

WOODSTOCK HAS \$200,000 FIRE, TWO MILLS, THREE HOMES GUTTED

The Hon. J. B. M. Baxter, Prime Minister of New Brunswick since 1925, retires from politics full of honors gained in the course of more than twenty years' activity in public life, and after re-entering inestimable service to his native province and to the Dominion. His appointment to the judiciary, as judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New Brunswick, is a fitting crown to a distinguished political career.

Capacity and fidelity are the Hon. Mr. Baxter's outstanding qualities. His successes have been achieved, as, of course, they can only be achieved in politics, through manifold struggles—and occasional defeat. He had won an outstanding position at the Bar when he first entered the provincial Legislature in 1911. He proved his ministerial worth by the efficient manner in which he administered the Department of the Attorney General. After the defeat of New Brunswick's Conservative Government in 1917, he ably led the Opposition until summoned by Mr. Meighen to Ottawa in 1921 to take the federal portfolio of Minister of Customs. The constituency of Saint John and Albert elected Mr. Baxter

to the House of Commons. He resigned his seat in Parliament when he was selected leader of the Conservative party in his province. The effectiveness of his leadership was soon demonstrated. A general election in New Brunswick in 1925 saw the Conservatives returned to power. Mr. Baxter was called to form a Government in September of that year and four days afterwards he was sworn in as Prime Minister. Popular appreciation of his administration was convincingly shown last year, when the ministerial party was sustained at the polls with thirty one seats, whilst the Liberals obtained a representation of seventeen.

It may be fairly claimed that, in the course of his six years' rule, Mr. Baxter helped appreciably to a stability of conditions that has enabled New Brunswick to weather the economic storm with less unemployment and distress, perhaps than has been

experienced in some of the other provinces of the Dominion. Surely he can lay down the reins of office and the mantle of Prime Minister in the knowledge that he has directed the provincial administration into the ways of progress. Education and agriculture are being conducted on efficient lines, a sound mining policy is being followed, the fisheries are being well maintained, and roads have been so improved that tourists, and with them good revenue, are being drawn into the province in increasing numbers every year. Mr. Baxter found that conditions under the province's prohibitory law were intolerable. He courageously put into effect a Government controlling measure which has evolved order and comparative temperance out of a disreputable chaos that prevailed through widespread non-observance of prohibition. Knowledge that it was an impossible law led to general indifference to its enforcement. Mr. Baxter's action has the added commendation in that it took the liquor question out of provincial politics. Altogether, he deserves well of his fellow-countrymen. His leadership has been that of a man who had the patience and the persistence and power to do; and invariably he did his work well.

Mr. Baxter, in fulfillment of the unanimous vote of the Government party in the Legislature, will hand on the Government leadership to the Hon. Charles Dow Richards, actually Minister of Lands and Mines. Mr. Richards is a self-made man in the best sense of the term. As a boy, he started work on a farm; in that way he earned enough money to pay his way through the University of New Brunswick. He graduated with honors in philosophy and economics, then taught school and eventually attained the principality of Woodstock Grammar School. Meanwhile, he studied law, passed his Bar examinations in 1912 and was admitted to the practice of law. At Fredericton, he was drawn into active politics, and his organizing and debating abilities won for him a leading place in the Conservative party. Elected to the Legislature in 1920, Mr. Richards labored in admin-

Woodstock, N. B., May 24— Two large mills, three residences and several smaller buildings were destroyed and considerable other damage suffered early this morning by fire which threatened for several hours to sweep the entire northern section of Woodstock. The outbreak originated in the Hayden mill shortly before 2 a.m., spread rapidly to adjacent buildings and was not brought under control until about 5 a.m.

Tons of water were still being poured on the flames four hours later and this evening the ruins were still smouldering. Replacement value of the property destroyed is more than \$200,000 although the sale value would probably be considerably less.

The buildings destroyed were: The Hayden saw mill, the Hayden wood-working factory, the Woodstock Woolen mills operated by Elden Fisher, a large dwelling also owned by the Hayden estate and occupied by Mrs. Albert Hayden, together with a barn and garage; the house and barn of George Bell, who also lost a horse and cow; the house and garage of Edward Saunders and a storehouse belonging to the town.

Considerable damage was done to the C. P. R. rails and roadbed. Several poles of the Woodstock Railway, Light & Power Co., the New Brunswick Telephone Company and the Canadian National Telegraphs were burned and the residence of E. W. Mair was badly damaged both by fire and water. Several other houses caught fire from flying embers but were not greatly damaged.

The fire broke out from some unknown cause and the Hayden mill was wrapped in flames before it was discovered. It was first noticed by Ross Mavor, a neighbor, who turned on the alarm and an alarm from another bay and by telephone arrived almost simultaneously.

Residence aroused by the fire bell found the entire town almost as light as day from the flames, and the country for several miles around illuminated. When the firemen reached the mill they found it a seething furnace, the woodworking factory well alight,

and the blaze, which had leaped the C. P. R. tracks, fastened upon the Hayden properties were flaming from top to bottom and the Bell and Saunders houses were on fire and plainly doomed. A strong wind was driving the fire in a northwesterly direction and columns of embers were showering a number of houses. Directly in the path of the blaze were the Mair residence and the dwelling of Mrs. George Balmain and Robert Dunbar.

It was realized that the apparatus at the disposal of the Woodstock department were inadequate to cope with the situation and fears were expressed that the conflagration would become general. Anxiety was felt for the Fisher Memorial Hospital which, while some little distance away, was in the direct path of the fire. Mayor Page telephoned to Houlton, Maine, asking for assistance. The Houlton department responded and in less than 40 minutes arrived with combination ladder truck and pump-er and eight men. Several other Houlton firemen arrived in their own cars soon afterward.

In the meantime the fire continued to rage in the area in which it originated. So intense was the heat that ties on the C. P. R. roadbed beside the Hayden mill took fire as well as a cedar wharf which forms part of the roadbed at this point, while the rails became red hot.

An attempt was made to hold the blaze at the Saunders house but to no avail and before long sparks set the roof of the huge wooden woolen mill alight. Within a few minutes the mill was a furnace adding greatly to the menace of nearby buildings. Among the places threatened at this period were the water-works with their pumping machinery. So quickly had the fire spread that six large buildings were now burning and giving off great sheets of flame. Owing to the intense heat it was impossible to save more than a few pieces of furniture and the occupants had barely time to save themselves.

FUR TRADERS MADE LARGE FORTUNES IN N. Y. REAL ESTATE

New York, May 20—Threats of contests of the will of Miss Ella Wendel by those who claim they are her kin, recall tails of real estate deals of John Jacob Astor. The founder of the Wendel fortune, estimated at \$100,000,000, invested the profits of fur trading in Manhattan real estate. John Jacob Astor did exactly the same thing. But while it was the policy of the Wendel family to acquire parcels of land, both large and small, the original Astor preferred to buy his land in large tracts. There also was another point of divergence in the two families. When Miss Ella Wendel, the last of her line died in the gloomy Wendel mansion, Fifth Avenue and Thirty-

able accord with Mr. Baxter, first in Opposition to the Liberal Government and later on in ministerial office. Mr. Richards' work in the Lands and Mines Department of the Government has been consistently constructive. Of outstanding importance have been developments through his efforts of the pulp and paper business and a rearrangement of conditions under which timber leases are granted and forest products manufactured in the province. Legislation sponsored by Mr. Richards has placed the mining industry on a better basis, and conservation laws adopted through his initiative caused him to be lauded as one of the best practitioners of conservation the province has ever had in public office. Since a change in premiership had to be made, it can be readily believed that New Brunswick will regard the transfer of Government leadership to the Hon. C. D. Richards with every confidence that the administration of its affairs will be in the hands of a man of proved worth and character, who will continue to strive to accelerate progress in the province and further promote the welfare of the people.

ninth street, the real estate holdings of the family were intact since while the Wendels bought they never sold. On the other hand, the branches of the Astor family began breaking up the estate 25 years ago.

Had the astors held on to one of the properties acquired by their astute ancestor, who came here in the steerage almost 150 years ago, its worth today would have been practically equal to that of the Wendel total. At present the land is assessed by the city for purposes of taxation at about \$75,000,000. It could not be brought, however, for anywhere near that figure, especially since the buildings on it are worth many millions more. On it are 20 theaters, the Astor and two other great hotels. The land, once owned by Medceff Eden, is a diagonal strip, about two blocks in width, running from Broadway and about Forty-third street to Twelfth avenue, between Forty-ninth and Fifty-first street, with some breaks caused by property owned by others. In 1848 there were two dwelling houses and two barns on it and the whole tract was for lease as a farm.

Concerning Medcef Eden, but little is known. He was an Englishman who came to New York from Yorkshire. In his will, filed Dec. 19, 1798, he described himself as a brewer, but there is no record of his brewery. There is record however, of his land holdings as they consisted of several thousand acres in the lower part of the city, now very valuable. His heirs were not as canny as he, however, since they mortgaged the mid-town farm. Astor acquired a third interest in a mortgage and in 1803, foreclosed. As his share, he got most of the lots along Broadway. His investments was \$25,000. Eden heirs came over from England, however, and appealed to the courts. After a 20-year lawsuit, Astor settled for \$9,000. Even at that, his profit was not what might be called insignificant.

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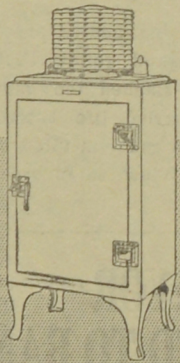
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