

FIRE IN ASTORIA WAS SET

MR. STEARNS IS SELECTED AS MANAGER

Temporary Appointment Places J. E. Stearns at Head of the City.

WILL TAKE OVER DUTIES TOMORROW

Commissioners Vote Unanimously for His Selection; O. A. Kratz Spending Final Day in Office.

(By The Associated Press) ASTORIA, Dec. 28.—Official reports say that O. A. Kratz, city manager of La Grande, has been selected for a similar position in Astoria by the new city administration which takes office on January 1. Kratz some days ago resigned in La Grande and his name has been linked with the office here, but no official confirmation has yet been given to the reports.

O. A. Kratz, city manager of La Grande, late this afternoon refused to make any comments as to whether he had accepted or had been appointed to the position of city manager of Astoria under the new regime.

At the close of a short discussion by the city commission last evening, Commissioner C. J. Black moved that J. E. Stearns, city recorder, be appointed temporary city manager as a successor to the present city head, O. A. Kratz, whose resignation becomes effective this evening, until the commission can appoint a permanent manager. Commissioner D. H. S. Brownson seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed. Mr. Stearns will take over the duties of the city manager tomorrow morning.

"The interests of the city and my interests," stated Mr. Stearns, "and while in office I will, without favor or fear, strive for the betterment of the conditions of the city to the best of my ability."

Resolutions Passed. Preliminary to the appointment of Mr. Stearns, the commission passed a resolution, concerning the services rendered by Mr. Kratz, in high appreciation of the splendid work he has done, especially in regards to the discovery and arranging for the refunding of the road fund from the county, and the satisfactory settlement of the courthouse matter, wishing him success and joy in his new undertaking and expressing regret at his departure. The resolution was in behalf of the city commission, the city officials and all employees of the city.

Mr. Stearns has been in the employ of the city for four years at present being in the capacity of city recorder and was highly recommended by Commissioners Black and Brownson for the position. Upon going into office, he will appoint a city recorder, but stated today that he is not ready to announce whom he will appoint at present.

Applications Many. Applications from seven men for the position of city manager, were received and read by the commission before the appointment. Among the outside applicants were Orin Stanley, Mr. Morris of Portland, and J. A. Matott of Perry. R. W. Oakley, who is not at present in the city but who is a La Grande taxpayer and made his home here for some time, tendered his application and the commissioners reported that John Wil-

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Hunger Crazed Wolves Devour Three Persons

(By The Associated Press) PORT ARTHUR, Ont., Dec. 28.—A great roving band of hungry timber wolves has devoured three men, according to meager reports sitting in Wednesday from the snow-covered trails of the Sturgeon river country. These reports told of a losing battle fought by two Indians against a white trapper who had been downed and killed. Last Saturday an elderly trapper left his cabin in the woods to miles south of Ignace to trap down to the settlement for his Christmas mail. He arrived in safety. There was no mail, however, and the old man said he would come back Christmas morning. At noon he had not arrived. The postmaster sent two Indians to follow the trail until they found him.

Trapper Is Pulled Down. About two miles from the settlement the Indians found a spot pointed

BUILDING IN COMING YEAR TO BE LARGE

Both Business and Residential Building to Be Brisk; La Grande Looks to Big Year.

From present indications the coming year will see one of the greatest advances in building in La Grande during the decade. Several new buildings are expected to be erected in the business district, in fact plans have been completed for a few, and the work in the residential district is expected to go far above that done during 1922. An approximate aggregation of the money to be spent on about a dozen buildings, both residential and in the business section, is only \$250,000 less than a quarter million dollars. Authorities confidently expect the sum total to reach the vicinity of half a million dollars before the arrival of January 1, 1924.

Among the projects that are practically sure to go through is the remodeling and renovation of the building now occupied by the Sommer hotel, which will become a rooming house when complete; the construction of a building by Mrs. J. C. Henry, on the site where the J. J. Carr furniture store stood, and the building of homes by Charles Playle, Jerome Foley, Oscar Johnson, Peter McDonald, Mrs. William McWilliams and Clyde C. Pennington.

A new building may be erected by Mrs. Foley and Lee Bouvy where the L. and L. drug store now stands, although definite action has not been taken on the matter as yet and it is understood that the Savoy hotel will undergo a renovation.

Mrs. J. C. Henry will begin planning on the construction of a modern building in the business section shortly after the termination of the holiday season.

1922 Record Good. During the present year approximately 45 or 50 buildings of all classes were erected in La Grande, the amount spent on the total being nearly \$350,000.

HOLIDAY BALL FRIDAY NIGHT

Country Club's Membership Dance Will Be Well Attended Apparently.

Tomorrow (Friday) evening at the Country Club the membership dance will be held, which will mark another notch in the successful series of affairs which was started last fall to the club's management.

NINE KILLED IN EXPLOSION

ROSE, Dec. 28.—Nine men were killed when a fort near Trent blew up last night. An accidental explosion of a shell set off other ammunition. Debris from the fort was scattered for miles around.

WOMEN SAID TO BACK THE IRREGULARS

London Daily Mail Correspondent in Dublin is Pessimistic.

PRESENT LULL IN IRELAND TEMPORARY

Declares Even Wives of Ministers are Passively if not Actively Rebels and are Supporting Irregulars.

(By The Associated Press) LONDON, Dec. 28.—Reviewing the Irish conditions the Daily Mail's correspondent in Dublin today paints a discouraging picture. He expresses fear the present lull in military operations is merely temporary and that republicanism is still strong enough to cause the government infinite trouble. He attributes the constantly recurring rebel activity to women, seventy-five per cent of whom he asserts probably sympathize with the irregulars. He declares that even wives of some of the ministers are passively if not actively rebels.

THIRTY INJURED IN KANSAS EXPLOSION

(By The Associated Press) KANSAS CITY, Mo., Dec. 28.—More than 30 men are injured and burned, some perhaps fatally, as the result of a dust explosion and fire at the mill of the Schreiber Flour & Cereal company here Wednesday afternoon. The plant was destroyed, with an estimated loss of from \$125,000 to \$150,000.

Twenty-six persons were given emergency treatment at the general hospital, and 13 of them were transferred to private hospitals for further treatment. Several others were treated at police headquarters. No one is known to have perished in the fire. C. T. Schreiber, manager of the mill, said late Wednesday all employees had been accounted for.

The 50 or 60 men working in the mill virtually were trapped, some of them injured by the concussion. Then fire appeared to break out throughout the building. Men with burns and other injuries staggered out, and were rushed to hospitals for medical treatment.

THE MARKET (By Associated Press) PORTLAND, Dec. 28.—Livestock, eggs and butter steady.

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EXTRA

(By Associated Press) BRIDAL VEIL, Ore., Dec. 28.—Three boys lost on Larch mountain turned up safe here this afternoon.

PORTLAND, Dec. 28.—Alfred Rowan, of Gladstone, Willard Bradley of West Linn, George Nelson, of Jennings Lodge, all boys in their teens, who left Tuesday night to climb Larch mountain, had not been heard from today and search for them was begun. The trails are reported to be in a perilous condition on account of heavy snow.

HUGE LIQUOR ROBBERY (By The Associated Press) NEW YORK, Dec. 28.—A million dollar liquor robbery is reported on the high seas, indicating that the pirates raided rum runners. The report comes from the Bahamas.

HOOP SEASON WILL OPEN ON SATURDAY EVE

Union Five Will Invade La Grande; Reports Indicate That Visitors are Strong.

Five stalwart warriors of the Blue and White basketball team will swing into action for the first time in the season's interscholastic association schedule on Saturday evening against the Maroon and White team from Union. The invaders, long one of La Grande's traditional enemies on the grid, court and track, are reputed to be stronger than last season and the local quintette are looking forward to a hard tussle to wrest the victory from their opponents.

La Grande's hoop team this year is expected to be rated on par with the stronger teams in Eastern Oregon. Five of last year's players are back in school and although the five was whittled unmercifully by the Alumni team, it should be taken into consideration that the old grads were one of the strongest teams ever seen on the local court, many of them being college players.

Close Race Expected. At this time it is impossible for anyone to pick out the coming basketball champs. The stronger teams of last year in nearly every school are disorganized by graduation and Pendleton's purple wearers are rebuilding with four veterans lost. Joseph, champs of district No. 1 for the 1921-22 season, are confronted with the same difficulties and unless some team suddenly bursts into the

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HARDING HAS BORAH PLAN CATALOGUED

President Acting in Advance of Idaho Senator on Foreign Affairs

ASKS THAT BORAH MOVE BE STOPPED

Embarrassment Sure to Follow if Senate Allows Congressional Action on Matters Already Being Worked Out.

Washington, Dec. 28.—President Harding asked the senate today not to adopt Senator Borah's proposal for a new international economic conference, saying in a letter to the publican Leader Lodge that formal congressional action on the subject now would embarrass him in negotiations he is already conducting looking to such a conference.

(By The Associated Press) WASHINGTON, Dec. 28.—The president's letter did not reveal the steps that had already been taken or contemplated by the administration. It said that the members of congress could learn if they inquired in the proper way, but that the state department communications on so delicate a subject obviously could not be "bulletined from day to day." He added "if congress really wants to help it might well free the hands of the debt funding commission," which under the act creating it cannot alter the interest terms or the date of payment of war debts.

The letter stated that while the senate might properly "advise" in regard to international negotiations its action on the Borah plan might give "false impression" to European powers.

(By The Associated Press) WASHINGTON, Dec. 28.—The first official disclosure that President Harding is negotiating toward an international conference for the consideration of European economic problems was made by Senator Lodge of Massachusetts, the Republican floor leader, during open debate in the senate Wednesday on the proposal of Senator Borah, Republican, Idaho, for the

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MASKED MEN ARE TRACED BY OFFICERS

Louisiana Officials Seek Evidence Against Dynamiters; Great Legal Fight Is Anticipated.

BASTROP, La., Dec. 28.—Two confessions involving forty-five citizens of the Morehouse Parish in the kidnapping and murder of two of last August's judges and Richard, whose bodies have been found in Lake La Fourche, have been made.

BALTIMORE, Dec. 28.—Dr. B. M. McKion, former mayor of Mer Rouge, La., today lost his fight for immediate release on habeas corpus proceedings.

(By The Associated Press) BASTROP, La., Dec. 28.—Civil and military authorities Wednesday followed through the hills and swamps of Morehouse parish the trail they believe was taken by the masked and robed men on the afternoon and night of August 24, when five men were kidnapped and two murdered.

The trail covered a distance of about 25 miles from a point on the Bastrop-Mer Rouge highway, where the men were kidnapped, to a ferry landing at Lake La Fourche, near where the bodies of two of them were found last week.

The reconnoiterers were seeking additional evidence implicating those responsible for the mysterious dynamiting that released the bodies from the bottom of the lake, where they had been weighted down four months.

Great Legal Fight Promised. The legal fight to bring him back may develop another historic incident similar to the efforts to get former Governor Taylor of Kentucky out of Indiana to stand trial for the murder of Governor Goebel of the Blue Grass state, in Frankfort, Ky., two decades or more ago, in the latter expressed Wednesday by friends of the former mayor.

It developed during the day there would be continued toward available and confident friends to assist the physician who does not want to return here. His friends in Morehouse and adjoining parishes were lining up in his behalf. Many messages of reassurance were sent to his family at Monroe, where his wife, four children and parents reside.

That bond in six figures would be available in the event he would be permitted to was generally conceded here. A sum of \$350,000 was said to have been available for the release of T. J. Burnett, former deputy sheriff, the first man arrested in the case. A fee of \$25,000 was reported to have been offered to a certain firm of lawyers to lead in his defense.

BULLETINS

(By The Associated Press) OREGON CITY, Dec. 28.—The new concrete bridge over the Willamette river was dedicated today with ceremonies including the christening by Queen Harriett and a banquet that was held at West Linn.

SHIPS WRECKED (By Associated Press) SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 28.—The power schooner Stockton City was wrecked in a storm last night off Russian Gulch, seventy miles north of here. The crew was saved.

Two Fine Homes Going Up in La Grande Now

Despite the inclement weather conditions, two of the finest houses in La Grande are being built by John and Earl Stoddard. Construction was begun on both edifices several weeks ago and both are progressing nicely, with indications pointing to their completion about the first of April.

Earl Stoddard's building, which is being erected at the intersection of O and Second streets, facing O avenue, is being built on the general plan of a Spanish mission house. John Stoddard's house, although slightly smaller than the former, adheres to the general plan of a Spanish mission construction in many details but does not follow the exact lines as nearly as does the one going up on O and Second streets. The house being erected by John Stoddard is facing Fourth street.

Magnificent Interior. The interior work on both buildings will be favorably compared with the finest in the state. John Stoddard's home will consist of nine

DESTRUCTION OF ASTORIA NO ACCIDENT

Clues Found That Will Lead To the Arrest of Incendiaries

ORIGIN KEPT SECRET UNTIL LATE TODAY

State Fire Marshall's Deputies Informed Newspapers What Investigation Disclosed.

(By The Associated Press) ASTORIA, Dec. 28.—That the Astoria fire was of an incendiary origin and that clues have been found which will lead to arrests was the information that was given out today following an investigation of the state fire marshal's deputies.

UNITED STATES ASKS GUARANTEE

Ambassador Child Declares That Guarantee Must Be Given By Turks to Protect Foreigners.

(By The Associated Press) LAUSANNE, Dec. 28.—American Ambassador Child joined the heads of the Allied Delegations at today's meeting by capitulation of the commission of the Near East conference, in declaring that some guarantees must be given by Turkey to replace the capitulations or extra territorial rights for foreigners which the Kemalists have declared abolished.

COMPENSATION ACT MAY PASS

(By The Associated Press) FORT WORTH, Tex., Dec. 28.—Passage of the adjusted compensation bill at this session of congress is practically assured, said Alvin M. Owsley, national commander of the American Legion, who spoke at a luncheon in his honor here Wednesday and attended a session of the executive committee of the Legion.

Even should the bill fail at this session, that it will be carried for at the next session is already certain, Owsley said, as the required number of senators and representatives has been obtained to pass it over a presidential veto.

A merchant mariner for the United States, subsidy or no subsidy; the Bureau bill's passage, total exclusion of immigrants, and regulation of all aliens, form the main order of the program work of the Legion's 1923 program, Owsley said.

The Bureau bill provides equal retirement emoluments for reserve officers of the national guard and national army.

