

# MANIAC SETS FIRE TO CHURCHES AT SUNSHINE

**POLICE** think a religious maniac lit a fire which damaged the Wesleyan Methodist church in Devonshire rd., Sunshine, last night.

They also think he started the fire, which caused £2,000 damage to the Catholic Church of Our Lady, in Monash st., Sunshine, last Wednesday—St. Patrick's Day.

Quick action by firemen, assisted by 100 residents, including children, prevented destruction of the Wesleyan Methodist church last night.

Pastor C. Wilson said the fire appeared to have been at the rear of the building.

"There is no power line or anything else there that could have caused the fire," he said.

"It is shocking to think that someone may have tried to deliberately harm a house of God."

## Children help

Pastor Wilson said damage to the building was estimated at about £300.

Main damage was done to the kindergarten at the rear of the church building, and arrangements are being made to accommodate the children at a local hall today.

Firemen were amazed when about 20 children between six and 10 years, who attend the kindergarten and church, offered to help fight the fire.

Despite protests, the children helped adults carry bibles, chairs, and other furnishings from the burning church into Devonshire

**burning church into Devonshire rd.**

**Alma Mayer, a member of the Church Youth Group, said she broke down and cried when she saw the Church burning and the community helping so bravely to rescue the furnishings.**

**"The little children were marvellous, she said. They did not get in the way and were very careful."**

Police looked for evidence under the weatherboard building where the fire is thought to have started.

But ashes from the kindergarten room floor and water made the ground a soggy mess that could have hidden spirit or paper used to start the blaze.

Police investigations into the fire at the Catholic church last Wednesday have also been hampered because valuable clues were obliterated.

This was the second fire on the site. On St. Patrick's Day, 1940, the old church building was destroyed.