

RAGING MASS OF FLAME

Three Shops Burnt at Sunshine

FIRE SPREADS ALONG STREET

A fire which broke out at 5.30 a.m. today in a cabinet maker's shop in Hampshire road, Sunshine, spread rapidly, with the wind, to the two adjoining shops, and ignition of the offices of M'Kay's Sunshine Harvester Works was narrowly averted.

At 100 o'clock all that was left of what had been a cabinet-maker's premises, a fruiterer's, and a butcher's, all adjoining each other in Hampshire street, was a mass of charred wood and planks, twisted iron, puddles of black water, and brick fireplaces and chimneys standing like pyramids of stones among the ruins.

Early this morning at 2.20, a small

fire was noticed in the back part of Mr G. Mochrie's cabinet-making shop, and this was, as was thought, quickly extinguished. Two hours later, Mr Mochrie was called from his bed and told that his shop was on fire.

The fire was aided by a strong wind which was blowing along toward the railway, and the wooden shops went at a frightful speed. The chips and wood in the cabinetmaker's premises proved a nursery for the flames, and they burst forth in full fury, making it impossible to save the adjoining shops.

Cash Lost

Mr A. Lowe, who is the tenant of the fruiterer's shop next door, was in bed at the time of the outbreak, and hardly had time to get out into the street with his wife and three children. The fire spread with amazing speed, and there was no time to save anything. Mr Lowe lost £15 in cash.

Cash was also lost by Mr W. T. White, of the butcher's shop next door, he rushed out as soon as he saw his house filling with smoke.

On the left of the butcher's shop is the Bank of New South Wales, and at the rear of the shops, which were burnt to the ground, are the printing works, artists' rooms, and general offices of H. V. M'Kay Ltd. It was fortunate that the bank did not catch fire badly, for the rest of the road is made up of wooden houses and shops, and, with such a wind, these would soon have been gutted.

Gardener's Hose Helps

The rear part of the bank premises, where the manager resides, was damaged by fire, but the front portion has a parapet wall, and this apparently resisted the onslaught of the flames. Tiles from the bank residence fell like

leaves, and one fireman from the Footscray station received a bad cut on the chin from one of them, and had to be treated by the doctor.

small leaks were of no avail, until a hose was treated by the doctor.

The Sunshine brigade and the private brigade from the Harvester Works were early on the scene. The fire was prevented from spreading to the works of H. V. M'Kay Ltd, by a gardener in the firm's employ. He was working in the garden, and, by keeping his hose flowing upon the rear of the offices, the flames were checked.

Water Pressure Bad

A raging mass of flame, and "an inferno of heat," were the descriptions of the scene given by eye-witnesses. Miss E. M'Creath, who tonight played in a garden's capacity the three shops, said that the fire, which she first saw in Mr Mochrie's shop, spread as if the other houses had been made of paper.

The brigade, realizing that it had no chance of saving the three shops, concentrated on preventing the spread of the flames, and although the bank caught, the fire was extinguished before it could get further. Water pressure, said the firemen, was very bad, until a rubber pump got to work, when better results were obtained. Soon after the Sunshine brigade was on the scene, the Footscray brigade arrived, and was reinforced at frequent intervals by brigades from Newport, Kensington, and North Melbourne.

Shopkeeper's Hard Luck

Hard luck stories lie in the heap of ruins. There is the tale of Mr Mochrie, whose shop is known as the Sunshine Cabinet Works.

Last night, in new premises which Mr Mochrie had erected, a ball was held, partly in celebration of the opening, partly in aid of the hospital. The plant, which Mr Mochrie values at £1,500, but which was insured for only £200, was to have been moved across to the new building, and work was to have been commenced there in a fortnight. Today the first of the machinery was to have been transferred.

Now the machinery lies somewhere in the heap of ruins, and orders clamor for fragments. Partly-executed work and raw material were burnt.

Then there is the story of Mr Lowe, the fruiterer. He has had bad luck lately, and has broken his arm several times. This morning, handicapped by a broken arm, he had to struggle to get his family out, and he lost the little business into which he has put much of his money.

Courageous Firemen

The firemen were courageous in their work, and the fire was extinguished at 10.15 a.m.

