

FEAR NO CHARGES

Mitchell and Hermann Come to Face Jury.

INNOCENT, THEY SAY

Deny That They Are Implicated in Land Frauds.

IGNORANT OF WRONG-DOING

Senator and Representative Declare They Can Convince Jury That They Have Not Conspired to Defraud Government.

Senator Mitchell and Representative Hermann, accompanied by Frank C. Baker, chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, reached Portland last night over the Northern Pacific after their long journey across the continent from Washington.

Judge Albert H. Tanner, the law partner of Senator Mitchell, met the Senator at the train and went with him to his apartments at the Portland. Mr. Hermann went to the Imperial, where he stays when in the city.

Both of the gentlemen were tired by their continuous travel and neither had much to say concerning the cause which led them to come from Washington at this time, though both were emphatic in their denial of any implication in the land frauds, and expressed their firm conviction that they would be able to explain to the grand jury when they appeared before that body anything that might have led to the inception of the rumors which have been afloat for some time and which had caused them to come to Portland now.

Senator Mitchell Speaks.

Senator Mitchell was seen at the Portland shortly after his arrival and consented to make a statement, though he said his ignorance of any charges which might be made against him would not permit him to say much more than to state his innocence and his conviction that he would be able to explain away all doubt that might arise as to any of his acts in the past.

"If you will state just what I say," said the Senator, "I will tell you my position in the matter." Assurance was given, and the Senator continued:

"Not until last Saturday," he said, "had I any knowledge or intimation that it was claimed by the prosecuting officers, or by anyone, that I was connected in any way with the Oregon land frauds."

"On that date, however, I received dispatches from Portland to the effect that it was current rumor on the streets that the prosecution of the persons engaged in the Oregon land frauds had implicated me and that there would be an effort to indict me with the others."

"Here to Disprove Accusations."

"On learning this," continued the Senator, "I immediately dropped every duty, both public and private, and started for Portland for the purpose of finding out what accusations were made against me and to disprove them. I am here for that purpose, having arrived at 7 o'clock this evening. I have not as yet had any communication with anyone, and therefore am not advised at the present time as to what charges, if any, have been made, or are intended to be made, against me, or by what alleged facts such charges are claimed to be sustained."

"Until I learn further, therefore, as to these matters, I have nothing further to say except this: That I am absolutely innocent of any connection whatsoever with the Oregon land frauds or other land frauds, and I have not the slightest fear of being connected, as to whether, if nothing but the truth is told. Later on, after I have learned the situation, I may have something more to say in the press."

"I may say in this connection, however, that I earnestly hope that all who have been in any way improperly connected with land frauds will be convicted."

Hermann Declares His Innocence.

Representative Hermann was entertaining some of his personal friends when he was called upon at the Imperial. The visit being nearly over, he came down into the lobby, where he was greeted by several acquaintances. He said in reply to the question as to whether he had any statement to make at this time that he did not in reality know enough of the situation here to make any comment on it other than to announce his entire innocence of anything fraudulent and to express his confidence in his being able to clear his name of any suspicious connection with the Oregon land irregularities.

"I have just reached the city, as you know," said Mr. Hermann, "and I have not as yet had time to see any of the prosecution or any one who could tell me anything of the nature of the allegations being made against me or against Senator Mitchell."

"Until very recently we had no intimation that we were to be implicated in any way with the frauds being found here, and when we were apprised of the fact we at once took the train for Portland to come here and vindicate ourselves before the grand jury."

"Not Implicated in Conspiracy."

"When I have found out what I am charged I will be in a position to make some statement in my behalf, but not until then. I have no idea what the allegations are, or will be, but I am confident that when the time comes I shall be able to explain to the jury my entire innocence of any connection with the frauds being found in the public lands in Oregon or in any other state. I have no fear of the outcome of this matter and am sure that I can explain to the jury that I am not in any manner im-

licated in any conspiracy or any plot to defraud the Government of any of its lands."

Both Senator Mitchell and Mr. Hermann will wait until summoned before the grand jury by Mr. Henny and expect to be able to gain a hearing when the jury reconvenes after the holidays.

INDICTMENTS ARE EXPECTED

Cases of S. B. Ormsby and C. E. Loomis Before Grand Jury.

The Federal grand jury had an apparently quiet day yesterday, though it is expected that something will be done this morning before the men leave for their Christmas holidays. The curious spectators who have been hanging around the corridors of the Postoffice building watching the witnesses as they go into the jury-room have seemingly made up their minds that nothing could be expected for some time and have been conspicuous by their absence for a few days.

Frank H. Walgamot was one of the men who went into the presence of the grand jury yesterday, and his stay was long one. When he came out, Colonel A. R. Greene, the special inspector of the Interior Department, was called for an extended conference. Thomas R. Wilson was the next witness. He is the State Prison employee who was alleged to have been one of the witnesses to the Frank H. Walgamot claim, and whose affidavit was found in the Loomis report on the lands in township 11 south, range 7 east. He was at the time the report was made an employee of the Denton News Company, but when he was brought before Mr. Walgamot, the latter was unable to recognize him.

Following these witnesses, George R. Ogden, the Land Office clerk, was called to give his testimony.

The witnesses examined yesterday would lead to the belief that the cases of S. B. Ormsby and C. E. Loomis were being considered by the jury, and it is the general supposition that indictments will be returned against these men before the jury adjourns today. The testimony of the other members of the 17 conspiracy has been taken before this time, and the men examined yesterday complete the list of those interested in that case. Greene was the man who uncovered the frauds and exposed the falsity of the Ormsby and Loomis reports. Walgamot was one of the men whose claim was passed through the Land Office on the false affidavits of these two agents of the Government.

T. R. Wilson was represented to have been one of the men witnessing the false land entry. G. R. Ogden was the clerk in the General Land Office who did not think that the first report made upon the lands was sufficiently clear and who ordered the second report to be made by Ormsby. All this evidence tends to implicate Loomis and Ormsby.

The jury adjourned yesterday until this morning at 10 o'clock, when they will work for the first part of the day at least. When the adjournment is taken it will be until Tuesday next at 10 o'clock in the morning.

The evidence in the Mitchell-Hermann cases will be placed before the jury during the next week. Owing to the fact that the two men are now in Portland waiting for an opportunity to appear before the jury, the prosecution has decided to take these cases up next on the list in order to have them over and allow the gentlemen to return to Washington for the rest of the Congressional session.

BOSTON EXHIBIT FOR '05 FAIR

University Medical School Display Won Gold Medal at St. Louis.

BOSTON, Mass., Dec. 23.—(Special.)—The exhibit sent to the St. Louis Exposition by Boston University is to be transferred to the Lewis and Clark Exposition at the expense of the Massachusetts State. This exhibit won the gold medal over all other exhibits of American medical schools, and attracted much attention from the medical profession.

PRESIDENT DEPOSES COURT.

Castro Believed Man Guilty of Murder Who Was Acquitted.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.—It has been reported to the State Department that President Castro has deposed the entire personnel of the Superior Court of Venezuela, on the alleged ground that the court had acquitted a prisoner of the charge of murder whom the President believed should have been convicted.

PAYS HIGH PRICE

Steel Girders Cost City \$37,170.

HEAVY PROFIT IS MADE

Expert Says They Cost Contractor \$22,000.

BRIDGE REPORT IS FILED

Charles S. Bihler Declares Morrison Street Structure Is a Credit to City, but Finds Excessive Cost for Extras.

HIGH PRICE FOR STEEL GIRDERS.

The contract price of the Pacific Construction Company for the Morrison-street bridge was \$31,342. On January 5, on recommendation of City Engineer Elliott, the bridge committee of the Executive Board recommended the substitution of steel girders for wooden stringers, as originally specified.

The Executive Board accepted the bid of the Pacific Construction Company for this extra work, \$37,170, no other bids being advertised for.

The Council's expert has shown that the steel girders, allowing for a fair profit, should cost the city \$22,000, a difference of over \$15,000.

No serious flaws in the construction of the new Morrison-street bridge have been discovered by Charles S. Bihler, the expert who yesterday submitted his official report to the special investigation committee of the Council.

By Mr. Bihler's figures, however, the city will be asked to pay \$15,000 more for the substituted steel girders than they cost the contractor, even when a reasonable profit is included. According to the contract, extras are to be charged up to the actual cost of material and labor, plus 15 per cent profit.

Mr. Bihler, who was brought from Tacoma to inspect this bridge, makes an impartial report. He, with Howard C. Holmes, of San Francisco, constituted the board of consulting engineers which in conjunction with City Engineer Elliott selected the plan for the bridge over those submitted last November.

So far as Mr. Bihler's statements concerning the exorbitant price charged up to the city for steel girders instead of wooden is concerned he proves his point by quoting current market prices for steel. When he shows that the city is scheduled to pay \$37,170 for it is getting value received for only \$22,000.

Mr. Bihler has been engaged to expert the Balch's-Gulch bridge at Willamette Heights, and the South Front-street bridge across Marquam Gulch. Questions of vital importance have been raised concerning the construction of these bridges. Upon the South Front-

street bridge the Pacific Construction Company holds the contract, but another contractor is doing the work on a sublet contract. Mr. Bihler is employed by the Taxpayers' League as well as the Council committee. He gets \$30 a day.

The report of Mr. Bihler was adopted at a meeting of the special-bridge investigation committee of the Council, Messrs. Rumelin, Whiting and Foeller, and the executive committee of the Taxpayers' League.

Pertinent questions had previously been asked of Mr. Bihler, and he adds the answers to these queries to his regular report. The gist of the whole matter is that Mr. Bihler is acceptable to the Taxpayers' League and the Councilmen who have become involved in the recent investigations. Therefore he is to continue his work here. Within a few days he will begin a technical examination of the other structures of the Morrison-street bridge.

How Contractors Saved Money.

Following is an interesting portion of Mr. Bihler's report upon the substitution of steel girders for wooden stringers:

"In connection with the substitution of steel stringers it became necessary to provide some timber strips on top of the steel joists for the purpose of attachment to the planking. These strips were apparently included in the proposition of the bridge company. The change released about 200,000 feet board measure, of joists, the reasonable value of which may be placed at \$300. The nailing strips amount to about 60,000 feet board measure, worth only \$100 in place. The cost of the steel stringers, therefore would be approximately \$37,170.

"I figure that the steel stringers amount to about 605,000 pounds of beams, and 900 pounds of bolts and washers. The weight may be somewhat greater, but this is what I could derive from the plans at my disposal. The cost to the city of these stringers is, according to this, 64 cents per pound in place.

"I find that steel beams were quoted at the time the supplementary contract was made at \$1.59 to \$1.75 per 100 pounds; adding cost of punching, shop paint and freight would bring the cost at Portland at \$2.55 to \$2.70. Handling, delivery at bridge site, placing and painting should be worth 35 to 50 cents, making actual cost in place \$2.90 to \$3.20, and with a fair profit the reasonable cost \$3.50 to \$3.80 per 100 pounds.

The total cost of substitution should be accordingly:

Steel beams, 605,000 pounds at \$3.50	\$2,117,500
Bolts, 900 pounds at \$2.00	1,800
Washers, 600 pounds at \$2.00	1,200
Freight, 600,000 feet board measure at \$30	1,800
Total	\$2,121,300

Judging from Mr. Bihler's report he does not consider \$725 an exorbitant price for the treated wood blocks. He holds that treated timbers are better for the cleanliness of the structure.

The last addition to the original contract of \$31,342 was made by the Executive Board November 7, when the bid of the Pacific Construction Company for the construction of tender-houses and waiting-rooms, and system of center pier, hanging footwalk around center pier, and other minor extras was authorized. Mr. Bihler says:

"In the absence of plans for the proposed work I hesitate to make any figures as to the proper cost of the various items composing this supplementary contract. It would seem that it would be more satisfactory to have extra work of this kind, where the work is not well defined beforehand, done on a percentage basis, or at least to have the proposition made for each part separately, so that the charge for each could be scrutinized, instead of having it all lumped together."

Following is the expert's summary under the heading "general":

"As far as the physical conditions of the bridge is concerned, in regard to quantities and quality of material and character of workmanship, I consider the work quite up to the specifications, and a credit to the city as well as to the builders."

Fog Lifts at Liverpool.

LIVERPOOL, Dec. 23.—The fog lifted at 3 o'clock this morning, and the White Star liner Oceanic and the Cunard liner Saxonia will shortly land their passengers.

PLAN IS SPOILED

Hill's Big Liner Too Late for Reception.

MINNESOTA AT SEATTLE

Mammoth Steamship Reaches Port Long After Dark.

ROUGH TRIP UP THE COAST

Loses Anchor and Chain by Dragging While in Royal Roads—Alterations and Repairs Are to Be Made.

SEATTLE, Dec. 23.—(Staff Correspondence.)—The Great Northern Steamship Company's new liner Minnesota dropped anchor in Seattle harbor about 10 o'clock tonight. The mammoth vessel had a rough trip up the coast, and there was enough remaining of yesterday's gale to prevent her reaching Seattle in time to admit of the programme of welcome being carried out as planned. The heavy gale which swept over the straits made it impossible to place the Oriental crew aboard last night, and it was still so rough this forenoon that the undertaking was very slow and hazardous, and instead of leaving the Canadian port at daylight, as planned, it was nearly 1 o'clock this afternoon before she sailed.

The vessel has aboard about 6000 tons of cargo coal, and this amount is so small in comparison with her size that the wind had a pretty full sweep at her vast sides, and progress was necessarily slow.

The belated departure of the steamer from Victoria precluded all possibility of her reaching Seattle before dark, and accordingly a large number of craft that had been placed in readiness to meet her a few miles out and escort her into port did not move from their docks. The steamer City of Seattle, which had been placed at the disposal of the Chamber of Commerce, and the steamship Umattila, each carrying about 500 people, departed at 2 o'clock and met the new liner a few miles out from Port Townsend. Seattle's nerves have been keyed up to a high tension all day, and hours before the big steamer had left Victoria, the docks were thronged with people who did not know or did not believe that the vessel would not make port before dark.

The Seattleites have always been inclined to become mildly hysterical over the big things that happen here, and they made as much fuss and noise over the arrival of the Minnesota as they did over the launchings of the Nebraska. This is not the first reception Seattle has given an Oriental liner. When James J. Hill had his first dream of Oriental trade he chartered an ancient British tramp named The Crown of Scotland, and carrying a few hundred tons of freight. This vessel drifted into Seattle about 12 years ago. It was a raw, chilly afternoon when she arrived, and it was raw and chilly today. The reception committee did not go out in a boat to meet the Crown of Scotland, but they stood on the dock and howled themselves hoarse, along with the rest

of the population, and every steam whistle between Ballard and Kent joined in the greeting.

A similar greeting awaited the Minnesota had she arrived in daylight, but the crowd on the docks, after shifting their weight from one leg to the other since early this morning, was too tired to make much of a demonstration, and satisfied themselves with mild comments on the shadowy mists which loomed up big in the main moonlight. Most of the steamers in port gave the big liner a welcome with their whistles, but the factory whistles were out of steam so late in the evening.

The Minnesota, as all know, is the largest steamship on the Pacific Ocean, but she was slammed around by the gale last night as easily as if she was an ordinary-sized craft. In the height of the gale, while lying in the Royal Roads, she began dragging anchor, and when she brought up her great weight caused the cable to part, and an anchor and 56 fathoms of chain were lost.

Of the coal on board the vessel, 1750 tons is for Portland and the remainder for Seattle. It is all anthracite and Cumberland blacksmith coal, and while it is being discharged at the bunkers here the steamer will take on fuel coal for her trip across the Pacific.

It is expected that there will be numerous alterations and repairs made, and in order that no time may be lost, these will be attended to while the vessel is discharging and loading. Unless there is a change in the plans, the steamer will not visit Tacoma on her first trip. Mr. Hill's able corps of freight rustlers have been preparing for the Minnesota's arrival and have in sight nearly enough freight from which to rig the big ship. Cotton, domestic salmon, steel and 25,000 barrels of flour will be the principal items on the manifest, and in weight and measurement the big steamer will carry about 22,000 tons.

LOSES ANCHOR AND CABLE.

Giant Minnesota and Other Steamers Withstand Strong Gusts.

VICTORIA, B. C., Dec. 23.—(Special.)—During the height of the southeast storm which raged on the Straits this morning the steamer Minnesota began to drag her anchors in Royal Roads. As a result of the straining one of the cables parted and the vessel lost an anchor and 56 fathoms of new steel cable. Another anchor was let go, and the big steamer rode out the gale in safety.

Some of the gusts were rated at between 80 and 90 miles an hour, and as the Minnesota stood far out of the water she got the full benefit of the wind. It was with great difficulty that she shipped the 172 members of her crew of Chinese from the tender this morning. Another instance of severe weather was the fact that the captain of the big White Funnel liner Yangtze decided to wait at the outer wharf until the gale raged in the Straits and off Cape Flattery should abate, before putting to sea, although she was ready to sail at daylight.

The Yangtze, although tied up to the outer wharf with all the wire cables and pump hawsers she could delay, had her starboard anchor down as a precaution. She sailed later in the day, when it was reported that the weather had moderated. The Yangtze shipped here 400 tons of salted dog salmon which the steamer Germania was unable to stow in her hold. She also took a large party of Japanese reservists, summoned to join the colors in Manchuria and at Port Arthur.

Funeral of Bishop Phelan.

PITTSBURG, Dec. 23.—The obsequies of Bishop Phelan, held today, were marked by simplicity. Pontifical requiem mass was celebrated by Bishop Casarin, after which absolution was given by five bishops individually. At the grave the services were brief, consisting of the ritual for the burial of a bishop and the blessing of the grave by Bishop Casarin, assisted by the officers of the mass. There were many high dignitaries of the church present from different parts of the country.

WIND FANS FIRE

Sioux City Shoppers Run for Their Lives.

TWO BLOCKS DESTROYED

Two Million-Dollar Loss From Department Store Blaze.

MAN JUMPS AND IS KILLED

In Three and a Half Hours Largest Buildings in Business Section Are Destroyed, and Flames Are Gotten Under Control.

PARTIAL LIST OF LOSSES.

Pelletier Dry Goods Company, \$240,000.
J. K. Brugh & Co., \$60,000.
R. R. Burlew, West Hotel and other buildings, \$45,000.
Commercial block, \$60,000.
Schulze's store, \$95,000.
George M. Conway, wholesale tobacconist, \$35,000.
State Bank building, Toy building, \$175,000.
Martin Bros., department store, \$25,000.

SIoux CITY, Dec. 23.—A fire, which resulted in the death of one man, a monetary loss roughly estimated at \$2,000,000, and the destruction of nearly two whole blocks, started in the basement of the Pelletier department store, in the Toy block, a six-story stone building at Fourth and Jackson streets, at 8 o'clock tonight. The district burned over lies in the center of the business portion of the city and among the buildings were several of the most substantial structures in the city. In these buildings were located a large number of large stores and several wholesale establishments and three Na-

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TODAY'S—Rain, possibly snow; southerly wind, 10 to 15 miles an hour.

YESTERDAY'S—Maximum temperature, 44 deg.; minimum, 35. Precipitation, 0.32 inch.

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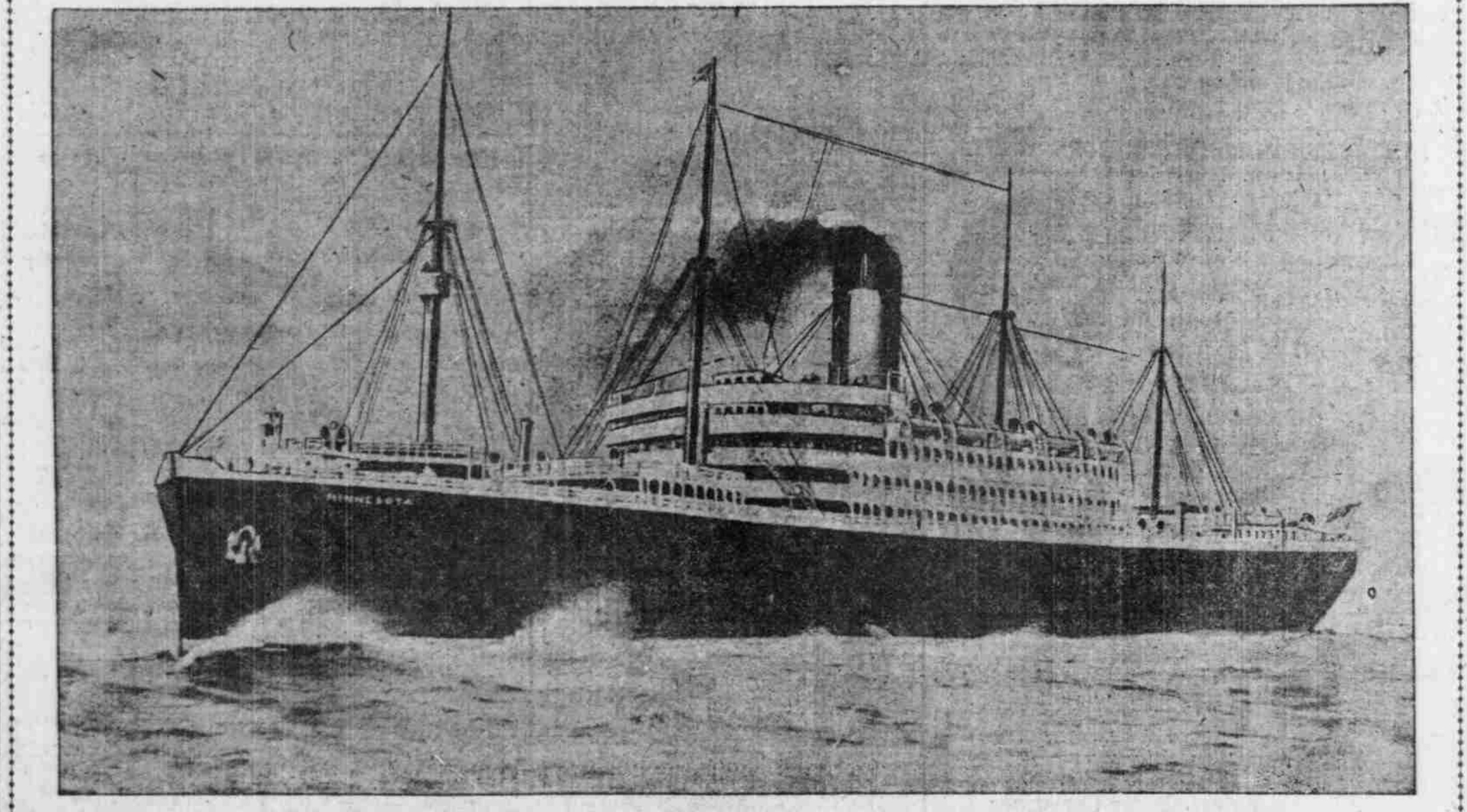
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Christmas services will commence in the churches tonight. Page 11.



STEAMSHIP MINNESOTA, WHICH ARRIVED AT SEATTLE YESTERDAY

The Minnesota, which arrived in Seattle yesterday, is the first of the Great Northern Steamship Company's new mammoth vessels to reach the Coast. This ship was built for service between Puget Sound and Japan, China, Hong Kong and the Philippines, and shares with her sister ship, the Dakota, the distinction of being the largest cargo-carrier in the world. The Minnesota is 630 feet in length, 73.8 feet beam and 56 feet deep from the keel to

saloon deck amidships. The total depth from keel to the upper navigating bridge is 88 feet, 4 inches. The vessel has a cubical capacity of 28,000 tons available for cargo, 2000 people can be carried; the accommodations covering 250 cabin passengers, 68 intermediate, 1500 steerage, and a crew of 250 men. An ordinary cargo for this boat would make two railway trainloads of 25 cars each, or a single train seven miles long.