

FATAL BLAZE IN A CHICAGO HOTEL

Fourteen Guests In a Windy City Hostelry Lose Their Lives. Many Others Injured.

THE VICTIMS CROWDED INTO A MAN TRAP

Visitors to Livestock Exposition Filled Every Available Nook in the Lincoln Hotel, on Madison Street—Careless Smoker May Have Set the Blaze—Small Fire Loss. Investigation Shows the Building to Have Been in the Worst Possible Condition.

Chicago, Dec. 4.—Fourteen persons among the scores crowded into the Lincoln hotel, at 176 Madison street, met death in a fire shortly before 6 o'clock this morning. Some died in their rooms, some were killed in jumping, while others were found in the hallway, where they had expired with their fingers dug into the cracks of the floor. All of the bodies were recovered, as the hotel was not destroyed.

Fire Trap of the Worst Kind. The victims were taken to Rolston's morgue and all day the place was filled with anxious crowds.

The building was a fire trap of the worst kind, according to experts. There were but two exits, a narrow stairway leading down the four doors of the building, and an uncompleted fire-escape in the rear.

The fire started on the second floor, presumably from a lighted cigar dropped on the floor while others were at the upper rooms in the front part of the hotel, aroused by the screams of a woman, were able to escape down the stairway, and about thirty people reached safety by means of the fire-escapes.

All but fourteen of the guests at the hotel were saved. Most of them came to Chicago to attend the International Live Stock show. Up to 10 o'clock last night persons were taken in at the hotel, and in every room on place in which a cot could be erected, it is said, guests were accommodated.

The hotel was constructed of brick, there was but one stairway leading to the upper floors, and a fire escape in the front of the building.

E. C. Weber, the night clerk, was one of the first persons to discover smoke on the second floor. It is believed that the fire began in this section of the building. Weber refused to make any statement, and after he had secured possession of the hotel register he was taken to the Central Station where he is being detained.

A short time after the fire was discovered consternation reigned on the upper floors. Frederick Sheppard, seven years old, was one of the first to be awakened by the smoke. He awakened his mother and both began screaming.

Allen Oldford, of Milwaukee, made a desperate descent from the fourth floor

by scaling the wall means of the iron shutters. Oldford stated that he had seen at least a dozen persons on the top floor vainly endeavoring to make their way from the building by means of the front stairway.

Many of the bodies were found in the beds. Others were found in the hallways lying face downward. Some were half clad and others were nothing but night clothing.

Building Agents Blamed. F. A. Smith, proprietor of the hotel, says: "I am certainly not to blame for this awful catastrophe. Three weeks ago the agents of this building were notified to place a stairway in the rear of the building and also to build a fire-wall around the freight elevator shaft in the rear. The contractors came and looked the building over, but nothing was done. Last night our seventy rooms were all filled and I should judge that we had about 125 or 150 guests.

Chief Musham, of the fire department, says that in some ways it was the worst fire he has attended during his career.

Coroner's Opinion. A jury was empaneled this afternoon by Coroner Truesart to ascertain the causes of the disaster and to fix the guilt for negligence. After viewing the bodies of the victims of the fire the jury went to the hotel, where an examination was made of the premises. The jurors were then dismissed to meet for the inquest, which will begin Dec. 12.

The fire undoubtedly was caused by the explosion of an oil stove in the rear of the third floor. The building is very carelessly constructed, the fire escapes worthless, the rooms are overcrowded, and it is nothing short of a crime that such a building should have been used as a housing place for human beings.

FIRE IN FOREST CITY.

Yeager's Livery Stable Consumed by the Flames—The Cunningham Hotel in Danger.

Special to the Scranton Tribune. Forest City, Dec. 4.—Fire was discovered in Yeager's livery stable, in the rear of Main street, near Cunningham's hotel, at about 10 o'clock last evening. The flames made rapid progress and the building was soon consumed.

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Prof. Hilprecht Honored. The eminent Archaeologist is Presented with a Medal.

Philadelphia, Dec. 4.—Prof. H. V. Hilprecht, the eminent archaeologist, was tonight presented by the University of Pennsylvania with a diploma awarding to him the Lucy Wharton Drexel medal for his excavations at Nippur and his publications on the subject.

Fire Department for Tobyhanna. Special to the Scranton Tribune. Tobyhanna, Pa., Dec. 4.—The Tobyhanna village fire department, for some time past this important matter has been agitated but not until Wednesday night was any definite action taken.

Blown to Atoms by Dynamite. Philadelphia, Dec. 4.—Horace E. Kellig, aged 45 years, superintendent of the Germantown Crematory company, was blown to atoms today by an explosion of dynamite.

Pennsylvania Railroad Tunnel. New York, Dec. 4.—Governor Odell said today that an act of the legislature granting a franchise for the Pennsylvania railroad tunnel under New York in case the board of aldermen refuse to grant the franchise would be unconstitutional.

Skiff Went Over the Dam. Rice's Landing, Pa., Dec. 4.—A skiff containing Charles Love, aged 22 years, and John Rock, aged 16 years, went over Dam No. 6 on the Monongahela river, last night, and the occupants were both drowned.

MINISTER BUCK DEAD.

The American Representative to Japan Dies Suddenly.

Washington, Dec. 4.—The Japanese minister called at the state department in haste today to communicate to Secretary Hay that a cablegram which he had received from the minister for foreign affairs at Tokio, dated today, stated that while Mr. Buck, the United States minister to Japan was on a hunting trip this morning, he was taken suddenly ill and expired. Death is said to have been due to heart failure. The hunt which Mr. Buck was attending took place in the suburbs of Tokio.

The deceased minister was born in Maine, but was appointed to his post from Georgia, in April, 1897. His service covered a critical and important chapter of Japanese history.

PANAMA CANAL TREATY SOON

Dr. Herran Representing the Colombian Government is Preparing to Rush Negotiations.

The State Department Now Understands That Concha Acted Wholly Upon His Own Views in Blocking Cession—Resort to Telegraph Now to Hasten Procedure—Improved Prospects for Satisfactory Treaty with Colombia Will Suspend All Negotiations with Nicaragua.

Washington, Dec. 4.—Negotiations for canal treaty have been resumed with Dr. Herran, representing the Colombian government, and the state department is hopeful of being able to present a treaty to the senate within a short time.

There are certain communications that Dr. Herran will have to exchange with his government at Bogota before the final draft of the treaty can be agreed upon, but it is understood that these communications will be made by telegraph rather than to wait for the slow transmission of the mails.

It now appears that the deadlock created a week ago was due more to the arbitrary assumption of power by Minister Concha than to the misunderstanding or deliberate refusal of the Colombian government to accede to conditions named by the United States.

It is understood that the president has given power under the Spooner bill to negotiate for the Nicaragua route until he has given up the hope of securing the Panama canal.

President's Power. Senators Spooner and Hanna had a conference with Secretary Hay today and Mr. Spooner tried to make it clear to the secretary that his power to negotiate a treaty with Nicaragua is conditional on the abandonment of all efforts to secure the Panama canal.

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He is authorized by the Spooner act to purchase the Panama canal when he is satisfied that the company can secure from Colombia a satisfactory concession granting the United States perpetual control over the necessary territory for the construction, operation and protection of that waterway.

Two Children Burned to Death. Detroit, Mich., Dec. 4.—A special to the Free Press from Saginaw, Mich., says that two children of Mrs. Anselmy Bowers, 814 State street, were burned to death this afternoon, when the mother left them alone in the house for a few minutes.

Princeton's Football Captain. Princeton, N. J., Dec. 4.—At a meeting tonight of the foot ball club who played in the Yale-Princeton game, John R. Dewitt, 194, right guard on the team, was elected to succeed Ralph Davis, 194, who was re-elected but declined to act as captain for another season.

An Allentown Shoplifter. Allentown, Pa., Dec. 4.—Mrs. Mary Shopliffe was arrested this evening in the act of shoplifting. Police searched her home and found thousands of dollars worth of articles including 12 silk muslin dresses, hundreds of yards of lace, three fur coats, several pairs of shoes, boxes of buttons and other articles.

Ohio Miners Demand Increase. Columbus, O., Dec. 4.—It is authoritatively stated that the Ohio miners will demand an increase of 20 cents a ton in the scale for pick-mined coal.

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PAINTERS' UNION RESTRAINED.

Supreme Court of New York Interferes in Case of William Potter.

Schenectady, N. Y., Dec. 4.—Supreme Court Justice W. O. Howard today granted a writ of mandamus restraining Painters' union, No. 42 of this city, from in any way treating William Potter as not a member of the union. Potter was expelled from the union because he is a member of the militia and as such served as a private during the Hudson river strike.

Potter's complaint states that he has been refused a copy of the accusation, and was never given a trial, hence the expulsion is null and void.

Included in the complaint is a letter written by Potter to every master painter in Schenectady asking every master painter to sign a petition for the restoration of Potter to the union.

MR. REED'S CONDITION PRONOUNCED CRITICAL

A Philadelphia Specialist Called—Uraemia Has Developed with Alarming Symptoms.

Washington, Dec. 4.—At 11:30 o'clock tonight the condition of ex-Speaker Thomas B. Reed, who has been ill here since Tuesday evening, was reported to be critical. A few minutes before that time, Dr. Gardiner, one of the attending physicians, handed the following bulletin to the press:

"At 10 p. m. Mr. Reed's condition is as follows: Temperature, 100.5; pulse, 88; respiration, 31. He is unconscious, and is in a state of coma. There is some degree of uraemia commencing this evening. His appendicitis symptoms are rapidly subsiding, but his condition is not a factor in his present condition."

Dr. Gardiner made two visits to his patient during the evening, leaving the first time at half past eight o'clock. Later he and Drs. Goodnow and Macdonald came and remained at the hotel for nearly two hours, some of the time with Mr. Reed and the remainder in consultation over his case.

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BEDFORD BRIDGE BURNED.

Fire Which Destroyed the Structure of Incendiary Origin.

Bedford, Pa., Dec. 4.—The long wooden bridge that crossed the Juniata river at the narrowest of the Bedford and Chambersburg turnpike, about a mile from here, was destroyed by fire this morning.

The fire is believed to have been the work of some persons who have become angered at the protracted litigation over the condemnation of the turnpike by the court and taken the law into their own hands.

Pershing Locates Spanish Vessels.

Matanzas, Dec. 4.—Captain Pershing has located what is left of a fleet of small gunboats which the Spaniards sank in Lake Llanos, Island of Mindanao, in 1898.

Fireman Decapitated.

Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 4.—James Hill, a fireman on the Pennsylvania railroad, was decapitated near Christiana last night. During shifting the wood ahead of his train was struck by a west-bound train and hurled under his own train, and his head completely severed from his body. His home was in Philadelphia and the body was sent there today.

Justice Holmes Confirmed.

Washington, Dec. 4.—Hon. Oliver Wendell Holmes, was today confirmed by the senate to succeed the late Justice Gray as a member of the bench of the United States Supreme court. There was no opposition and the nomination was not discussed.

COMMISSIONERS HEAR FROM MORE MINERS

EMPLOYEES OF COXE BROS. & CO., THE SUSQUEHANNA COAL CO. AND D. L. AND W. GO. ON STAND.

THERE WAS LITTLE CROSS-EXAMINATION

Attorneys for the Big Companies Sit Back in Their Chairs and Allow the Statements of the Miners' Witnesses, for the Most Part, to Go Unchallenged—Local Independent Operators and Mr. Lenahan for the Non-union Men Do the Bulk of What Little Cross-examining is Done—Commissioners Ask Some Questions.

Yesterday nothing occurred to halt and nothing occurred to further the impression gained by many at the sessions of the Mine Strike commission that the parties to the controversy are expecting another interruption for the active renewal of the negotiations for amicable settlement.

The statistical evidence which was to be prepared during the ten days' recess is still wanting and nothing is heard of it. The more orderly and expeditious method of procedure which was to be agreed upon by the attorneys is not apparent.

PRESIDENT OF LEHIGH VALLEY.

E. B. Thomas Elected to Fill Out the Term of Alfred Walter.

Philadelphia, Dec. 4.—E. B. Thomas was elected president of the Lehigh Valley Railroad company and the Lehigh Valley Coal company, in place of Alfred Walter, resigned, at special meetings of the boards of directors of those companies held today.

REGARDING THE CANTEEN.

Records Support the War Department in Recommending Restoration.

Washington, Dec. 4.—General Bates, paymaster general of the army, has sent a communication to Adjutant General Corbin in regard to the army canteen question in which he says:

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The Doctors Claim That His Recovery Will Be Improbable.

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Diplomatic Appropriation Bill.

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Steamship Arrivals.

New York, Dec. 4.—Arrived: Steamers Zealand, Antwerp; Teutonic, Liverpool; Liverpool, arrival, steamer Majestic, New York; Naples, arrival, steamer Frava, New York; Queenstown, sailed, steamer Kron, Prince Wilhelm, from Bremen and Southampton and New York.

Dr. Duncan Out on Bail.

Pittsburg, Dec. 4.—Dr. Ellis S. Duncan, who is charged with the shooting of Bruce Head, of Louisville, Ky., at Camp Kenefick on the new Wabash railroad, several weeks ago, was released from jail in \$2000 bail today. Head is reported out of danger.

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WEATHER FORECAST.

Washington, Dec. 4.—Forecast for Friday and Saturday—Eastern Pennsylvania: Rain or snow in a squall, snow probably heavy in northern portion Friday; brisk to high, cold this weekend; Saturday, fair, cold.