

REBUILDING OF SEATTLE.

SEATTLE is on record with not only the greatest conflagration of the year, but one of the greatest that has occurred in the history of the United States, and this country numbers among its catastrophes, the most destructive fires of modern times. The actual property loss from the great fire that swept away the business portion of the proud Queen City of the sound on the sixth day of last June, as computed by reliable and conservative commercial agencies, reaches a total of \$8,000,000. The historic burning of San Francisco, in 1851, caused a property loss variously estimated at from \$4,000,000 to \$10,000,000, and the big Portland fire in 1872 cost but \$1,500,000. Spokane Falls's loss of \$7,000,000 and Ellensburg's \$2,000,000 make memorable this fateful season in Washington.

Three months since the date of the burning of Seattle have passed, and that enterprising city has as good shipping facilities as before the calamity. Its railway tracks and stations and its warehouses and docks have been restored. Its one electric and two cable car lines disabled by the fire are again in full operation, and the construction of a third cable line has been commenced. In the burned section streets have been straightened and widened and buildings are planned and under construction aggregating in value about \$4,000,000. The total value of brick buildings destroyed was about \$1,023,500. Some of the new buildings are already occupied. Work is prosecuted in every hour of daylight, and in a number of instances building goes on all night by the aid of electric light. It required a whole month to entirely extinguish the fire so that the work of clearing away the debris could progress in all portions of the burned district. For three weeks Seattle was under martial law and a considerable part of her energies was devoted to alleviating the immediate suffering entailed by the disaster. But while the soil was so hot that it had to be cooled by running water in the excavations where workmen were engaged, in order to make it possible for them to work, walls were commenced and carried upward with the greatest possible speed. The piling on the water front, soaked as it was with salt water, did not burn readily. Many of the piles were only blackened over and it was only necessary to replace the top timbers and planking to restore portions of the docks. This gave a foothold for pushing the work on the rest of the wharves. Then the warehouses were quickly thrown up and enclosed with corrugated iron. The railroad buildings were erected with equal haste and the tracks and yards placed in better condition for business than before the fire. Then the great volume of materials for

rebuilding the burned city began to flow in from neighboring places, and every means for moving freight has been taxed to its utmost capacity.

Such an enormous draft on the building supplies of a new country like the Pacific northwest has the effect to send up prices. When Boston or New York or Chicago burned, each had a well-developed country to fall back upon to produce and pour in upon it a limitless supply of building materials. With Seattle the conditions are different. Great as is the amount of brick, lumber, stone and iron in this country, the supply in the immediate vicinity of the city was not equal to such a sudden demand, and prices soon reached a stage that warranted the importation of brick from Oregon and even from Southern California, from whence many cargoes are being brought by water. On the principal building materials there has been a straight advance of more than fifty per cent. since the fire, and the limit appears not to have been reached yet. Under such difficulties the progress Seattle has made in rebuilding is nothing less than phenomenal. On pages forty-eight and forty-nine is given a view of a portion of the burned district as it appears at the present time, showing some of the buildings now under construction.

The following buildings are the most important ones in the burned district upon which work is now actually being done: Pioneer building, by H. I. Yessler, northeast corner of James and Front streets, to cost \$250,000. J. M. Coleman's block, on Front street, between Columbia and Marion, to cost \$250,000. Dexter Horton's building, on Cherry street, between Second and Third, to cost \$200,000. W. A. Bailey's block, southwest corner of Second and Cherry streets, to cost \$200,000. The new county court house, for which \$200,000 were appropriated. Phinney & Jones's building and the new Occidental block will each cost \$150,000. John Noyes, Gilmore & Kirkman and Toklas & Singerman are each constructing buildings costing \$125,000. The above will be from four to seven stories in height and constructed of brick, stone and iron. Scores of fine brick buildings costing less than \$100,000 each are going up in every portion of the burned district. The records of the building inspector (which official was created July 17, over a month after the fire) show that 128 permits for the erection of buildings to cost various sums between \$5,000 and \$100,000 have been granted, and a great many were begun previous to that date, of which there is no record. It will be observed that the Denny hotel, costing over \$250,000, which is in course of construction, is not enumerated above, because it is outside the burned district. The Ranier hotel and two large school buildings and numerous other structures are omitted from the list for the same reason.