

The Semi-Week

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WILMINGTON N. C.

P. O. AFFAIRS

Alleged Irregularities Discussed in the Senate

SPIRITED DEBATE

The Debate Arose Over the Motion to Refer the Carmack Resolution, Which Calls for a Senatorial Investigation, to the Committee on Postoffices and Postroads—Several Senators Took Part in the Debate. The Democrats Claimed That the Country Would Not be Satisfied Unless a Thorough Investigation is Made.

Washington, January 6.—Alleged irregularities in the postoffice department consumed nearly all the time in the Senate today. The question came up on a motion first made by Mr. Lodge and afterwards by Mr. Penrose to refer the Carmack resolution looking to a senatorial investigation of the department to the committee on postoffices and post roads. The democratic Senators resisted the motion and contended that the country would not be satisfied with an investigation of a department made by the department itself. The debate continued for almost two and a half hours and was extremely spirited from start to finish.

Mr. Carmack resisted Mr. Lodge's motion, declaring that if departmental irregularities were to be investigated only by the department themselves it would not be long until there would be "a stench in the nostrils of the people." The only safeguard was in congressional investigation, he said.

Mr. Clay, expressed surprise that there should be opposition to the resolution and called attention to the declarations by Fourth Assistant Postmaster General Bristow and Counselors Bonaparte and Conrad that the investigation should be carried further. He declared that the Bristow report "demonstrates the absolute guilt of the late first assistant postmaster general, Mr. Heath. He (Bristow) says himself that this leading high official was guilty and the proof is overwhelming. If this is true, Mr. Heath should have been indicted. "I will do Mr. Bristow the credit to say that his report shows that frauds of postoffice department originated in Mr. Heath's office. If so he must have had cognizance of them. Then why should the subordinates in that office be indicted and the principal be allowed to escape?"

Reference also was made to the negotiations with D. S. Richardson concerning the Montague indicator in which Mr. Clay said there were many suspicious features pointing to Mr. Heath.

Mr. Clay declared his conviction from a thorough reading of the Bristow report that Mr. Bristow had been satisfied beyond a doubt that the guiltiest party of all was the retired first assistant postmaster general, yet he had never been indicted or arrested. "In the interest of fair play, in the interest of justice, in the interest of good government and clean administration" he said, "there should be an inquiry, and I am surprised that my friend the Senator from Massachusetts, (Mr. Lodge) should object."

Mr. Clay also declared that the President had reflected seriously upon Mr. Heath and had desired the retirement of Mr. Heath from the secretaryship of the Republican National convention.

Mr. Clay was careful to say that he intended no reflection upon Mr. Wynne, the present first assistant postmaster general. On the contrary, he took pains to speak in high terms of Mr. Wynne, saying that he had given material assistance to the department inquiry.

Mr. Carmack made a general plea for a senatorial inquiry and the reason given by him was the newspaper report to the effect that the postmaster general had not been in sympathy with the postoffice department inquiry when undertaken and that he had pronounced Tulloch charges to be "hot air."

The statement aroused Mr. Spooner, who said that the charge did great injustice to the postmaster general. So far as the Bristow inquiry was concerned Mr. Payne had been in thorough sympathy with it and had placed the entire machinery of the department at the command of the official who made this most remorseless inquiry.

Mr. Carmack repeated the report that Mr. Payne had referred to the Tulloch charges as "hot air" and Mr. Spooner replied that Mr. Payne had remained at his desk in this city day after day all last summer while the inquiry was in progress, notwithstanding he was in very poor health, devoting every energy to seeing that "the truth should be brought out and the department purged of every element of graft."

Mr. Carmack declared the irregular-

ities in the postoffice department had shown an inefficiency in the administration.

Mr. Spooner said there could not be any disputing the fact that inefficiency had been shown, and that it was begun in the Cleveland administration.

Mr. Gorman said he was willing to have all the resolutions calling for investigations of the postoffice department referred to the committee on postoffice and postroads as he had received assurances from the chairman that prompt action would be taken. In this connection, however, he said, he wanted to call attention to the fact that all of the debate on this subject had but emphasized the necessity for an investigation of the postoffice department. He said he had no desire to investigate any particular officer; that he believed the investigation should be much broader than that, as the irregularities had crept in by degrees and their corruption possibly had been a part of three or more administrations. It has now reached a point, where men who are corrupt themselves have disclosed the corruption of others "My purpose," he added, "is not so much to expose this corruption as by the action of Congress in making protective laws to eliminate the chance of such corruption in the future in the postoffice department."

Mr. Spooner asked if Mr. Gorman would not be willing to supplement that suggestion by calling upon congress for a thorough investigation of all departments at stated periods.

Mr. Gorman answered that he would be willing to make the change, but for the present he was content to deal with the question in hand. Continuing he declared that the corruption was not a party matter; that the present postmaster general could not have been responsible for the state of affairs in his department, as it started before he entered upon his duties at the head of the department.

A severe denunciation of the charge of suppression of information was made by Mr. Lodge, who said that he was thoroughly tired of that old weakened story which had been made over and over again by Senators on the other side of the chamber. He said it is quite true that the Republicans had nearly two-thirds of the members of the Senate and that he wanted to inform the other side that they were thoroughly responsible for their conduct of affairs and that as they were responsible they proposed to conduct their affairs in their own way. Continuing he said: "We are not afraid of day light; we are not afraid of the Senator from Maryland and least of all we are not afraid of that old time worn story of suppression of public information."

After some further colloquy between Messrs. Spooner and Teller over caucus control of party action in the Senate an agreement was reached to postpone further discussion of the postoffice question until Friday next and the Senate adjourned.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Washington, January 6.—The only measure considered in the House today was a bill introduced by the delegate from Hawaii to ratify an act of the Hawaiian legislature to authorize the manufacture and distribution of electric light and power on the island of Oahu, territory of Hawaii, which came up for consideration under call of committees. Owing to objections made to the bill in the form presented it was recommitted to the committee on territories. Reference was made by Mr. Robinson to the absence of Delegate Kathanianaole, saying the committee was embarrassed on that account.

CAPTAIN LEMLEY SUED

By Naval Officer for Arbitrary Conduct Toward Him.

Washington, January 6.—Robert Burton Rodney, paymaster with the rank of lieutenant commander on the retired list of the navy, today brought suit for \$50,000 damages against Captain Samuel C. Lemley, judge advocate general of the navy for alleged long continued "pecuniary and naval grade losses" and indignities. The complainant alleged that Captain Lemley has usurped practical supremacy in the navy department and is depriving the complainant of legal rights under his commission.

NO SUCCESSOR TO LONGSTREET.

Officer of Railroad Commissioner to be Abolished.

Washington, January 6.—Secretary Hitchcock, of the interior department has recommended to the President that the office of railroad commissioner held by the late General James Longstreet, be abolished. It seems probable now that the recommendation will be adopted and that no successor to General Longstreet will be appointed. For two years the interior department has made no estimate for the salary of railroad commissioner, the necessary appropriation for General Longstreet's salary of \$5,000 being made by congress on its own initiative. The duties of the office practically have been absorbed by the inter-state commerce commission.

Resigns Position With the Southern.

Columbia, S. C., January 6.—P. I. Wells, superintendent of the Savannah division of the Southern railway has resigned, effective January 31st or as soon before as he can be relieved. He has accepted the position of general manager of the Columbia Electric Street Railway Company, which was re-organized today. Mr. Welles has been superintendent of the Savannah division since September, 1895.

LACK OF CARE

Terrible Condition of Affairs Existed in the Theatre

NO PRECAUTIONS

By the Testimony of the Managers of the Iroquois it Was Shown That There Had Been no Provisions Made for Putting Out a Fire if One Occurred—None of the Employees Were Instructed What to Do if Fire Should Occur—Eleven of the Exits Were Locked on the Day of the Fire.

Chicago, January 6.—By their own evidence given today before Monroe Fulkerson, who is conducting the fire department investigation into the Iroquois theatre horror, the proprietors of the theatre showed that a worse condition of affairs existed than had heretofore been thought possible.

Will J. Davis, Harry J. Powers and Thomas J. Noonan, active managers of the Iroquois theatre, were examined by Mr. Fulkerson today. All of them pleaded ignorance of any precautions taken to prevent loss of life by fire at their theatre. They admitted failure to instruct employees in fighting fire, and failure even to provide suitable appliances, for use against the flames. Their statements were corroborated by the testimony of twenty employees of the theatre, none of whom had ever been told his duty in case of fire.

Noonan who is the working manager of the theatre under direction of Davis and Powers, admitted today that eleven of the theatre exits were locked and bolted. Two of these exits leading to the front of the theatre on the ground floor were locked, three additional exits on the north side of the ground floor were bolted, three exits on the north side of the theatre from the first balcony were bolted, and three exits on the north side of the second balcony were bolted.

The greatest loss of life from the fire was in the first and second balconies where hundreds of people were suffocated through the inability to get out or were trapped to death while trying to do so. Had these three exits in each balcony been available, according to Inspector Fulkerson thousands of life must have been greatly diminished.

Noonan declared that no person had been named by the theatre management to superintend the operation of the ventilators of the theatre in case of fire and that in consequence the flames had been permitted to sweep the place, instead of seeking a natural outlet through the stage roof. It was said by Noonan that George M. Dussanberry, the head usher, Archibald Bernard, chief electrician and the theatre engineer knew how to operate the ventilators. It was proved by the evidence of these men, however, that two of them never went upon the stage and that the other had never been told to assume charge of the ventilators in case of fire.

From figures obtained by Noonan today it became evident that almost one in three of the people who attended the matinee lost their lives, the percentage being a trifle over 31 per cent. The theatre seated 1,606 people and in addition to these 236 had been admitted after all these were sold, making a total of 1,862 people in the theatre of whom 591 were killed.

That the employees in the front of the house were thrown into a panic by the fire was shown by the testimony of all stage hands examined today. Two ushers, each sixteen years old, declared that they ran on the first alarm of fire and did not return to the theatre until the next day. The stage hands said they all sought safety on hearing that the place was on fire.

The formal inquest into the fire will begin tomorrow morning. The first witnesses called will probably be spectators who were in the theatre when the fire was discovered and after them the stage hands will testify.

DISPENSARY ON FIRE.

Several Barrels of Whiskey Burned. Licenses Revoked.

(Special to The Messenger.)

Wilson, N. C., January 6.—The Wilson dispensary caught fire this morning at 4 o'clock. Several barrels of whiskey were burned, besides considerable damage being done to the large stock of bottled goods on hand and to fixtures of the place. The loss will amount to about \$1,000, which is fully covered by insurance.

The origin of the fire is supposed to be incendiary, as what appeared to be burned tar was found by a trash pile in the room where the fire originated, and a window pane had been broken out of the front of the building.

Business continued as usual after a few hours interruption.

The county commissioners had a meeting yesterday at which they decided there should be no more license granted in Wilson county, and revoking those that had already been taken out. This action is considerably criticized by many, while it meets with the approval of others.

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