

RESUME OF THE WEEK'S DOINGS

General Review of Important Happenings Presented in a Brief and Comprehensive Manner for Busy Readers—National, Political, Historical and Commercial.

Many political exiles of Venezuela are returning to their homes.

Roosevelt says the only thing about his African trip he fears is the fever.

It is believed American Ambassador Griscom will resign his post at Rome.

Henry W. Poor, a leading Wall Street broker, has assigned. His liabilities will reach \$5,000,000.

Castro has witnessed what to him is a unique spectacle—a snowstorm and skating on natural ice.

Governor Hughes has appointed a commission to investigate the New York produce and cotton exchanges.

Chicago contractors who have been in the habit of giving presents to city officials at Christmas time this year had their gifts returned.

Gomez' power as ruler of Venezuela is finally established. Many suits have been commenced against Castro and he will lose \$2,000,000 by the turn of affairs.

Plans are all complete for the arrest of about 40 more Pittsburg grifters. The railroads are aiding the movement, as it is cheaper to oust them than to pay their price.

The bank at Monrovia, Cal., has lost \$29,000, which mysteriously disappeared.

One man was killed and three persons injured in an automobile wreck in California.

Christmas was celebrated all over the United States by lavish gifts and feasts to pour.

The bribery of Pittsburg councilmen by bankers has been taken up by the government.

A crazy French Royalist tried to pull President Fallieres' beard, and was promptly arrested.

An appeal may be made to Taft to pardon Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison in case their appeal fails.

Claus Spreckels, the sugar king, is critically ill at his home in San Francisco, and it is feared he cannot survive.

The Chicago saloon question may be put to a referendum vote next April. The anti-saloon element is gaining in strength.

Oklahoma prisoners, who are confined in the Kansas penitentiary, complain of cruel treatment and an investigation is to be made.

A boy of 15 is under arrest at Mount Clemens, Mich., charged with stealing at least \$30,000 from postoffice boxes. He was caught while cashing a check.

Express companies were swamped with Christmas business.

Cosgrove has so far recovered that he is able to walk a little.

Count Boni de Castellane lost his suit for possession of his children.

Harriman has been reported ill, but his physician says it was only a slight bilious attack.

The monitor Wyoming, now at Mare Island navy yard, will be changed to the Cheyenne.

Fire in Brooklyn drove hundreds into the streets, destroying an entire block of property, valued at \$1,000,000.

The steamer Stork sank in Hudson bay, taking down a cargo of fur valued at \$1,500,000. The crew all escaped.

The receiver of the old Panama Canal company declares the story of graft in the purchase of the property by the government a fable.

Ex-Senator Clark, of Montana, remembered his employees at Christmas by giving them turkeys. Between 10,000 and 12,000 birds were necessary.

Fire destroyed a great tenement building on West 127th street, New York. A number of people were injured and it is feared some were killed.

Secretary Root has signed an arbitration treaty with San Salvador.

A shortage of over \$7,000,000 in the city's money has been unearthed at Lisbon, Portugal.

The Japanese diet is in session. A member of the Constitutional party was elected speaker.

The supreme court has decided that Los Angeles has the right to regulate liquor establishments.

The cruiser Buffalo will leave San Francisco early in January with a battalion of marines, officers and men for Honolulu.

Two hundred thousand Chinook salmon eggs have been shipped from the government hatchery at Redding, Cal., to the Argentine Republic.

King Manuel, of Portugal, has charged Dr. W. Desperca de Lima, ex-minister of foreign affairs, to form a cabinet, the success of which, however, is doubtful.

The supreme court of California has denied a petition for a rehearing of the case of Mrs. Cornelia Botkin, now serving a life sentence for sending poisoned candy through the mail.

Chiefs of the native tribes of German Samoa are planning an uprising against the home government.

CUBANS IN CONTROL.

Evacuation by American Army Begins New Years Day.

Havana, Dec. 29.—New Year's day will witness the beginning of the evacuation of Cuba by the army of pacification, which has been in possession of the island since the beginning of the provisional government, in October, 1906. The first provisional regiment of marines, numbering 900, which will be among the first troops to leave, are now concentrating from various posts at Camp Columbia.

About half this regiment will sail in January on the cruiser Prairie, which arrived here Christmas eve, bound for Newport News. The Prairie will return about the middle of the month and embark the remainder. The final embarkation will not occur until April 1.

The embarkation will be effected with as little ceremony as possible and it is probable that their departure will be made with as little notice as marked their landing. The purpose in deferring the departure of a portion of the 17th Infantry until April 1 has been the subject of considerable speculation, but it is believed this was agreed upon at a conference between Governor Magoo and President-elect Gomez. It is not thought to be a measure of precaution, for which not the slightest necessity is apparent, but it probably is for the purpose of keeping the barracks and quarters in good order until it is possible to turn over to the Cuban authorities a model camp for occupation by the new permanent army under command of General Pino Guerra, the nucleus of which will be formed, it is intended, with the present corps of Cuban artillery and 1,000 members of the Rural Guard.

CASTRO THE LOOTER.

Unknown Ten Years Ago, Now Prominent World Figure.

Washington, Dec. 29.—Since Cipriano Castro, president of Venezuela, has left his country but slight regret over his departure and subsequent vicissitudes have been expressed on the part of the people over whom he has tyrannized and whom he has impoverished. Since 1899, when, at the head of a revolutionary army, he drove his predecessor, President Andrade, from the capital and made himself absolute ruler of Venezuela, Castro seems to have had but one object in view, namely, to enrich himself. And in this he has succeeded to an amazing extent.

Naturally no person knows, nor can an estimate be made of the wealth which Castro has garnered at the expense of the poor and rich alike among the Venezuelans. It is pretty definitely known that for years he has been sending vast sums of money to England, and this fact lends color to the belief that his departure for Europe, ostensibly to consult a noted physician concerning a serious malady, was only another of his tricks, perpetrated in order to escape from the country which expects to see him no more.

Ten years ago Castro was practically unknown. Born of obscure parents in the province of San Antonio in 1860, he grew up practically without education.

RELIEF WORK IS ENDED.

Committee and Red Cross Society to Go Out With Old Year.

San Francisco, Dec. 29.—With the end of the old year, the San Francisco Relief and Red Cross society, which has handled \$9,500,000 in contributions since the great fire, will go out of existence. This huge sum was distributed at an expense of 2.3 per cent. Nearly \$400,000 is left, which will be transferred to various charities. The society not only fed and lodged thousands for several months after the fire, but it has provided 8,000 permanent homes for 30,000 people and has established a permanent home for the aged and infirm at a cost of \$575,000. Of the money contributed, New York gave \$2,750,000 and Illinois \$650,000.

Poison Squad Test.

San Francisco, Dec. 29.—A campaign of experiments calculated to demonstrate beyond any doubt whether sulphur dioxide, as used at present in this state in the preparation of dried fruit, is harmful to the human system, has been inaugurated by the local medical men and chemists, as a result of the long-standing controversy between the pure-food authorities at Washington and the dried-fruit packers of California. A "poison squad" has been selected and it is proposed to use his own familiar weapons against Dr. Harvey W. Wiley.

Shorthand Record Made.

San Francisco, Dec. 29.—Ruth Olson, a 14-year-old San Francisco girl, has established a new world record for her age for rapid shorthand writing. In a test before Superior Judge Thomas E. Graham, the girl wrote 850 words in five minutes and read the same correctly. Miss Olson's record is considered phenomenal, as the matter read to and written by her was taken from a transcript of proceedings taken from the court files.

Natives Desire Opium.

Amoy, Dec. 29.—Orders were issued Saturday to a number of natives at Tungan, 20 miles north of Amoy, to cease planting opium poppies. They declined to acquiesce, and a riot followed, in which one officer and ten civilians were killed. The populace at Tungan is up in arms and 500 troops have been sent there to restore order.

NEWS NOTES GATHERED FROM VARIOUS PARTS OF OREGON

REDUCE BAG DUTY.

Gilliam County Farmers Think Rate Is Too High.

Condon.—The executive committee of the Gilliam County Improvement association has named January 6 as the day for the big booster meeting to be held in this city in behalf of the experimental farm and the advertising in general of the resources of Gilliam county. The meeting is to be held during the sessions of the circuit and county court, when a number of prominent speakers will be here to present their views on securing the location of the experimental farm and station in this county. At the meeting of the executive committee were present D. B. Thomas, president, Condon; Charles H. Horner, secretary, Condon; George R. Dukek, treasurer, Mayville; J. L. Blalock, Arlington; Oscar Maley, Ferry Canyon; Ed Palmer, Ajax.

It was decided to circulate a petition among the taxpayers of the county to secure the names of all those who were in favor of a 13-mill tax to cover the expenses of buying land and buildings for the experiment station. Mr. Blalock suggested that those signing the petition should set opposite their names the amount of property on which they were paying taxes, which would show how many were interested in the movement.

Another important question discussed was the rebate on grain bags. It was decided to circulate a petition among the ranchers, to be sent to the congressman of this district, asking him to work for the reduction of duty on sacks. It is estimated that the past year the farmers of this county paid out \$20,000 more than necessary on grain bags, on account of the high tariff.

Free Courses of Lectures.

Winter short courses of study will begin at Agricultural college, Corvallis, Or., on January 5. Men and women, young and old, interested in the farm, the shop, or the home, are cordially invited to attend. By writing at once to the Agricultural college a circular will be sent telling in detail what is proposed to be accomplished by these courses. A week of lectures on general agricultural topics begins January 5. A special course for creamery operators and managers runs from January 5 to 15; a course in dairying from January 18 to March 27; a course in horticulture, January 11 to February 20; a course in mechanic arts from January 11 to February 20; a course in road construction from January 11 to February 6; a course in household science and art from January 11 to February 20. Special lectures on business methods on the farm will be given.

Irrigators Use Too Much Water.

Freewater.—That water is wasted in irrigating orchards and crops in this vicinity, and that it is made to take the place of proper cultivation, is charged in the trial of the case of the Peacock Mill company against 200 citizens residing along the Walla Walla and Tumalum rivers, which is before Judge Bean, of the district court, and will likely take up several days. Witnesses have been introduced to show that farmers are using too much water, placing it too frequently on their crops, and keeping the soil in such muddy condition that proper cultivation cannot be given the land.

Richland Land Price Soaring.

Richland.—Foothill land under ditch skirting the north side of Eagle valley is attracting the attention of home seekers and speculators. Several buyers were in the valley last week, looking over this land. Some of these fields along the foothills have never been cultivated, but owing to their elevation above the valley they are warmer and better adapted for raising fruit than the valley itself. The price of this land is \$75 an acre. Last year it could be bought for \$50, and it is daily rising in value.

Bold Robbery at Freewater.

Freewater.—A bold robbery was committed here when the residence of Mrs. A. A. Brady was broken into and \$130 in valuable old coins taken. Trunks were forced open, their contents strewn on the floor and a drawer containing jewelry of Mrs. Brady was pilfered, valuable rings being included. Footsteps were discernible in the soft soil surrounding the house and bloodstains from the Walla Walla penitentiary are being engaged. It is expected arrests will follow in a few days.

Irrigate Molalla Section.

Oregon City.—A move toward the inauguration of summer irrigation on a large scale in the Willamette valley is indicated by the organization of the Canby Canal company, which has filed articles of incorporation in the county clerk's office. The company is a close corporation, with a capital stock of \$5,000, and proposes to irrigate about 5,000 acres of land in Clackamas county, taking water from the Molalla river for the purposes.

Ontario Is Next.

Ontario.—At the Oregon state irrigation convention held at Baker City, Judge Stephen A. Lowell, of Pendleton, was elected president, and Walter Griffith director in charge of the Malheur Water Users' association, was chosen secretary. Ontario was named as the next meeting place of the congress. The meeting will take place in September, 1909.

Site for La Grande Postoffice.

La Grande.—The site of the new \$85,000 federal building promised La Grande has been selected, according to information received. The site cost over \$80,000, and is located on the main street, where the J. M. Berry residence now stands.

TO HAVE COOLING PLANT.

Across Continent Skipments Can Be Made From Salem.

Salem.—Fruitgrowers are jubilant over the announcement that a cooling plant will be erected to handle the cherry and berry crops of 1909. F. G. Deckebach, of the Salem ice works, announced at a meeting of the fruitgrowers that his company will erect a plant with about a seven carload capacity, and have it ready for operation this year. It will be constructed in such a manner that it can be enlarged to meet future needs. The establishment of a cooling plant will enable growers to ship fresh fruit across the continent safely.

The meeting of fruitgrowers was held under the auspices of the Marion County Horticultural society. Horticultural Commissioner W. K. Newell was the principal speaker. His address dealt almost entirely with marketing problems.

H. Williamson of the state board of horticulture, delivered an address upon the future of the apple industry. In a very exhaustive discussion Mr. Williamson declared that though large additions are being made to the apple producing area, there is no danger of overproduction.

HARNESS DESCHUTES.

Proposed Project Will Benefit Farming in Wasco and Sherman.

The Dalles.—The construction of a large power plant on the Deschutes river, near Sherar's bridge, has been commenced by the Interior Development company. If present plans are carried out, it will mean a great deal toward the development of Wasco and Sherman counties. Notices of appropriation of water have been filed in the county clerk's office. A force of about 15 or 20 men is at work on the proposed canal.

A dam 60 feet high will be built 1600 feet above the falls of the Deschutes, and from this a canal 85 feet wide and 35 feet deep will convey the water for two-thirds of the distance to the site of the proposed plant. The water will be conveyed the remainder of the distance in eight parallel pipes, each 11 feet in diameter. A fall of 105 feet can be secured. With the immense volume of water an enormous horse power can be developed.

It is estimated by engineers that sufficient water can be thrown into Sherman county to irrigate the entire county. At the end of the pipe line a power house will be built and hydro electric machinery installed.

M. A. Moody and other prominent capitalists are back of the proposition. The force of men is soon to be doubled, and when the winter is over hundreds of men will be put to work.

Part of General Scheme.

The winter course is a part of a general scheme of agricultural extension which the agricultural college faculty is working for. Traveling agricultural and domestic science schools, farmers' institutes, demonstration trains, free circulating libraries, home reading courses, winter courses, and free bulletins are all features of a comprehensive system of extension work that the Agricultural college faculty has recommended to President Roosevelt's uplift commission.

Fine for Violating Game Laws.

Engene.—Judge Bryson fined Clarence E. Warden and his nephew, Tilden Warden, \$50 each for a violation of the state game law in regard to deer. At the same time he sent Allen Warden, another nephew, under 17 years of age, to the reform school authorities. Warden and his two nephews live in Linn county. It appeared that they have been killing deer and selling the meat and hides. The case was brought by Game Warden George Holcomb.

PORTLAND MARKETS.

Barley—Feed, \$27 per ton; brewing, \$28. Wheat—Ruemont, 95@97c; club, 91c; five, 91c; red Russian, 88c; 40 fold, 93c; valley, 91c. Oats—No. 1 white, \$31@32 per ton; Hay—Timothy, Willamette Valley, \$14 per ton; Eastern Oregon timothy, \$16.50@17; clover, \$12; alfalfa, \$12@13; grain hay, \$12@13. Fruits—Apples, 75c@82.75 per box; pears, \$16.175 per box; grapes, 65c@1.50 per crate; quinces, \$16.125 per box; cranberries, \$14@15 per barrel; persimmons, \$16.125. Potatoes—80@90c per cwt.; sweet potatoes, 2@2 1/2c per pound. Onions—\$1@1.25 per 100 pounds. Vegetables—Turnips, \$1.25 per sack; carrots, \$1; parsnips, \$1.25; beets, \$1.50; horseradish, 8@10c per pound; artichokes, 90c@81 dozen; beans, 15@17c per pound; cabbage, 14@11c per pound; cauliflower, 75c@81 per dozen; celery, \$4.50@4.75 per crate; cucumbers, 2@2.50 per box; egg plant, 11c per pound; lettuce, 75c@1 per box; parsley, 50c per dozen; peas, 12c per pound; peppers, 15@20c per pound; pumpkins, 16@11c per pound; radishes, 50c per dozen; spinach, 2c per pound; sprouts, 9@10c per pound; squash, 16@18c per pound; tomatoes, \$1.75. Butter—City creamery, extras, 36@37c; fancy outside creamery, 32@35c per pound; store, 18@20c. Eggs—Oregon ranch, 40@42c; Eastern, 36@35c per dozen. Poultry—Hens, 10@11c per pound; spring, large, 10@11c; small, 13@14c; mixed, 10c; ducks, 15@16c; geese, 10@10c; turkeys, 17@18c dressed turkeys, 20@25c. Veal—Extra, 9@10c per pound; ordinary, 7@8c; heavy, 5c. Pork—Fancy, 7c per pound; large, 6 1/2c. Mutton—5@6c per pound.

NEW LIGHT ON HISTORY.

Stanford Professor Finds Key to Ancient Writings.

Stanford University, Cal., Dec. 28.—The key which bares the secrets so long hidden behind the Etruscan and old Italian inscriptions has at last been discovered by Professor George Hempel, the holder of the philological chair at Stanford university, and the manners, customs and history of a people today practically unknown may be read in the future as in a book.

Experienced in his investigations of old German inscriptions and roles, Professor Hempel was able to accomplish in a single night the feat undertaken by science ages ago and never before pushed to a successful conclusion. Members of the faculty who were present at the lecture of Dr. Hempel before the Stanford Philological association today declared that the discovery is a veritable triumph and will have far-reaching results. It will necessitate a re-stating of ancient Roman history and it will throw a flood of light on many disputed facts of Latin grammar and etymology.

It has been the generally accepted view among historians that the Etruscans were an element entirely foreign to their neighbors, the Romans. This theory is entirely and conclusively overturned by Professor Hempel, whose investigations prove a great similarity between the Roman and Etruscan languages and make possible only one conclusion, that the Etruscans and Romans sprang from one race, which, following the old legend, wandered to Italy from Troy after the fall of that great city. Thus Virgil's Eneid is substantiated by scientific proof. Dr. Hempel's discovery is yet in its infancy. Out of 8,000 inscriptions he has read but 50, yet the little work he has done has been sufficient to convince him that the old idea of distinct races is entirely erroneous.

QUICKSAND IN FOUNDATION.

Unstable Soil Adds \$500,000 to Cost of Northwestern Depot.

Chicago, Dec. 28.—A stratum of treacherous quicksand underlying the site of the new \$20,000,000 station of the Chicago & Northwestern railroad, now under construction, will add about \$500,000 to the cost of the structure, owing to the increased difficulty of sinking the foundation pillars. This information has been given to the railroad company by the George A. Fuller company, which has in turn been told to go ahead with the construction of the building at any cost.

Interesting pneumatic processes are now being used to overcome the difficulties presented by the unstable soil. Engineers say that Chicago soil is alive with quicksand in the territory about the river banks. Two engineering experts who handled the situation in New York at the laying of two big river tunnels of the subway, when quicksand there furnished the gravest engineering problem of the kind in the history of America, were called by telegraph and are at work solving the problem presented.

Russia Approves Deal.

St. Petersburg, Dec. 28.—Foreign Minister Iswolsky met with a favorable reception in the duma today when he presented the annual statement of Russia's foreign policy. He referred with warm approval to the Japanese-American agreement, which he said guaranteed the open door in the Far East and the integrity of China, and the terms of which were communicated to Russia before it was signed. The rest of M. Iswolsky's speech shed no light on mooted questions, nor gave any substance of the Russian proposals regarding the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria.

New Geyser May Result.

Virginia City, Mont., Dec. 28.—Thirty earthquakes have been felt in this section since last Sunday afternoon, the last tremor being recorded at 4:10 yesterday morning. The ground has trembled very perceptibly, with the earthquake apparently coming from the south, which has lent color to the theory that a big new geyser is about to burst forth in the Yellowstone park, which lies 75 miles southeast of Virginia City. No damage has resulted other than considerable plaster having been thrown down.

Congressman Daved Dead.

New Orleans, Dec. 28.—Representative Robert C. Davey, of the second congressional district of Louisiana, died Saturday of apoplexy. He had served continuously at Washington since the fifty-third congress, with the exception of one term, when he declined the nomination. Davey was born in New Orleans in 1853, served several years in the state senate of Louisiana, was elected a judge in 1880 and in 1888 was defeated for mayor of New Orleans. He was re-elected to the sixty-first congress.

Claus Spreckles Dead.

San Francisco, Dec. 28.—After an illness of less than a week's duration, Claus Spreckles, widely known as the "Sugar King of the Pacific Coast," died at his home in this city Saturday. Mr. Spreckles was 80 years of age, and was taken ill with a severe cold early this week. This developed into pneumonia, and during the last two days the veteran sugar refiner sank rapidly, his death occurring at 4:30 o'clock Saturday morning.

Pearl Harbor Drydock.

Washington, Dec. 22.—Specifications have been issued by the navy department for the drydock at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The structure will be 195 feet long, divided by a caisson so that two battleships can be docked simultaneously. The drydock will be 35 feet deep and 120 feet wide. Bids will be opened on February 13, 1909.

TOTAL EXPOSURE OF BEEF PACKERS

District Attorney Sims Declares Aim of Present Inquiry.

Possible Existence of Price Agreement to Be Looked Into as Well as Shipping Rates—Great Secrecy Being Maintained by Government Attorneys.

Chicago, Dec. 26.—Nothing less than a complete exposure of the methods of the beef trust is contemplated by District Attorney Sims in the present grand jury investigation which is being carried out with the aid of special agents of the interstate commerce commission.

It developed today that, in addition to the inquiry in regard to shipping rates and possible rebates, to which the work of the interstate commerce commission and its agents is confined, a number of secret service operatives, who work directly under the department of justice, have been looking into another phase of the packing industry.

These officials have been trying to determine whether tacit agreements between packers as to the fixing of prices and the division of territory for distribution have been in systematic operation. The sweeping nature of the inquiry was indicated today in the first positive statement made by Mr. Sims since the investigation started.

"This is no mere fishing expedition, as has been said by some critics of the department," declared the district attorney. "We know what we are going after, if we are not permitted by the nature of the inquiry to start a little case, in which packers of railroads are concerned in the hope that we can unearth some information which would be of value or be useful as a basis for a new and more extensive investigation. There is nothing vague or indefinite about this inquiry, and it has a purpose which I am not permitted to disclose."

RAILROADS FOR OREGON.

Competition Forces Harriman to Consider New Lines.

Chicago, Dec. 26.—Oregon bids fair soon to come into its own with respect to transportation facilities. Alarmed over the activity of other railroad corporations in surveying and constructing lines of road through various portions of the Pacific Northwest, Edward H. Harriman and his aids have decided actively to occupy all of the territory in the Northwest which bids fair to become of value from a traffic standpoint.

Plans have been perfected by Mr. Harriman for the construction of between 750 and 1000 miles of railroad in the State of Oregon alone, and that surveys have been ordered of a great deal of territory which is now without means of transportation.

Julius Kruttschnitt, director of maintenance and operation for the Harriman lines, and J. D. Isaacs, consulting engineer for Mr. Harriman, have recently returned from New York, where these plans were perfected. It is admitted by the Chicago officials that there are such plans.

JOHN BULL NOT SO MERRY.

Christmas in England is Marred by Poverty.

London, Dec. 26.—The dark side of the English Christmas is the great number of unemployed, and the distressing prevalence of destitute and suffering. This is seen principally in London and at Glasgow, and at other shipbuilding centers, where shipbuilders are out of work.

A small band of shabby dressed, miserable looking unemployed persons have paraded fashionable streets during the past week, threading their way among the crowds of Christmas shoppers. The police accompanied the band as it marched in order to prevent disturbances. Its motto showed, "We want work."

More than 1000 homeless men assembled on the James embankment at midnight to get Salvation Army tickets for beds. The newspapers daily record cases of men being sentenced to imprisonment for stealing food who have families suffering from want.

New Canadian Coal Fields.

Vancouver, B. C., Dec. 25.—Henry Hewitt, the Tacoma smelting man, has acquired coal mining rights in the Graham island, one of the Queen Charlotte group. Immensely valuable coal deposits have been discovered there and an application for a charter for building railroads and steamship wharves and for the general carrying on of business is advertised to be made at the next meeting of the British Columbia legislature. Indications are that the mines will far exceed in value the famous Dunsmeith properties.

Wreckers Throw Switch.

Hillsdale, Mich., Dec. 26.—Instead of a broken flange, it is reported here today that a tunnel switch was the cause of the derailment last night near Pleasant Lake, Ind., of a Lake Shore passenger train, in which about 30 persons were injured, one possibly fatally. It is also said here that there are suspicions that it may have been misplaced by members of the gang which have been robbing safes recently in this section of the country.

Oklahoma Town Burns.

Oklahoma City, Okla., Dec. 26.—Virtually the entire business section of Ravia, Okla., a town of 1200 inhabitants in Johnston county was wiped out yesterday by fire, the loss aggregating about \$55,000.