

SURVIVORS RELATE GRAPHIC STORIES OF DISASTER TO GREAT NORTHERN TRAINS J. J. HILL ACQUIRES CONTROL OF OREGON ELECTRIC RAILROAD

RESCUE PARTIES SENT TO ASSISTANCE OF PASSENGERS AND CREWS CANNOT COMMUNICATE WITH OUTSIDE WORLD

JOHN WENTZEL BRINGS DETAILS OF THE DISASTER

Was Asleep in Hotel When, With a Roar, the Avalanche Descended on the Narrow Canyon.

Spokane, March 2.—Great Northern officials say 60 persons probably lost their lives at Wellington.

- Those on Train. Persons on the wrecked train who may have been lost: James McNeny, attorney, Marion building, residence 1106 Twenty-third avenue, Seattle. A. G. Mahler, real estate dealer, residence 820 East Forty-fifth street, Seattle. R. H. Bethel, contractor and civil engineer, residence southeast corner Ninth avenue and Jefferson street, Seattle. Mrs. M. A. Covington of Olympia, mother of L. J. Covington of the Washington children's home, Seattle. George F. Davis, motorman, Seattle, Renton & Southern railway, 2229 American avenue, Seattle. Charles S. Hiza, treasurer Pacific Coast pipe company, residence 4514 Fourteenth avenue, northwest, Seattle. Hiram Fowler, mail clerk, Seattle. Fred Bohm, mail clerk, Seattle. Lemmon, attorney, Seattle. G. L. Beck, wife and children, residence northern Washington, on way to California. Mrs. Starrett, three children, mother and father, Vancouver, B. C. J. O. Pettit, conductor of train, Everett. R. P. Diehl, baggage man, Spokane. H. Johnson, stockman, Trinidad, Colo. I. Cohen, Everett.

- Identified Dead. TRAINMASTER A. R. BLACKBURN. E. R. LONGCOY, secretary to Superintendent O'Neil. LEWIS WALTERS, Everett. Known Injured. Fireman J. D. Kurdie, fatally. Mail Clerk A. B. Hersell. Porter A. Smith. Porter L. Anderson. Brakeman Ross. Assistant Trainmaster W. Harrington. Engineer Osborne of Seattle. Engineer F. S. Martin of Everett. Engineer Carroll. Engineer Jarigan. Fireman Dan C. Gilman. Fireman S. A. Bates. Fireman Fred Nelson. Engineer D. Tegtmier. Conductor M. O. White of Everett. Fireman Mauk.

Clerks on Main Train. John D. Fox, married, Spokane; R. C. Bogart, single, Spokane; George Hoefler, married, Spokane; John C. Tucker, married, Spokane; Alfred B. Hensel, single, Spokane; L. J. Ahern, single, Spokane; Hiram Fowler, Seattle; Fred Bohm, Seattle. (Special Dispatch to The Journal.) Seattle, Wash., March 2.—Breathless, exhausted with his eight hour struggle against the blinding blizzards that have swept the Cascades for the past month, John Wentzel of Wellington staggered into Skykomish bringing the first news of the avalanche which Tuesday morning swept away two trainloads of human beings and part of the little town.

Wentzel gasped out his story in broken sentences. Spent with the effort of his flight from the scene of the accident, he was unable to give any connected account of the tragedy until several hours later. "Nothing But Snow." "All wiped out," he moaned, after he had been revived. "Nothing but a smooth bed of snow to show where tracks, trains and passengers were swept into the 200 foot gulch. Nobody can tell how many were killed. Thousands of tons of snow and ice and dirt and rock choke the narrow canyon and it will be days before the wreckage and corpses can be removed."

Asleep in Hotel. Wentzel was asleep in W. R. Balfet's hotel at Wellington when the disaster occurred Monday morning. "I was awakened by a terrific roar and rumble. My bed trembled violently and I jumped out in my stocking feet and ran to the door. Flying snow and debris filled the room and I was temporarily blinded."

"Huge Black Mass." "I carry a confused remembrance of a huge black mass, crashing at awful speed down the mountainside. The hotel in which I slept escaped destruction by a bare six feet. That roaring hell of dirt and rock and

HILL GAINS ENTRANCE TO WILLAMETTE VALLEY

Oregon Electric Road Said to Have Passed Into the Control of the Great Northern Magnate. Invasion of Southern Pacific Reserve Is Imminent.

James J. Hill is said to have gained control of the Oregon Electric road. The significance of the move can scarcely be exaggerated, for it is fraught with consequences of vast importance to Portland and to western Oregon. While local officials of the Oregon Electric deny any knowledge of the reported sale, it is admitted that they are not in a position to know the facts. Well informed local financiers are satisfied that the deal has been made and that Hill is now fully prepared to invade the Willamette valley as an open and active competitor of the Harriman system. Nor is the purchase of the Oregon Electric the only important strategic move recently made by Hill. It is an open secret that when the United Railways was sold a few months ago, the actual purchasers were eastern men intimately associated with Hill. By this deal Hill acquired the connecting link between his main line property in the north end and the very heart of the west side business section. Moreover the United Railways connect with the present terminus of the Oregon Electric at Jefferson street, thereby opening the way for direct invasion of the Willamette valley. Ever since the advent of the North Bank road it has been predicted freely

by railroad men that Hill would not rest content with the exploitation of central and eastern Oregon, but would ultimately make a determined fight for the still more attractive territory lying west of the mountains. Control of Electric Lines. Speculation naturally turned to the question whether Hill would not find in the Oregon Electric the most natural means of access to this portion of the state. And this is precisely what has happened. The Oregon Electric now has lines in operation to Salem and Forest Grove, with valuable rights of way to many other points of importance in the Willamette valley. Albany, Corvallis, Dallas and McMinnville are among the objective points to which the surveys have been made, and rumor has credited the company with plans for extensions still further south. The intimate relations between the Hill interests and the present owners of the Crater Lake road, running east from Medford, are well known, and it is quite on the cards that the Oregon Electric, under Hill management, may eventually reach the Rogue River valley. The Oregon Electric is a standard gauge road of very substantial construction. Moffatt & White of New

(Continued on Page Seven.)

TRAINS BLOCKED BETWEEN SPOKANE AND WALLULA; TRAVEL NOW UNCERTAIN

Centering all its forces on its Washington division, the O. R. & N. is doing its utmost to open its line between Wallula and Spokane, but under the most favorable conditions it will probably be Friday before direct communication can be established with Spokane by way of that route. In the meantime O. R. & N. trains to and from Spokane are routed of the S. P. & S. tracks north of Pasco. General Superintendent Buckley and Chief Engineer Boshke are at Colfax giving personal attention to the work of getting the line in shape for traffic. The greatest trouble on the Washington division is in the vicinity of Colfax, where extremely high water covers the tracks at a number of points. The Palouse river at Colfax is a raging torrent and all the town bridges have been swept out and lodged against the O. R. & N. bridge, making it unsafe. This trouble delays repairs to bridges in Hay canyon, shutting off material supplies for the pile drivers. Touchet river is very high and is still rising. The water in Hay canyon remains high and the current is too strong for effective work in replacing wrecked bridges. A telegram from Chief Engineer Boshke to General Man-

ager O'Brien's office this morning states he expects to have the Washington division open next Friday unless something unforeseen happens. On the Oregon division trains are running between this city and Huntington, but between here and Umatilla all the creeks are full and roadbed is very soft. This necessitates extreme caution in operation and all trains are behind schedule. Oregon Short Line Trouble. The Oregon Short Line has more or less trouble, so that service between Portland and the east over the Harriman system is very indefinite. Southern Pacific lines, between here and Astland are open, but trains are being run under strict caution orders, the tracks being soft from the heavy rains. The S. P. & S. line was tied up for a couple of hours this morning by a small slide in the vicinity of White Salmon. Aside from that this line has had no trouble. Trains are operated with caution, however, because of soft tracks. The Northern Pacific was delayed a while today by a small slide a short distance beyond Vancouver. The local Great Northern offices received word this morning that the line is open from Everett to Skykomish.

EVERETT AWAITS DREAD NEWS

Everett, Wash., March 2.—Suspense! This is the only terse word that expresses the situation relative to the smashing of two trains by a mighty avalanche near Wellington, yesterday. At noon today the Great Northern officials were as much at sea for news from the scene of the disaster as were the relatives and friends of those whose dramatic life secret is enveloped in the miles upon miles of snow covered mountains of the Cascades. Relief parties were sent out last night from this city and from points farther up the line. Wires are down, tracks are obliterated and the "great white silence" is more impressively silent than ever. Not less than 100 men are striving to reach the canyon where the two Great Northern trains were struck from their narrow shelf in the mountain side to destruction, 600 feet below. The rescue parties are well equipped with snowshoes, and it is hoped that the medical men among them will be able to surmount the difficulties that confront them and reach Wellington where many injured are undoubtedly in need of assistance. Wellington is a small railroad station at the other side of the Cascade tunnel and half way between this place and Wenatchee. There are few persons living there and it is surmised that the little house or two that constituted the hamlet have been swept away and those who have survived the disaster must be suffering from the extreme cold and lack of food. Top of the party that started for Scheib, 10 miles distant, arrived safely. One of these was a John S. Rogers, who escaped injury after having been carried several hundred feet on the great snowslide.

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RELATES STORY OF STRUGGLE TO REACH EVERETT

John S. Rogers, With Nine Others From Stalled Train, Has an Exciting Experience in Reaching Home.

AVALANCHE DESTROYED BUNKHOUSE, 2 DEAD

Immense Snow Caps Threatened Lives of Passengers and Train Crew.

(United Press Lined Wire.) Everett, Wash., March 2.—This is the story of John S. Rogers, a real estate man, who, with nine others, struggled through the snow from the stalled train at Wellington Monday and made his way out. "I had been to Soap Lake. I left just a week ago, on the Great Northern. By the time we reached the mountains the train had about 70 passengers aboard. "At about 6 o'clock Wednesday morning we were stopped at the east portal of the Cascade tunnel. We stayed there until Friday, getting our meals, two a day, at a bunkhouse. "On Friday night we left the east portal, and a few hours later an avalanche wiped out the station and bunkhouse, killing two men. We pulled through the tunnel as far as Wellington, about half a mile beyond the west portal. "At Wellington there are three tracks. On the track nearest the mountainside stood Superintendent O'Neil's private car, two box cars, the engine and three of the electric motors that are used to haul trains through the tunnel. On these cars were the superintendent, train crews and porters. On the second track from the mountainside stood my train, consisting of engine, baggage car, two coaches, two sleepers and an observation car. On the third track stood the fast mail train, on which were 15 or 18 mail clerks. About 10 track laborers were also sleeping on the train in the day coaches. "We all ate at Hallie's hotel in Wellington and while food was plentiful, fuel was not, so the train was not run back into the tunnel. "The railroad climbed over the mountain on a switchback. Sunday we noticed on top of this switchback, far above us, an enormous cap of snow hanging precariously on the side, and clinging to the sparse timber. The same day I saw a slide coming down the east side of the hotel, carrying timber with it in a great avalanche of snow. That night there was a slide at the east portal that filled a 50 foot gulch. We began to fear for the safety of the train. "The menace of that immense snow cap was a pall on our spirits. It was the most enormous accumulation of snow ever known in the mountains, during all the time it snowed continuously, with terrific winds driving the drifts. Monday noon the party of 10 started out for Seabe and after an all day battle with the snow, reached Skykomish and safety that night. In the party with Rogers were E. A. Sperber, R. McNight and Samuel Field, Vancouver, B. C.; Charles Yohn, Portland; Frank Ritter, South Billingham; August Van Larken, Seattle; Giuseppe Dinatolo, Portland; H. L. Wertz, Hillyard and E. W. Bowles, Vancouver, B. C. Rogers' story is the most accurate description yet obtained of the situation in Wellington when the slide came. It makes it evident that Spokane local, No. 25, fast mail No. 26, an exclusive mail train, and the superintendent's car were all swept into the canyon, a thousand feet below.

SPOKANE FLOOD IS ALARMING

Spokane, March 2.—Anxious wives, husbands and friends pack newspapers, railway and telegraph offices awaiting news from the catastrophe. Floods almost surround Spokane on three sides today, and bridges are rapidly going out, residences are flooded and much household furniture is ruined. In both the east and west sides of the city, residents are fleeing from their homes for uptown and the hills on the south side of the town. Small buildings are afloat on the east side and the water is rushing in raging torrents through the west side resident district. The worst flood in years.

SERIOUS FLOODS THREATENED BY MELTING SNOW

Upper Columbia and Snake Rivers Rise Rapidly, Causing Alarm Along Lower Stretches—Crest Not Yet Reached.

LOWER WILLAMETTE WILL REACH 17.5 FEET

Above Salem Only the Santiam River Responds to Spring Freshet.

Flood conditions are prevalent in the Willamette river below Salem although above that point there is no flood except in the Santiam river. The upper Columbia and Snake rivers are rising rapidly, due largely to the melting of snow in the foothills. All of the tributaries of the lower Willamette are above the flood stage, and pouring their waters into the latter at a rapid rate. The Willamette at Portland stood this morning at a stage of 16.3 feet and the prediction is that it will reach a stage of 17.5 feet by Friday. District Forecaster Beale said this morning that the peculiar feature of the present flood is that it has no crest and for that reason it is hard to predict just what it will do. The rising of the Columbia river will check the flow of the water out of the Willamette and with the rapid influx of water from the flooded tributaries, it will run out slowly. His advice to persons who have property which will be damaged by the water at a stage of less than 17.5 feet is to move. In the last twenty-four hours the Snake river at Welter rose 2 1/2 feet reaching a stage of 14.1 feet which is phenomenally high for this season of the year. At Umatilla the Columbia river rose .7 of a foot to a stage of 5.3 feet above low water, and at Lewiston made a leap of 5.8 feet in the twenty-four hours up to 8 o'clock this morning, reaching a stage of 11.1 feet. The rise is caused almost exclusively by melting snow. At Estacada the Clackamas river was at a stage of 14.5 feet this morning at 8 o'clock and is now at a stand, no rise having taken place in the last 12 hours. Another river which also came to a stand was the Yamhill river which stopped rising at McMinnville at a stage of 28 feet. The Tualatin river is still coming up.

(Continued on Page Fourteen.)

PEPOON IS ARRESTED FOR WIFE MURDER

Taken Into Custody on Warrant Issued Through Efforts Made by Woman to Determine Cause of Daughter's Death—Now Seek Ray Wilcox.

Cause Arrest of Wilcox. Mrs. D. W. Wolcott of 111 East Forty-seventh street, Portland, Or., and Mrs. Earl Pugh of East Forty-sixth and Belmont streets, brought about the arrest of Pepon and started the search for Wilcox after an investigation which they personally conducted and which covered a period of five months. Mrs. Wolcott is the mother of Mrs. Edith Pepon, who died in convulsions at a lonely cabin six miles from Northport, Wash., August 29, 1909. Mrs. Pugh is the sister. They were helped in the investigation by Morton Crossan, an aged homesteader, at whose cabin the woman died. Mrs. Wolcott is now in Northport.

murdering his first wife, Mrs. Edith Pepon, August 29, 1909, who is believed to have died from the effects of strychnine poisoning. He was put in the county jail at Colville, Wash., today. Pepon was arrested on a warrant. Another has been issued for Ray Wilcox, paroled convict, against whom the same charge rests. Wilcox has not been arrested. His whereabouts is not known. He broke his parole two days after the woman's death. The warrant has been held 14 days awaiting the result of the examination of Mrs. Pepon's remains by Dr. Ralph Mason of Portland, to whom they were shipped. But so strong was the sentiment of the residents of Northport that the prosecuting attorney decided to cause the arrest of Pepon. Excitement is at a high pitch. Pepon has not made a statement. Mrs. D. W. Wolcott, mother of the dead woman, is making every effort to make it possible for the Boys' and Girls' Aid society to get charge of the youngest child of the Pepons. The two elder children are wards of the Multnomah county juvenile court, but Pepon has the custody of the baby.

(Special Dispatch to The Journal.) Northport, Wash., March 2.—George L. Pepon, former theological student and lecturer, was arrested here yesterday on a warrant issued by Prosecuting Attorney H. C. Kirkpatrick of Stevens county. He is held on suspicion of

ARREST OF PEPOON PLEASERS SISTER OF MURDERED WOMAN

CITY GETS PART OF THE INCOME OF ONLY ONE CORPORATION

The Home Telephone company this morning filed its annual report for 1909 with the city auditor and enclosed in a letter to that official a check for \$2700, representing 1 per cent of the gross income of the corporation for one year. By the terms of the corporation's franchise it is required to pay 1 per cent of its yearly gross earnings here, in compensation for the privilege of doing business in Portland. "If some of the other corporations that operate in Portland were required to pay a similar sum it would be a nice thing for the city treasury," said City Auditor A. L. Barbur this morning. "It is too bad that those communities long franchises in the past did not have the foresight to base the compensation therefor on the amount of business to be done by the companies."

Mrs. Earl Pugh of East Forty-sixth and Belmont streets, a sister of the dead woman, whose remains have been shipped from Northport, Wash., to Portland for analysis, was told today of the arrest of George L. Pepon, and of the filing of the prosecuting attorney H. C. Kirkpatrick of Stevens county in swearing out a warrant for the arrest of Ray Wilcox, the convict, who is charged with complicity. "I know everything will turn out right now," she said. "I am greatly relieved. My mother and I have been working to this end for five months." Was Theological Student. George L. Pepon, a former theological student, is charged with the murder of his wife, Mrs. Edith Pepon. She died at the cabin of Morton Crossan, an aged homesteader, six miles from Northport, Wash., on the afternoon of August 29, 1909. Conditions under which she died indicated death followed the administration of strychnine. Three weeks before her death Mrs. Pepon insured her life in favor of her husband for \$1000 in the Women of Woodcraft. She was then living with her husband, their three children, May Jones, a servant, and Morton Crossan, in the homesteader's cabin. Her husband had settled upon a nearby tract of government land. Three days after the woman took out the life insurance policy the husband employed Ray Wilcox, a convict paroled from the Walla Walla (Washington) state penitentiary, as a farm hand. Wilcox had been working for Maude Keller, who married Pepon two or three months after the death of his first wife. Her reputation was assailable. Wilcox was graduated a pharmacist before he was sent to the penitentiary for attempting to commit grand larceny. Mrs. Pepon Taken Ill. Several days before her death Mrs. Pepon was taken ill. She wrote to her mother, Mrs. D. W. Wolcott of 111 East Forty-seventh street, Portland, that her stomach seemed affected. After her death, her three children, which indicated they had contained morphine and laudanum, were found. Not the servant, May Jones, but the convict, was charged with the care of the woman. Witnesses to the violent death of the woman were Morton Crossan, May Jones, Pepon, Wilcox and Mrs. David M. Downs, a neighbor. They testify, all of them, that the woman suffered three convulsions, the last of which was followed by her rigor mortis. Strychnine, administered to a human being, has the same effects. No physician was called to examine the body. Crossan and Mrs. Downs aver that 15 minutes before the first convulsion, Mrs. Pepon was induced by her husband and Wilcox to drink glassful of dark colored liquid which they offered her. Afterward she was given a raw egg. Wilcox Escapes. Wilcox escaped the day before the woman's funeral, breaking his parole. Although he was entitled under the law to receive only \$15 a month and his food and lodging from his employer, he cashed a check which was drawn to his order by Pepon for \$100. A reward of \$50 has been offered for his capture by the prison authorities. When Crossan and Mrs. Wolcott and her three daughters, Mrs. Pugh, began investigating the death they found that a vial of strychnine which had been purchased to kill gophers had disappeared. Crossan affirmed that only he and Pepon knew where it had been hidden. Later the bottle was found in the cabin. It was empty. For five months Mrs. Wolcott and



George L. Pepon, held at Northport, Wash., while investigation is made concerning the death of his wife.

(Continued on Page Two.)