

EVERY THEATRE IS CLOSED \$100,000 FIRE FIND GUILTY WAR SEEMS ALMOST CERTAIN

Mayor Harrison Will Require Compliance With all the Ordinances

SECRET OF THE FIRE DISCOVERED

The Theatre Managers Made a Vain Effort to Secure a Postponement of the Order Which Compelled Them to Close Up—Certain Provisions That Every Play House Must Comply With Before They Can Open—An Estimate is Made That Over \$100,000 Worth of Diamonds, Jewelry and Other Personal Property Was Lost in the Fire.

Chicago, January 2.—Tonight every theatre in the city of Chicago is dark and with doors locked. Not one of them will be opened to the public until their managers have complied in the fullest manner with every section of the ordinances regulating playhouses.

The order compelling the theatres to close was issued this afternoon by Mayor Harrison after a conference with Corporation Counsel Tolman, who assured the mayor that ample legal ground existed for his action.

Seventeen theatres and museums were closed last night and the sweeping order of the mayor today shut the doors of sixteen more. These last are the leading theatres in the business section of the city and are the Studebaker, Grand Opera House, Bush Temple, Calumet, Cleveland, Great Northern, Hay Market, Hopkins People's Institute, Trocadero and Columbus, McVickers, LaSalle, Garrick, Illinois, Powers. The last 2 are owned and controlled by Messrs. Powers, E. Davis, the managers of the ill-fated Iroquois. The Garrick closed today is not to be confounded with the Garrick theatre closed yesterday, it being one of the largest playhouses in the city, while the one concerning which action was taken yesterday is a much smaller affair in the northwestern portion of the city.

The seventeen places of amusement which were shut last night were closed for the one reason that they were not provided with an asbestos curtain. The further action taken today is in consequence of violations of other sections of the ordinance regulating theatres.

There was a hasty rush of theatrical managers to the office of Mayor Harrison in the effort to secure the withdrawal, or at least a postponement of the order, but their reception was of an exceedingly frosty nature.

They were informed by the mayor that the inspectors had reported in the case of every one of the violations of the law and he was determined that it should not be said hereafter that the city had neglected anything which could prevent a repetition of the horror of last Wednesday afternoon.

The fact that the asbestos curtain in the Iroquois theatre was so badly wrecked by the fire that charred portions of it have been carried away by various investigating committees caused the mayor to decide that asbestos curtains could not be relied upon to afford the most complete protection. It was announced that every theatre in the city must hereafter comply with the following provisions before they will be allowed to open:

Steel roll curtains, wide exits, no combustible of any kind in the house furnishings, fire proof scenery, no calcium or "spot" lights to be used on the stage, skylights above the stage provided with automatic lids to permit the egress of smoke, fire and gas; separate stairways—each exit having its own means of egress.

After issuing his sweeping order, Mayor Harrison said:

"I do not wish to assume responsibility for these theatres. My order was issued to make it certain that no precaution to insure the safety of audiences had been neglected. It is quite probable that the owners of the theatres may sustain serious financial loss, but in view of the conditions of the play houses we cannot take any risk, and if the law had been fully complied with in the first place there would have been no question of closing them now. The Auditorium, which is the only theatre left open in Chicago, has a steel roll curtain, and as this seems to be the only certain that affords absolute protection against fire, in view of the fact that the Iroquois curtain was so badly wrecked, I have determined that it is possible to see that the other play houses are similarly provided."

It is a noteworthy fact that Building Commissioner Williams who is now charged with manslaughter, in connection with the greatest fire horror the country has ever experienced, owes his appointment to a tragedy of similar nature, but of much less extent, which occurred two years ago. Mr. Williams' predecessor vacated his office after the burning of the St. Luke's sanitarium at 20th street and Washburn avenue. This was the institution in which a score of men suffering from delirium tremens were

burned to death while strapped to their beds. Mr. Williams was selected with the idea that he was the proper man to see that no such catastrophe could happen again.

Fire Inspector Monroe Fulkerson tonight announced that he had finally discovered the secret of the fire. The asbestos curtain upon which the safety of the audience depended was, according to Mr. Fulkerson, blocked in its descent by a steel reflector, carelessly left open by a stage hand. While one end of the curtain got within five feet of the stage, the other was suspended twenty feet above it, beneath it swept the flood of flame that carried death to so many hundreds.

The first step toward a definite conclusion as to the cause of the fire was made when William McCullen, operator of the "spot" light threw the blame upon another electric light nearby. The task was completed when Mr. Fulkerson followed up a clue furnished by John A. Mazzoni, a stage hand, and discovered the deadly reflector still open in the ruins of the theatre. The wire used in the aerial ballet, mentioned as a possible cause of the curtains failure to reach the stage, was proven to have been out of the way of the curtain as it descended.

On each side of the proscenium arch at the theatre, was a metallic reflector, conclave in form, 20 feet long and studded throughout its entire length with incandescent lights. Normally these lights fitted into niches in the masonry, but when in use were swung out in order that the lights might be thrown upon the performers upon the stage. Their greatest width when opened, was fourteen inches. When both reflectors were in place the fire curtain had no impediment in its course, but with either swung outward the descending curtain could not get below the reflectors top. Carelessness of some employe, whose identity will be the effort of the police to ascertain tomorrow, resulted in the combination of the open reflector and falling curtain, which lost nearly 600 lives.

Mozzoni who was employed as a scene shifter was one of the first of the stage hands to be placed under arrest. After he released this afternoon on bond of \$50,000, he disclosed the truth of the misplaced reflector to Fire Inspector Fulkerson.

"I stood near the switchboard from which the fire started, said Mozzoni, when I saw the flames shooting up from the drapery near the lamps. The wire curtain was coming down as I stood by, and almost at the same time I saw that the second was lower than the other. I looked close and I could see that it was caught. I ran up on the bridge on the north side to get the curtain free, but failed. When I looked again, a few seconds later a great sheet of flame was darting under the curtain and into the faces of the people."

Inspector Fulkerson taking witnesses with him, at once went to the theatre where he found that although the flames had whirled the asbestos curtain into sheds, the reflector which had blocked its descent was still in the position stand by Mozzoni.

From the large number of complaints received of the loss of personal effects from the bodies of the fire victims, coroner's office, clerk's estimate that \$100,000 worth of diamonds, watches, jewelry, furs and other property was lost in the fire. Many of the victims had money in their possession which could not be found when the bodies were examined at the morgues. Much of the property of value was undoubtedly lost. A large amount may have been stolen by ghouls. The largest amount pinned to the garments of a woman of currency recovered was \$405, found Superintendent of Street Cleaning Solon and a force of men went to the Iroquois theatre today with instructions to clean it most thoroughly. As the men set to work they examined every scrap for jewels, articles of clothing and trinkets. The order was issued after City Custodian DeWitt C. Creigler had found a diamond pin holding a stone as large as a pea, and valued at \$500. Mr. Creigler added the gem to the collection of effects displayed for purposes of identification.

Mayor Harrison today received a letter from Coroner Traeger suggesting that a public funeral be held in the near future of the unidentified dead. The mayor agreed heartily with the suggestion.

It also proposed to build a monument by popular subscription in honor of the unidentified dead. This suggestion came from Coroner Traeger and was approved by Mayor Harrison.

The number of dead is now definitely known to be 587. Of those 575 have been identified. The remaining twelve bodies were tonight upon order of the coroner removed to the county morgue where they will be kept hereafter.

Most of the State colleges and schools will reopen this week for the spring term, after the holidays. Wilmington's contingent of college boys and girls will begin leaving today and by the end of the week all of them will have returned to their work.

A Terrible Conflagration Visited Wilson this Morning

TOBACCO LOST

About a Quarter of a Million Pounds Were Burned—In all About 12 Buildings Were Burned, all of them Being Completely Destroyed—The Fire Department Fought Valiantly. But it Was Several Hours Before the Flames Were Gotten Under Control—The Loss is Partially Insured.

A telephone message at 7 o'clock this morning from Wilson to The Messenger brought the information that a terrible fire was raging in the heart of the business section of the city and was threatening to do extensive damage. The estimated loss at that time, when four large buildings had been burned was \$60,000. After two o'clock another message was received stating that the flames were under control, but much more damage had resulted and the total loss will probably reach \$100,000. Before the Rocky Mount fire company, which had been appealed to for aid, could respond, the fire was under control and the request was countermanded.

The fire started in Cooper and Watson's warehouse at 11:45 p. m. and the building was totally destroyed. About 30,000 pounds of tobacco was stored in the building. The flames spread from the warehouse to an adjoining three-story brick building belonging to the W. J. Batts estate. This building was also totally destroyed. The first floor of the building was occupied by Webb's saloon, but the second and third stories were unoccupied.

The Batts' building being a tall structure caused the flames to leap across the street, setting fire to the Centre Warehouse, occupied by Cozart, Cogges and Carr. About 30,000 pounds of tobacco was also stored in this building, which was totally destroyed.

Another warehouse belonging to Woodard and Jones was also totally destroyed. The building belonging to the Batts' estate and the Centre Warehouse were both brick buildings. The other warehouses were two story frame buildings.

It was pouring down rain in Wilson last night, but still the fire companies were unable to get the fire under control.

The total amount of insurance carried on the different buildings could not be learned last night. Cooper and Watson had \$4,500 on their warehouse, but this will not cover the loss.

LATER NEWS.

It was learned at 2:15 a. m. that eight other buildings had been destroyed, but at that time the fire was under control.

The other buildings burned were: A one story brick building owned by W. H. Morris, and occupied by Lewis and Cooper's bar room. One story brick building owned by W. H. Morris and occupied by Hayes and Son, groceries.

Two story brick livery stable, building owned by J. P. Wiggins and livery business by John G. Moore.

Two story brick livery stable, building owned by J. P. Wiggins and livery business by W. T. Cork.

Two story frame building owned by J. P. Wiggins and occupied by Young and Hargrove's blacksmith shop.

One story frame building owned by F. A. Woodard and used as a restaurant.

One story frame building owned by F. A. Woodard and occupied by Mr. T. Davis' saloon.

Ten pin alley owned by F. A. Woodard, run by John Brogdon.

Two story frame livery stable owned and occupied by Edwards Brothers.

All of the above buildings were totally destroyed.

A telegram was sent to Rocky Mount asking for assistance, but at 2 o'clock the Rocky Mount company had not started, so the request was countermanded.

In less than two hours and a half more than one hundred thousand dollars worth of property was destroyed. This is a very conservative estimate of the loss, many thinking that it will exceed this sum.

About a quarter of a million pounds of tobacco was burned. Two horses were burned at Cooper and Watson's warehouse.

The firemen, assisted by hundreds of the citizens, fought the flames heroically. The fire would rage fiercely on one side of the street for awhile and then sweep across to the opposite side.

Formal Proceedings to Fix Blame for the Iroquois Fire

MANY ARRESTS

Proceedings Against Managers Davis and Powers Were Brought on Complaint of Mr. Hall, Whose Family Perished in the Flames—Twenty Men Arrested in Connection With the Fire Were Also Arraigned—All the Hearings Were Postponed for a Few Days and Heavy Bonds Placed Over the Defendants.

Chicago, January 2.—Formally charged with manslaughter, Managers Will J. Davis and Harry J. Powers, of the Iroquois theatre, with City Building Commissioner Williams were today held under bonds of \$10,000 each. Arthur E. Hall, whose family perished in the theatre fire and who was the complainant, was present, when the two theatre managers and the city officials underwent the ordeal of facing the charges.

The hearing of the case was set for January 12. The arraignment took place at the home of Justice Underwood, where the accused presented themselves accompanied by Counsel. An officer read the warrants. The bonds, however, were quickly read and the defendants were released until the day set for arraignment in court.

"This is not a vindictive proceeding," announced the complainant's attorney, "and we feel disposed to refrain from causing any one any unnecessary annoyance. In view of the investigation now being carried on by the authorities we feel that this proceeding can be properly continued."

"The purpose of this proceeding is, first, to place these men under bonds and to hold them by means of legal process. Secondly, Mr. Hall desires to spur the authorities to a complete investigation of the catastrophe. In the third place, if the official investigation is side tracked into small fry this proceeding will reach the persons who occupy the position of the Keystone of the whole affair. It appeared to my client to be a mockery to arrest stage carpenters and men and women in a minor capacity, while others who occupied much more prominent positions were allowed to go free. He feels that the responsibility ought to be fixed upon who ever is guilty."

"On behalf of Davis and Powers, I will say that they are going to meet the issue squarely," said the defendants' attorney. "Both have a clear conscience in this proceeding and intend to act their part as men should."

This ended the proceedings for the present. Twenty men arrested in connection with the Iroquois theatre tragedy were arraigned before Justice Caverly in the Harrison street police court today on a charge of manslaughter. Five of the defendants were members of the chorus of the "Mr. Blue Beard" Company and were defended by Attorney Thomas Hogan. No testimony was given in court and it was immediately agreed that a continuance be granted. Most of the time was devoted to an effort of the attorney to have the bonds of his clients reduced from the \$5,000 in which they had been held. In the end the bonds in each case were reduced to \$1,000 and the cases placed on the calendar for hearing January 11th.

Attorney Hogan told the magistrate that his clients had nothing to do with the management, construction or handling of the scenery. He said they continued singing even after the audience became panic stricken in a vain effort to allay the fear of the frightened audience.

The other defendants will have a hearing before Justice Caverly Monday. Their bonds were placed at \$5,000 each.

Death of General Longstreet.

Atlanta, Ga., January 2.—General James Longstreet, soldier, statesman and diplomat, and the last lieutenant general of the Confederate army with the exception of General Gordon, died in Gainesville, Ga., this afternoon at 6 o'clock from an attack of acute pneumonia. He had been ill two days.

General Longstreet was a sufferer from cancer of one eye, but his general health had been good until Wednesday, when he was seized with a sudden cold, developing later into pneumonia of violent nature. He was 84 years old. He is survived by his wife, four sons and a daughter. He will be buried in Gainesville, which has been his home since the civil war.

In St. Petersburg the Situation is Regarded as Very Serious

THE RUSSIAN REPLY NOT YET SENT

MORE IRREGULARITIES.

Accounts of Inter-State Commerce Commission to be Investigated.

Washington, January 2.—Treasury Department experts today instituted an investigation of the accounts of the Inter-State Commerce Commission. The action is taken at the instance of Acting Chairman Clements of the commission, as a result of persistent rumors of irregularities in the drawing of vouchers, etc. When the expert accountants, Nathaniel M. Ambrose and Richard H. Taylor, and James L. Chase, the latter of the office of the auditor for the State and other departments, reached the commission today, they sealed the safe and examined Secretary Edward A. Moseley, H. S. Milstead, the cashier, and other employees. Milstead has not been suspended.

Acting Chairman Clements stated today that he did not know that anything was wrong, but that the rumors had become so persistent that they could no longer be ignored, and the Treasury department was therefore asked to take charge of the accounts. Mr. Moseley is under \$25,000 as disbursing officer.

It is understood that the rumors include allegations of payments made for service at one place, while the payee was engaged elsewhere and similar irregular methods. The investigation will be thorough and every phase of the accounting work of the commission will be thoroughly overhauled. The commission handles about \$275,000 annually, the bulk of this being for salaries, traveling expenses, supplies, etc. The payments are by warrants, drawn on the treasury. H. S. Milstead performs the duties of cashier, but Edward A. Moseley, the Secretary of the commission is in charge of all the accounting work. Acting Commissioner Clements, who is head of the commission in the absence of Chairman Knapp, in New York city, said that he did not regard the situation as startling and that he did not believe any wrongful conduct should be found, but that it was the unanimous opinion of the commission that the rumors should be inquired into by experts to ascertain the exact facts.

A PLEASANT RECEPTION.

Mrs. Hunter Smith Entertains in Honor of a New Orleans Lady—Other Fayetteville News.

(Special to The Messenger.) Fayetteville, January 2.—Mr. J. A. King, the prominent Gillespie street

carriage and harness dealer, who has been for some days in the Marsh-Highsmith hospital, was today discharged and is getting on well, and will be spared the amputation of his foot.

Yesterday afternoon, at her residence on Green street, Mrs. Hunter G. Smith gave a charming reception to a few friends, complimentary to Mrs. John C. Gorham, of New Orleans. The cards were received at the door by Misses Alice Haigh Underwood and Mary Anna Drake, and the guests were greeted in the hall by Mrs. Hunter G. Smith and Miss Lillian Stocomb. In the drawing room received Mesdames J. C. Gorham, H. M. Pemberton, W. E. Kyle, J. C. McDiarmid, B. C. Gorham, L. C. Vayten, H. W. P. Robinson, M. J. Pemberton, E. Williams. The guests were conducted to the punch room by Mesdames W. Frank Blount and S. H. Strange, where Miss Lina Pemberton served delicious fruit punch in the center of the room. Evergreens through the boughs of which filtered the ruddy glow of crimson lights. In the dining room presided Misses Fannie Williams, Mary McNeill, Rosie Dodd and Eloise McDiarmid, where in the center of the room a few friends, complimentary to Mrs. John C. Gorham, of New Orleans. 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