

Arson possibility in Fort Garry Court blaze

Tunnel
deadline
May 24

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the vapor of an inflammable liquid on a table top where it appears the fire hovers above the table's surface.

Walking around the building he saw a window lying across the lane. He said later he realized that the window had been thrown or blown further than it would have been if it had been pushed out.

It appeared to have been blown out, he said, but this was unusual. The normal furnishings of a room wouldn't burn with the intensity to create the conditions for an explosion.

It would be consistent with the presence of an inflammable material, he said in answer to Crown questions.

Mr. Henderson, who turned in the second alarm, said he thought the fire was in the northwest. Considerable smoke was the first indication of fire in C section of the building.

He wasn't aware of any fire in the overpass connection A and B sections.

Deputy Fire Chief John Thomas Cautler, who arrived after the second alarm was turned in (2:02 p.m.) said he saw no signs of fire on the overpass but observed fire on the south and west sides.

"There is no doubt in my mind there were two fires and possibly three," he said.

Constable Thomas Edward Hymau, who first saw the fire in the northwest corner of the building, was on traffic control at the corner of Main Street and Broadway from about 2 p.m.

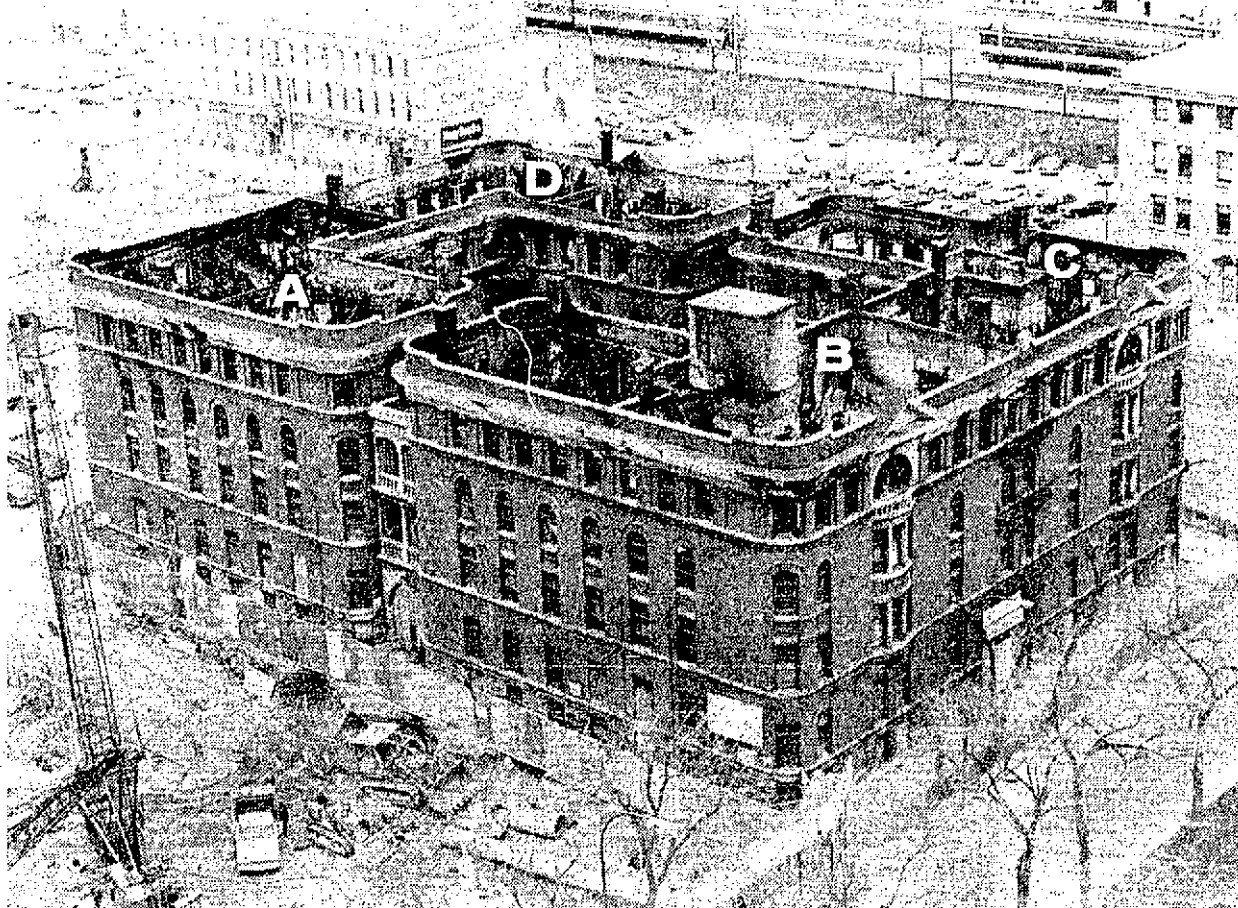
He said he also saw smoke and some flame in the southeast corner of the building.

When Assistant Fire Commissioner Gary Newton, of the provincial fire commissioners office, arrived at 2:40 p.m. the fire was out of control.

"There was heavy burning in the northwest corner and some fire on the south side," he said. About 10 minutes later the overpass was burning.

About half an hour later he saw two bodies being removed from the building.

There was one definite fire in the northwest stairwell and another in either the B or C sections, Mr. Newton said. "There may have been others."



Letters mark the specific sections of the Fort Garry Court, Broadway and Main Street, which was destroyed by fire Feb. 1. Investigating officials told an inquest Thursday that fire broke out in at least two areas and inflammable material or incendiary devices may have been used to start the fire that claimed the lives of five elderly men. One of the victims was found on the top floor of Section A. Sections A and C received heaviest damage, officials said.

"At the time I arrived the overpass on the west side was burning but there couldn't be a connection between the fires," he said.

The fire, if it had spread from one section to the other, would have completely destroyed the overpass, he said.

There was evidence of more burning on the B side of the firewall than the A (where all witnesses testified they first saw fire), he said.

The worst damage was on the third and fourth floors of the A section, he said.

Mr. James was found on his bed in his suite on the courtyard side of the fourth floor.

His body was blackened, but more from soot than burns, Mr. Newton said.

The suite was next to the blocked-off fire exit and since the fire-engulfed stairwell at the other end of the corridor was the only other regular way out, he would have had to break into the opposite apartment and escape through the window where there was a fire ladder, Mr. Newton said.

Mr. Black was in poor health, virtually blind, and hard of hearing, so perhaps the only means of escape possible would have been too much for him, he said.

Mr. Gaul was found in his suite with his head lying on the floor of a metal shower cabinet and his body protruding into the room.

Mr. Tail and Mr. Hamell were found in Mr. Tail's room, also on the fourth floor.

Mr. Newton found Mr. Desjarlais's body on the floor of his third-floor suite. Mr. Desjarlais hadn't been listed as missing because he had been seen outside after the fire started.

"It's possible he went back to his room," Mr. Newton said.

The smoke in the courtyard was dense, Mr. Newton said. Mr. Cautler said this had surprised him because of previous calls the firemen had operated from the yard.

He said the courtyard was open to the sky and said there was concern about the fire hazard in new buildings using the same design but glassing in the roof.

Witnesses were closely questioned about the functioning of the fire alarm system in the building.

Mr. Henderson said no alarms were ringing when he arrived and this was unusual.

Mr. Newton said several people told him they didn't hear an alarm. Other people said they heard it go off and on.

The alarm could only be turned off at the water control which was in a fairly inaccessible part of the basement, he said. It could also be temporarily stopped by someone pressing a button.

He said it was possible the on-off effect was noticed by people passing through parts of the building where the alarm couldn't be heard.

There also had been a number of false alarms and so people might have ignored the alarm, he said. This also could have contributed to the deaths.

In December, fire officials began enforcing a new bylaw which requires owners of older buildings to improve fire emergency systems, Mr. Newton said.

Fort Garry Court was on the original list of about 1,800 buildings in the city but hadn't been inspected. More are being added but it will take about four years to bring them all up to standard, he said.

Formerly improved fire regulations, with some minor exceptions, applied only to buildings under construction, he said.

He had attended five fires at Fort Garry Court and said there was a severe deficiency in the then existing arrangements.

However, he said there were worse buildings in the city.

The inquest, which was held before Judge R. L. Kopstein in provincial judges court in the Public Safety Building, was adjourned Thursday without a new date being set.

Mr. Pollack said three more city officials were still to be called. There also is to be evidence from civilian witnesses, some of whom are still to be contacted.

(ICEC -- Fort Garry).

Any further delays in the concourse "may cause increased costs which may jeopardize the project," said their report.

The city wants to get going on the \$5.1 million project by June 1.

Policy committee is hopeful it has participation commitments to the concourse from four corporate property owners who want to link their buildings at the Portage - Main intersection to it.

The committee thinks James Richardson and Sons (Lombard Place), the Bank of Montreal and Marathon Realty (northwest corner) will kick in \$350,000 and the Toronto-Dominion Bank, \$300,000.

But nothing has been signed. Last Friday, the city's chief commissioner, D. L. MacDonald, notified all possible participants, including Trizec, that the city wants them to approve the concourse plans and specifications by May 10 and all subsequent agreements by May 24.

What the city wants now is to get Trizec to agree to run a leg of the concourse west under the south side of Portage up to the Royal Bank Building, which also would be linked in.

In early March, the city proposed that Trizec do this within 18 months of completion of the main concourse linking the four intersector corners, but got no reply until the Tuesday meeting in Montreal.

Coun. Norrie said it was "unfair" of Trizec to make construction of its leg of the concourse dependent on the city's construction of the underground parking site.

He said Trizec seems to be using the controversy surrounding the parking structure as an excuse not to participate in the concourse.

The city is obliged to build the underground parking under its Jan. 18, 1974 agreement with Trizec to participate in the multi-million-dollar Winnipeg Square development proposed for the Portage - Main intersection's southwest corner.

Policy committee adopted the subcommittee recommendation that the city's board of commissioners report "on the feasibility and legality" of constructing a smaller parking garage than the \$9.5 million, two-tier, 1,000-car structure now being proposed.

Cost, traffic problems and the city policy of encouraging use of public transit rather than private auto downtown were given as reasons for a smaller structure, possibly only one tier.

But at the Montreal meeting, Mr. Soden "requested the city to proceed with the 1,000-car parking structure as early as possible," according to the subcommittee's report.

Before the city started building it, the report said, Mr. Soden said he would state whether he intended to build just the minimum 300,000 square feet above it, as the city-Trizec agreement requires, or the one million square feet of office-hotel-retail-public space development the company proposed to city council in mid-1973.

In any event, the recent acquisition of controlling interest in Trizec Corporation by the Brennan family of Montreal would not affect the agreement, Mr. Soden said, according to the subcommittee report.

Coun. Gee described corporate officials as "gung-ho and anxious" to proceed claiming they've already spent \$3.5 million on the project.

Premiers planning more co-operation

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of federal moves to amend the constitution, deciding that topic is best left to a meeting of all premiers and federal presentation.

Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed said the provinces can avoid duplication in medical research by having different centres concentrate on different aspects of research.

Alberta "intends to move in a very dramatic way in this area."

He also said Alberta is preparing a coal development policy and it should be co-ordinated with British Columbia policy in research and transport.

Premier Bill Bennett of British Columbia said some meetings have been held on standards for coal mines but the provinces now will hold such discussions on a year-round basis.

Mr. Lougheed said the degree of co-operation envisaged by the premiers would not affect the provinces' independence in resource taxation.

Mr. Blakeney's New Democratic Party government is committed to public involvement in resources and heavy resource taxes.

Medicare drop-out advocates didn't practise preachings

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medicare status or attempted to evade the question and had to be asked several times.

However, Dr. R. S. Rigby of Portage la Prairie, representing District 7 of the association on the executive, was co-operative and outspoken.

Dr. Rigby has succeeded Dr. C. W. Luckhurst, who said he has opted back into medicare and will leave Manitoba June 3.

Dr. Rigby said: "Yes, I have gone back into medicare. The reason was our annual business meeting last weekend. It became blatantly obvious that nine-tenths of the association are not opting out and that there is no political advantage in it.

"We've got to become more political. We've got to get into the political parties. We must start lobbying politically."

Opting out of medicare, said Dr. Rigby, was "ineffective and useless."

Describing the meeting Saturday, for which press coverage was banned, Dr. Rigby used the adjectives "ineffective and useless" also in reference to the association itself, saying only 300 members attended.

"By the time serious discussion started, only about 100 doctors were left in the hall," Dr. Rigby said.

"The membership is pretty disappointed in the executive and the leadership it has provided," Dr. Rigby said. He said the "MMA has very little power left to prevent these government changes."

Following is a list of medical association executive members, their medicare status and their comments to the survey:

Dr. Feroze Khan of Winkler: Opted in but intending to opt out later this year. "I am not quite ready to opt out yet."

Dr. Peter Lindsay of Gimli: Opted in. "I'm not opted out right now, but I have some plans. We made it perfectly clear to the membership that the decision was a personal one but that they should be prepared to stay out of medicare at least for one year. Not to opt out was my own, personal decision."

Dr. A. T. Laxdal of Winnipeg: Opted out. "I guess you have to come in and be a patient to find out if I'm in or out of the plan. Well, I have opted out — but I don't know whether that's any of your business."

Dr. C. E. Abbott, immediate past president of the medical association: Opted in. "I have no comment at all. You just don't worry about it — I have been in the scheme and I'm still in it. I don't know why you are asking this, what is so interesting in this for you."

Dr. B. B. Jakobson of Neepawa: Opted in. "No, I have not opted out. But I reserve the right to do so."

Dr. S. C. Guha of Ste. Rose: Could not be contacted but is confirmed as being in medicare.

Dr. Mervyn Shneider of Flin Flon: Opted in. "I'm part of a group. We decided we can't afford to opt out. We already have some experience with what happens while opted out from the time when doctors in Saskatchewan did it. They couldn't collect their bills."

Dr. George Sisler, Winnipeg psychiatrist: "I'm opted out."

Dr. Garth Mosher, a former president of the medical association and intensely involved in the negotiations with the provincial government last winter — Dr. Mosher took part in several press conferences after medical association mass meetings at which progress reports were given to the membership: Opted in.

Winnipeg general practitioner Dr. Oscar Domke, the only city member of the medical association executive who couldn't be reached despite numerous calls to his office, hospitals and home, has been confirmed as an opted-in physician.

The Manitoba health services commission announced this week many physicians who had opted out of medicare at the height of an association confrontation with the provincial government are back in the plan, revoking their opt-out notices before they became effective.

As of Jan. 1, said the commission, 61 physicians were opted out. As the wave of opt-out notices gathered momentum, as many as 329 doctors were either opted out or had said they would be out of the plan at one point in February.

By March, however, doctors started revoking their earlier opt-out notices.

As of this week, 149 doctors had revoked their notices, leaving 139 Manitoba physicians out of medicare unless further revocations are received by Saturday.

Police besiege Mexican students

MEXICO CITY (Reuter) — Riot police maintained their siege Thursday on the main university building in the central Mexican city of Puebla, where armed students were holding 18 hostages and demanding the resignation of the rector.

By witnesses said a few stray shots were fired but officials reported no fresh casualties from Tuesday and police were keeping their distance from the building as the siege entered its third day.

One man was shot dead and six others were wounded Tuesday in a gunfight between rival student groups when rightists occupied the building in the industrial city, 69 miles southeast of here.

The rightist group told reporters by telephone they would release their hostages, mostly neutral university staff and students, if the federal government would name mediators to discuss their demand for the rector's resignation.

Police said there was no sign the group had made any physical threats against the hostages.

U.S.S.R. minister 'bright, tough guy'

MOSCOW (AP) — Western specialists say the Soviet Union's new defence minister, Dmitri Ustinov, favors heavy military spending and accelerated technological development.

"A bright, tough guy," said one Western military attaché of the first civilian to head the Soviet military machine since Stalin fired Leon Trotsky in 1923.

The appointment of the 67-year-old armaments expert was announced Thursday night a few hours after his predecessor, Marshal Andrei Grechko, was buried in the Kremlin wall. Grechko, 72, died Monday of a heart attack and had been defence minister since 1967.

Ustinov has headed the Soviet arms industry since 1941 and was made a full member of the Communist party's Politburo last month. But Western observers had expected Grechko's successor to be another soldier.

"Still, he knows as much about the military as any soldier," one Westerner said of Ustinov.

Good Samaritan may get millions

WILLARD, Utah (Reuter) — A young gasoline station owner who believes he loaned Howard Hughes 25 cents in 1968 might receive more than \$100 million if a document that might be the billionaire's will proves genuine.

"I don't know whether to laugh or cry," Melvin Dumar said when told he has been named in the document filed in court in Las Vegas on Thursday.

The document said one-sixteenth of Hughes's estate is to go to "Melvin Dumar of Gabbs, Nevada." Some estimates say Hughes's was worth \$2,000 million, and based on this Dumar might stand to receive \$136 million.

Dumar said Thursday that in January, 1968, he was travelling to southern California.

"I stopped on the side of the road someplace near Tonopah, Nevada, near the Utah border, and saw a man lying on the side of the road bleeding.

"I asked if he wanted to be taken to a hospital. He was most insistent he wanted to be taken to Las Vegas. I thought he was a bum. He was poorly dressed and looked very shabby. He told me he was Howard Hughes but I didn't believe him," Dumar recalled.

Dumar did not know why Hughes was bleeding and he described the man he picked up as "a skinny man in his 60s."



MELVIN DUMAR Hughes beneficiary?

Scrawled Hughes 'will' discovered

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Hughes' two former wives, Ella Rice and actress Jean Peters, his personal aides at the time of his death and key men at his companies would receive most of the rest.

Hughes' estate has been estimated at up to \$2.5 billion.

However, early indications were that — as when Hughes was alive — any activity surrounding the secretive man would be shrouded with controversy, and pursued in lengthy court actions.

The questioned documents expert, Mrs. Leslie W. King, said she compared the purported will with a photocopy of a document written by the late billionaire and now on file in Nevada.

She said a lawyer, Wilford W. Hinton, who frequently represents the Mormon Church, asked her only "to determine whether or not (the will) is an outright hoax."

"I wrote a preliminary opinion that there was a good possibility that Mr. Hughes wrote it — but that was as strong as I would go."

She did not, she emphasized, make any final or definite determination.

Mrs. King, who lives in a Salt Lake City suburb and has 14 years experience in the field, said she had only about 3 1/2 hours to examine the will, which, she said, consisted of three handwritten pages — each page signed.

How the alleged will came into possession of the Mormon Church — in which Hughes had no known connections, according to church sources — was perhaps the greatest mystery of all.

Norman R. Bowen, a spokesman for the headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon), gave this account:

The document was discovered at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday by Daniel A. Hinmon, a 23-year-old public relations officer of the church, when Hinmon returned from a conference.

The conference had begun on the 25th floor of the church's headquarters building in downtown Salt Lake City at 3 p.m. and Hinmon is certain the envelope, possibly two envelopes containing the document, had not been on his desk at that time.

"When he got back, there it was," Bowen said. "Whoever put it there would have had to walk past a staffed reception area, but no one saw anyone do that."

The outer envelope which would have been picked up by any tourist information centre in Temple Square, was addressed in hand and in ink to:

"President Spencer W. Kimball, Church of Jesus Christ, Salt Lake City, Utah."

It was also marked, "PERSONAL."

Inside the outer envelope was a second, but much older, envelope. In between was a loose piece of note paper which read, apparently referring to the older envelope and its contents:

"This was found by Joseph F. Smith's house in 1972 — thought you would be interested."

The inside, older envelope was addressed in handwriting:

"Dear Mr. McKay, "Please see that this will is delivered after my death to Clark County Courthouse, Las Vegas, Nev., (signed) Howard R. Hughes."

Inside the envelope was the yellowed, three-page "will," which had been written on lined, legal paper.

Bowen said a search of church records showed that Hughes had never been a member and had never been recorded as a contributor to the institution.

"Also," Bowen said, "so far as we have been able to tell, Mr. Hughes never met, or had dealings with, either Mr. McKay or Mr. Smith."

While never a Mormon himself, Hughes was also known to have played a great deal of confidence in members of the Mormon church, having surrounded himself with church members for his personal guards for many years.