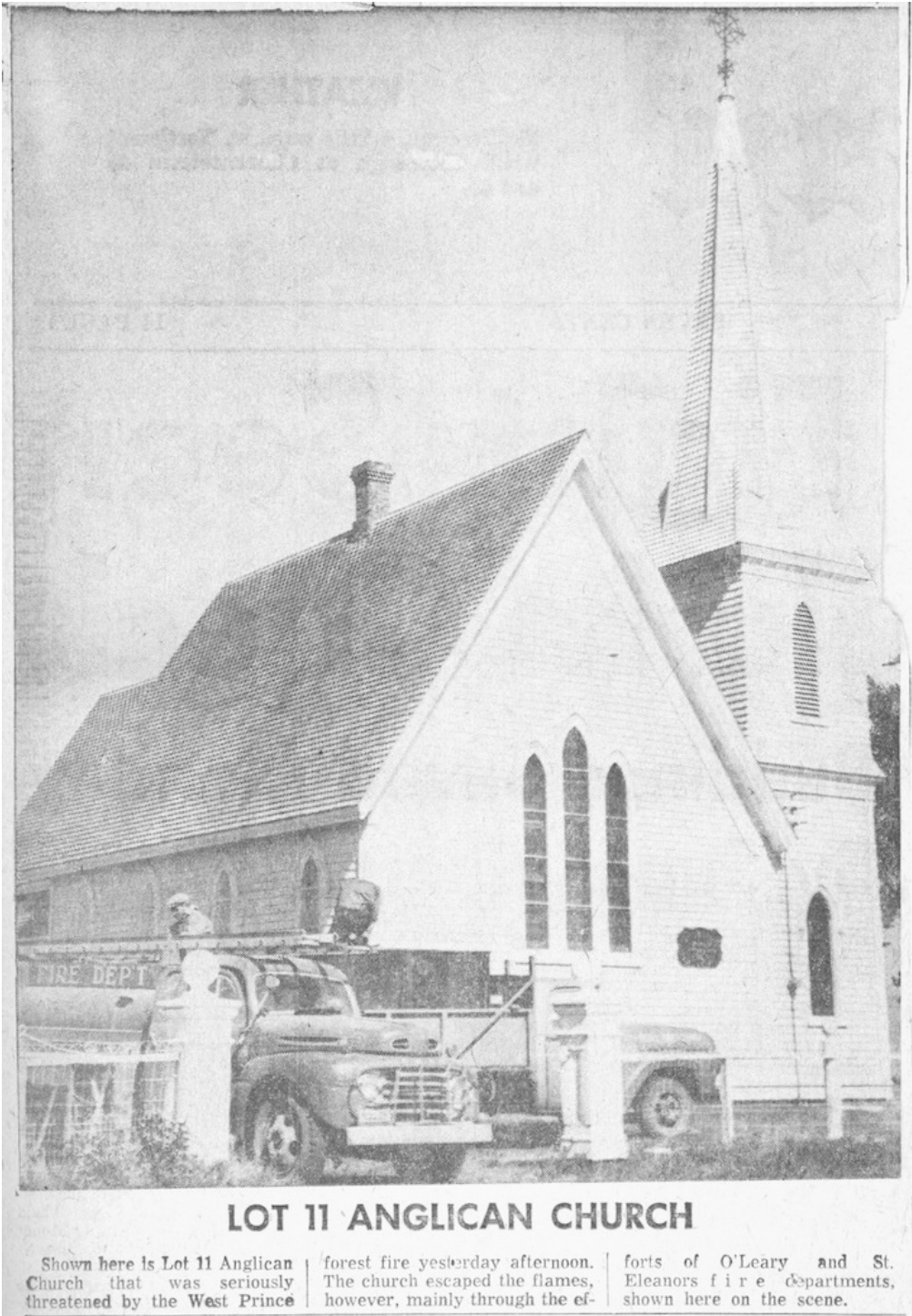
RCAF firefighters play major role

SUMMERSIDE – An all-out effort to help halt the fires in Prince County is being made by RCAF Station personnel from Summerside, under the co-ordination of Squadron Leader G. R. Denison.

Fighting side-by-side with civilians and Royal Canadian Mounted Police are 240 men from the station, working around the clock in shifts of twelve hours. Directed by fire marshal Flight Lieutenant Mel Gilmour and the fire chief WO2 G. L. Somerville, 24 pump crews of ten men each alternate in a determined attempt to save the villages and hamlets in the paths of the fires.

In addition to the actual fire fighters, a fire truck, stake truck, and bulldozer, with their crews, are engaged in the operation. There are two 500-gallon water trucks, 12 pick-up trucks, and 9 RCAF pumps in use. Yesterday a further 140 back-packs, flown in for the emergency, were added to the 50 already in use. The newest equipment sent to the field is a field kitchen, in which one cook can feed 500 men.

All regular activities on the station, except the most essential, have been suspended to send personnel into the fire area.



LOT 11 ANGLICAN CHURCH

Shown here is Lot 11 Anglican Church that was seriously threatened by the West Prince forest fire yesterday afternoon. The church escaped the flames, however, mainly through the efforts of O'Leary and St. Eleanors fire departments, shown here on the scene.