

La Grande Evening Observer

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER -- PRINTS THE NEWS THE DAY IT HAPPENS

VOLUME XIV.

LA GRANDE, OREGON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 1915.

NUMBER 181

NEW YORK SUBWAY FIRE AND TIE-UP CREATES WILD PANIC AND HUNDREDS SUFFERED

SEVEN HUNDRED TRAINS STALLED IN TUBE FILLED WITH SMOKE AND FUMES

ONE HUNDRED, APPARENTLY DEAD, ARE REVIVED

New York's Worst Subway Fire Rages For Two Hours--Unconscious Fill Hospitals

New York, Jan. 6.—One woman lost her life, 13 are in a very serious condition, and 700 are suffering from shock, and inhalation of smoke, and thousands were seriously in danger for a time, as the result of a subway fire and tieup today. A blowout put the tube system from Upper Bronx to Brooklyn out of commission at 8 o'clock and an hour and 45 minutes later—after the tieup of the system had become the most complete in the history of the city—fire broke out between Fiftyth and Fifty-ninth streets, directly under two trains jammed with passengers. Trapped in the darkness, they fought frenziedly to escape until they fell unconscious from smoke.

People Lifted by Relays.

Firemen tore up the gratings and lowered ladders and rescued more than 100 who were apparently doomed but revived on reaching good air. It took two hours to rescue this group alone, the firemen working in relays, lifting the men and women up the ladders to safety.

Volunteer doctors revived some, and the rest were sent to the hospitals. Seven hundred trains were stalled at this point.

Woman is First Victim.

An unidentified woman was overcome by the smoke and died at the hospital. Fire Chief Kenlon said at 11:30 that all the passengers had been rescued, that 150 victims had been taken to the polyclinic hospital alone.

Wild scenes were enacted in the subway. When the blowout occurred the tube was filled with densely-packed trains. For miles in each direction from Fifty-Ninth street, the trains were stalled and plunged into pitchy darkness.

Fire Smokes up Tube.

The fittings at the powerhouse, where the blowout occurred took fire and filled the subway with smoke. The heat became unbearable. Finally the guards succeeded in running the trains between Fifty-Ninth and One Hundred and Tenth streets together, and for end, and opened the doors connecting them so the passengers could get out at the Ninety-Sixth street station.

Whole Trainload Suffocated.

Elsewhere great difficulty was experienced. Firemen entered the subway at Fifty-Ninth street by jamming the grating loose, and reported an entire trainload of passengers unconscious from the smoke. More than 150 were brought to the surface and carried to the Circle hotel where they were stretched on the stage until taken to the hospitals later.

COMMISSIONERS AT BAKER.

Light Rate Hearing Not Finally Set Down.

Baker, Jan. 6.—Clyde B. Aitchison of the Oregon Railroad commission, accompanied by Messrs. J. A. Rockwell and Wm. J. Neill, engineers to the commission, arrived in Baker yesterday afternoon for the purpose of investigating the affairs of the Eastern Oregon Light and Power company in preparation for the hearing in the company's rate case, which is now before the commission.

Mr. Neill was here last summer making an inventory of the company's property, and Mr. Aitchison at this time will confine his efforts to work on the company's books and

records, the history of its organization, management, etc.

"It is a somewhat unusual case," said Mr. Aitchison yesterday. "The investigation was originally taken up at the instance of the La Grande Commercial club relative to the rates in that city, but the company asked that its whole system be investigated at the same time, and that is why the service in Baker is being looked into, although there has never been a line of protest from any individual, club or corporation in this city."

"We will probably be busy here all this week, going over the company's books and records. We will probably have all our data ready so that the hearing before the commission could start about the 20th of the month, were it possible to hold the hearing in Salem. It is customary to hold the hearings on the ground, however, and with the commission pretty well tied to the state capital during the session of the legislature, it is impossible at this time to say just when we can get action. I had a talk with Commissioner Finley today concerning the situation as it affects the city and the promotion of the municipal project and we understand what it means to them to get the matter settled soon, and of course we will all co-operate to expedite the hearing and ruling and finish the case at as early a date as possible."

CELEBRATION THURSDAY.

Woodmen Have Big Time in Store at Anniversary "Blowout."

Tomorrow evening Modern Woodmen of America and the Royal Neighbors have a big time in store. Joint installation is on the program, and in addition there is going to be a musical and literary program. A feature of the music portion will be a male chorus of a dozen voices singing under the name of the Woodmen Male chorus.

Bert Oakman, district deputy head consul, has extended a warm invitation to every Woodman and Royal Neighbor to be present, and especially to Woodmen from other camps who may be in the city.

GERMANS ACCUSE FRENCH

Berlin, Jan. 6.—Fresh charges have been made by the war office against the French, charging they wantonly destroy German villages behind the Kaiser's lines. It is asserted towns are systematically wrecked by heavy bombardments which don't harm the teutonic troops. Capture of several trenches with 200 men is claimed at Argennes, near Souain.

Rains Hinder Battles.

Paris, Jan. 6.—Torrential rains are preventing Germans from resuming the offensive in the extreme North line of fighting in the Western war zone. Disposition of the troops has left no doubt in the minds of experts that Germans had planned a strong offensive operation.

Pneumonia Victims Great.

Conditions in the trenches are such that the soldiers live in frightful conditions. Pneumonia victims are arriving at Dunkirk by the trainload. Most of them are British.

Farther southward the troops are

FIRST PHOTOGRAPH OF BRITISH TROOPS FIRING BIG GUN IN TRENCHES.



This photograph vividly illustrates the activities of war in the winter time in the east of France. Here are shown British gunners in the act of firing from breastworks on the German trenches miles away. These large guns are hidden as well as possible behind brush or in forests where the enemy cannot see them through glasses nor make them out from the smoke which arises after a shot.

HODGIN RECOGNIZED AS THE COUNTY PROSECUTOR BY JUDGE KNOWLES--TESTS COMING LATER

Attorney John S. Hodgin was this morning recognized by Judge Knowles of the Circuit court as the District Attorney of Union county. Judge Knowles bases his action in this matter upon the law enacted by the state legislature empowering the governor of the state to make appointments to fill vacancies in public offices. Commenting upon the matter this morning Judge Knowles said: "Mr. Hodgin was appointed district attorney of this county under a law enacted by the legislature and

approved by the people of the state. I feel that it is my duty to observe this law until it shall have been declared unconstitutional by some court." The legal phase will likely be tried out in a test case in which Attorney F. S. Ivanhoe, retiring prosecutor, will attempt to retain his office until a regular election, on the grounds the law under which the appointment of Mr. Hodgin was made was unconstitutional.

Mr. Hodgin officiated in his first case in his new capacity this morning when he was present at the sentencing of Alexander Stevens, found guilty by the jury Monday of petit larceny. Stevens was sentenced to serve one year in the county jail. The judge in passing the sentence took occasion to lecture the prisoner upon the folly of the crime committed by an able bodied man who should be able to earn an honest living. He also intimated that unless the county could find some employment for the prisoner in a measure pay for his board during his long imprisonment; that the court would probably pay Stevens rather than allow him to remain an expense upon the county.

Attorney F. S. Ivanhoe, former district attorney, said this morning that he would take the case to the Supreme court right away through his attorneys Crawford & Eakin. Mr. Ivanhoe said that he intended to contest the case to a finish and is convinced that he has good grounds for his action in the unconstitutionality of the law authorizing the appointment.

Watches and Clothing Taken. The shack on Jefferson avenue occupied by Tony Peters, an Italian, was burglarized last night and a couple of gold watches and a quantity of clothing taken. The party or parties who took part in the burglary are not known.

SENATOR KIDDLE IS FOR LAW AND ORDER

URGES GOVERNOR WEST TO FOLLOW LAW IN NAMING NEW SENATOR.

EXECUTIVE ASKS FOR A SENATORIAL EXPRESSION

State Senator Kiddle Figures in Thrilling Tipover.

"I am a firm believer in law enforcement; would advise you to follow the law."

Such is the advise State Senator Ed E. Kiddle gave to Governor West this morning in response to a letter

(Continued on Page 8.)

LIFELESS BODY AT WHEEL

George Ruckman, aged 66 years, and well-known Alice farmer died at 8 o'clock last evening at the steering wheel of his automobile. In company with Mrs. Ruckman he was returning from the home of his son Sam Ruckman, nearby, and while leisurely driving along the machine suddenly swerved into the fence and stopped. The turn of the car called Mrs. Ruckman's attention to the fact that something was wrong. To her horror she discovered her husband's lifeless body at the wheel. He had spoken a few moments previous.

Later investigation proved that the machine had been shut off. It is supposed that Mr. Ruckman felt an attack coming on and instinctively shut off the apparatus of his car, dying in the same instance.

Mrs. Ruckman gave the alarm and was taken to her home. About a mile from the Sam Ruckman home, the auto went into a snow-drift and Mr. Ruckman got out to

REPUDIATES CONFESSION

JOHN SIERKS, ASYLUM INMATE, NOW SAYS MURDER CONFESSION NOT TRUE.

CLAIMS PEN. CHAPLAIN WORKED ON FEELINGS

Confession of Killing of Mrs. Wehrman and Son, Made Sunday, is Repudiated When Confronted by Father—Says Every Word of Former Statement Was Untrue.

Salem, Jan. 6.—John Sierks, an inmate of the insane asylum, who Sunday confessed that it was he, and not John Pender, who murdered Mrs. Daisy Wehrman and her young son near Scappoose in 1911, today completely repudiated his confession, declaring it untrue in every detail. Pender is now serving a life sentence in the penitentiary for the crime.

The repudiation of the murder confession came today when young Sierks was confronted by his father. At the conference between father and son Sierks claimed that state penitentiary Chaplain MacLaren had worked on his feelings and told him that he should confess in order to save Pender.

The remarkable confession of young Sierks, Sunday has created state wide interest in the case. State officials were loath to believe the story of the asylum inmates and have not yet taken any action looking to the release of Pender. Much evidence contradictory to the statement as issued by Sierks has been unearthed since Sunday, and Governor West has ordered a careful investigation of all the details connected with the confession.

IDAHO LIQUOR LAW UP.

Prohibition Bill Introduced in State Senate Today.

Boise, Jan. 6.—A resolution for the submission of a constitutional amendment prohibiting the manufacture and sale of liquor in Idaho was introduced in the Senate today by Senator Hart. No action has been taken on the resolution this afternoon. The House was not in session.

N. Y. Legislature Convenes

Albany, Jan. 6.—In accordance with state law the legislature will convene here today, the first Wednesday in January. With its meeting, the wheels of the new state government, begun today, will be started on their revolutions. The make-up of the Senate will be: Republicans 33, Democrats 17, and Republican-Progressive 1. The assembly will be composed of 99 Republicans, 49 Democrats and 2 Progressives. The presiding officer of the senate will be the lieutenant-governor, Edward Schoenock.

The re-election of Thaddeus C. Sweet, Phoenix, as speaker of the assembly is practically assured.

clear the way, and soon drove on. The rival of death too place about three miles farther on.

Mr. Ruckman had been in the best of health and has had no known affections of heart trouble.

Funeral arrangements have not been announced this afternoon.

Three sons, a daughter and the widow survive. The sons are Will and Sam of this valley, R. J. of Walla Walla and Mary Pearl of Joseph. Many distant relations, including the Cochran family, live here and at Portland, and most of them will likely be at the funeral.

Water Case Up Again.

The recent decision of the Supreme court in the North Powder river determination, whereby the North Powder Milling Co., was deprived of the use of certain water for two summer months will be reconsidered, as the court on yesterday granted the petition of C. E. Cochran, attorney for the mill, to have a rehearing.