

## Flames Devour a Big Store District

Two Acres Burned Over and Property Valued Between Five and Six Millions Destroyed—All Day Battle Against Big Odds

Rochester, N. Y., Feb. 26.—After an all-day fight, the disastrous conflagration which swept Rochester's retail shopping district, causing a loss of between \$5,000,000 and \$6,000,000 and throwing at least three thousand people out of work, has been conquered. It was the biggest fire Rochester ever had. Starting at 5:30 a. m., the flames raged with fury, and within six hours the damage was done. Six of the city's handsomest and costliest commercial structures are laid in ruins. The northeast corner of the junction of Main and St. Paul streets, extending up Main as far as the piano store of Gibbons & Stone, is completely gutted; extending down St. Paul street to the Cox building the loss is equally complete. The burned district covered not quite two acres of ground, but it would have been difficult to have selected anywhere in the city of Rochester a similar space where such sweeping damage could be inflicted. The loss in realty, while great, is not much greater than the loss of personal property in the shape of dry goods and office fixtures. The immense department store of Sibley, Lindsay & Currie, one of the largest between New York and Chicago, is practically wiped out of business. The stock in the big retail store, valued at \$380,000 and insured for \$500,000, was destroyed with the exception of a small salvage of silks valued at \$25,000. The stock in the wholesale department, valued at \$1,200,000, insured at \$1,000,000, is a total loss, not a dollar being saved. Adjoining the store of Sibley, Lindsay & Currie was the big dry goods store of Beedie & Sherburne, carrying a stock

of \$350,000; next was the store of the Rochester Dry Goods Company, carrying a stock of \$150,000. Every dollar of goods in these stores is a total loss and the buildings themselves are razed to the ground, the walls being pulled down this afternoon that did not fall in the morning fire. The actual loss in dry goods that went up in smoke in a few hours this morning was approximately \$2,000,000, with not enough salvage out of the lot to make a good "fire sale." Fortunately there were no fatalities, although a number of narrow escapes are reported. Only two firemen received injuries, and their hurts are not serious. It is expected that within six months the burned district will be restored. The granite building, which is as nearly fire proof as can be made by modern builders, stands looming up high in the air, its walls uninjured, its floors safe and its roof intact. The fire completely gutted the inside of the building, but leaving practically unharmed the granite and brick in the walls and the steel and iron that bound them together. There is nothing left of any other buildings. They have been razed to the ground with the exception of a few walls not thought dangerous enough to warrant removal. All front walls are down, so that traffic on one side of Main and St. Paul streets can be resumed tomorrow morning and street car traffic opened.

Fire lines were maintained all day and all night from Water street to Clinton avenue, almost stopping business for an entire day in the busiest section of the city. Two banks, the Merchants and the Alliance, were within the fire lines, as well as the Hotel Eggleston.

For the first time in many years Rochester called for outside aid in handling a fire. Two companies from Buffalo and two from Syracuse came to Rochester's aid.

Secretary D. P. Carry, of the Rochester Dry Goods Company, in whose store the fire began, attributes the origin of it to defective electric wiring. "I think the fire was caused by the electric wires," he said, "as it started around the centre of elevator. Wires connect with these in the next building, and probably caused the explosion there."

## A SCAFFOLD FELL WITH FIFTEEN MEN

Sheer Descent of 250 Feet From the Dome of the Chicago Post Office--All Killed

Chicago, Feb. 26.—A triple floor scaffold in the dome of the new post office building suddenly collapsed this afternoon, carrying fifteen men into the first floor of the building, killing them all. Scores of policemen and firemen were quickly summoned to clear away the debris and permit the recovery of the bodies. The helpless fifteen victims had a sheer descent of 250 feet through space. The men were at work on the big scaffold finishing up the decorations on the interior of the dome. There is a space beneath extending to the first floor, and it was down this hole through all the floors that tons of splintered wood surrounding the men fell with a crash. The men were buried, and after the sound of the fall died away no cries or moans of pain were heard. Timekeeper Walter Anderson, who

was on the second floor of the scaffold, had a hairbreadth escape. He said: "I was helping a little with the work when I heard a sound like the tearing or rending of wood. The thought struck me that the scaffold would collapse, and I jumped from the platform to a window on the side of the dome. I had scarcely jumped from the wooden scaffold when the long platform suddenly collapsed and carried all of the men into the first floor. It was sickening to realize what little chance the men had for their lives." The platform was constructed largely of two by four timbers, in some places nailed together lengthwise. The platforms were constructed under the charge of the Lennox Haldeman Company, sub-contractor for the John Pierce Company, who have charge of the interior decorations.

## ONE GUESS PROBABLY AS GOOD AS ANOTHER

Russian and Japanese Reports of Recent Operations at Port Arthur Differ Widely--Nothing in the Way of War News Can Be Stated Positively

London, Feb. 27.—It is impossible as yet to determine who is telling the truth, the Russians or Japanese, in regard to the attempt to seal up the entrance to the harbor at Port Arthur. It is pointed out that even if the three Russian cruisers were able to retreat into the harbor, as general Pfung states in his dispatch, thus absolutely proving that the harbor is not sealed up, nevertheless it is quite possible for it to be blocked against the passage of battleships. But pending the receipt of more reliable details, speculation is of little use. In reference to the statement that the hulks the Japanese used were loaded with coal and kerosene it is absurd to suppose that the Japanese made the Russians a gift of four cargoes of coal. Other versions of the character of the cargoes say they were stone.

The most important news, if it is reliable, is that a large fleet of transports is off Port Arthur, preparing to disembark an army to besiege that place. Unofficial telegrams from St. Petersburg indicate that such a development is fully expected there. Bennett Burleigh, a correspondent of the Telegraph, has gone from Japan to Shanghai, apparently to avoid the Japanese censorship. He cables thence that a large number of transports have returned to Nagasaki, where they are busily embarking more troops for the vicinity of Dally. Over forty transports have sailed since February 10. A still larger embarkation is proceeding from Ujina, near Hirasshima. The latter place, and not Kioto, will be the army and navy headquarters during the war. Over thirty big transports are now at Ujina, which is the principal station of embarkation of troops. Dally is being evacuated. There are only five months supplies at Port Arthur. The Russians say they mean to defend Port Arthur, and to fall back with the rest of their troops from Dally to the Yalu River and, if pressed, upon Harbin.

Of the reported Japanese landing at Possiet Bay there is no confirmation, but the rumor recurs. Some skepticism is expressed over the report, partly because there is a large Russian garrison there. There is an unconfirmed report that a Japanese squadron is blockading Vladivostok, and still another report that the Russian squadron there has again put to sea. Its destination is unknown.

It was explained at the legation that Vice Admiral Kamimura is in command of the cruiser squadron and torpedo boat destroyer flotilla now off Port Arthur. He is second in command to Admiral Togo.

### A Russian Report of the Bombardment

St. Petersburg, Feb. 26.—The details of the fighting at Port Arthur yesterday morning which were promised by General Pfung, Admiral Alexieff's chief of staff, have, it is understood, been received at the ministry of war, but have not been published. It is learned, however, that General Pfung says in effect that the enemy's squadron, consisting of sixteen warships, approached Port Arthur from the Dally side shortly after midnight February 25 and opened fire against three Russian cruisers that were standing outside, and also against the land forces. The bombardment lasted half an hour. At its conclusion the cruisers retired into the harbor. The enemy then bombarded one of the land batteries for some minutes. They then retreated, remaining out of the range of the Russian guns. Meanwhile four Japanese cruisers separated from the main squadron and went into Golubnaja bay, where they opened a heavy fire upon one of the Russian torpedo boats standing in the bay, and also upon the coast batteries. Consequently the commander of the forts sent troops to this point, but no landing took place. The bombardment at this place lasted twenty-two minutes. At the expiration of that time the Japanese retreated. The Russians lost one man wounded in the land batteries.

### Ships Described as Infernal Machines

St. Petersburg, Feb. 26.—An official dispatch from Port Arthur says that the Japanese steamers that were stranded at the entrance of the harbor have been examined. They were loaded with coal and kerosene. An electric battery on each steamer, placed in a scow, was connected with wires in the holds, where apparently infernal machines were placed. One torpedo boat which was sent for the purpose of rescuing the crews of the steamers sent to block up the harbor at Port Arthur, the Hokoku Maru on the left side of the entrance of the harbor near the lighthouse, and the Bushin Maru outside the entrance, were sunk by explosion. The Tenshin Maru and the Buvo Maru and the Jinsen Maru were sunk out on the

### BLOCKING WAS INEFFECTUAL

Latest Version of the Attempt to Hobsonize Port Arthur from Japanese Sources

Washington, Feb. 26.—The following telegram from the Japanese admiralty at Tokio, descriptive of the second and third attacks by the Japanese fleet on Port Arthur, was received at the legation here tonight.

"Tokio, Feb. 26.—Vice Admiral Kamimura reports on the 26th of February as follows:

"According to the report from the torpedo boat which was sent for the purpose of rescuing the crews of the steamers sent to block up the harbor at Port Arthur, the Hokoku Maru on the left side of the entrance of the harbor near the lighthouse, and the Bushin Maru outside the entrance, were sunk by explosion. The Tenshin Maru and the Buvo Maru and the Jinsen Maru were sunk out on the

## Partisan Fight on the Naval Bill

The Bill Passed Without Division After All Democratic Amendments Had Been Rejected by a Party Vote

Washington, Feb. 26.—After six hours hard partisan fighting the House today passed the naval appropriation bill amended in only three important parts. One of these was agreed to by the committee of the whole several days ago to increase the appropriation for the Charleston yard by \$568,000, and two were agreed to today: one, offered by Mr. Hill of Connecticut, to authorize the secretary of the navy to purchase submarine boats within his discretion after competition and limiting the amount to \$550,000 for such craft, and the other, offered by Mr. Dalzell of Pennsylvania, directing the secretary of the navy to purchase armor plate at a price within his judgment "just and reasonable."

The Democrats fought every inch of the bill to increase the number of submarines, to limit the cost of armor plate to \$298 a ton, or, as an alternative if it could not be bought for that price, to spend \$4,000,000 for a government factory; to provide that none of the money expended for armor plate shall be paid to concerns in a trust; and finally, to limit a day's work on government contracts, heretofore authorized and authorized in the bill, to eight hours a day. All of these propositions were defeated except the qualified amendment to increase the amount for submarine boats. A motion to recommit the bill to the naval committee with instructions to report a bill embodying these amendments was finally submitted and defeated by a party vote. The measure was then passed without division. During the day there were prolonged and heated discussions, especially over the cost of armor plate, and the efforts to limit the hours of labor.

After the previous question had been ordered on the bill Mr. Meyer of Louisiana moved to recommit the bill to the committee on naval affairs with instructions to report a bill providing for a coaling station instead of a naval station at Olangapo, P. I.; eliminating the provision for two armored cruisers; placing a limit of \$398 a ton on the cost of armor plate, or as an alternative, directing the secretary to erect a government factory; providing that all the

ships authorized by the bill except those building, shall be constructed in government yards; providing that no part of the money paid for armor plate shall be paid to a concern in a trust, and limiting to eight hours a day's work on all government contracts authorized.

Mr. Payne shut off further debate on motions to recommit with instructions by moving to recommit with no instructions. Mr. Williams of Mississippi demanded the ayes and noes and the Republicans then voted solidly against Mr. Payne's motion, which was lost—ayes 99, noes 138, a strict party vote.

The bill was then passed without division. Then at 6:15 the House adjourned until tomorrow.

### A Little Subsidy Bill in the Senate

Washington, Feb. 26.—In the Senate today Mr. Fairbanks made an effort to get up the bill authorizing the construction of a building to be used by the department of state, the department of justice and the department of commerce, but Mr. Cockrell objected on account of the absence of Mr. Gorman, who, he said, is greatly interested in the measure and desired to be heard on it. A general exchange of views followed, with the result that the Senate agreed to make the bill the order of business for next Monday.

There was considerable discussion of the bill requiring the employment of American vessels for the shipment of government stores. Mr. Berry said that in effect the bill grants a subsidy to vessels owned in the United States. He quoted a letter from the secretary of war, expressing the opinion that the enactment of the bill would result in a three-fold increase of the freight rates.

Mr. Hale defended the measure against the charge that it is in effect a subsidy. He said that every effort should be made to protect our dwindling commerce on the sea. He contended that the bill only puts in practice the system of other countries.

Mr. Perkins of California remarked that he and his colleague had received telegrams from the San Francisco Shipowners' Association, stating that there were 100,000 tons of shipping lying idle at San Francisco.

Mr. Daniel of Virginia opposed the bill as being a subsidy to a small lot of shipowners.

An amendment, offered by Mr. McCumber of North Dakota, providing that the charges to the government should not be made higher than those to private parties, was agreed to.

A motion was made by Mr. Carmack of Tennessee to recommit the bill. A roll call disclosed the lack of a quorum, and at 4:20 the Senate adjourned until tomorrow.

## Court Uninfluenced by Party Politics

Southern Suffrage Laws Reasonably Safe From Judicial Interference--Railroad Receivership Was a Genuine Surprise

By THOMAS J. PENCE

Washington, Feb. 26.—Special.—The fact that the supreme court of the United States is the one branch of the federal government that it beyond the reach of Republican politicians and negro agitators in the north has been forcibly emphasized this week, and is a subject of general comment here. The decision of the court in the Giles case from Alabama, in which it was attempted to overthrow the suffrage amendments to the constitutions which disfranchised the negro, evidences the fact that the court is not going to interfere with the delicate machinery of a score of states of the Union if it can help it. This is the second time the court has had the question of disfranchising the negro presented to it, and each time a way has been found to avoid jurisdiction. The printed copy of the court's decision was available to day for the first time and it was eagerly sought by southern senators and representatives. There was a little disappointment over the failure of Justice Harlan, who dissented, to voice his views in an opinion. However, southerners were greatly pleased with the opinion of the court, written by Mr. Justice Day. While it does not meet the question squarely—that is on its merits—the fact remains that the court is not going to do so if it can find a way to avoid it. This fact is clearly emphasized. In less than two weeks another case, originated for the purpose of testing the suffrage laws of the south, will be argued before the supreme court. This is the Virginia case, which is to be presented by John S. Wise. Eminent lawyers think it will meet the fate of the Alabama case.

### Everybody Talks About the Receivership

The first news of the appointment of a receiver for the Atlantic and North Carolina railroad came in the Post and was discussed to the exclusion of nearly every other subject by members of the North Carolina colony in Washington. Several members of the delegation received telegrams bearing on the subject. They were loath to discuss the developments that have created such a sensation over the state. There

are strong advocates of the proposition to lease the road among members of the delegation, while others are as strongly opposed to such a program. One stockholder said today that he was for anything that would yield a dividend on his investment. Naturally many questions were asked pertaining to Captain K. S. Finch, the complainant, and speculation was freely indulged in as to whether or not he is identified with either of the big railway systems of the south. In railroad circles here no information was obtainable with reference to Captain Finch, but one member of the delegation recalled that he once represented the Seaboard Air Line in the state, having been located at Charlotte among other places. It was recalled also that he was prominent as a bidder for the purchase of state lands.

### Conviction of the Grafters

The conviction of Machen, the Grotts and Lorenz, in Judge Pritchard's court tonight gave Washington a genuine surprise. The prevailing opinion was that the alleged post office grafters would be acquitted or that a hung jury would result. There was much betting on the result and odds favored a hung jury. While this is true, the majority of the people apparently believed them guilty. On every side there is praise for Judge Pritchard, who was absolutely impartial. The Times contained his picture this evening, declaring that his conduct in the trial of the case "gave equal satisfaction to both the government and the defense."

### Dentists Elect a Tar Heel President

Dr. Charles L. Alexander of Charlotte was elected president of the Southern Branch of the National Dental Association, which ended its sixth annual convention this afternoon. The election of the distinguished Tar Heel dentist to the presidency of the association, which was by unanimous vote, was highly gratifying to the large delegation from the state. North Carolina captured several of the responsible positions. The election resulted as follows:

President, Dr. Charles L. Alexander of Charlotte, N. C.; to succeed Dr. George S. Vann of Gadsden, Ala.; first vice president, Dr. W. G. Mason of Tampa, Fla.; second vice president, Dr. L. P. Dotterer of Charleston, S. C.; third vice president, Dr. N. N. Vann of Attala, Ala.; corresponding secretary, Dr. J. A. Gorman of Asheville, N. C.; recording secretary, Dr. J. Crossland of Montgomery, Ala.; treasurer, B. D. Erabson of Knoxville, Tenn. Dr. A. R. Melendy of Knoxville, Tenn., was chosen to succeed himself as a member of the executive committee, and Dr. Holly Smith of Baltimore (Continued on page 2.)

## An American Naval Officer Taken to Task

Commander Marshall Accused of Breach of Neutrality in Refusing to Protest Against Japanese Threats—Was Acting Under Orders

Washington, Feb. 26.—At the request of Secretary of State Hay, the navy department has undertaken an investigation of the reports that Commander Marshall, of the gunboat Vicksburg, violated neutrality in declining to join with the commanders of other foreign warships in a protest against the declaration of Admiral Uru that if the Russian ships Varieg and Korietz did not come out of Chemulpo harbor, the Japanese squadron would attack them inside, and that Commander Marshall was guilty of inhuman conduct in not attempting to succor Russian seamen of the two ships named. State department officials decline to furnish any information in regard to the basis for their request to the navy department, but it is believed that complaint was lodged informally by either the Russian ambassador in Washington with Secretary Hay or the minister of foreign affairs at St. Petersburg with Mr. McCormick, the American ambassador there.

While the officials of both the state and the navy departments are without any information whatever in regard to the attitude maintained by Commander Marshall with reference to the hostile action at Chemulpo, they are of the opinion that he was not guilty of any infraction of international law or law of neutrality for failing to join with the other naval commanders at Chemulpo against the Japanese admiral's threat to attack his enemy in that then neutral, Korean port. In accordance with the consistent policy of this government, Commander Marshall had been instructed not to join with officers of foreign navies in any demand or request or to do anything that would savor of collective action, but in all cases to act individually, thus adher-

ing to the traditional practice of the United States to avoid foreign alliances, actual or suggestive. Should Commander Marshall give as his reason for not protesting against Admiral Uru's threat, that he found himself unable on account of his instructions to be a party to collective action directed against the commander of the Japanese squadron, it appears certain that he will be exonerated by his government of any wrong doing.

At the state department the view is held that common humanity would have required Commander Marshall to pick up drowning men even if their vessel had declined to surrender, and should it be shown that Commander Marshall failed to perform his duty in this respect the state department will urge the navy department to take proper action against him.

### Marshall Sent Medical Aid and Boats

Washington, Feb. 26.—At the instance of Secretary Hay a telegram was sent by Secretary Moody to Commander Marshall, asking him if the charge was true that he had declined to save drowning Russians. Commander Marshall's response was received yesterday in cipher, but had become so badly garbled in transmission that only part of it could be translated. That part was made public today in this form: "A dispatch from Commander Marshall, commanding the U. S. S. Vicksburg, states that he sent medical aid as well as boats to the assistance of the Varieg."

### Objected to Jurisdiction

Wilson, N. C., Feb. 26.—Special.—This afternoon when the case of Richard and Samuel Stancill, for the murder of W. T. Harrison, was taken up for preliminary trial, the defendants excepted to the jurisdiction of the magistrate upon the ground that the offense was committed in Greene county. It was decided to hear the evidence tomorrow.

Memphis, Tenn., Feb. 26.—John Armistead, president of the Mercantile Savings Bank of this city, died today of pneumonia and heart trouble. He was 67 years old and had been identified with the banking business of Memphis for years.