

WASHINGTON NEWS.

Records Saved—Lives Lost. The Treasury to Be Cleaned.

WASHINGTON, June 11, 1893.—If the Congress of the United States were liable to criminal indictment it would have to stand trial on the charge of murder in the first degree for having killed the 22 employes of the Surgeon General's office who lost their lives by the falling of the floors of Ford's old theatre, last Friday, a catastrophe which can never be forgotten by any at the time in Washington, and which still is the leading topic of conversation wherever one goes. In addition to the 22 men killed outright there were 68 injured, a number of whom may die, and many of whom will be permanently crippled. Congress cannot claim in extenuation that it did not know the condition of this building, because its condition had been repeatedly called to its attention, and it actually appropriated money some six or eight years ago to erect a new building to contain the Army Medical Museum and library which had been in this building. Just think for a moment what damning evidence is given by this action. Congress erects another building because this isn't safe enough for the museum and library with their comparatively few attendants to remain in, and then allows 500 clerks to be crowded into the unsafe building. Had a private employer been guilty of this crime he could have been legally executed for murder; but Congress—well, the families of the dead and crippled, who are now being aided by private contributions, can spend the remainder of their lives in asking Congress to recompense them for their lost breadwinners. Meanwhile there are half a dozen buildings in Washington containing many times the number of Government employes who were in the collapsed building that are known to be equally dangerous, among them the Government Printing Office, with its nearly 3,000 employes; the Patent Office, the annex to the Post Office department and the Winder building, where a large branch of the War department is quartered.

An attempt is being made by an army court of inquiry to locate the personal responsibility for the disaster at this old death trap, if there be any, and a coroner's jury is also at work with the same end in view. It is said that the direct cause of the accident was an excavation which was being made for purpose of putting in new boilers. This may be true, but even if it is, that furnishes no excuse for Congress for having allowed a building which was officially condemned twenty-seven years ago to be occupied by 500 Government employes. In consequence of the accident there is a feeling of excitement among those employed in the other buildings that are known to be unsafe. Secretary Smith is trying to allay this excitement in the Patent Office by having all the heavy stuff stored on the upper floors of that building transferred to the ground floor.

President Cleveland was one of the first contributors to the fund that is being raised for the help of the families of the clerks that were killed and wounded; he also directed that all flags on the public buildings be half masted for the dead clerks, an honor never before paid to any except high officials or ex-officials.

The number of appointments during the past week was unusually large, particularly in the consular service, but the new Government printer has not been named, although it is daily expected that he will be.

There are indications that Secretary Carlisle has in view a complete reorganization of the immense clerical force of the Treasury department. He has addressed a circular letter to all of the heads of bureaus directing them to prepare and send to him not later than the 25th inst. a list of all employes under them, showing age, number of years employed, those who entered the service under the civil service law of 1883; those who have wives, husbands, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters or other relatives employed in any branch of the Government; those employed as clerks or otherwise, with compensation exceeding \$840 a year, who are doing work that properly belongs to messengers, assistant messengers and laborers; and those who are doing clerical work but are on the rolls as messengers, assistant messengers or laborers. This has raised a commotion in the department, and no wonder, for the information, if correctly given, and there is no doubt about that, is bound to lead to a grand shake-up and a large number of dismissals. In taking this step Sec. Carlisle has set another good example for the heads of all the other departments. A grand shake-up all round will be beneficial to the country as well as to the democratic party.

GENERAL NEWS.

Gov. McKinley has been renominated for Governor of Ohio.

The new cable cars are very popular in New York, on the Broadway line.

One bank in Illinois, two in Wisconsin, and an iron house in Delaware failed June 8th.

A rumor prevails that \$2,000,000 in treasure, buried by Emperor Maximilian, has been found in Mexico.

The investigation into the cause of the disaster at Washington, so far seriously implicates Col. Ainsworth, U. S. A.

The World's telegraphic interviews with Congressmen show an overwhelming disposition to repeal the Sherman Bill.

The Fargo (N. D.) fire destroyed half the city, cost six lives, and three millions' worth of property, and left three thousand people homeless.

A lot of the firemen at Waco, Texas, have confessed that they set a good many buildings on fire so that the city would buy new fire engines and increase their force.

Who says Mr. Cleveland is any respecter of persons? He has just appointed a millionaire chief of the Bureau of Statistics in the Treasury Department, a Mr. Worthington Ford, of Brooklyn, N. Y.

RIOTOUS STRIKERS KILLED.

Eight Bodies Found; Possibly More were Shot Down—A Large Number Wounded.

CHICAGO, June 9.—A pitched battle took place this afternoon between strikers and employees of the contractors on the drainage canal at Romeo. Some of the strikers came down from Lamont and others came from the north. They at once began firing on the contractors and their men.

Those who came from the north drove off the men on section 10. The men retired fighting, but had gone only a short distance when they were set upon by another division of the strikers and a number of men were killed and many more wounded. There were about twenty-five wounded, all of them strikers. Some of the men were frightfully wounded and it is probable that many of them will die.

Of the men employed on the drainage canal, about 100 negroes in the employ of Contractors Edward Loecker, Smith & Jackson, King Brothers, and John McCormack refused to join the strikers. This morning they were armed with shotguns, Winchesters, and revolvers and told to protect themselves.

Lookouts with powerful field glasses were stationed in towers to give the warning of the approach of the strikers.

When the party from the north came in sight about noon they were surprised to be met with a fusillade from the men at work. They deny firing a shot or making any hostile demonstration.

At the first fire they started to run. The negroes gave pursuit, and seventeen of the strikers were captured and imprisoned in a box car, in which they were afterward conveyed to Joliet.

When the party from Lamont approached the camp from the south an hour later, the lookouts gave notice to the negroes who were placed by the men in charge at various points of vantage on the summit of the huge piles of rock which surround the camp.

The strikers approached, unconscious of the reception in store for them. When about 600 feet from the camp a whistle was sounded. This was the signal for the negroes to fire.

Many fell at the first fire, while those uninjured started to flee. They were almost surrounded, however, and as the firing continued they became thoroughly bewildered.

At last an avenue of escape was discovered, and then began the race for life. The negroes gave pursuit, firing as they ran, bringing down a striker every few rods. For a mile and a half the chase was kept up.

Two of the wounded strikers were seen to fall into the canal. Others died where they fell in the roadway.—[N. Y. Sun.

Salisbury went wet by 155 majority out of 467 votes.

A TERRIBLE DISASTER.

THE COLLAPSE OF A GOVERNMENT BUILDING IN WASHINGTON.

Fall of the Old Ford Theatre—Over 500 People in the Building—Twenty-One Persons Killed and Many Injured.

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 9.—Another tragedy, less national in character but involving the loss of many more lives and much more human suffering, has stained the walls of the old Ford's Theatre, Washington, where Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by J. Wilkes Booth in April, 1865, and the horrors of the scene were by no means lessened by the knowledge that a blunder—surely in this case almost "worse than crime"—had caused the death of from twenty to thirty persons at least, and inflicted injuries upon fifty or sixty more.

Evidence as found in the official records appears conclusive that as long ago as 1885 this building, which the Government purchased after Lincoln's assassination, and used as an army museum, was officially proclaimed by Congress an unsafe depository for even inanimate skeletons, mummies and books of the Army Medical Museum, for which a safer place of storage was provided by act of Congress. So the comforting official assurance is given that while thirty clerks may have been killed, the pension records are all saved and uninjured. The building collapsed in the midst of an illjudged effort to remedy some of its defects.

There were 475 persons, mostly Government clerks, employed in the building, and nearly all of these were at work when the building fell. Excavation for an electric light plant was being made in the cellar of the structure—a three story affair—and, according to the best information obtainable, the workmen this morning had dug beneath the foundation supports in front of the building, weakening them to such an extent that the walls gave way before they could be jacked.

The explanation of the cause for the accident is the only one advanced, but it seems somewhat strange, in view of the fact that the top floor gave way first. Men who were in the building say the crash came without warning. Those on the top floor were suddenly precipitated to the floor below, and the weight of falling timber and furniture carried the second and first floors with it. Fortunately only the forward half of the floors gave way. The outer edges of the floors and the rear part of the structure remained intact. The walls did not fall.

The general fire alarm was turned in a few minutes after the crash, and then all the ambulances in the city were summoned. As quickly as possible the police and firemen formed a rescue brigade, and ready hands assisted them to take out the killed and wounded. In less than an hour about 25 people had been taken out, and every few minutes thereafter some still form would be borne on stretchers from the building. Police and army ambulances, cabs, carriages and vehicles of every description were pressed into service for taking away the dead and injured. All hospitals in the city were utilized in caring for the injured, and scores of physicians volunteered their services for the work. Every hospital in the city was called into requisition. Ambulances, carriages and other vehicles filled with wounded were quickly traversing the city in every direction.

One of the bravest and most daring incidents connected with the calamity was performed by a colored boy 19 or 20 years of age, named Basil Lockwood. As soon as the floors collapsed and the dust cleared away, realizing the danger of those at the rear windows who were wildly climbing out and calling for aid, he climbed up a large telegraph pole as high as the third story and lashed a ladder to the pole, putting the other end in the window. By this means ten or fifteen were assisted down the ladder in safety.

None of those who escaped injury could tell which of the floors first gave way. To the occupants of each floor there was but one crash heard, and instantly the whole building was filled with blinding lime dust. Running directly through all of the floors and in the middle of the building was a light-well ten feet or more long and nearly as many wide. The fatal area was in front of this, leaving a space of six or seven feet in width undisturbed on either side. The entire back part

of the building, containing more than half of the floor space, remained intact.

There were many very narrow escapes from death. A number of clerks whose desks rested directly upon the line where the floors broke away saved themselves, while the desks at which they sat were precipitated down the awful chasm. Others who were walking across the room heard the ominous sound and stopped just at the very threshold of death.

When the crash came those who survived heard a mighty scream of anguish from their comrades as they sank out of sight, and then groping in darkness they found their way to safety, trembling in every joint with the pallor of death in their faces. No women were employed in the building, but in a few minutes after the crash the wives, mothers and daughters of the victims began to arrive. Within a very few moments hundreds or more of men, stripped for the hot work, jumped into the building and began throwing out the wreckage in front and under the floors which remained standing in the rear.

About 10.30 o'clock the dead and injured began to arrive at the Emergency Hospital faster than the corps of surgeons could attend to their injuries. Shortly after the arrival of the first unfortunates a crowd began to assemble in front of the hospital, many of them being the wives, daughters and relatives of the dead and injured. Their weeping and frantic cries for information were heart-rending. They greatly interfered with the work of the physicians, and Dr. Keer, in charge of the hospital, determined to put them out. Load after load of the wounded, blind from the debris and with limbs broken and maimed, were dumped at the door. They had to remain outside for some time, as the force and facilities of the hospital were unequalled to the emergency.

At other hospitals and in the drug stores adjacent to the accident similar scenes were being enacted. In the meantime the work of rescue was going bravely on at the ruins. About half-past eleven o'clock a company of the Fourth U. S. Artillery from Washington Barracks arrived on the scene of the accident, and the men were distributed about the ruined structure to guard against interference with the workmen. Shortly after, the cavalry from Fort Myers, Va., reached the spot and assisted the other regulars in maintaining order.

The main duty of the soldiers was to guard the rebellion records, stored in the building. The clerks who escaped were pressed into service and went willingly to work removing the bundles of valuables. A great deal of the work of the Pension office is dependent on these records, and their value to the Government and to individuals is inestimable—they cannot be replaced. Every few minutes during the first two hours after the accident, dead and wounded men were taken out of the debris. To the on-lookers all the bruised, maimed and dust-covered bodies seemed bereft of life. One man whose face was covered with blood and who was seemingly dead suddenly raised up in the ambulance in which he was placed and swallowed a glass of whiskey. This brought a cheer from the crowd, and thereafter every rescue was accompanied by applause.

An incident of the day was the number of the clergy who, on hearing of the disaster, flocked to the scene utterly regardless of their own safety, entered the building, the rear walls of which were warningly bulging out, and ministered to the dying and injured. Ministers of all creeds were present. The hairbreadth escapes narrated by survivors were numberless. One of the most thrilling scenes of the whole affair was the sight of a dozen men who were left in the corner of the third story, climbing down a hose-pipe to the ground.

The President was informed of the sad event just as he reached the entrance to the White House by one of the clerks, and he at once interested himself in the relief measures, learning with satisfaction what had been done by Assistant Secretary of War Grant, who had come over to the White House before noon.

When the crash came there were supposed to be in the building 496 clerks, 18 messengers, 20 laborers—a total of 534 persons.

The work of clearing away the debris continued from half-past eleven until

three minutes past five o'clock before another body was found. The work was being done in the cellar in the extreme front of the building, when one of the laborers announced that "he saw a hand." Shovels and picks were immediately dropped and the debris was removed by hand. The body of the unfortunate man, who from his dress was evidently a clerk; was lying face down, with one arm doubled under him and the other extended. The back of his head was badly crushed and his face was cut in several places. The body was removed with all possible care and sent to the morgue to await identification. Laborers did not cease their efforts until about 7 o'clock. Work was therefore stopped, the streets roped close to the building, and a police guard stationed there for the night.

A meeting of citizens was held this afternoon to put into operation measures for the relief of victims of to-day's catastrophe. It was called to order by Commissioner Ross, and Commissioner Parker was chosen to preside. With but little preliminaries, the purpose of the gathering was achieved in the appointment of a committee of five to canvass the meeting for subscriptions. While this was being done, brief addresses were made by B. H. Warner, Rev. W. A. Bartlett, A. Smith Thompson, a clerk employed in the collapsed building, and Bishop J. T. Hurst. Dr. Bartlett's ringing arraignment of the Government for its moral responsibility for the calamity met with warm commendation of the gathering. He said the chief officers ought in some way to get together and provide means which shall secure to the suffering ones that care and support which a niggardly policy had made necessary, and "not saddle a single dollar upon this long suffering community".

Thompson's speech was largely devoted to abuse of Col. Ainsworth, Chief of the Record and Pension Division, whom he charged with the direct active cause of the casualty. He said the large, fine, airy, safe rooms in the War Department building were sacred to the storing of records, while Ford's Theatre building, utterly unfit for clerical duties, was crowded with clerks, many of whose lives had been sacrificed by this one man's dictum. The theatre had been a "perfect hell on earth," he said; no military prison or jail was comparable to it in disagreeable features, while the insecurity of the structure was notorious, it having been condemned no less than three times. Thompson stated that although seventy-two years of age he had been providentially enabled to make an escape from the second story of the building by means of a ladder.

The total amount of subscriptions obtained was announced as about \$5,500; the largest being \$1,000 from the dry goods firm of Woodward & Lathrop. President Cleveland, who had been asked to preside over the meeting, but was unable to do so because of pressing official business engagements, sent his check for \$100, and Secretary Thurber his for \$25.

Joint Board Meeting.

The joint Board of Magistrates and County Commissioners met in regular annual session June 5, 1893. On call of the roll 26 out of the 63 magistrates in the county answered to their names. All the county commissioners were present, with L. R. Whitener in the chair.

The levying of the county taxes was taken up, and after many motions and much discussion, 18½ cents was levied on the \$100 value for county purposes, and 4 cents for schools. There was also levied on unlisted subjects under schedule "B" the same tax as that levied by the State, except on marriage license, on which no tax was levied.

It was recommended that the Board of County Commissioners appropriate 2 cents on the \$100 value of the amount levied for county purposes, to build a bridge across South Fork river. It was also agreed that the committee appointed one year ago to select a location for the bridge, be continued, and that M. T. Hull be appointed on said committee in place of D. W. Ramsaur. The committee was instructed to report their action to the Board of County Commissioners. A motion to adopt the alternative road law was lost.

The body then proceeded to elect a new Board of Education. The balloting resulted in the election of Rev. J. A. Foil, S. T. Wilfong and J. U. Long.