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# ARMORY FIRE

## SCENES AS ARMORY BURNED

### ESTIMATE DAMAGE \$35,000.00



Official figures for the damages resulting from the fire at the armory here Tuesday morning have not been arrived at, reliable sources said this afternoon. A definite estimate may be determined some time before the week-end.

It is known definitely that the three steel girders supporting the front half of the roof over the drill floor will have to

be replaced. The walls of the foyer and the rooms immediately above and the four columns will have to be torn wholly or partially down. Both the brick and the cement "stone" are badly damaged.

Workmen were ordered today to build supports under the two sagging girders to prevent their falling and pulling the entire roof down.

Some unofficial estimates have been as low as \$15,000 while others have said that the losses will run to \$60,000. The majority of men who have viewed the building have estimated damages at around \$35,000.

Reconstruction work will not begin until the sponsors, the County Commissioners, and the insurance company have agreed upon a figure for the damages.

Whether the reconstruction work will be let to a contractor, or whether it will be done by the WPA is not known.

A county official said today that reconstruction work will delay completion of the structure at least 60 days. If materials are as hard to secure as they have been at times in recent months, he said, the delay might even go beyond 60 days.

Above "Action Photograph" Snapped by Shearod Crumpler

Roaring flames, causing losses of tens of thousands of dollars swept through the front of Roanoke Rapids' almost completed \$70,000 armory Tuesday morning. With incredible velocity, the fire shot up through the subflooring and into the recently laid roofing before firemen could bring hoses to bear on the inferno.

The fire began in the foyer of the building where workmen were heating asphalt in an asphalt kettle in preparation to "tarring" the floor of one of the rooms. The hot and highly inflammable asphalt caught on fire when the liquid boiled over the sides of the kettle into the fire beneath.

Various estimates of damages by citizens who saw the fire and its results have been anywhere between \$15,000 and \$45,000. No official estimation was available Tuesday.

The building was amply covered by insurance. The insurance was carried entirely by the County, to insure WPA projects being against the policy of the Federal Government.

#### OFFICIAL SAW FIRE START

Earl Parker, WPA Supervisor of this district, said Tuesday that he saw the fire start. As he stepped into the foyer, he said, he noticed that the asphalt in the kettle was about to boil over, in spite of the fact that workmen were working frantically to bail enough of the liquid out to keep it from boiling over.

Mr. Parker said that he immediately instructed someone to call the Fire Department and turned back to assist with the boiling kettle. As he did so, the asphalt boiled over, the whole kettle becoming enveloped in flames in an instant.

The flames from the hot liquid—about 40 gallons, the official said—shot up into the subflooring of the second story with incredible speed, the whole space above the foyer becoming an inferno within a few seconds.

Water in the asphalt was given as a probable reason for its boiling over. It is believed that the container from which the asphalt was poured into the kettle had caught rain water during the night, the water and asphalt poured into the kettle shortly after the men started to work Tuesday morning. Approximately a half barrel of the "tar" had been poured before the fire occurred.

Mr. Parker said it was known that water and asphalt "will not mix". He said that when mixed, the asphalt takes on a great foaming quality, a little added water causing the kettle to boil over.

The asphalt is used in the armory construction as a base for the floors. Gravel is poured down on the ground; then the asphalt

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### Steel Girders Lose Temper, Sag



The two steel girders nearest the front of the armory lost their temper from the heat of the fire and sagged Tuesday morning, causing the brick walls on either side to crack and lean inward. The third girder was damaged until officials have seen fit to count it among the losses. Today props were constructed to prevent their falling and pulling the roof down.

(NewsKut by Brigman)

### Walls Smoked Badly From "Tar" Fire



Smoke from the burning asphalt and the heart-pine sleepers poured out through the windows, results of which are seen in the above picture. A great deal of injury occurred to the walls by smoke alone.