

DROWNED AT OTTAWA

Miss Bessie Blair, Daughter of the Minister of Railways,

AND A COMPANION LOSE THEIR LIVES WHILE SKATING ON THE RIVER.

News That Shocked Fredericton Greatly.

THE BODIES RECOVERED.

(Special to Daily Herald.)

Ottawa, Dec. 7.—The bodies of both Miss Bessie Blair and Henry Harper were found this morning by searching parties.

The Minister of Railways and Mrs. Blair are expected to reach Ottawa from Clifton Springs, N. Y., to-morrow morning. Miss Amea Blair has gone to meet them.

Ottawa People Much Affected.

Ottawa, Dec. 7.—The people of this city are still greatly worked up about last evening's drowning accident.

Mr. Blais who rescued Mr. Creelman, says that his attention was first called to the accident by the cries of his young son Napoleon Blais who heard Miss Snowball's alarm.

He at once launched a large punt into the river and hurried to the scene of the drowning. When he arrived, Mr. Treadgold was unsuccessfully endeavoring to hand out a cord to Mr. Creelman, who was hanging on to the edge of the ice.

The two then launched boat and got Mr. Creelman into it. Later he lapsed into semi-unconsciousness from exhaustion and asked where Miss Blair was.

This was the first authentic assurance people who had gathered around had that the others were drowned.

Some boys who had been attracted to the place when the party first fell into the water were endeavoring to establish the fact that others had been in the water but in the excitement of getting Mr. Creelman out, the crowd which had then gathered did not apparently take much stock in the youths' assertion.

Sympathetic Friends.

One of the first callers at Mr. Blair's residence was Her Excellency the Countess of Minto, who offered her heartfelt sympathy to the stricken sisters.

Sir Louis Davies and Judge Burbridge arrived soon after on the same mission, and as the sad news spread members of the cabinet and many other friends of the family also visited the house of mourning.

A short time before the catastrophe Mr. J. M. Cromwell, a real estate agent who was skating, went into the river some where near the scene of the accident, but managed to get out without assistance. He was skating to the city with his clothes frozen stiff.

When he met Mr Harper and party going towards Rockliffe, it was about 5 o'clock, and being near New Edinburgh, Mr. Cromwell did not think that the party were going so far down the river at dusk.

Shortly after 9 o'clock last night, Mr. R. F. Randolph received a telegram from Mr. J. L. Payne, private secretary to Hon. A. G. Blair, announcing the distressing news that Miss Bessie Blair, daughter of the Minister of Railways, had been drowned while skating on the Ottawa River at the capital, and the sad intelligence soon spread among the more intimate friends of the bereaved family, bearing with it a shock and sorrow that can scarcely be expressed.

The young lady was well known here, being a bright girl hardly in her teens when the family removed from this city some nine years ago. Miss Blair had returned a few months ago from Switzerland, where she had gone to finish her education, and was a favorite in society at Ottawa. At the time of the dreadful accident, the Minister of Railways and Mrs. Blair were at Clifton Springs, New York, where the latter had gone in search of health. Miss Amea Blair the deceased's elder sister was at the skating party, and a young man named

Harper, who bravely attempted to rescue the drowning young lady met death with her in the icy waters of the Ottawa. The only member of the Blair family residing here is Mrs. R. F. Randolph the eldest sister of the household, and to her the news was an awful shock. Accompanied by her aunt Miss Mary Thompson, and her brother, A. G. Blair, of St. John, Mrs. Randolph left for Ottawa this afternoon.

The following press telegrams from the capital give the details of the tragedy which has sent a popular family into mourning:

Ottawa, Dec. 7.—A gloom was cast over the city last night when the report was circulated that Miss Bessie Blair—daughter of Hon. A. G. Blair—and H. A. Harper, assistant editor of the Labor Gazette, were drowned down the Ottawa river, near Kettle Island. The report turns out to be too true.

From what can be learned at this hour of writing there was a private skating party down the river. At the same place the evening previous the government house party also had a skating party. About 5.30 last evening, as far as can be ascertained, Miss Bessie Blair and Mr. H. Creelman, of the Imperial Bank, were skating together. A good distance ahead were Miss Amea Blair and Mr. Treadgold, Mr. H. A. Harper and Miss Snowball—a daughter of Senator Snowball, of Chatham, N.B.—who is a guest at Mr. Blair's, were skating behind Mr. Creelman and Miss Bessie Blair.

Mr. Harper and Miss Snowball heard a cry and saw Miss Bessie Blair and Mr. Creelman break through the ice. Miss Snowball skated towards the shore for assistance and to get blankets, while Harper went to the assistance of the young man and woman. That is all that is known about the sad accident until Mr. Treadgold and Miss Blair, hearing the cries, skated back to see what was wrong. They had reached a good distance ahead.

They arrived in time to take Mr. Creelman, who was partly unconscious, out of the water and did not know that Miss Bessie Blair and Mr. Harper had disappeared below the ice. It appears that Mr. Harper was able to assist Mr. Creelman out, but lost his own life trying to save Miss Blair.

The sad news was circulated all over the city last night and there is intense sorrow for Mr and Mrs Blair, who are now at Clifton Springs, New York. They are there for the benefit of Mrs Blair's health.

Mr Harper was a bright young man, a graduate of Toronto University, who was a few years in journalism before joining the labor department of the government.

Survivor Tells of Sad Accident.

A. Creelman, who is a brother of Adam Creelman, C.P.R. solicitor, was seen last night and gave the following narrative of the sad drowning.

"I was skating with Miss Bessie Blair, about 40 feet ahead of Harper and Miss Snowball. Our skates went through the ice and we tripped and fell headfirst into the water in an air hole. I was keeping Miss Blair up in the water and shouted to Harper, who was rushing to our assistance, to keep back, as he could do more good on the ice than in the water. Harper pulled off his gauntlets and his coat and plunged into the water where Miss Blair and I were struggling. In trying to lift Miss Blair, I sank myself. In coming up I struck my head against the ice and I had to break it with my hands. There was then no sign of Miss Blair or Harper.

Matthias Blais put out in a boat from the Quebec side of the river and pulled me out. I was hanging on to the ice until he reached me. Just then Treadgold, who was skating in front, returned to me."

Mr. Creelman was taken to his quarters in the city last night, in a rather numb condition. Doctors were called in to see him. He says that he was not unconscious when taken out of the water, but suffering from cold.

J. L. Payne, private secretary to Hon. Mr. Blair, as soon as he heard of the fatality, went to the residence of the minister of railways and broke the news to the family.

Mr. Treadgold's Story.

A. N. C. Treadgold was interviewed last night by your correspondent. He said that he, with Miss Blair, was skating a quarter of a mile away from where Miss Bessie Blair was. They heard a cry for help. It was repeated, "help," and both turned to where the cry came from. They made to what they thought was a dark spot on the river. This turned out to be Harper's cap. Then came a cry from the water to keep back, that the ice was thin there. It was then that they saw a man in the water holding on to the ice. Treadgold shouted to the man to hold on firmly, that he had a cord with him and would pull him out. As he was winding the cord off his body, Blais, with a boat, came along and both of them pulled Creelman into the boat. When they got him in he asked where Miss Blair was. Treadgold replied that Miss Blair was all right, meaning the Miss Blair who was

with him. It was only when they got Creelman to Blair's house that they learned from him what had really happened. Creelman must have been nearly 20 minutes in the water.

Miss Snowball, who had gone to the Quebec side of the river for help, returned ahead of the others to the scene of the tragedy. She brought with her some spirits and reached where the drowning took place as Blais was pulling towards the shore with Creelman and Treadgold. Creelman says that when he and Miss Bessie Blair were floating in the water, he was keeping her up with one hand. She said, very bravely, not to mind her, she could swim. This was the last word she said, as a few minutes later she commenced to shiver with cold.

Dr. Herridge notified Harper's two sisters.

(CONTINUED ON THIRD PAGE.)

DEATH OF MILNE YERXA.

Was the Oldest Native Born Citizen of Fredericton.

Milne Yerxa, an aged and highly respected citizen died this morning, at the home of his son-in-law, Ludlow Grant, York street. He had been ailing some time from heart trouble, but his death was quite sudden and unexpected. The deceased gentleman was 82 years of age and a widower. He claimed to be the oldest native born citizen of Fredericton, and the claim was well founded. His father was the late Daniel Yerxa, who many years ago was proprietor of the hostelry known as "The Stone House," located on Queen's street above A. F. Randolph & Sons' stand. The deceased carried on farming operations at Nashwaaksis for many years, but has lately lived in retirement. He is survived by one son, Lorenzo Yerxa, of Nashwaaksis, and several daughters, one of whom is Mrs. (Capt) Elkin of St. John. The funeral will take place at 2.30 p.m. on Monday. Interment will be made in the Pickard burying ground, Douglas, John G. Adams, undertaker.

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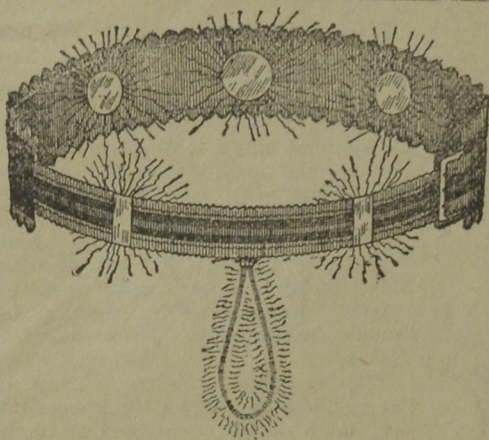
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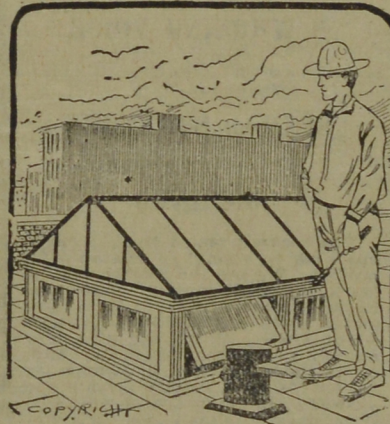
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Do Low	1 40	1 00	Do 2 do	2 25	1 50
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Do Zig Zag Rubbers,	1 00	75	Do Alaska	1 85	75
Do Storm	1 05	65	Women's Alaska	1 05	70
Do Light	92	60	Do 3 Strap	2 45	1 75
Women's Striped	60	35	Do 10 Button	1 70	1 10
Do Plain	60	35	Misses' 3 Strap	2 00	1 25
Do Zig Zag	65	35	Do 10 Button	1 40	1 00
Misses' Storm	45	25	Child's 3 Strap	1 75	1 15
Do do	50	30	Do Felt Button	1 25	85
Do Plain	45	25	Do Button	1 50	1 15
Child's Storm	45	25			
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