

CRAWFORD COUNTY AVALANCHE

September 13, 1951

BEAR ARCHERY BEGINS BIG JOB OF CLEANING UP FOLLOWING FIRE

Expect To Be At Work In Week

The employees of the Bear Archery Company of Grayling began on Monday morning a tremendous job of cleaning up their fire-wrecked plant after a preliminary start had been made on Sunday by a few of the employees. A start was also made on Sunday towards rewiring the building.

Secretary-Treasurer Charles D. Piper of the Bear Archery Company stated that he believed the company could be back into production within a week or ten days contingent upon the installation of the new electrical carrying equipment.

Damage was set by company officials and insurance company adjusters at between \$50,000 and \$70,000. The biggest share of damage occurred in the arrow department, shipping department and main office.

The fire, whose origin has still not been definitely defined, was first discovered between 9:30 and 9:45 Saturday evening almost simultaneously by William C. Tufts and Jerry McClain, both of whom were driving past. McClain stopped at the Burton McWilliams home across the road from the plant and McClain, accompanied by McWilliams, crossed to investigate. Upon their return, they phoned in a fire call. Tufts drove back into Grayling to turn in the alarm.

The Grayling Fire Department answered the call in a very short space of time and was then hindered by a hose leak. Two fire trucks from Camp Grayling and one from the Grayling MacNamara Air Base also answered the alarm and their aid enabled the fire fighters to finally beat down the blaze. The department worked very hard to bring the stubborn blaze under control.

The fire struck the bow and arrow manufacturing plant at the very peak of their production. Sales had been skyrocketing due to the coming hunting season and following a change of production which had been ironed out, the plant was humming along at top speed.

The loss was fully covered by insurance, Piper said, and added that all of the company's employees would be kept working on cleaning up the blaze-swept plant and equipment until production could be commenced again.

The fire centered along the rear wall of the main office and was mostly confined to the middle of the 50 x 170 foot plant. A heavy fiberglass ceiling insulation kept the heat down in the building which consequently burned the insulation from most of the plants electrical lines.

Everyone was agreed, however, that the steel roof construction prevented the total loss which would have been suffered had the roof been made of inflammable material.

Two large steel supporting beams and several smaller ones near the center of the blaze were buckled and twisted by the extreme temperatures. Another factor that caused heavy damage was the melting of the roof from the heat causing tar to drip down into the plant and on to equipment.

President Fred Bear who is in Wyoming bow hunting with Mrs. Bear and company vice-president K. K. Knickerbocker of Chicago was notified by phone of the fire on Sunday.

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