

The Wilmington Messenger

ALL IN BLACK

City of Chicago Wrapped in Gloom

OVER 500 DEAD

The Mayor Officially Asks That There be no New Year's Celebration on Account of the Horrible Disaster...

The fire started with an explosion, and in this they are flatly contradicted by scores of people in the audience...

received many offers of aid. It may be before we get through this a few persons will be found to have been put to need...

Messages of Condolence. Among the telegrams of condolence received during the day by the mayor were the following:

"Washington, D. C., Dec. 31, 1903. 'Hon. Carter H. Harrison, Mayor, Chicago, Ill. 'In common with all our people throughout this land, I extend to you, to the people of Chicago, my deepest sympathy...

"HENRY OF PRUSSIA." From E. S. Willard, the actor, London, was received the following: "Deepest sympathy with citizens mourning."

Telegrams of condolence were also received from Mayor Low, of New York; Mayor Collins, of Boston, and from dozens of the chief executives of cities between St. Louis and New York.

In addition to his proclamation issued during the afternoon suggesting that the usual New Year's festivities be abandoned, Mayor Harrison tonight made the announcement that all departments of the city hall will be closed on Saturday, January 2nd...

Chicago during the morning came the relatives of persons who were thought to have been killed or injured in the fire. The lobbies of the downtown hotels were scenes of many happy meetings, as well as anxious inquiries on the part of fathers, mothers and more distant relatives of people of whom no trace could be found...

Strikers Declare a Truce. Possibly nothing could better typify the breath of the sympathy which is felt for those who suffered directly by the calamity than the action of the striking livery drivers...

By a vote which was without a dissenting voice it was decided to establish a truce of ten days. President Albert Young, of the union, following the meeting, issued the following decree which was distributed broadcast:

"Owing to the great disaster to the public caused by the fire at the Iroquois theatre, I do hereby declare a truce in the present strike of undertakers and livery drivers for ten days, and do further request that every man now on strike report at once to their respective places of employment, and do everything in his power to assist his employer in caring for the wants of the public. Wages are to have no consideration. (Signed) 'ALBERT YOUNG.'"...

In their turn the employers issued a call to their striking employees to return to work, "irrespective of any previous affiliations with any and all organizations," and promising to protect them in all contingencies which may arise in the future.

A Virginia Girl Escapes. One of the most thrilling escapes was that of Miss Millie Overlook, of Virginia, a young girl who was visiting friends in the city. Miss Overlook's cousin, Remington Thomas made an heroic effort to escape with her, but after carrying her to the door where he placed her on her feet, the two became separated and Thomas is among the missing.

From early in the morning until late at night, crowds besieged the undertaking rooms and hospitals looking for the dead and injured. Policemen were detailed at all places where the dead and injured had been carried to restrain the anxious men and women who pressed in at the doorways and inquired for their lost friends and relatives.

In all the undertaking rooms the bodies were placed as far as possible upon cots and when these were exhausted, stretched in long lines upon the floors and a constant succession of pale faced men and fearful women passed slowly between the bodies, lifting the covering from the charred and bruised faces, and searching in the clothing of the dead for something by which their lost ones could be recognized.

While the crowds of anxious seekers for news besieged the different morgues, the telegraph and long distance telephone offices were almost swamped with the flood of inquiring messages. Messenger boys from the telegraph offices of the Postal and Western Union, carrying great bundles of messages and tonight the terrific rush of business was still on. Private wires of stock exchange and board of trade houses were likewise

loaded down with inquires and answers.

Six bushel baskets of valuables and trinkets of various descriptions were gathered by the police and firemen and turned over to the coroner. Among these were fully a dozen watches, and in every instance, the watches had stopped at 3:50 o'clock, the time when the fire broke out.

House Was Too Crowded.

There have been numerous reports, unauthenticated, however, that the aisles and passageways in the rear of the theatre were blocked by a crowd of people who occupied the standing room. The actual seating capacity of the theatre is 1,615. Will J. Davis, one of the proprietors of the theatre was asked if it was true that 500 people were standing in aisles and in rows back of the seats on each floor. Mr. Davis was plainly unstrung, but said he did not credit the statement. On Wednesday afternoon, after the fire, however, several of the ushers declared that at least 2,000 people were in the theatre.

James H. Strong, told tonight of his experience in attempting to force open one of the exits leading from the first balcony. When the party commenced, Mr. Strong led his party off toward an exit in the center of the balcony toward which he saw but few people hastening. On arriving at the door he found it locked. He smashed in the transom and climbed over on the other side and with the assistance of a carpenter tried to get the door open. They failed and the fire drove them out.

Loss Will Not Exceed \$20,000.

E. R. Welmore of the insurance firm which had placed the insurance on the Iroquois Theatre, declared tonight that the loss would not exceed \$20,000. He also asserted that the spread of the flames to the auditorium was due to the failure of the asbestos curtain to work properly.

Newport News, Va., December 31.—Miss Minnie Overlook of Middlesex county, Virginia, whose escape from the Iroquois Theatre was reported in today's Associated Press story from Chicago, is well known in society circles here.

She is the daughter of Mrs. Stewart Kellam, of Saluda, Middlesex county, Virginia. Before going to Chicago she wrote to her friend, Mrs. T. J. Chewing, of this city, that she would pay her a visit here before returning to her home in Middlesex. Miss Overlook was reported among the missing in Wednesday's night's report of the disaster and to this probably is due the erroneous report of her death appearing in Virginia afternoon papers today.

Richmond, Va., December 31.—M. B. Florshheim, of Richmond, had a narrow escape from death in the Iroquois Theatre fire. He left the building leaving behind his overcoat, hat and gloves. Mr. Florshheim is in Chicago on a visit to his mother, Mrs. Florshheim and his brother-in-law, J. Flegenheimer both of whom formerly lived in Richmond.

SEVEN MEN ARRESTED.

Charged With Accessory to Manslaughter in the Theatre Fire.

Chicago, December 31.—Seven employees of the Iroquois Theatre were arrested tonight on orders issued by Chief of Police O'Neill. The charge against them is at present that of being accessory to manslaughter. They will be held pending the verdict of the coroner's jury.

The men arrested are: William Calton, stage manager; Edward Cummings, stage carpenter; Frank J. Jandrow, R. M. Cummings, E. Engle, Thomas McQueen, S. J. Mazoni.

The last five are stage hands and scenery shifters. After being taken in custody by the police, four of the men told Chief O'Neill that they had been requested by people, connected with the theatre to leave the city. When asked who advised them to do this they at first refused to say, but later admitted that the advice was given by Assistant Stage Manager Plunkett. They say they were about to follow Plunkett's advice and all of them had packed their trunks and would have been out of the city had not the police arrested them.

Orders were issued tonight by Chief O'Neill to find other members of the company and theatre employees who were actual witnesses of the fire. This order will mean, the police say, that more than twenty arrests will be made in the morning, chiefly among the ballet dancers and members of the chorus.

According to Coroner Traeger, a large placard had been placed in the hotel where a large number of the company are stopping, ordering that all members of the company should be ready to leave upon short notice. Believing that this was a move to keep witnesses from testifying before the coroner's jury the arrests were decided upon.

No War Talk Nor Excitement.

Moscow, December 31.—The imposition of war risks today by the insurance companies on shipments hence to the Far East was the first local intimation that Russo-Japanese hostilities were considered within the bonds of possibility. There is no war talk, however, nor excitement.

No New Developments.

St. Petersburg, December 31.—The foreign office declares nothing has yet been decided regarding Russia's reply to Japan. Mr. Krino the Japanese minister here, has been conferring actively with Foreign Minister Lansdorf, notwithstanding the fact that the Japanese official is suffering severely from a cold and from lumbago.

PLACE BLAME

Coroners Jury Will Fully Investigate Cause of Fire

SINGLE VERDICT

Will be Rendered and This Will Cover all the Cases—The Jurors Visit the Morgues, Examining the Charred Bodies and Then Are Taken Through the Theatre—It Was Generally Remarked That the Protection Against Fire Was Inadequate.

Chicago, December 31.—With the announcement that one jury of representatives citizens would listen to all the evidence regarding the Iroquois Theatre fire and return a single verdict for all the victims, Coroner Traeger today promptly enpanelled a jury.

"If any persons are responsible for this fire," said Coroner Traeger, "they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. The investigation of the fire will be thorough. We will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to fix the responsibility."

The coroner's jury is as follows: L. H. Meyer, secretary of the Kennedy Furniture Company; Dr. Eger Byrnes, salesman for Lyon and Healy; Walter Clingan, salesman for the Tobey Furniture Company; Joseph A. Cummings, manager of Browning, King and Company; Geo. W. Atkins, credit man for Marshallfield and Company; John W. Finn, salesman for A. H. Revell and Company.

Continued sight of dead bodies lying huddled on the floors and tables of the various city morgues proved too much for some of the jurors. Several of the members of the jury objected to being forced to view the bodies, and one juror, Joseph Cummings, practically collapsed at Rolstone's morgue, where the jury was forced to step over the dead bodies in their tour of inspection.

Coroner Traeger tonight conducted an informal inquiry into the cause of the fire. His first witness was William C. Sellers, the fireman employed at the theatre. Sellers did not know just how the fire began, but said he saw it shortly after it broke out. He threw extinguishers on the blaze, but without effect. He tried to pull down the drop curtain or to tear loose that portion of it which was blazing, but without success. The fire then spread with such great rapidity that he was unable to do more. Other witnesses were examined and after they had been heard Assistant State's Attorney A. A. Herer, who was present, said: "It seems agreed that the asbestos curtain was dropped, but that it went only to within fourteen or fifteen feet of the stage floor. People on the stage opened the door leading from the stage to the street on the west side of the theatre and this created a strong draft. The draft blew the curtain out toward the audience. This held the curtain so tightly that all attempts to lower it further were fruitless."

This evening the coroner's jury, which had spent the day in visiting the various morgues, was taken by Coroner Traeger to the theatre. The jury first went to the stage and Deputy Coroner Buckley pointed out the spot where the fire was discovered. The seats in the first ten rows on the first floor were burned, but back of that the orchestra were in good condition.

The members of the jury while engaged in inspecting the stage, frequently remarked that the protection against fire seemed to them to have been inadequate.

The jury then climbed the stairway leading to the first balcony. Here the plush covering of the seats was found to be burned on every seat from wall to wall and from the front row of the balcony to the last. An inspection was made of the exits leading to the fire escapes at the north end of the building. "These doors are much too small; they should have been three times as large," said Juror Finn.

The iron doors were closed and locked and it was then seen that the inner doors were so close to the steel shutters that they could not be opened with the shutters fastened. This exit is not sufficiently high for an ordinary sized man to walk through without stooping and when the jurors learned this fact by personal experience there was considerable comment among them. The jury then ascended to the top gallery, where the greatest loss of life occurred.

Coroner Traeger pointed to the balcony rail which was bent in several places and said that a number of spectators had jumped through these openings to the lower floor. An inspection was then made of the exits leading to the fire escapes and the jurors were told that the bodies of the dead were piled ten feet high in front of these doors when the

police reached the scene after the fire.

"If these doors were locked somebody was criminally negligent," said Juror Finn. "The exits are too small anyway," said Foreman Meyer, as he measured the doors leading to the fire escape.

In both balconies there were hundreds of gawesome relics of the catastrophe, scattered between the seats where they had been dropped by the terrified victims. There were a score or more of rubbers, muffs, handkerchiefs, gloves, children's woolen-hoods and mittens. Under one seat was found a tiny doll which had evidently been taken to the theatre by a little girl. The jurors were deeply affected by the sight as they sorted over the relics of the disaster.

At the conclusion of the inspection of the theatre it was decided to continue the inquest until next Thursday morning at 9 o'clock.

REDUCE THE WORK HOURS.

Cotton Spinners in England Resolve to Curtail Production.

Manchester, Eng., December 31.—A meeting of the committee of the federation of master cotton spinners today recommended that the mills should work 40 hours per week, instead of 55 1-2.

The resolution declared that if the movement were to be successful in defeating the operations of speculators every section of the trade must join in.

The committee also adopted a resolution calling a special meeting January 4th, to consider the following questions: "First. Can the trade be carried on without paper contracts? Second. The best possible to obtain from the American cotton fields a sufficient, reliable supply for the Lancashire trade."

It was announced that a joint conference of the members of the United States had been called to meet in Washington, and that the Manchester federation had been invited to send a representative.

MISSIONS AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS

Plans by the Baptists for Vigorous Prosecution of the Work.

(Special to the Messenger.)

Raleigh, N. C., December 31.—The mission board of the Baptist State convention met here this evening, John E. Ray, being chairman. It is composed of forty representatives from the state at large and one from each of the fifty-nine associations. This is the most important meeting the board holds during the year. The work is enlarged. Last year it was on a basis of twenty-five thousand dollars. This year on a thirty thousand dollar basis and this was apportioned tonight.

Plans were put on foot in Charlotte at the recent convention for a vigorous prosecution of Sunday school work. The Sunday school committee will employ a Sunday school missionary to give entire time to this interest, organize new schools, hold rallies, in order to create interest in work and also hold institutes.

The outlook before the denomination is found to be brighter than ever before.

TWO DISTRICTS CONSOLIDATED.

Eastern and Western Districts of Southern Ry. Become One.

(Special to The Messenger.)

Greensboro, N. C., December 31.—It is announced here that the eastern and western districts of the Southern Railway have been consolidated, C. S. McManus the present general superintendent of the western district office at Birmingham, Ala., becomes the superintendent. The general offices will be transferred to Atlanta. S. J. Collins general superintendent of the eastern district, offices at Greensboro retire. The news created surprise and regret here and a large force of office men and women lose employment unless work is provided elsewhere.

AN ACCIDENTAL KILLING.

Fargo Squiers Mortally Wounded by a Chaffeur in His Father's Employ.

Havana, December 31.—Fargo Squiers, the eldest son of United States Minister Squiers, was accidentally shot and mortally wounded today by Gaston Michaud, a chaffeur, employed by his father. Young Squiers and several servants were shooting at a target in the coach house of the minister's residence in the suburb of Marianao at the time. They were using 22 calibre rifles, and one of them apparently got out of order. Michaud, after examining the weapon re-cocked it when suddenly it was discharged in the direction of Squiers, who was standing between Michaud and the target. The ball penetrated the young man's left lung. A hemorrhage ensued and within half an hour Squiers died.

Secretary Sleeper, who was in charge of the legation, sent a cable dispatch to Minister Squiers at Washington and one to Mrs. Squiers at Katonah, N. Y., informing them of the accident. The body will be sent home.

Fargo Squiers was popular here. He was twenty years old, and prior to last summer was a student at a military academy in Virginia.

Michaud is distracted at the consequence of his carelessness. It has been decided that as the accident occurred on the premises of the United States minister there will be no investigation of the shooting.

Chicago, December 31.—At midnight 471 dead had been identified, the injuries of 174 persons had received attention and 387 were still reported missing. As only about 80 bodies were still unidentified, many of the men, women and children who were reported to the police as missing last night and this morning have, doubtless, been covered from their fright and returned to their homes.

Chicago, December 31.—For the first time since Chicago has possessed bells to peal, whistles to shriek, and horns to blow, the old year was allowed silently to take its place in history and the new year permitted to come with no evidence of joy at its birth.

In an official proclamation issued this afternoon by Mayor Carter H. Harrison, he made the suggestion that the usual new year's eve celebration be for this time omitted. The idea found a ready response in the hearts of the people and the mayor's words in fact only gave utterance to the unexpressed thoughts that had filled them all.

Ordinarily on new years eve, the streets of the city are filled with merry makers, but tonight the only throngs to be found were those around the morgues, ordinarily, numbers of fashionable restaurants in the heart of the city are filled with light hearted revellers who toast the year that passed and hail the year that comes. Tonight these places were comparatively deserted, and some of them closed entirely, with doors locked and curtains drawn. Usually among these gay people are found many members of the theatrical profession. Tonight but a single one of them was in evidence.

The List of Dead.

The list of dead continuing as it was given last night, in the neighborhood of 500. It is generally accepted at this time that the most accurate estimate is 564. This number will be increased somewhat as there are people in the hospitals who do not survive for any length of time. It is believed, however, that the total number of dead will not in any event exceed 575. Including the missing, it is estimated that the total number of casualties at the present time is approximately 1,000.

There are among the missing the names of many who are at their homes and of some who were not at the theatre at all. In the first excitement following the calamity these were reported by their relatives as among the missing and numbers of them have since returned to their homes and no report of this fact has been made to police headquarters. Their names, however, still swell the list of the missing. When the names of the dead which are still to be identified are subtracted from the list of missing it is probable that the extent of the catastrophe will be fully revealed.

Cause of the Fire.

There was animated discussion today among firemen, employees of the theatre and architects as to the cause of the fire. Accounts differ today as widely as they varied last night. The theatrical people are practically a unit in declaring that