

State Library copy of newspaper is severely damaged

....that there is an air of mystery attached to its origin. It is thought that the action of the sun's rays on some glass may have caused some rubbish to ignite, otherwise they are unable to account for it.

The flames soon spread to the main building, the high wind that was blowing at the time carrying lighted leaves, &c., on to the roof.

Help having speedily arrived, the body of Mr Ayers was quickly removed to a neighbour's place, and the work of saving the furniture began, most of the articles being rescued. The books of the Forester's lodge had been sent to Mr Brocklebank's early that morning, and thus escaped destruction, but the plan of the cemetery was amongst the articles that were lost.

The shock of the fire falling so closely on the death of her father caused Miss Jane Ayers' nerves to give way, and it was some time ere the kind attentions of friends succeeded in bringing her to her normal condition.

Fortunately the wind blew in the direction of a vacant allotment, and though, owing to the wind, much danger existed to the adjacent buildings, a strict watch and a few buckets of water sufficed to keep the enemy in check.

The brigade arrived on the scene in good time, but their efforts to subdue the flames were quite nullified by the miserable pressure of water, and this fact opens up a theme for general and grave discussion. The smallness of the main may have had something to do with this state of affairs, but it is generally supposed that the fact of property holders allowing the water taps to run in their gardens indiscriminately was the chief cause of the defect. If so, the matter requires immediate attention from those who have the superintendence of such affairs, it having become a grievance of no slight dimensions. As a proof of this it may be stated that several business people in the town contemplate applying to the insurance companies to increase the amounts on their premises on account of the insufficiency of the water supply in case of fire affording such slight protection. The question, though conspicuously before the public on previous occasions, has had but slight attention paid to it, and it is to be hoped that the prominence now given to the matter will be the means of bringing about a change in the method and means of the townships reticulation.

Various suggestions have been made with reference to the question of extinguishing such fires, one of them being that each person, before starting out, provide himself with a bucket, so as, if necessary, to form a line from the point where water was obtainable to the scene of operations. The plan would have been easily workable in the case under notice, a large waterhole in the garden being sufficient to supply the necessary liquid. Perhaps an engine for the fire brigade would prove more effective than the hydrant and nose under the present conditions.

On the following day the remains of Mr Ayers were conveyed to the cemetery and deposited in their final resting place, the Rev. R. L. Reed conducting the funeral service. A large number of townspeople were present, including about sixty members of the Forester's lodge, and a great amount of sympathy was expressed for the bereaved family, who have thus been deprived of a father and a home at one fell swoop.

