550 PEOPLE WERE KILLED

Terrible Disaster in the Irequois Theatre at Chicago.

A Chicago despatch says: About 550 people were killed in ten minutes on Wednesday afternoon during a fire in the Iroquois Theatre, the newest, the largest, and so far as human power could make it, the safest theatre in Chicago. Estimates of the dead and injured vary. The police account of the dead is 536. The estimate of the newspapers is 562. Besides this, there are 55 people missing at midnight, the majority of whom are probably among the dead in the morgue and various undertakers' establishments. Six of the dead have been positively identified. Ninety-two persons are known to be injured.

The fire broke out during the second act of the play, "Mr. Blue Beard," the first production in the theatre since its erection. The theatrical company, which was very large, escaped to the street in safety, nearly all of them, however, being compelled to flee into the snow with no clothing but their stage costumes. A few members of the company sustained minor injuries, but none were seriously hurt.

The accounts of the origin of the fire are conflicting, and none of them certain, but the best reason given is that an electric wire near the lower part of the piece of drop scenery broke and grounded, setting the scenery ablaze. The fire spread rapidly toward the front of the stage, causing the members of the chorus, who were then engaged in the performance, to flee to the wings with screams of terror. The fire in itself up to this time was not serious, and possibly could have been checked, had not the asbestos curtain failed to work.

So soon as the fire was discovered, Eddie Foy, the comedian of the company, shouted to lower the curtain. It descended about half way, and then stuck. The fire was thus given precisely a flue through which a strong draught set to the doors which had been thrown open in the front of the theatre. With a roar and a bound the flames shot out through the opening over the heads of the people on the first floor and up to those in the first balcony, caught them and burned them to death.

GAS TANKS EXPLODED.

Immediately following this rush of flames there came an explosion which lifted the entire roof of the theatre from its walls, shattering the great skylight into fragments. So soon as the flames first appeared beyond the curtain a man in the rear of the hall shouted, "Fire, fire!" and the entire audience rose as one person and made for the doors. It is believed that the explosion was caused by the flames coming in contact with the gas reservoirs of the theatre, causing them to burst.

Will J. Davis, manager of the theatre, said after the catastrophe that if the people had remained in their seats and had not been excited by the cry of fire, not a life would have been lost. This, however, is contradicted by the statements of the firemen, who found the bodies of numbers of persons sitting in their seats, their faces directed toward the stage, as if the performance were still going on. It was the opinion of the firemen that these people were suffocated at once by the flow of gas and fire which came from behind the asbestos curtain.

A WALL OF DEAD.

Outside of the people burned and suffocated by gas, it was in these two doorways on the first and second balconies that the greatest loss of life occurred. When the firemen entered the building the dead were found stretched in a pile reaching from the head of the stairway at least eight feet from the door, back to a point about five feet in the rear of the door. This mass of dead bodies in the centre of the doorway reached to within two feet of the top of the passageway. All of the corpses at this point were women and children.

The fight for life which must have taken place at these two points is something that is simply beyond human power to adequately describe. Only a faint idea of its horror could be derived from the aspect of the bodies as they lay. Women on top of these masses of dead had been overtaken by death as they were crawling on their hands and knees over the bodies of those who had died before. Others lay with arms stretched out in the direction toward which lay life and safety, holding in their hands fragments of garments, evidently torn from others whom they had endeavored to pull down and trample underfoot as they fought for their own lives. As the police removed layer after layer of dead in these doorways the sight became too much even for the police and firemen, hardened as they are to such scenes.

The bodies were in such an inextricable mass, and so tightly were they jammed between the sides of the door and walls, that it was impossible to lift them one by one and carry them out. The only possible thing to do was to seize a limb or some other portion of the body and pull with main strength.

FRIGHTFUL SCENES ENACTED.

Men worked at the task with tears running down their cheeks, and the sobs of the rescuers could be heard even in the hall below, where this awful scene was being enacted. A number of men were compelled to abandon their task and give it over to others whose nerves had not yet been shaken.

As one by one bodies were dragged out of the water-soaked, blackened mass of corpses, the spectacle became more and more heartrending. Bodies lay in the first and second balconies in great numbers. In some places they were piled up in the aisles, three and four deep, where one had fallen, and others tripped over the prostrate forms, and all had died where they lay, evidently suffocated by the gas. Others were bent over backs of seats, where they had been thrown by the rush of people for the doors, and killed with hardly a chance to rise from their chairs.

In the aisles nearest to the doors the scenes were harrowing in the extreme. Bodies lay in every conceivable attitude, half naked, the look on their faces revealing some of the agony which must have preceded their death.

The theatre had been constructed but a short time, and all its equipment was not yet in place. This was unfortunately the case with a fire escape in the rear of the building. The small iron balconies to which the iron ladders were to be attached were up, but the ladders had not yet been constructed. When the panic was at its height a great number of women ran for these fire escapes, only to find as they emerged from the doorway upon the little iron platform that they were 30 to 50 feet from the ground, a fire behind, and no method of escape in front.

FORCED FROM FIRE ESCAPES.

Those who reached the platform first endeavored to hold their footing and to keep back the crowd that pressed upon them from the rear. The effort was utterly useless, and in a few moments the iron ledges were jammed with crowds of women, who screamed, fought and tore at each other like maniacs. This lasted but a brief time, and the rush from the interior of the building became so violent that many of them were crowded off and fell to the granite pavement below. Others leaped from the platform, fracturing legs and arms, and two were picked up at this point with fractured skulls, having been instantly killed.

George H. Elliott, secretary of the Ogden Gas Company, was in a building directly opposite from the building across the alley. When he reached the street the women already were dropping into the alley, and Elliott immediately rushed for a ladder in an effort to save as many as possible. No ladder was available, and the only method of assistance they were able to devise was to hurriedly lash some planks together and throw them across to the affrighted women on the platforms with instructions to place the end firmly on the iron framework. Women were being pushed every instant into the alley, and by the time the bridge was constructed, but few remained to take advantage of it. However, about two dozen, it is believed, made their way across this narrow causeway. The members of the theatrical company, being on the first floor, had comparatively little difficulty in reaching the street although their situation was for a moment highly critical, because of the speed with which the flames swept through the mass of scenery in the flies and on the stage.

Eddie Foy, principal comedian in the play, was one of the last to escape by getting out through a rear door, after assisting the women members of the company to safety.

FUNERALS OF THE VICTIMS.

Saturday was a day of mourning in Chicago. Through the streets passed the sad funerals of 200 victims of the disaster. Some of the hearses were black, but most of them were white and the caskets inside were white, for little children had made up the larger part of the audience at the fatal matinee. Few homes on the boulevards or avenues were not touched by the sorrow. In the downtown district restaurants and cafes were closed. Entertainments which had been announced for the day were postponed. Business was suspended except in the banks. The large dry goods stores remained open during the early part of the day to supply the demand for mourning goods. It being evident by noon that this demand had been fully met the stores closed for the day.

At noon the bells of the city tolled a requiem for the dead. The idea of an hour of mourning was not generally disseminated, but when at noon the sound of the chimes of St. James' Church on the north side were borne by the wind over the heart of the city, it seemed as though every other church in the city caught from it the inspiration and their bells responded at once. The churches in the outlying portion of the city were last to take up the tolling, and the bells of St. James had been silent for hours when bells of churches in the south-west portion of the city were heard.

All day long the funeral processions were moving and all day services were being said at the churches and in homes. Chicago never buried so many dead before in one day, and the city had not sufficient hearses for so large a number of funerals. Families who could not get hearses were forced to see their dead carried to graves in undertakers' wagons.

CURE FOR CONSUMPTION.

A French Serum Which Kills the Microbe.

A Montreal despatch says: "There cannot be any doubt that Dr. Marforek, of the Posteur Hospital of Paris, has found a positive cure for all tuberculosus diseases, and the first exhibition of his cure on this side of the Atlantic will be given in this city. The treatment calls solely for the injection of serum discovered by Dr. Marworck, and during my stay at the Pasteur Hospital I witnessed 25 cures by the treatment."

This was the announcement made on Tuesday by Dr. L. J. Lemieux, of the Notre Dame Hospital, on his arrival after a long stay in the leading hospitals of France.

'Dr. Marworck has kindly given me all the instruments required for the treatment, and the first patient upon whom it will be tried in Canada will be a gentleman from Glasgow, who accompanied me to Canada, and is suffering from tuberculosis of the lungs. The cases that I saw cured included all kinds of tuberculosis of the throat and lungs, and it was found that in every instance the serum killed all the germs. The discovery has awakened the greatest interest throughout France, and later on it is intended that demonstrations should be given at the Notre Dame Hospital in this city."

SCENE IN COURT.

Mrs. Barbato Severed a Man's Jugular Vein.

An Orange, N. J., despatch says: —In a crowded courtroom on Saturday, Mrs. Carmelo Barbato, about forty years old, drew a razor from the pocket of her dress and slashed Pasquale he Parma across the neck severing his jugular vein. The man and woman were directly in front of Judge Bray at the time, and the blood that spurted from the wound spattered the Judge's face and clothing. The wounded man was hurried to the Orange memorial Hospital, where he lies in a critical condition. Mrs. Barbato had caused the arrest of De Parma, whom she accused of annoying her by his attentions. They were sweethearts fifteen years ago in the town of Prata, Italy.

SHOT IN THE KNEE.

Armenian Laborer Victim of Assault at Brantford.

A Brantford despatch says: Abraham George, an Armenian laborer in the employ of the Pratt Latchworth Iron Works, this city, was assaulted and shot while walking along Market Street on Thursday night in company with a fellow Armenian. He was accosted by a stranger, who demanded his watch and money. George refused, and his friend joined with the assailant in depriving the man of his watch. A desperate struggle followed, in which the stranger shot George in the left knee. The two men, who are supposed to be in league, escaped, and the victim was taken to the hospital where the bullet was extracted.

HALF-CENT STAMPS.

Only Newspaper Offices Are Privileged to Use Them.

An Ottawa despatch says: The Post-Office Department has issued another notice that half-cent stamps must only be used by newspaper offices.

Postmasters are enjoined to be careful that all parcels posted at their office for transmission by parcel post to the United Kingdom or to foreign countries are fully prepaid, have the necessary Customs declarations affixed to them, and comply in all other respects with the regulations.

ORDERED MAMMOTH BOAT

From Port Nelson to Argentina, via Winnipeg.

A London despatch says :—It is reported that the White Star line has ordered a steamer 755 feet in length, or thirty feet longer than the Baltic the largest ship in the world. The construction of the vessel, it is added, will begin immediately at Belfast, Ireland.

THE WORLD'S MARKETS

REPORTS FROM THE LEADING TRADE CENTRES.

Prices of Cattle, Grain, Cheese, and Other Dairy Produce at Home and Abroad.

Toronto, Jan. 5.—Wheat—The market for Ontario grades is unchanged. No. 2 white and mixed quoted at 77 to 78c low freights, and No. 2 red Winter at 77c. No. 2 Spring steady at 74 to 75c east, and No. 2 goose at 70c. Manitoba wheat steady. At upper lake ports No. 1 Northern is quoted at 86½c, and No. 2 Northern at 84c. No. 1 hard nominal at 89½c lake ports. For grinding in transit quotations are 6c higher than above.

Oats—The market is quiet, with prices firmer. No. 2 white quoted at 27½ to 28c west, at 28½c middle freights, and at 29c low freights to New York. No. 1 white steady at 29½ to 30c east.

Barley—The market is quiet, with the prices steady. No. 2 quoted at 41 to 42c middle freights; No. 3 extra at 39c, and No. 3 at 37c middle freights.

Peas—Trade is dull, and prices unchanged. No. 2 white quoted at 61½c west and at 62½c east.

Rye—The market is steady, with No. 2 quoted at 52c east or west.

Corn—The market is quiet, and prices weaker. No. 3 new American yellow quoted at 50c on track Toronto, and No. 3 mixed at 49c. Poor ungraded Canadian sold at 38c west.

Buckwheat—The market is firm, with demand good. No. 2 quoted at 46 to 46½c middle freights.

Flour—Ninety per cent. patents are steady at $3.05 middle freights, in buyers' sacks for export. Straight rollers of special brands for domestic trade quoted at $3.40 to $3.50 in bbls. Manitoba flours are weaker; No. 1 patents $4.50 to $4.75; No. 2 patents, $4.25 to $4.40, and strong bakers', $4 to $4.35 on track, Toronto.

Millfeed—Bran steady at $16.50, and shorts at $17.75 here. At outside points bran is quoted at $14, and shorts at $17. Manitoba bran in sacks, $18, and shorts at $20 here.

COUNTRY PRODUCE.

Apples—The market is quiet at unchanged prices. Choice stocks job at $2 to $2.50 per bbl.

Beans— There is a limited demand with prices steady. Prime beans are quoted at $1.60 to $1.75 per bushel.

Dried apples—The demand is fair, with prices unchanged at 4½ to 5c per lb. Evaporated apples, 6c per lb.

Hops—The market is unchanged at 25 to 30c. according to quality.

Honey—The market is firm at 6½ to 7½c per lb. for bulk, and at $1.25 to $2 for comb.

Hay—The market is fair, with receipts only moderate. No. 1 timothy quoted at $8.75 to $9 on track, Toronto, and mixed at $6.50 to $7.

Straw—The market is quiet at $5 per ton for car lots on track.

Potatoes—Offerings continue light, and prices rule firm. Choice cars are quoted at 78 to 80c per bag on track here, and inferior quality at 70 to 75c per bag.

Poultry—The demand is limited, and prices unchanged. Turkeys are quoted at 12 to 14c per lb, and geese at 8 to 9c per lb; ducks, 9 to 10c per lb., or $1 to $1.25 per pair; chickens, 9 to 10c per lb., or 80c to $1.25 per pair; fowls, 7 to 9c per lb.

THE DAIRY MARKETS.

Butter—The market is quiet, with prices generally unchanged. We quote: Finest 1-lb. rolls, 17 to 18c; choice large rolls, 16 to 17c; selected dairy tubs, 16½ to 17c; inferior to medium qualities, 13 to 15c; creamery prints unchanged, 20½ to 21½c; solids, 19 to 19½c.

Eggs—The market remains firm. We quote:—New laid, 30c; selects, 25 to 28c; cold storage, 23 to 24c; limed, 20 to 21c.

Cheese—Market dull; very little trade doing. We quote:—Finest, 10½ to 11c; seconds, 10 to 10½c.

HOG PRODUCTS.

Dressed hogs are unchanged, with offerings more liberal. Sales, $6.10 to $6.35, delivered here. Cured meats are steady, with a fair demand. We quote:—Bacon, long clear, 8¾ to 9c in ton and case lots; mess pork, $17; do short cut, $18.50 to $19.

Smoked meats—Hams, light to medium, 12½ to 13c; do heavy, 11½ to 12c; rolls, 10c; shoulders, 9½c; backs, 13½ to 14c; breakfast bacon, 13 to 13½c.

Lard—The market is quiet, with prices unchanged. We quote:—Tierces, 8¼c; tubs, 8½c; pails, 8¾c; compound, 8 to 9c.

BUSINESS AT MONTREAL.

Montreal, Jan. 5.—Manitoba wheat is now quoted at 80c for No. 1 Northern, 78c for No. 2, and 74½c for No. 3 ex store. Butter is quiet, and prices are steady; the stocks in the city are said to be large. There is more enquiry reported for cheese; advices from the other side are encouraging, and it is expected that business will be good during this month and February; the stocks in the city have been materially decreased during the month of December, but most of the exporting was to fill orders taken earlier in the year. Eggs are in good demand and the supply is small; it is quite probable the prices will go up again next week. Grain—Peas, 71½ to 72c afloat here; rye, 53c cash, 58c afloat here; oats, No. 2, 34½c in store; No. 3, 1c less; flaxseed, $1.15 on track here; No. 3 barley, 50c. Flour—Manitoba patents, $4.60 to $4.85; seconds, $4.30 to $4.50; strong bakers', $3.90 to $4.30; Ontario straight rollers, $3.90 to $4; in bags $1.85 to $1.95; patents, $4 to $4.25; extras, $1.65 to $1.70; rolled oats, $1.80 per bag, $3.80 per bbl. Feed—Ontario bran in bulk, $17.50 to $18.50; shorts, $20 to $21: Manitoba bran in bags, $18; shorts, $22. Beans—Choice primes, $1.55 to $1.60 per bush; $1.50 to $1.55 in car lots. Provisions—Heavy Canadian short cut pork, $18 to $18.50; light short cut, $17.50 to $18; American short cut clear, $17 to $17.50; American fat backs, $18 to $18.50; compound lard, 8c; Canadian lard, 8½ to 9c; kettle rendered, 10½c; hams, 11½ to 13c; bacon, 14c; fresh killed abattoir hogs, $7.50; country dressed hogs, $7; live hogs, $5.25 to $5.50. Eggs—Candled selected, 26 to 27c, and Montreal limed, 21 to 22c; Western limed, 20 to 21c; refrigerator, 20 to 23c. Butter— Eastern, 19 to 20c, according to quality; Western dairy, in tubs, 16c. Western rolls, 16½ to 17c. Cheese—Ontario, 10½ to 10¾c; Townships, 10 to 10½c; Quebec, November, 9¾ to 9½c.

UNITED STATES MARKETS.

Buffalo, Jan. 5.—Flour—Fair demand. Wheat—Spring dull and firmer; No. 1 Northern c.i.f., 90¾c; Winter, no offerings. Corn—Easy; No. 2 yellow, 50c; No. 2 corn, 47 to 47½c. Oats—Strong; No. 2 white, 41½c; No. 2 mixed, 39c. Barley—Firm; Western in store, 52 to 63c. Rye—No. 1 in store, 60½c.

Milwaukee, Jan. 5.—Wheat—Firm; No. 1 Northern, 85½ to 86c; No. 2 Northern, 82 to 83c; May, 84⅛ to 84⅜c. Rye—Steady; No. 1, 56 to 57c. Barley—Dull; No. 2, 63c; sample, 31 to 60c. Corn—Steady; No. 3, 40 to 41c; May, 45½ to 45¼c.

Duluth, Jan. 5.—Wheat—To arrive, No. 1 hard, 83½c; No. 1 Northern, 81¾c; No. 2 Northern, 79½c; December, 80¾c; May, 83½c; July, 82½c.

Minneapolis, Jan. 5.—Wheat—December, 81½c; May, 83⅞ to 83⅞c; July, 83c; on track, No. 1 hard, 84⅜c; No. 1 Northern, 83⅞c; No. 2 Northern, 80⅞c; No. 3 Northern, 73 to 77c. Flour—First patents, $4.45 to $4.55, second patents, $4.30 to $4.40; first clears, $3.30 to $3.40; second clears, $2.30 to $2.40. Flaxseed—Cash and to arrive, 98c; December, 97c; May, $1. Bran—In bulk, $13.75 to $14.

A BUFFALO TRAGEDY.

Man Wanted For Theft Kills Wife and Shoots Himself.

A Buffalo despatch says :—When the police forced open the door of Joseph Koehler's home in Gettre street on Sunday evening, to arrest him on a petty charge, they found him lying on the floor with a bullet in his neck. In another room they found the body of his wife, Annie, 30 years old. There was a ghastly wound in her throat, from which she had bled to death. Koehler was alive, but very weak. At the hospital he made a statement to the police, confessing that he murdered his wife and attempted to kill himself.

AMERICAN FALLS DRY.

Rivulets Replace Usual Torrent Owing to Ice Jam.

A Buffalo despatch says :—Unusual conditions prevail at Niagara Falls. An ice jam has formed on the American side of the river above the Falls, leaving the channels on the American side almost dry and sending an enormous quantity of water over the Horseshoe Falls. The channels between Goat Island and Three Sisters Islands, which under ordinary conditions are deep rushing torrents, on Saturday night were mere rivulets, three or four inches deep. The jam is the second that has occurred in a quarter of a century, and the present one exceeds the one of last March in size and grandeur.

PRACTICAL SYMPATHY.

Queen's to Present Books to Ottawa University.

A Kingston despatch says :—At a special meeting of Queen's University trustees held on Saturday, it was decided that Queen's should show her sympathy towards Ottawa College in some tangible way, and a committee consisting of Chancellor Sir Sandford Fleming, Principal Gordon, and Miss Lois Saunders was appointed to make a generous selection of books for presentation to the Ottawa College library, whose extensive and valuable contents were destroyed in the flames which brought destruction and death to Canada's premier Roman Catholic educational institution.

CUTTING THEIR WAGES.

U. S. Steel Corporation Employes Receive Notice.

A McKeesport, Pa., despatch says: Notices of a wage reduction were on Tuesday posted at the local plants of the United States Steel Corporation. The cut includes every employee, and will graduate down from heads of departments to laborers, the latter receiving but a slight reduction. Ten thousand men are affected, but the reduction will be generally accepted.