

THE WOODYARD

Perth's Fuel Committee 1917-1932

As the Great War entered its second year and the winter of 1916-1917 set in, the citizens of Perth, dressed in their warmest long-johns, sweaters, and toques, huddled around cold stoves and fireplace grates. In a country where a century earlier the forest had stood so thick it obscured the sky, its inhabitants now shivered in their beds and kitchens for want of fuel.

By the late 19th century the vast forests that greeted Perth's first settlers were largely gone, cleared for farmland, export timber, domestic lumber, and firewood to heat homes, schools, and businesses, and to fuel factories, steamboats, and railways. In fact, in the early 1900s Lanark County had much less forested land than exists today and firewood had become so expensive that, for most uses, it had been replaced by cheaper coal, even on many farms. In those years, petroleum and electricity played no significant role in rural Canada.



Then World War One, the first 'industrial scale war', completely repainted the picture. Due to the high cost of transporting coal from Alberta or Nova Scotia, Perth's coal supply, like nearly all of the coal fueling Canada's industrial heartland in Ontario and Quebec, came from the mines of Pennsylvania. But the exponential growth in industrial production demanded by war requirements soon taxed the ability of those mines to fill orders, especially so after April 1917 when the United States entered the war. As the American army expanded from 127,500 to 4,000,000 men, the number of men employed digging anthracite coal in Pennsylvania was reduced from 177,000 to 145,000. The explosion in demand in both the U.S. and Canada also quickly outstripped the capacity of the railways to deliver coal.

Frequent labor unrest also played havoc with the supply and cost of coal. In the United States there were a series of strikes between 1912 and 1921 known as the West Virginia Coal Wars. There were also major strikes, led by the United Mine Workers of America (UMW), in Indiana and Illinois in 1919 and a nationwide strike, April-August 1922, that saw miners, strike breakers and mine guards killed at Herrin, Illinois. In Canada, in 1922-1925, there were four successive years of strikes at the Cape Breton mines.

As Perth, like towns and villages across central Canada, faced a coal famine, home furnaces, heaters, and cookstoves were reconfigured to burn wood once again, only to discover that securing a supply of affordable firewood was nearly as difficult as finding coal. Although farm woodlots in the surrounding townships had been heavily cut over in the 19th century, sufficient mature second growth remained to meet local requirements, but it had to be cut and delivered. However, the farmers who owned those remaining woodlots, and who had once benefited from the winter employment provided by the firewood trade, were struggling to cut sufficient wood to meet even their own requirements. Their sons and other young men traditionally employed in the winter bush were gone to war with the 130th and 240th Battalions. Even large numbers of the horses needed to skid the logs and haul the sleighs had been shipped to the Western Front.

By New Year 1917 the *Perth Courier* was reporting incidents of thefts from the woodsheds of residences in town and rural schools. At Carleton Place a load of wood was left standing on the street one night and in the morning, it was no more – nothing left but the sleigh. At Smiths Falls the fuel situation was equally dire.

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Equal Coal in Comfort,**

ALL the discomforts of uneven heating are entirely eliminated in a Happy Thought Woodland Wood Furnace because you get maximum heat with absolute draft control over any other sort of fuel.

THE drafts are so accurately adjusted and operate so consistently that you get the same even flow of heat from wood that is obtained from a bed of coal.

THE many built in features that give the Woodland Furnace pre-eminence as a wood burner, include:

An oversize steel tubed radiator giving very long fire travel and much greater radiation.

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The close checking drafts that convert every stick of wood into a heat that is evenly distributed through all the registers.

The Happy Thought Woodland Furnace is made in five sizes, for large or small houses, either pipe or pipeless.

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The farmer who has a big pile of wood – any kind of wood, even green basswood – has a little gold mine this winter if he can haul it to town. Shivering citizens stand along the streets looking for anything in the shape of fuel that may be coming in and swarm around a lonesome load of what would have been left in the bush a few years ago, offering six, seven eight dollars for it. Terrible time. The man who can coax a half ton of coal from a dealer must be from Ireland and have kissed the blarney stone. Most men send their wives.¹

As the cold and difficult winter of 1916-1917 finally gave way to spring, the *Perth Courier* lamented the current state of affairs and future fuel prospects.

Those who have to use firewood ... look back with regret to the time when wood was yet plentiful in the neighborhood of Perth. Then little else was brought to town but ... hardwoods, and the better class of soft woods. The limbs and branches were left in the woods to rot. Now any old thing ... always finds ready customers. What was once considered waste is now looked on as regular fuel and brings the price of the best stove-wood 20 years ago. On many farms even this, what was once considered refuse, is getting scarce ...²

¹ *Smiths Fall Record News*, February 23, 1917.

² *Perth Courier*, March 23, 1917.

In October 1917, as the rigors of another winter approached, Perth Town Councillor John Thomas Conway (1881-1950)³ requested that Mayor James John Hands (1866-1927)⁴ call a special Saturday morning council meeting to consider the advisability of purchasing firewood and offering it to citizens at nominal prices. Conway had a very specific plan in mind.

In June of that year the Clyde Woollen Mills at Lanark Village had been completely destroyed by fire at a loss of \$100,000 and 100 jobs. Tragic as the event was for Lanark, it presented what Conway saw as an opportunity for Perth. Four hundred cords of cured firewood destined for the mill's boiler plant, cut and drawn over the previous winter, had survived the blaze. From discussions he had initiated with mill owner Thomas Boyd Caldwell (1856-1932)⁵, Conway believed the wood could be purchased at a fair price of \$3.50 per cord. Following some debate, Conway and Reeve Charles James Foy (1867-1927)⁶ tabled a motion that council purchase the entire 400 cords and have it hauled to Perth as soon as sleighing would permit. Their fellow councilors agreed and named Conway, Henry Montague Shaw (1865-1932)⁷ and Robert Alexander Brown (1859-1938)⁸ to a Fuel Committee that, in turn, placed Police Chief John Russell Griffith (1872-1928)⁹ in charge of day-to-day operations. That same afternoon Griffith closed the deal with a telephone call and began accepting orders from Perthites.

Perth Council is not going to allow the citizens to suffer discomforts for want of fuel this winter. Coal is scarce, but wood in town is not any more plentiful, and those with wood for sale have little time at present to draw it to town. Many citizens have little or no coal on hand and practically no wood; as a result the fuel prospects were not very bright.¹⁰

³ Born in County Westmeath, Ireland, the son of John Conway (1856-1940) and Mary Jane Henry (1861-1939), John T. Conway apprenticed to the grocery and dry goods business at Perth and then in Toronto before returning to Perth c1908 and to open a dry goods store at the corner of Gore and Herriott Streets. He served as Perth Mayor 1919-1920. When he moved to Toronto to open a furrier business in 1925, he sold his Perth store to his brother Frank Conway. John T. Conway died at Toronto in 1950. The men's wear store bearing his name still operates at the Gore Street location.

⁴ Hands was born in Drummond Township in 1865, the son of Thomas Hands (1834-1904) and Caroline James (1841-1922). He married (1897) Mary Elizabeth Smith (1875-1921). James was mayor of Perth 1916-1918 and 1932-1936. A farmer turned businessman, he died at Perth in 1937 when he drowned in his bath.

⁵ Born at Lanark Village in 1856, the son of lumberman Boyd Caldwell (1818-1888) and Dinah Waugh (1831-1905), Thomas B. Caldwell owned and operated the Caldwell Woollen Mill at Lanark and, after it burned, Taybank Woollen Mills (Tayside Textiles) at Perth. He was Captain and Paymaster with the 42nd Lanark and Renfrew Regiment 1883-1893 and sat as MP for Lanark North 1904-1908. Caldwell married Jeannette M. Falconer (1855-1935). He died in 1932.

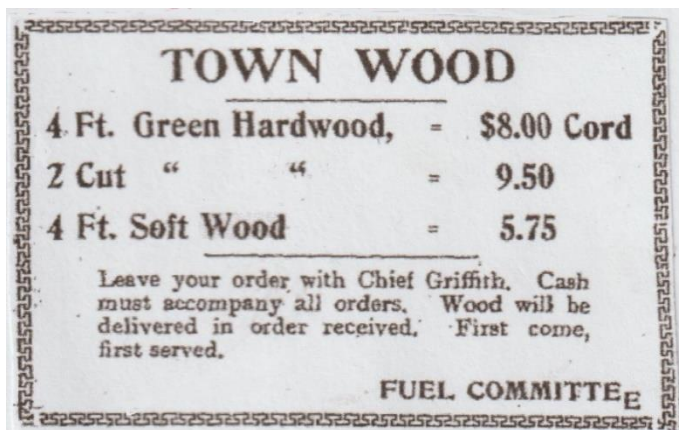
⁶ Foy was born in Drummond Township in 1867, the son of Michael P. Foy (1829-1908) & Ann Elizabeth Walsh (1842-1893). He married (1898) Margaret Spence (1874-1927). Foy was a lawyer, a leading Catholic layman, Canadian President of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (1912-1923), a Town Councillor 1899-1916, Perth Mayor 1905-1906, and Lanark County Warden in 1909. He died at Perth in 1927.

⁷ Shaw, the son of Henry Dowlesy Shaw (1833-1886) & Madeline Matheson (1836-1894), was born at Perth in 1865. He married Anne Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (1869-1959). Shaw operated the family dry-goods store, Shaw's of Perth. He was a town councilor 1906-1908 and 1913-1932, Mayor 1907-1908 and Lanark County Warden in 1926. He died at Perth in 1932.

⁸ Brown was born in Elmsley Township in 1859, the son of Alexander Brown (1807-1889) and Agnes McLaren (1819-1859). He first married (1883) Margaret A. Charles (1860-1888) and secondly married (1900) Ella M. Hammond (1874-1962). He was a livestock drover and died in 1938 at Perth.

⁹ Griffith was born in 1872 in Drummond Township, the son of Thomas Griffith (1850-1924) and Eliza Jane Griffith (1847-1923). Before becoming Perth Police Chief in 1911 he worked at the CPR Car Shops. Griffith married (1889) Loretta J. Morris (1872-1934). He died at Perth in 1928.

¹⁰ *Perth Courier*, November 2, 1917.



By mid-November some 80 cords had been drawn from Lanark, and Chief Griffith had sold all of it. A month later, the entire Caldwell purchase had reached Perth and only about 40 cords remained for sale. As the Caldwell firewood stock dwindled, Town Council held another special meeting at the end of December and authorized the purchase of five railcar loads of hardwood for sale off the cars in four-foot lengths at \$19.15 and in eighteen inch lengths at \$8.50 a cord. The first Fuel

Committee report, covering the Caldwell wood plus the two railcar loads showed an expenditure of \$2,666.83, income of \$2,849.12, and a profit of \$182.29.

In the depth of that winter, high demand and uncertainty of supply continued to drive commercial prices steadily upward. Perth Board of Trade Chairman Colonel John Edward de Hertel (1863-1945)¹¹ told the January 1918 committee meeting that on a recent morning he had seen a woman purchase a load of wood for \$10.00 and a little later the same day sell it for \$13.00. In response Council decided to purchase,

... at least 1,000 cords of wood for the citizens of the town, and that [the fuel] committee ... take such steps as they may deem necessary to procure this wood, and that the same committee be given power to buy all the dry wood that can be disposed of, for the citizens of the town".¹²

Finding that firewood was in critically short supply across the province, the new committee immediately exercised its broad mandate by purchasing a 10-acre woodlot in neighboring North Elmsley Township for \$500, estimating that it would produce 35 cords to the acre "if they could hire sufficient men to cut the wood".¹³ James Knowles (1868-1954)¹⁴ was engaged as foreman to recruit workers and to manage cutting and delivery operations. A few weeks later the committee purchased an adjoining woodlot of 100 acres. Over the coming years Perth's Fuel Committee would buy and harvest dozens of woodlots in Drummond, Bathurst, North Burgess and North Elmsley Townships.

¹¹ de Hertel as born at Perth in 1863, the son of Jean-Edouard de Hertel Sr. (1831-1868) and Jane E. Douglas (1839-1916). He married Susan Rothwell Balderson (1875-1935). As a young man de Hertel worked for the Hudson Bay Company in the northwest, then the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service¹¹ in the West Indies and clothing manufacturer H. Shorey & Co. of Montreal, before establishing Campbell & de Hertel Gents Furnishings & Fine Tailoring of Perth. He was also a partner in the Perth Creamery Company and later managed McLaren Distillery after death of its founder John A. McLaren. At the outbreak of WW1, he was appointed Chief Recruiting Officer for Lanark and Renfrew Counties, and Lieutenant Colonel of the 130th Lanark & Renfrew Battalion CEF. Following the war, he became manager of the Balderson Theatre. De Hertel sat on Perth Town Council 1900-1902 and served a single term as Mayor in 1925-1926. He died at Perth in 1945.

¹² *Perth Courier* January 18, 1918.

¹³ *Perth Courier*, January 25, 1918.

¹⁴ Knowles was born in Dalhousie Township in 1868, the son of Hugh Knowles (1821-1870) and Grace Blair (1825-1901). He married (1890) Mary Jackson (1865-1945). Knowles died at Lanark in 1954.

Thus was born Perth's wood business, a non-profit, self-funding, public service endeavor that continued, without interruption, for the next 15 years. In most seasons the project cut and delivered at least 2,000 cords of firewood, provided several month's employment for 30 to 35 men cutting in the bush-lots, and contracted as many as 50 local teamsters to haul the wood into town.¹⁵



During the scheme's first weeks in 1917, if a load was not directed for immediate delivery to a buyer, loaded sleighs were parked in the location long-used by private suppliers along Foster Street between Wilson and Gore Streets. However, the huge consignment of Caldwell wood hauled from Lanark in only a few weeks created traffic problems along the town's main business street, so the Fuel Committee shortly established a woodyard in the Market Square, behind town hall. In 1919 the woodyard was moved to a location along the Tay Canal bank near the Curling Club, but in mild weather that site became a muddy "*No Man's Land*" ... and those in need of wood have to wait a while for their supply"¹⁶. In 1922 the municipal woodyard was moved again to a property at the corner of Wilson and Glascott Streets where it remained for the next decade.

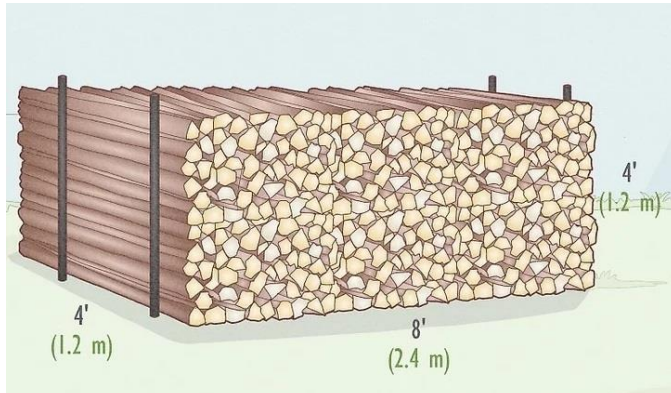
Perth was the first municipality in Ontario to establish a wood business guaranteeing a supply of affordable fuel for its citizens, but other municipalities soon followed its lead. A few weeks after Perth launched its effort in 1917, Smiths Falls town council purchased several railcar loads of wood from Sharbot Lake, for re-sale to people in need. At Almonte, owing to the difficulty of securing firewood at reasonable prices, the Rosemond Woollen Co., hired a gang of men to cut wood on company limits in Wolf Grove to supply their employees. In March 1918 Carleton Place Council decided to help ease their shortage by purchasing 20 acres of standing wood on the Innisville Road in Ramsay Township.

The coal famine in Canada reached crisis proportions in the winter of 1917-1918 prompting the Federal Government to intervene with conservation regulations. Effective February 8, 1918, manufacturers and businesses burning coal in central Canada (Ontario and Quebec) were ordered closed Saturdays through Mondays. A few days later the order was extended to include the Monday closure, February through March, of all coal-burning business and professional offices, warehouses, wholesale and retail stores, theatres, moving picture houses, bowling alleys, billiard rooms, dance halls and all other places of public amusement. Violation of the order risked a \$5,000 fine and/or six months in jail.

¹⁵ In February 1926, in a year of particularly good sleighing conditions, teamster Alex Baker set a record by hauling 2¾ cords of green hardwood from a woodlot in Bathurst Township to Perth in a single load.

¹⁶ *Perth Courier*, November 7, 1919.

These restrictions on coal increased demand for firewood, putting even more pressure on availability and prices. At Perth, coal was in such short supply that wood had become essentially the only available fuel and three of the town's churches, St. Andrews Presbyterian, Knox Presbyterian, and Asbury Methodist, abandoned their unheated sanctuaries to conduct joint Sunday services at the Balderson Theatre which was still heating its auditorium (except on Mondays).



One full cord of firewood equals 128 cubic feet (3.6 cubic meters), or a pile four feet wide, four feet tall and eight feet long.

As spring weather brought the immediate crisis to an end, in May 1918 Mayor Hands received a letter from H. C. Harris, Fuel Administrator for Ontario, “expressing gratification at the way in which Perth council was dealing with the fuel situation in establishing a municipal woodyard”.¹⁷ This was shortly followed by a Provincial Government notice urging municipalities to “prepare against the fuel famine which is likely to occur in the province next winter and emphasizing the seriousness of the situation”.¹⁸ The

Province offered municipalities free wood from Algonquin Park, but Perth continued to meet its needs from sources closer to home.

In January 1919 Mayor Hands stepped down and Fuel Committee Chairman John T. Conway was acclaimed mayor. In his acceptance speech Conway told the nomination meeting that “We sold \$8,000 worth of wood last year, and when the wood at present being cut is sold Council will have delivered \$23,000 worth of wood to the citizens of Perth” ...¹⁹. In no small part due to the popularity of the municipal wood business he had initiated and managed, Conway was returned by acclamation three times and served as Mayor through 1922 when he retired from municipal politics.

The success of Perth's wood business was proving to be an exception, however. By January 1919 Smiths Falls had lost \$700 on its venture and the City of Ottawa had lost \$8,000 supplying firewood. In the winter of 1920-1921 alone Renfrew lost \$2,560 on wood and \$2,526 on coal. Napanee's 1923 audit report showed a loss of \$250 on their wood account. In 1922 the *Renfrew Mercury* reported that, “... having lost an even thousand dollars the town of Wiarton announces that it has had enough of the wood business. Every town in Ontario that has tried it has lost money, though Orillia leads as usual, having lost more than any of the others”.²⁰ The *Mercury's* claim that “every town in Ontario” had lost money was wrong, however. At Perth, energetic and careful management by the Fuel Committee, Police Chief Griffith, and foreman Knowles, had ensured the town suffered no want of fuel, and sustained no monetary losses.

¹⁷ *Perth Courier*, May 3, 1918.

¹⁸ *Perth Courier*, June 28, 1918.

¹⁹ *Perth Courier* January 3, 1919.

²⁰ *Renfrew Mercury*, March 1922.

Thomas Albert Code (1854-1937)²¹, owner of the Code Knitting & Woolen Mill, conducted a comparative analysis of wood vs coal in the winter of 1922-1923. He concluded that,

... some years ago, when anthracite coal was to be obtained at or about \$6.00 per ton, equipment for the use of coal became general which was apparently less trouble, not requiring attention so often. Today, with hard coal at \$13.00 per ton the situation is serious and there does not seem to be any prospect of much reduction ... Heating the Code block with wood for the winter of 1922-1923 cost about 60% of what it would have cost with coal. We consider a cord of good average dry hardwood equal to a ton of anthracite coal ... We consider that soft wood has a relative value of 60% to 70% of hardwood.²²



**Codes Knitting/Woolen Mill c1920.
(Courtesy of Perth Remembered)**

Another study concluded that two pounds of seasoned wood was approximately equal to a pound of coal in heat value. A cord of hickory, oak, beech, birch, cherry, hard maple, ash, elm, or locust was of equal fuel value to a ton of coal. The same heat value existed in a cord and a half of sycamore, soft maple, or hemlock, or two cords of poplar, catalpa, basswood, or white pine as in a ton of coal.

²¹ Born at Innisville in 1854, Code was the son of William Code (1821-1868) and Elizabeth Hicks (1827-1895). He married (1890) Jennie Leslie (1854-1907). He was proprietor of the Code Knitting & Woolen Mill, and later President of Perth Felt Company. Code sat as a Town Councilor for 15 years and served as Perth Mayor 1889-1890.

²² *Perth Courier*, April 27, 1923.

Some communities explored other solutions. Over the winter of 1919-1920 an experiment of heating with peat was conducted at Merrickville. One participant reported that,

Those who received a share of the carload of peat lately arriving are well satisfied with it, considering that at what it costs it is a very desirable sort of fuel. Fire reduces it to very fine ashes, leaving no clinkers. In handling it one's hands and face do not become black, as in the case of coal. People here would like to see the Government make millions of tons of it, and place it on the market, not only to regulate coal and wood prices but to meet the prevailing scarcity of fuel.²³

By 1923, with the war over and the men returned home, township farmers were once again becoming active in the firewood trade.

A lot of wood of all descriptions is being drawn into town from all directions, some coming from points 15 miles away. The Town complement, from its several bush lots, swells up the total materially. All this relieves the fuel situation greatly and will save the importation of much of the coal ordinarily brought to town from Pennsylvania ... Wood is coming into town in immense quantities, and some days the streets show processions of the old-fashioned fuel from all the roads leading into the town.²⁴



That year the Town Council Fuel Committee still stocked its woodyard with nearly 2,000 cords of wood, selling four-foot hardwood at \$7.50 a cord and soft wood at \$5.50 per cord. By 1923, from commencement of the project, the town had purchased more than 6,000 cords of wood, paying out \$41,000, while providing thousands of man-days of employment to woodcutters and teamsters. In February 1923, 35 horse teams were at work hauling Fuel Committee wood to town.

That the municipal wood business scheme not only assured a dependable supply, but regulated cost, was apparent in that in 1927 the town sold hardwood at \$8.00/cord, the same price as in the project's inaugural year a decade earlier.

Police Chief Griffith, who had so successfully managed sales since inception of the project, retired due to poor health in July 1927²⁵. He was replaced as Police Chief by Gordon Gilhuly (1887-1937)²⁶, but wood business responsibilities were assigned to Town Engineer William George Howie (1888-1952)²⁷.

²³ *Smiths Fall Record News*, November 1920.

²⁴ *Perth Courier*, February 23, 1923.

²⁵ Griffith died a year later, on August 1, 1928, at the age of 56 years.

²⁶ Gilhuly was born in 1887 at Numogate near Smiths Falls, the son of James Gilhuly Jr. (1852-1912) and Rosanna Currie (1845-1905). He married May McAllister (1885-1984) in 1907. Before arriving in Perth, Gilhuly worked as a police officer in Ottawa and Capreol. After leaving Perth he was Chief of Police at Norway Bay 1933-1934 and then at Almonte where he died in 1937.

²⁷ Howie was born at Perth, the son of John Howie (1862-1937) and Sarah Graham (1860-1930). He married (1911) Florence Agnes Parfitt (b.1893). Howie worked for the Town of Perth for many years as Street Engineer, Town Foreman, and Town Engineer. He was also a member of the fire department from 1906 and served as Fire Chief 1947-1952. Howie died at Perth in 1952.

Times were changing, however. As the depression of the 1930s throttled the economy, the municipality found itself struggling with a growing deficit. When Joseph H. Devlin (1877-1948)²⁸ was re-elected Mayor in January 1932 his inaugural address noted that,

*Among the other problems which will come before council is the wood question. A large number of accounts are outstanding, some of which are doubtful assets. There is quite a lot of wood in the town woodyard, but there has been quite a draft on it for relief owing to the unemployment ...*²⁹

In an attempt to manage its financial crisis, at its first meeting that year Council formed a Finance Retrenchment Committee that called for the immediate resignation of all officers and servants of the town and solicited tenders to fill the vacated positions. Among the resignations accepted was that of William G. Howie, Chief Engineer and Wood Manager. The wood account was reassigned to Town Tax Collector, Robert Edwin Hicks (1866-1943), but his task was limited to clearing the woodyard of remaining inventory, collecting outstanding accounts and tying up loose ends. Council decided that it would have no wood cut that winter and citizens would have to purchase their supply from the country vendors.

Fortunately, the township farmers, hard pressed by their own need for some cash income in tough economic times, were prepared to meet the demand and did so in volumes that drove prices to lows unseen for nearly two decades. In March the *Courier* reported that,

*People are unanimous in saying that Perth was justified in entering the wood business as a war-time emergency measure. Some thought that this department should have been dropped at the end of the fuel scarcity and today ratepayers are fairly well agreed that Perth's Wood Department should be discontinued.*³⁰

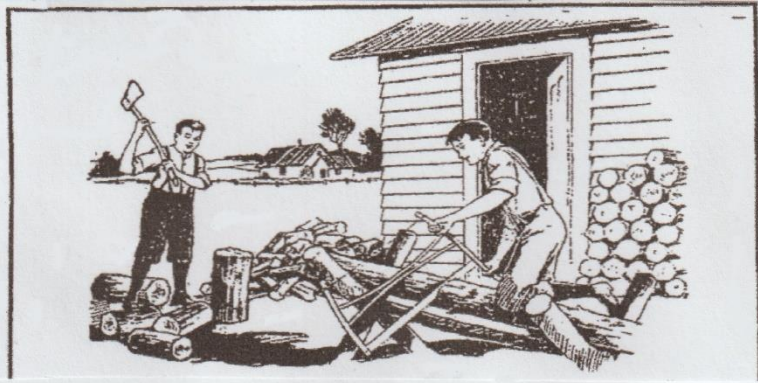
*The present good sleighing is resulting in a large amount of wood being hauled to Perth. At one time on Saturday morning 20 loads were 'parked' on Foster Street in the block between Gore and Wilson Streets, the customary wood market in Perth for a great many years. First-class green hardwood is being sold at an average of \$6.00 per cord, the lowest price since before the Great War. The low-priced wood has decided many citizens to use it in future in preference to the coal which has not yet lowered any in price.*³¹

²⁸ Devlin, the son of William Allen Devlin (1842-1918) and Jane Hannah Radford (1847-1920), was born in Drummond Township in 1877. He married (1912) Mable May Whyte (1891-1942). Devlin farmed in Drummond until moving to Perth in 1921 when he became Superintendent of the Children's Aid Society. In 1932 he was appointed Lanark County Court Clerk. He sat on the town council 1925-1930 and served as Mayor 1930-1931.

²⁹ *Perth Courier* January 15, 1932.

³⁰ *Perth Courier*, April 15, 1932.

³¹ *Perth Courier*, March 18, 1932.



The woodyard on Glascott Street was cleared of its last cord of firewood in the spring of 1932 and the Town of Perth's wood business was consigned to the files and ledgers of the Town Clerk's office. Perth had been the first to venture the supply of firewood to its citizens, and operated its woodyard for 15 years, many years longer than any other municipality in the

province. Over its lifetime the project supplied seasonal employment for hundreds of out-of-work citizens and local teamsters, provided free fuel for families on relief, and controlled firewood prices for the community at large while keeping all money involved within the local economy.

Most remarkable, perhaps, all of this had been achieved without any financial cost to the municipality, a feat achieved by no other town engaged in a similar effort. Over 15 winters, between 1917 and 1932, the Town of Perth expended \$132,131.60 procuring firewood for its citizens and collected \$133,930.15 in sales revenue, to show a net profit of \$1,798.55.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Paid Out</u> | <u>Received</u> |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1917 | \$ 1,713.08 | \$ 1,173.13 |
| 1918 | 10,910.77 | 7,809.29 |
| 1919 | 8,341.39 | 7,850.62 |
| 1920 | 8,775.00 | 10,268.81 |
| 1921 | 8,661.08 | 7,014.74 |
| 1922 | 9,215.71 | 10,751.60 |
| 1923 | 12,720.70 | 10,433.70 |
| 1924 | 10,202.02 | 13,953.21 |
| 1925 | 13,081.26 | 12,787.29 |
| 1926 | 11,727.66 | 13,011.00 |
| 1927 | 12,411.77 | 14,681.35 |
| 1928 | 8,899.41 | 11,359.71 |
| 1929 | 4,734.61 | 4,948.90 |
| 1930 | 6,619.41 | 3,406.01 |
| 1931 | 4,617.70 | 2,791.80 |
| | <u>\$132,131.60</u> | <u>\$133,930.15</u> |

Restated in terms of Canadian dollar purchasing power in 2020, this amounted to a profit of \$45,000 from an expenditure of \$2,675,000 and an income of \$2,720,000.

The Fuel Committee's intervention was unusual and the financing substantial, because the need was very real – as grimly described in the lament of an unidentified local poet writing in the winter of 1917-1918.

The End Of A Heatless Day
By Spring Poet

*Oh, this is the end of a heatless day,
All alone by the fireside I sit;
My poor bones ache in a dreadful way,
My head is sure to split.
At early morn I went to the bush
And tried to chop some wood;
A tree fell with an awful crash,
And pinned me where I stood.*

*Oh, this is the end of a heatless day,
My hands and feet are blue.
My body is shivering, and they say
My nose is a pitiful hue.
Where the firelight's glow use to cheer my frame,
And the hardwood burned with glee;
Cold, silent ashes don't seem the same
As the old time fire to me.*

*Oh, this is the end of heatless day –
A day I shall never forget –
No wood, no coal, no work, no pay,
Nothing to do but fret,
When the war is over, and the boys return,
From the trenches far away,
I'll sing of the Home Fires that didn't burn,
At the end of a heatless day.³²*

- Ron W. Shaw (2023)

³² *Perth Courier*, February 15, 1918.