

# FORMER FIRE CHIEF OF ST. BONIFACE IS SENT TO JAIL

## Eighteen-Month Term Imposed on William Thompson for Theft Theft and Forgery

Pleading guilty to a series of thefts and forgeries, committed with regularity for six years against the city of St. Boniface, and involving the sum of \$7,883.60, William Thompson,

former chief of the city's fire department for nine years, was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment by Magistrate Henri Lacerte, in St. Boniface police court Tuesday morning.

Thompson, facing a courtroom crowded with people, including his wife and 18-year-old son, solemnly admitted his guilt as each of the charges were read to him by J. Grymonpre, court clerk. There were four charges of theft and six charges of forgery. The oldest offence dates back to October 1, 1926, when Thompson had been head of the fire department for three years.

On each theft charge Magistrate Lacerte imposed a prison term of 18 months, the four sentences to run concurrently. One year's imprisonment on each of the six forgery charges was also imposed, these sentences also to run concurrently.

After a plea for the "utmost leniency" for Thompson was voiced by his counsel, Oscar H. Campbell, who based the plea on Thompson's splendid service as a firefighter and his admirable work of fire prevention, Magistrate Lacerte said:

"The thefts committed by Thompson were committed with regularity over a number of years, therefore sentence must be measured as if the accused were now before me with criminal record, although this is his first appearance in a criminal court."

### Not In Need.

"The accused can hardly plead extenuating circumstances as the cause of his crime. He was making a good salary" (\$175 monthly, 1926-9, reduced to \$158.50 in 1930) "had his living quarters provided by the city and received a certain amount of clothing from the city," the magistrate concluded just before passing sentence.

Thompson's admission of his guilt showed that, from Oct. 1, 1926, to August of this year, he had regularly carried "extra" names on the fire department payroll. Some of the names were fictitious, while others were the names of persons who, at some time or other, had been employed for a short time on the department.

In submitting the payroll to the treasurer's department, cheques were requisitioned for these names. Thompson secured these, forged signatures or signed fictitious names, and cashed them. The moneys he obtained falsely were cited in the charges as follows:

Theft of \$4,318.80 between Oct. 1, 1926, and Sept. 1, 1932; theft of \$1,680.95 between May 1, 1929, and Sept. 1, 1932; theft of \$166.10 between Aug. 7, 1926, and Jan. 15, 1927; theft of \$601.35 between Feb. 14, 1927, and Dec. 31, 1928. The forgeries: Oct. 1, 1926, this year forged signature "S. Brown" on cheque for \$51.90; Nov. 24, 1926, "S. Brown," for \$36.65; April 14, 1927, "H. Foster," for \$30; Aug. 10 this year, "A. Gauthier," for \$55; Feb. 21, 1928, "L. Hunter," for \$17.85, and Jan. 1, 1927, "L. Hunter," for \$12.90.

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