

Engineer and Stillman Narrowly Escape Death

Top of Huge Tank, Hurl'd Through Air by Explosion at Radio Oil Refineries, Misses Workers by Inches—Spectacular Fire Gives Firemen Stern Battle for Several Hours.

George Gibson and Joe Hechter, engineer and stillman, respectively, employed at the Radio Oil Refineries, Ltd., distilling plant, Munroe avenue, East Kildonan, narrowly escaped death at 6.40 o'clock, Thursday evening, when an explosion, followed by fire, almost wrecked one of three big oil tanks on the premises. Damage by the explosion and fire was tentatively estimated by Ben Hechter, 32 Noble avenue, president of the company, at approximately \$1,000, partially covered by insurance.

The blast, which rattled windows of houses for blocks around, tossed the 500-pound galvanized iron top of the tank for a distance of more than 50 feet. Gibson and Hechter, who were tending the open-air boiler at the time, jumped back when they heard the explosion, although totally unaware that at that exact moment the huge weight was hurtling through the air toward them.

Missed Death by Inches

Had they not leaped back in the direction they did they would have been killed, for the big top, missing them only by inches, landed on the exact spot where they had been standing a second before.

Flames belched forth from the tank immediately following the explosion, casting a spectacular glare which could be seen a considerable distance away, and which attracted a huge crowd to the scene. Making a dull roaring sound, the fuel oil which the tank contained, burned furiously and was still blazing hours after the outbreak. Fortunately, the tank in which the fire occurred was not full at the time. Each of the three containers, which stand in a line and are separated only by a few inches, are of about 16,000-gallons capacity.

Blast Heard for Miles

The explosion, the cause of which is not yet known, was heard within a radius of several miles, and shattered windows of the offices of the plant. Outside of this, the loss of the oil and damage to the tank, was all that resulted. Tanks containing gasoline were not endangered, as they are located some distance away on the grounds.

East Kildonan firemen responded to the alarm and two pumps and a ladder truck from halls 7 and 8 of the Winnipeg fire department were sent out by request of the suburban brigade, but their aid was not required. Acting Chief John Miller, of the city fire department, also personally attended and gave assistance.

While water from several hose was poured on the blazing tank other streams were directed on the two adjoining tanks and at the same time they were emptied of oil, which was piped into other containers in a distant part of the grounds.

Provincial fire commissioner, Edward McGrath, and Robert Stewart

chief boiler inspector of the department, were called to the scene and will continue their investigation today when they will make an examination of the damaged tank and connecting apparatus in an effort to determine the cause of the explosion.

REWARD OFFERED FOR SOLUTION OF TRAGEDY

Parents of Milton Koser,
Found Strangled Saturday,
Appeal for Information

Think Most Likely Cause of
Boy's Death Was Attempt
to Do "Houdini Act"

Reward of \$500 for information that will clear up the mystery of their son's death is offered by the parents of Milton Koser, the 13-year-old boy who was found strangled in his room, at 77 Home street, Saturday afternoon.

Announcement of the offer of the reward was made in a written statement issued to the Free Press, Thursday afternoon, by the boy's father, Leon W. Koser.

In his statement, Mr. Koser says the suicide theory is inconceivable to any one who knew the boy. The murder theory, he states, is equally hard to entertain. No one, in his opinion, except a dope-smared fiend, could conceive of executing such a crime and in any event there would have been signs of a struggle and bodily injuries other than those that were around the boy's neck and head.

The most likely cause of the tragedy, Mr. Koser believes, was that Milton was attempting to do a "Houdini act." He is convinced, however,

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LOOKING BACKWARD

(From the Free Press Files)

Fifty-five Years Ago—Oct. 15, 1876

The prize-winners at the provincial fair were Jas. Harrower, Robinson & Wilson, Geo. Maxwell, Mrs. Pritchard, R. Egan, Mrs. McIvor, M. McDonald, C. Mellard, E. G. Conklin, W. A. Farmer, the Manitoba Free Press, F. D. K. Geo. Packer, Geo. Lydie and E. H. J. O. Hay.—It was recommended that one of the first duties of the new government of the Northwest Territories should be the enactment of legislation to protect the buffalo.

Fifty Years Ago—Oct. 15, 1881

The building boom continued in