TORONTO'S GREAT FIRE

Loss Over $12,000,000 With $8,885,000 Covered by Insurance.

It will be some days before a definite statement of the losses sustained in Toronto's devastating conflagration can be ascertained, but a conservative estimate places them at over $12,000,000, of which $8,885,000 are covered by insurance. In all 122 buildings were destroyed, 222 firms affected, and about 10,000 people thrown out of employment. Already a number of firms have secured temporary offices. So soon as the insurance claims can be adjusted or appraised, gangs of men will be engaged to clear away the debris. While many business men are stunned and bewildered by the catastrophe, the majority of them take a hopeful view of the situation, and from what could be gathered, the district destroyed will speedily be replaced by more pretentious structures.

THE OLD IRON BLOCK

on Front Street, just east of the Customs' house, proved to be the crux of the situation. This building was occupied by McMahon and Broadfield, pottery and crockery dealers, and it was at that point that the great and deciding battle was waged. From Wellington Street south and west, as far as the Queen's Hotel, and extending to the Esplanade, practically everything had been consumed, and the devouring elements had spread east on Front Street to the Minerva building on the north, and the McMahon-Broadfield building on the south. It was a question if the flames could be held in check, and all the energies of the brigade were addressed to saving the Customs house and the Minerva building. The fear was that with the high and erratic wind prevailing the fire might continue in its course eastward, and eat northward up Yonge Street into the heart of the retail section.

It is perhaps idle to conjecture what might have happened had the brigade been unable to prevent the fire from spreading to the Customs building and the premises of the Minerva Company. It would have undoubtedly leaped across Yonge Street to the Board of Trade and adjoining buildings, and would have worked its way eastward and probably northward into the retail sections.

The burned district presents a very desolate scene. Jagged walls with great gaping holes represents all that was left of magnificent warehouses and office buildings.

The firemen were greatly hampered in their fight against the devouring elements by the mass of overhead wires. The experiences thus gained should make the Council insist that all wires should be placed underground in the down-town district.

One of the vagaries of the fire was the fact that an old frame building on Lorne Street was left standing, although the supposedly fire-proof structures on either side of it were consumed.

CARNARVON A VICTIM.

The Earl of Carnarvon, the owner of burned buildings at 46 and 48 Bay Street, occupied by Cockburn and Rea and D. Morrice Sons Co., and of the building leased by the Wyld, Darling Co., at the south-east corner of Bay and Wellington Streets, is the fifth bearer of the title, which was created in 1793. He was born thirty-eight years ago. His Lordship figures on the voters' list of Toronto under the democratic appellation of "E. Carnarvon," and under this sobriquet he has been frequently personated at elections by pluggers, whose general appearance and bearing were the reverse of aristocratic.

FUTURE UNIMPERILLED.

The city's future will be in no way imperilled by Tuesday's great fire. This is the opinion expressed by Mr. Byron E. Walker, General Manager of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Mr. Walker is of opinion, however, that Toronto should profit by the many tragic experiences of the past and the overwhelming nature of the present catastrophe to put her house in order. He recalled the great Globe, Osgoodby and Simpson fires, in which damages resulted to the amount of $2,178,000, and yet the City Council had done nothing to secure an adequate water pressure. More stringent regulations in regard to the building of great establishments were absolutely necessary in a large commercial city like Toronto, and in his opinion an effort should be made to separate the manufacturing from the distributing houses. The insurance was carried mostly by British houses, but a great fire was none the less a dead loss. Although many great businesses had been destroyed, there was no doubt that the rebuilding of them was a matter of a very short time.

BY-LAW SUSPENDED.

The Board of Control at a special session took steps to relieve the demand for accommodation. It was decided to suspend the operation of the building by-law so far as necessary to permit of the erection of temporary one-story buildings on vacant land, under the direction of City Architect McCallum, Commissioner Fleming and Chief Thompson. These officials have also been delegated with authority to deal with firms who suffered by fire, and think proper accommodation can be provided on the Exhibition grounds.

RENTS LIKELY TO GO UP.

The fire's ravages will have the effect of stopping house-building this summer. All the available labor and material will be needed in the work of replacing the wholesale houses now in ruins. Bricks are said to be very scarce, and lumber has increased 25 per cent. The result of the change in the building situation brought about by the fire will probably be a raise in rents owing to the scarcity of houses.

A CURIOUS TRICK

of the fire demon was the leaving unharmed the sign of McMahon, Broadfield & Company, wholesale crockery dealers, in the Phoenix block, Front street, adjoining the customs house. Only the front wall of the building stood, yet the sign which overhung the sidewalk looks as bright and sound as the day before the fire.

A DESOLATE SCENE.

Standing at the corner of Front and Bay streets, one begins to realize the extent of the awful destruction that has been wrought. On every hand are ruins almost as far as one can see. Within the whole burned area there is not a single wall intact, and such as are standing are mere crumbling ruins, likely to fall at any time and a menace to all who approach. In one or two instances the rebuilding may begin from the first story, but in the great majority of cases not one brick can be left upon another, and work must begin from the foundations.

Desolate as the widespread ruin appears in daylight, at night it is gruesome and awful. A dull, fitful glare partially illuminates the shattered walls and ragged spires and turrets that alone meet the eye. Every cellar is filled with smouldering debris, over which the fires play. Much of the flame is burning gas, of which there is a strong odor everywhere, despite the efforts of the Gas Company gangs to cut it off. As an illustration of how it collects, the writer was standing on Bay street about 9 o'clock, when suddenly a short distance away, there was a puff of blue flame shooting upward. It was thought the pavement had been blown up, but on examination it was found to have come through a grated manhole. The glare on walls here and there from hidden flames, the low smouldering fires in the debris, the murky, red smoke, and the unspeakable ruin recall nothing but the inferno.

RATES ARE RAISED.

At a special meeting of the Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association, held on Thursday afternoon, it was decided to increase the rates in Toronto. The extra rates call for an addition of $1 to the rate on all mercantile, schedule and other specially rated risks; an extra 50c to the rates on all risks except dwellings and their contents outside the above districts. An exception is made in favor of risks on residential stores outside the congested districts allowing a rebate of 25 cents on them when the usual warranty is furnished. Sprinkler risks and risks on fire-proof buildings will be advanced half the above extras. When more than one company take the risk a reduction of 15 per cent. from the rate on the building aod 10 per cent. on the stocks may be allowed on the 80 per cent. co-insurance clause.

The above rates mean an average advance of 75 per cent. on risks within the congested district, and of 40 per cent. on all risks outside the district, except on dwellings and their contents.

ANOTHER FIRE.

Damage estimated at about $35,000 was done by a fire which broke out in the Phillips and Wrinch warehouse, 8 Wellington Street west, at 10 minutes to 8 o'clock on Thursday evening. The firemen playing the streams on the ruins of the burned buildings a block west of the Phillips and Wrinch building, saw a volume of flame shoot from the warehouse. A general alarm was rung in and all the reels in the city responded. As many men as could be spared were placed in positions to fight the new fire, and thus it was prevented from spreading. After an hour's strenuous work the fire was extinguished. Mr. Phillips stated that the loss to his firm would amount to $25,000 or $26,000, which was almost entirely covered by insurance, distributed in several companies. The top floor of the building was used as a storeroom.

SCARCITY OF BRICKS.

It is feared among builders and architects that the supply of bricks for building will will be enormously inadequate to the demand for extensive building operations. The demand for bricklayers, masons, builders' laborers, and carpenters will be enormous, and thousands of men are sure to flock to the city from surrounding places in order to obtain employment.

THE WORLD'S MARKETS

REPORTS FROM THE LEADING TRADE CENTRES.

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

Toronto, April 26.—Wheat—The market is quiet for Ontario grades, with the demand limited. No. 2 white and red Winter are quoted at 92c low freights. Spring wheat is nominal at 87c east, and goose at 81 to 82c east. Manitoba wheat easy, with No. 1 Northern quoted at 98c Georgian Bay ports; No. 2 Northern at 94c, and No. 3 Northern at 91c. No. 1 hard is nominal at 99c. Grinding in transit prices are 6c above those quoted.

Oats—The market is steady, with sales of No. 2 white at 31½c east. No. 1 white quoted at 32c east.

Barley—The market is quiet, with the demand limited. No. 2 quoted at 43 to 44c middle freights; No. 3 extra at 42 to 43c, and No. 3 at 40 to 41c middle freights.

Peas—The market is unchanged, with No. 2 quoted at 65 to 66c outside, with choice milling lots at 67 to 69c.

Corn—The market is quiet, with prices unchanged, No. 3 American yellow quoted at 54c on track, Toronto; No. 3 mixed at 52c. Canadian corn is nominal at 38½c west for yellow, and 38c for mixed.

Rye—The market is unchanged, with No. 2 quoted at 59 to 60c east and west.

Buckwheat—The market is unchanged, with demand moderate; No. 2 quoted at 50 to 51c middle freights.

Flour—Ninety per cent. patents are unchanged. Buyers at $3.60 middle freights in buyers' sacks for export. Straight rollers of special brands for domestic trade quoted at $4.30 to $4.50 in bbls. Manitoba flour unchanged. No. 1 patents, $5.30; No. 2 patents, $5, and strong bakers', $4.90, on track, Toronto.

Millfeed—Bran is steady at $17 to $17.50, and shorts at $18.50 here. At outside points bran is quoted at $16.50, and shorts at $17.50. Manitoba bran in sacks, $20, and shorts, $21 here.

COUNTRY PRODUCE.

Apples—There is a quiet trade, with prices steady at $2 to $2.50 per bbl. for the best stock.

Dried Apples—The demand is limited, and prices are steady at 3 to 3½ per lb. Evaporated apples, 6 to 6½c per lb.

Beans—Trade is quiet, with prices steady. Prime beans are quoted at $1.50 to $1.60, and hand-picked at $1.65 to $1.70.

Hops—The market is unchanged at 26 to 32c, according to quality.

Honey—The market is quoted at 6 to 7c per lb. Combs quiet at $1.50 to $1.75.

Hay—The market is quiet, with offerings moderate. Timothy is quoted at $9.50 to $10.50 a ton here.

Straw—The market is dull, with prices unchanged at $5.50 on track here.

Maple Syrup—The market is quiet at $1 per Imperial gallon.

Potatoes—The market is firmer, with offerings small. Choice cars are quoted at 90c per bag on track here, and inferior quality at 80c per bag.

Poultry—The market is steady, with limited offerings. Chickens, 11 to 13c per lb. turkeys are quoted at 15 to 17c per lb. for fresh killed.

THE DAIRY MARKETS.

Butter—The market is quiet, with prices as a rule unchanged. We quote:—Finest 1-lb rolls, 16 to 16½c choice large rolls, 15c; selected dairy tubs, 15 to 15½c; medium and low grades, 12½ to 14c; creamery prints, 20 to 22c; solids, 18 to 19c.

Eggs—Receipts are fair, and prices unchanged, with sales at 14c per dozen.

Cheese—Market continues quiet, with prices steady. We quote:—Finest September's, 10½c; new cheese, 10c.

HOG PRODUCTS.

Dressed hogs are unchanged with offerings small. Car lots are quoted at $6.25 delivered here. Cured meats are in good demand at unchanged prices. We quote:—Bacon, long clear, 8 to 8½c per lb. in case lots. Mess pork, $17 to $17.50; do., short cut, $18.50.

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

Lard—The demand is fair with prices unchanged. We quote:—Tierces, 7¾c; tubs, 8c; pails, 8¼c; compound, 7½ to 8¼c.

UNITED STATES MARKETS.

St. Louis, April 26.—Wheat closed—Cash, 95½c; May, 90c; July, 82½c.

Milwaukee, April 26.—Wheat—No. 1 Northern, 97c; No. 2 Northern, 93c; old July, 86 to 86⅛c bid. Rye—No. 1, 72c. Barley—Steady; No. 2, 63c; sample, 38 to 60c. Oats—Standard, 43c. Corn—No. 3, 47 to 48c; July, 48⅞c asked.

Duluth, April 26—Wheat closed—No. 1 hard, 98⅛c; No. 1 Northern, 89⅞c; No. 2 Northern, 87⅞c; May, 89⅞c; July, 90⅛c; September, 81⅞c.

CATTLE MARKETS.

Toronto, April 26.—The run at the City Cattle Market this morning consisted of 86 cars, of which, however, 31 were from Chicago to the seaboard. Arrivals totalled 1,225 head of cattle, 168 sheep and lambs, 1,935 hogs and 182 calves. Business was good, and after some holding off buyers and sellers got together and pretty well everything was disposed of.

Exporters, heavy	$4.50 to	$4.80
Bulls, export, heavy, cwt	3.50	3.75
do. light	3.50	4.00
Feeders, 800 lbs. and upwards	3.00	3.25
Short keep, 1,100 lbs.	4.00	.....
Stockers, 400 to 800 pounds	2.50	3.12½
do. 900 lbs	2.75	3.50
Butchers' cattle, choice	4.25	4.30
do medium	3.80	4.15
do picked	4.25	4.40
do bulls	2.75	3.00
do. rough	3.00	3.40
Light stock bulls, cwt	2.25	2.50
Milch cows	30.00	65.00
Hogs, best	4.90	.....
do light	4.65	.....
Sheep, export, cwt	4.00	4.25
Lambs	5.50	6.12½
Bucks	2.50	3.25
Culls, each	3.50	4.00
Spring Lambs	2.50	5.50
Calves, per cwt	3.00	5.00
do each	2.00	8.00

JAPS' PLAN A MYSTERY

Expected Battle Has Not Been Fought.

NO SERIOUS FIGHTING.

A despatch to the London Daily Mail from St. Petersburg says no news has been received from the Yalu River. No credence is to be attached to the reports that there has been serious fighting there. The latest official despatch definitely states that all is quiet there.

This disposes of the reports telegraphed to St. Petersburg and repeated in London, declaring that a severe battle has been fought near the mouth of the Yalu River, and that the Japanese army has suffered a serious check. One despatch from Port Arthur declared the Japanese were defeated with a loss of 7,000 men.

It is also reported at St. Petersburg that Vice-Admiral Togo's squadron has returned to Port Arthur. If this is correct it foreshadows probably another bombardment.

It is pointed out here that Togo's boisterous calls at Port Arthur usually are made about ten days apart. It has been eight days since Port Arthur was under the Japanese guns, and another bombardment is due.

In spite of the rumors of activity near the mouth of the Yalu, Japan's plan of campaign is still as much of a secret as it was at the beginning of the war two months and a half ago. No one can yet say that the Japanese will or will not cross the Yalu at Wiju; that they will or will not attempt to land at Takushan, at Talienwan Bay, at Kin-Chau, at Yin-Kow or west of New-Chwang.

No one knows where Japan's armies are concealed. Russian scouts believe there is one division at Wiju, but the hiding place of the other division is a mystery. It is known that they sailed from Japan, some of them weeks ago. They may be in Corea—or Tibet—as far as anyone here, in Paris or St. Petersburg, knows.

HOSPITALS FILLED.

A despatch to the London Standard from Kieff says it is stated in military circles that 10,000 troops are in the hospitals in Manchuria, chiefly typhoid patients.

30 MILES ALONG THE YALU.

It is reported that the Japanese are landing troops and constructing buildings at Hung-Chuan, below Yongampho. Advices received at Seoul also state that the Japanese lines now extend 30 miles along the Yalu River, reaching from Yongampho to 10 miles above Wiju. The Russians are strongest at Antung. Tiger Hill is, as it was in the Chino-Japanese war, the key to the situation.

Three islands, one above and two below Wiju, will facilitate an attack as they offer a base for artillery to cover the crossing of the Yalu.

Advices from the Province of Hamgyung, in North-eastern Corea, state that the country folk along the northern border of the province are selling cattle and supplies to the Russians. The Province of Hamgyung is the former home of Yiyongik, a former Corean Minister of Finance, who, on account of his pro-Russian sympathies was transported to Japan last February by the Japanese authorities.

Several Corean officers suspected of being Russian spies have been arrested.

SMALL ENGAGEMENT.

The following telegram from Viceroy Alexieff has been received at St. Petersburg by the Emperor:—

"Quite a series of reconnaissances carried out on the Yalu have shown that the Japanese are concentrating in considerable force. It is believed that they have one division to the north of Wiju. They are also beginning to concentrate troops in Wiju, from which place they have moved the Corean population.

"Information has reached me that quantities of material, apparently parts of pontoon bridges, are being collected opposite the Island of Mabikhie.

"Our scouts have killed two Japanese scouts, one of whom appeared to be an officer.

"On our right flank our scouts executed daring reconnaissances, extending over several days, on the left bank of the Yalu, as the result of which it has been ascertained that there are only a few troops south of the River Pomakua, but that the Japanese there are occupied in preparing boats.

"A Russian detachment of two officers and 32 men proceeded thither in three boats. The detachment was, however, discovered by the enemy and shots were exchanged, three of our riflemen being killed. Staff-Capt. Smeizin and 11 riflemen were severely, and Lieut. Pushkin and four men slightly wounded. The detachment returned to our bank of the river under the cover of two of our guns."

Gen. Kouropatkin telegraphed to the Czar on Friday that he had decided to take the offensive, considering the force now at his disposal sufficient. He says he will leave nothing to chance. He therefore gave orders to advance a brigade of infantry, supported by a strong force of Cossacks. Five thousand Cossacks are also advancing in North-eastern Corea, and are said to be seventy miles from the Yalu.

TWENTY RUSSIANS KILLED.

The Russian Emperor has received the following telegram from Viceroy Alexieff, bearing Friday's date:—

"I respectfully report to your Majesty that to-day during the placing of mines by some steam launches Lieut. Pell and 20 men were killed through a mine exploding prematurely under the stern of one of the launches."

Viceroy Alexieff's announcement has added to the gloom which has prevailed since the disaster to the Petropavlovsk.

"We are paying the price of carelessness," said a member of the Admiralty, "and previous disasters seem to teach nothing."

The War Commission suppressed part of the Viceroy's despatch, which showed where the mines were being laid. It is believed that as launches were employed, they were mining the entrance to the harbor in order to prevent the Japanese from forcing an entrance and attempting to destroy the remaining ships. It is evident from the closing of the entrance, that Viceroy Alexieff has no intention of letting his ships go to sea again, even against an inferior force, though this may not be the policyt of Vice-Admiral Skrydioff, who will determine on a plan of operations when he assumes command.

MOUTH OF YALU BLOCKED.

Numerous skirmishes in the vicinity of the Yalu River are reported. Japanese scouts crossed the river twelve miles above Wiju and reconnoitered the Russian position. They sustained no loss. The Japanese have established posts on the small islands near Wiju. It is believed that they have succeeded in blocking the mouth of the river. The Russians are extending their fortifications. They are strongly reinforcing their troops on Tiger Island, opposite Wiju, where a severe battle was fought in the Chino-Japanese War.

THE JAPANESE PLAN.

A despatch to the London Express from Nagasaki, by way of Shanghai, claims that an eminent Japanese statesman confided to the correspondent at Tokio, on condition that his identity should not be revealed, an important statement, of which the following is the gist:—

Japan does not intend to push the war to the bitter end. She does not wish to humble Russia, but she is resolved to accomplish the removal of the menace of Russia's power in the Far East, and is confident that she can accomplish this. She will destroy as many Russian warships as possible and capture the remainder. She will then take Port Arthur and Vladivostock, and make her position in Corea so impregnable that Russia cannot possibly gain a foothold there. When all this is accomplished, she will offer terms of peace, having attained the objects for which she went to war, but until this is accomplished, she will not listen to any proposal except an unconditional acceptance of her terms.

CLAIM JAPS LOST WARSHIP.

It is persistently asserted by the Russians that a Japanese cruiser was sunk off Port Arthur, April 15, and that the Japanese armored cruisers Iisshin and Kasuga were damaged respectively below and above the water line.