

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SCENES AND RUINS OF THE BALTIMORE FIRE

COWED BY RING

Notary Public Testifies in Land Frauds.

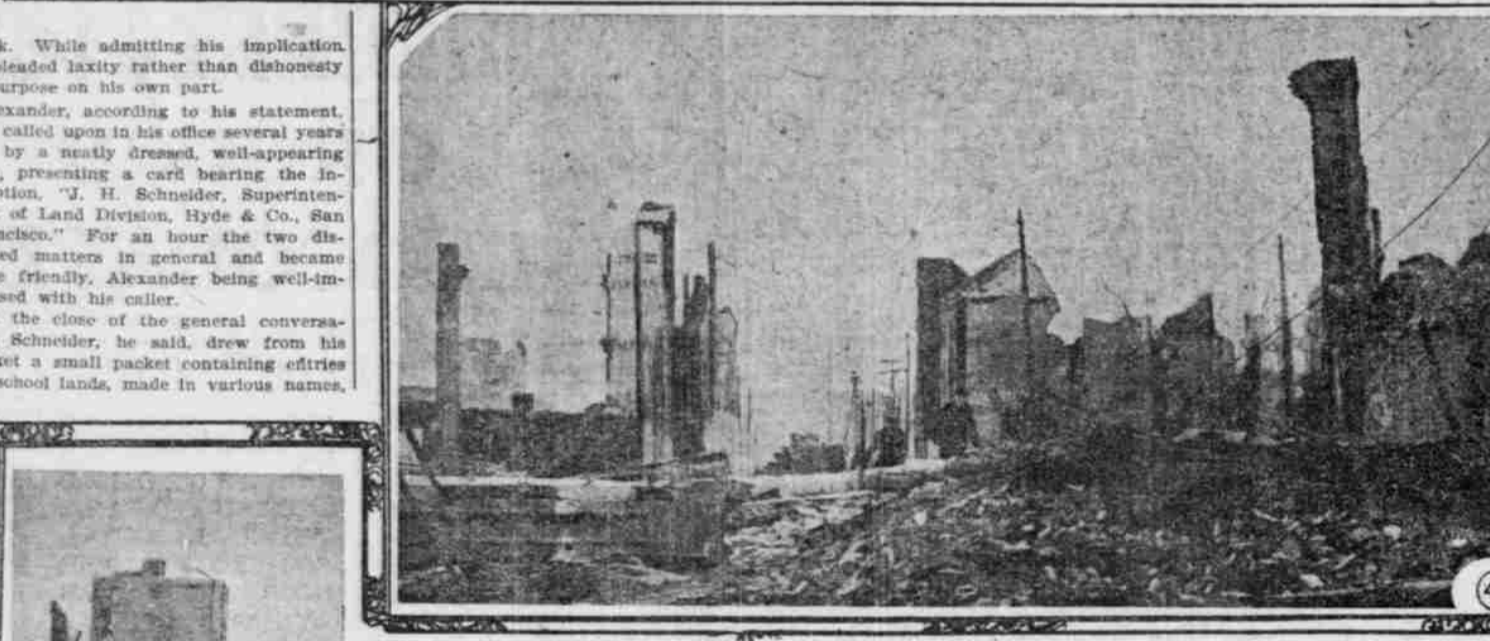
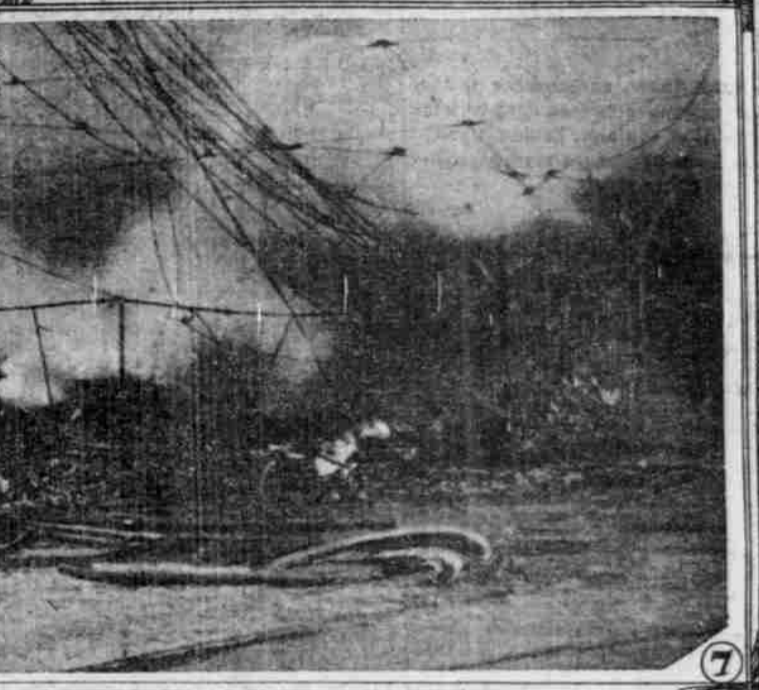
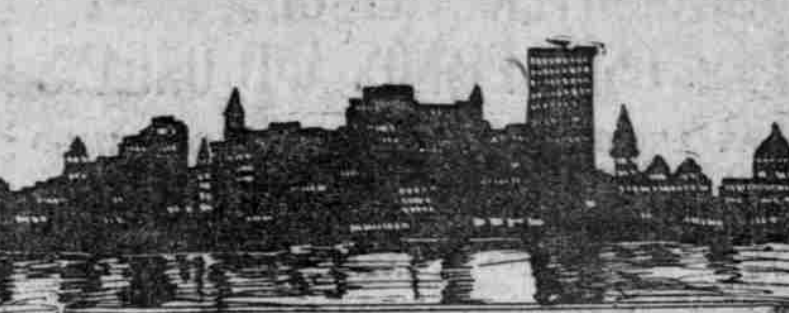
YIELDED THRO' WEAKNESS

Portland Man Feared Prosecution From Then On.

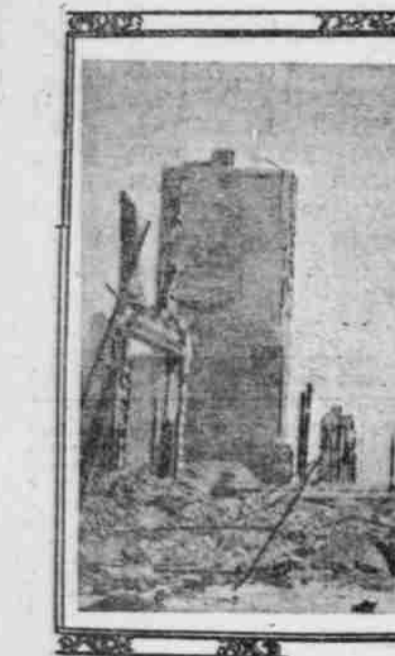
RECEIVED ONLY REGULAR FEES

Don Alexander Tells Grand Jury of the Alleged Expensive Operations of Benson, Hyde et al., in Oregon School Tracts.

OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, Feb. 15.—Don Alexander, a notary public of Portland, was the star witness today before the Federal grand jury investigating land frauds. During the hearing of the Benson-Hyde case his testimony, covering more than an hour, showed methods by which the lie land ring manipulated dummy entries in the State of Oregon. Alexander's testimony was straightforward and apparently



Frank. While admitting his implication, he pleaded laxity rather than dishonesty of purpose on his own part. Alexander, according to his statement, was called upon in his office several years ago by a neatly dressed, well-appearing man, presenting a card bearing the inscription, "J. H. Schneider, Superintendent of Land Division, Hyde & Co., San Francisco." For an hour the two discussed matters in general and became quite friendly, Alexander being well-impressed with his caller. At the close of the general conversation Schneider, he said, drew from his pocket a small packet containing entries on school lands, made in various names,



as well as numerous assignments of school lands to Hyde & Co. He asked Alexander to acknowledge the various signatures and attest the genuineness of the documents, assuring him that "it was all right." Alexander hesitated, as he did not know the persons named in the filings, and said he could not in good faith certify to their entries and conveyances. Schneider, however, persisted, and finally Alexander, as he said, weakly consented, and affixed his signature as a notary to the papers, receiving the regulation fee and nothing more. The next day, so he testified, Schneider returned with an enormous bundle of entries of a like character, and again sought to obtain the notary's attest. Alexander was stupefied by the boldness of Schneider and declined to sign, but when Schneider became obdurate and threatened to expose him for having certified to entries in a fraudulent manner the day previous, he acquiesced and complied with Schneider's wishes. The practice once started grew into a habit, and, as Alexander testified, has been going on for years. He admitted to the grand jury that he

had certified to thousands of entries made in the names of people unknown to him, but declared in all this time he never received more than the regulation fee. When flatly asked by a juror: "Did you recognize the names of any of these people whose entries you certified?" Alexander replied: "Not one." Another witness today was a Chief of Division in the General Land Office, who laid before the grand jury copies of the records of his office showing the extent of the operations of Hyde & Co., Benson & Hyde, and John A. Benson. These papers were too voluminous to be examined today, but show operations in quite a number of states, particularly California and Oregon, and involve millions of acres of land. **Sent Benson a Decoy Letter.** The important testimony given before the grand jury on Saturday last, mentioned in these dispatches, was that of William E. Valk, clerk in the General Land Office. Valk confessed to having agreed to furnish Benson with "inside information," but his first confession was

made to Secretary Hitchcock some months ago. At the time of his first confession Valk was promised immunity from prosecution if he would consent to assist the department in bringing about the arrest and conviction of Benson and Hyde. This he agreed to, and it was he who wrote a decoy letter to Benson which brought him to Washington under the supposition that he was to be furnished a copy of the report of Assistant Attorney General Pugh and Treasury Secret Service Agent Burns on their investigations. Woodford D. Hartman, ex-Chief of the Forestry Division, has also turned state's evidence and his testimony with that of Valk is to be used against Benson. Today's New York Sun, after relating Benson's manner of bribing clerks as told in these dispatches Saturday, says: "On one occasion one of the bribed clerks called at the New Willard Hotel to see Benson and found another person in an adjoining room. "Come in and meet him," said Benson. "It will be to your advantage." "But the clerk was suspicious and declined the invitation. On the next visit, as he was about to open Benson's door, the clerk said he met Binger Hermann, Commissioner of the General Land Office, coming out. They passed without a word. The testimony regarding this encounter caused a sensation before the grand jury." Hermann denounces this statement, and denies having met Benson, except on three occasions, in the General Land Office, when he denounced Benson on account of his fraudulent surveys in California. **Now Says Bridges Must Go.** OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Wash-

ington, Feb. 15.—Secretary Hitchcock has notified the Oregon Senators that neither Register Bridges nor Receiver Booth, of the Roseburg Land Office, can be reappointed. The department opposition to Booth was well known, but up to a week ago the department had no objection to Bridges. Even now no reason is given except that a change is desired. **FEAST ON OREGON SALMON.** **Fulton Gives Members of the Senate a Great Feast.** OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, Feb. 15.—Members of the Senate enjoyed a feast today of a monster chinook salmon from the Columbia River. By invitation of Senator Fulton, all Senators at the Capitol partook of the royal fish, and many a glowing tribute was paid the king of the finny tribe. Two 50-pound salmon were sent to Senator Fulton from Astoria, and by his direction one was today prepared by the Senate chef. It had been the Senator's intention to serve both fish, but he was advised one would suffice, and this proved to be the case. **Oregon Indian Lands to Be Sold.** OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, Feb. 15.—The House today passed Representative Hermann's bill ratifying the treaty with the Grand Ronde Indians. This treaty provides for the cession to the United States of 2,721 acres of lands. These lands are to be sold under sealed bids, but no bids can be accepted until the aggregate sum of all bids received

equals or exceeds \$2,100. All moneys derived from the sale of the Indian lands is to be paid the Indians. **To Improve Mount Rainier Park.** OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, Feb. 15.—Senator Ankeny today favorably reported from the committee on forest reservations, Senator Foster's bill appropriating \$50,000 for improving Mount Rainier National Park. The committee on conference today struck out of the urgent deficiency bill all appropriations for military cables in Alaska. **Astoria Memorial Presented.** OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, Feb. 15.—Congressman Hermann today presented to the House a memorial of the City Council of Astoria asking for an application for the erection in that city of a new Custom-House and the enlargement of the city Postoffice. **OPEN DOOR FOR PHILIPPINES.** **Bill by Carmack Also Extends Time for Application of Shipping Law.** WASHINGTON, Feb. 15.—Senator Carmack today introduced an amendment to the bill regulating shipping trade between ports of the United States and ports or places in the Philippine Archipelago. The amendment is for the purpose of extending the time of the application of coastwise laws of the United States to the Philippine Archipelago from July 1, 1904, to July 1, 1906. Senator Carmack said in explanation of this extension that the necessity was apparent from reports of ex-Governor Taft

and ex-Secretary of War Root, to the effect that immediate application to the Philippine Archipelago of the coastwise laws would be injurious to the trade and interests of the Philippine Islands. The amendment also provides a new section to the bill for the purpose of maintaining the "open door" in the Philippines. The new section follows: "That hereafter any duty or tax levied and collected upon the exportation of any article, the product of the Philippine Archipelago, shall be levied and collected, whether such article be exported to the United States or to any other country, it being the policy of the United States to maintain the 'open door' in the said Philippine Archipelago." **Russian Gunboat to Stay in Harbor.** SHANGHAI, Feb. 15.—The Russian gunboat Mnsdjur, which before the war began was preparing for sea, has now gone several miles up the Wu Sung River, where she is likely to remain, unless objections are raised by the Chinese authorities. **The Nanking Viceroy has telegraphed instructions to the officials under his jurisdiction to observe strict neutrality and to take measures to prevent anti-Christian and other disturbances.** **Indorsement of Russia Confirmed.** PARIS, Feb. 15.—The Foreign Office today confirmed the announcements made in these dispatches Saturday that Russia and France have approved of the United States' note on the subject of Chinese neutrality with a resolution excluding Manchuria. **Russia Orders Foreigners Away.** YINGKOW, Feb. 11.—In consequence of the attack by the Japanese upon Port Arthur, Viceroy Alexieff has or-

dered all foreigners and civilians to leave the place. Dainy was the first place to be deserted. These noncombatants and civilians have abandoned all their property at Port Arthur and Dainy.

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