

Boy Accidentally Set Guigues School Blaze

A Fire Department inspector said that a 10-year-old boy accidentally touched off the \$20,000 fire in Guigues Street School classrooms early Monday afternoon.

Only the fact that the fire broke out during the noon recess when few children were in the building averted what might have been a major Christmas week disaster.

Inspector Phil Larkin said that the 10-year-old pupil had inadvertently started the fire when he pulled out a wire extension plug from a wall socket. This caused a spark which ignited a cluster of cotton batting which, in turn, spread to a Christmas tree in the classroom.

Name Withheld
The fire department official declined to make public the boy's name. He said the lad was in the room with two companions. He had brought a model Christmas manger to set up on extinction with a number of others in the classroom.

He had a light fixed to his model and in pulling out a plug lighting several other model mangers he caused the spark which set the school afire.

The spark jumped and ignited a bit of cotton batting on another model manger and spread from there to the Christmas tree. The boy ran to the building superintendent, told him of the fire and then ran home crying. Larkin said. He sobbingly told the story to his mother who phoned the school officials. Investigation has shown that the fire was completely accidental and it is not believed that a charge will be laid against the boy.

It was a two-alarm outbreak, but firemen had the blaze well in hand within a half-hour.

The roof and entire upper floor of the three storey building suffered extensive damage from the flames, while tons of water pouring down from above caused heavy damage to the lower floors of the old building.

When the fire broke out most of the 800 pupils of the school were absent for the lunch hour recess, but some 25 pupils and 10 teachers were in the building. They got out without any difficulty.

Rev. Brother Lucien, one of the teachers, told The Evening Citizen that he had just left the classroom on the northwest side of the upper floor when two youngsters came running up, shouting, "The tree is on fire. Come quickly."

Brother Lucien said that when he got back into the class room the gaily-decorated Christmas

tree was blazing furiously. He removed his coat and attempted to beat out the flames, and when that failed he brought a fire extinguisher into play.

He saw that the fire had already leaped up to the ceiling and over to one wall, and he then hurried downstairs from where he telephoned the fire department.

Clears Upper Floor
In the meantime he had cleared everyone from the upper floor, and warned other children and teachers on the lower floors.

When the other pupils arrived back from lunch, they found heavy black clouds of smoke and flames shooting up through the roof, and they cheered and yelled while firemen fought the outbreak from aerial ladders.

Aime Arvaisis, secretary-treasurer of the Separate School Board whose administrative offices are located on the ground floor, estimated following a preliminary inspection that damage to the building would probably total at least \$20,000.

Old Landmark

Built originally in 1890, Guigues School has long been a landmark in the Lower Town section of Ottawa. An addition to the school was built in 1904. At present there are 18 class rooms in the building, and the enrollment averages around 800 pupils, according to Mr. Arvaisis.

Raymond Groulx, assistant secretary of the Separate School Board, said the four third-floor classrooms at the west end of the building had been virtually destroyed. He said the roof had been burned through over the four rooms and that there was heavy damage to classrooms below.

The lower hall of the building was completely awash with an inch of water at the height of the fire.

It was the second fire in the school in past years. About a year ago, following an evening meeting of the Separate School Board, Aime Arvaisis, secretary, discovered a fire in a first floor room reportedly started by a short circuit. This was nipped in the bud with comparatively little damage.

Lawyer's Funeral

TORONTO (CP)—The funeral of Alex M. Garrison, 59, retired lawyer and one-time commissioner to the Supreme Court of Quebec, will be held today. Mr. Garrison died Saturday following a heart attack at his Toronto home. He was in private practice for 36 years.

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