

WASHINGTON GOSSIP.

Serious Condition of Affairs in Alaska—National Homes for Disabled Soldiers.

A serious condition of affairs is reported in Alaska in letters which come from army officers on duty in that territory, and especially from those stationed at Fort Davis. The forage at last accounts was nearly exhausted. The price of supplies which must be shared by civilians as well as the army, has greatly increased, and there was every indication that those who had made money in Alaska would have every opportunity to spend it for the necessities of life. Coal, for instance, brought as much as \$60 per ton.

The national homes for disabled volunteer soldiers are open to regulars and volunteers alike who have served in any war, the board of management, in the discretion allowed by law, construing service in the Philippines as equivalent to service in a war. The proposition has been several times advanced to throw the volunteer homes open to regulars without regard to war service, and an amendment was offered during the last session of congress with that object in view. But it was defeated because of strong opposition to endangering the rights of the volunteers, and also because the regulars have a national home at Washington, surrounded by beautiful grounds, an ideal place, which is in part supported by contributions of 13 cents deducted from the monthly pay. There are in addition to these 30-state homes where the volunteers of the various states may find shelter in their old age.

Commissioner Powderly wants the head tax on immigrants coming into the country increased to not less than \$2. At present this tax is \$1. He recommended to congress that the increase be made, not with a view of imposing hardships upon the newcomers, but really to help them. He says the increase imposes no severe burden upon those seeking homes in this country, and it would insure the accumulation of a fund sufficient to construct suitable and comfortable buildings whenever needed for the comfort and safety of those awaiting inspection, as well as for the administration of the law relating to immigration. The tax of \$1 upon each immigrant makes up a fund used in administering the immigration laws. Last year this amounted to \$576,688.

Admiral Dewey favors a neutral isthmian canal, being opposed to its fortification. The neutrality of the canal can be guaranteed by our fleet. The canal is to be a commercial waterway, and neutralization, therefore, will mean its preservation.

Mrs. Jessie Benton Fremont, widow of the "Pathfinder," has a claim against the United States government for lands taken from her in California. These lands were appropriated as far back as 1863 for military purposes. They had cost her more than \$50,000, to say nothing of the interest since, and she has never been paid for them. Gen. Miles made an investigation, and he promises her right to restitution to be unquestionable.

P. C. Knox is the eighth attorney general of the United States taken from Pennsylvania.

At the communion service in one of the Presbyterian churches in Washington recently, the bread and wine were passed by two admirals, a general, two supreme court justices and a former secretary of state.

The private letter books of Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution, were brought to light in Washington recently.

In order to economize time and physical effort, Secretary Root has reduced his official signature from "Elihu Root" to "E. Root."

The trade balances in favor of the United States in its foreign commerce during the last three years have amounted to more than all the gold in all the banks and treasuries of Europe, including the British Isles.

Wu Ting Fang was recently asked about the status of the legal profession in China. He replied, "Lawyers are prohibited in China."

Uncle Sam is making all the way from \$40,000 to \$60,000 a day in stamps upon stock bought and sold on the New York stock exchange. Every transaction has to pay whether it is a sale or purchase, so that Uncle Sam catches the speculators "coming and going."

Judge George E. Baldwin, United States consul at Nuremberg, Germany, in 1868 nominated President McKinley for the first public office he ever held, that of prosecuting attorney.

One Thousand Filipinos Freed.
Manila, May 23.—General MacArthur celebrated the surrenders of the insurgents Lascardo and Lacuna by releasing 1,000 Filipino prisoners. The insurgents are still in possession of the mining town of Paracole, North Camarines. The nearest troops are at Indan, 30 miles away.

Founder of Texas Siftings Dead.
New York, May 23.—Alexander Edwin Sweet, founder of Texas Siftings, and a humorist of national reputation under the pen names of "Colonel Bill Short" and "Rev. Whangdoodle," died at his home in this city of heart disease, from which he had suffered for several years. He was a native of Nova Scotia and 60 years of age.

STEAMER FOUNDERED

Storm on Lake Huron Claimed Twelve Victims.

ONLY TWO OF THE CREW WERE SAVED

Second Engineer and a Deckhand, Lashed to Wreckage, Picked Up by a Tug—Later Crazy by Suffering.

East Tawas, Mich., May 27.—The wooden steamer Baltimore foundered this morning in Lake Huron near Au Sable, and 12 of her crew of 14 were drowned. Two men were washed about in the lake for several hours, lashed to pieces of wreckage, and were finally picked up by the tug Columbia and brought in here. George McGinnis, a deck hand, one of the rescued, went crazy from his experience. The other survivor, Thomas Murphy, of Milwaukee, second engineer, was able to tell the story of the disaster.

It was sometime after the Columbia had brought the shipwrecked men into port before Murphy was revived sufficiently to tell his story. The Baltimore foundered at 6 o'clock in the morning and he was in the water until late in the afternoon.

"We were bound from Lorain to Sault Ste. Marie," he said, "and had in tow a large steam drill and scow. When off Thunder Bay Captain Place decided to turn about and run for Tawas for shelter. When we arrived off Au Sable the steamer struck heavily on her bottom. The seas broke over her at the same time and carried away the deckhouse and the after cabin, and finally the smokestack fell. Both rails forward broke in two just aft of the forward deckhouse, and we knew it was only a few minutes before the steamer would go to pieces.

"It's every man for himself now," shouted Captain Place. We took Captain Place's advice and every man started to save himself as best he could. Some of the boys took to the rigging, but McGinnis and myself lashed ourselves to a ring bolt in a piece of the after cabin, and we were washed overboard shortly afterward. The strain was too much for McGinnis and he went crazy before we had been in the water very long. He tried to throw me off the wreckage, but I talked to him and encouraged him to hold on. Twice he got loose and tried to drown us both, but each time I succeeded in quieting him. I told him a boat was coming to take us off, and then I would get him tied fast again.

The tug Columbia lost a drill scow with six men on board just before she picked up the men from the Baltimore. The Columbia went out again this afternoon and found the drill. The men were taken off it badly frightened, as they had neither boat nor life preservers.

The lost steamer was rated at \$40,000 by the underwriters, and was insured for nearly that amount.

NATIVE JUDGES INCOMPETENT.

Discontent Caused by Appointment of American Judges.

Manila, May 27.—The discontent among the natives at the appointment of American judges and alleged discrimination in the civil service in favor of Americans is finding expression, encouraged by some of the native judges, who are aware that the reorganization of the judiciary will result in the loss of their positions. Judge Neer, of the court of the first instance of Tondo, one of the leaders of what is beginning to be called the radical wing of the Federalists, declared today that if such things continue there will be a second revolution. Some of the prominent Federalists ridicule the prediction. The Philippine commission's selections of judges were thoroughly considered. It is undeniable that most of the native judges lack the competence required. One of them has been removed for malfeasance, and others are suspected of irregularities. The classifications of the civil service avoid discrimination, but the native and Spanish qualifications are not equal to those of capable Americans. Some departments are employing natives at the risk of temporary inconvenience.

After a conference with General MacArthur, General Trias has undertaken negotiations at Luchan for the surrender of General Cailles which is daily expected.

Yukon is Not Open.

White Horse, Y. T., May 14.—Notwithstanding reports to the contrary, the Yukon river is not open below Lebarge, but the daily clearance of the ice is expected. Many scows and a great quantity of freight have been passed as far as Lebarge, the latter awaiting the arrival of the first Dawson bound steamer. Lake Bennett is not yet open, but that is of but little concern to the 1901 Klondiker, since the White Pass & Yukon route has solved the problem of lake and rapid navigation, as far as White Horse.

Saved a Bank From Burglars.

Waverly, O., May 27.—Dr. W. T. Wallace engaged in a duel with four robbers last night, and saved the First National Bank and the postoffice from being burglarized. The doctor lives on the second floor of the building and was awakened by the noise. He exchanged shots with the burglars and a trail of blood proved that his aim was good. The crooks made their escape from town on a freight train.

AMERICAN POLICY UNCHANGED.

Still Endeavoring to Reduce the Amount of Indemnity.

San Francisco, May 24.—The president and Secretary of State Hay have been in constant communication with Washington during all their journey West. Dispatches from our foreign embassies have been continually arriving, and the Chinese situation has received special attention. The president has been anxious lest the difficulties thrown in the way of an arrangement of some of the powers might lead to indefinite delay and a consequent increased indemnity be exacted.

In regard to the total amount of the indemnity the president has constantly endeavored to moderate the demands of the powers to an amount which China might pay without financial ruin or territorial dismemberment. He has thought that \$200,000,000 was the maximum amount indicated by the best authorities consulted, and he has proved the willingness of this government to make sacrifices in the interest of China and the restoration of former relations by cutting down our already moderate claim one half if other powers would admit a proportionate reduction. These propositions have not been accepted by the other governments, though Great Britain has shown a disposition to a considerate treatment of the affair.

As to the method of paying the indemnity, none of the propositions thus far submitted suits President McKinley. Two weeks ago he proposed that each power should accept for its share of the indemnity the bonds of China at par and with interest at 3 per cent, provision for meeting the interest and for eventual payments being taken from the like, the salt duties and increased import taxes. The attitude of the British government, as set forth in the recent speeches of its representatives in parliament, indicate that Great Britain, though not willing to go so far as this country in moderating the demands of the powers, is inclined to accept ours, which, if adopted, may bring the negotiations to a conclusion.

FLOODS IN TENNESSEE.

Eight Lives Lost and Millions of Dollars' Damage Done.

Knoxville, Tenn., May 24.—Millions of dollars' damage has been done and at least eight lives lost in Upper Tennessee by the floods, which began their work of destruction when a dam across the Doe river, at Elizabethton, Tenn., gave way yesterday afternoon. Little mountain streams emptying into the Doe and Watuga rivers swelled these streams beyond all proportions hitherto known, submerging Elizabethton, a town of 2,000 people, located at the junction, and drowning three persons. The Watuga pours its volumes into the Holston, spanned by many bridges, which were swept away. Railway traffic is entirely stopped on account of all bridges crossing the Holston being washed away.

Nome is Very Quiet.

Seattle, May 24.—Advices from Rampart state that A. D. Campbell, deputy marshal at Nome, arrived in Rampart from Nome the first week in March, after a trip of 26 days. He reported Nome very quiet and about 3,000 people there. There was considerable lawlessness at Nome, because of the fact that the town was not able to incorporate, and because of the opposition of gamblers and their kind. After the soldiers were withdrawn the chamber of commerce took up subscriptions to the amount of \$12,000 to pay special deputy marshals to protect life and property. After one month no money could be collected, and the deputy marshals were discharged, and so the town was practically thrown over to the tender mercies of the thieves and thugs.

Minister on Way Back to Japan.

San Francisco, May 24.—A. E. Beck, United States minister to Japan, sailed for Yokohama yesterday. He came home on a visit a few months ago, but was attacked by the grip, and has not yet recovered from the disease. He expects that the sea voyage and the change of climate will completely restore him to health.

Warehouse Burned.

Glendive, Mont., May 24.—The Northern Pacific Company's large warehouse in which was stored 50,000 pounds of wool, tools and supplies, caught fire tonight, presumably from a locomotive spark, and was destroyed, together with a two story residence and a large number of cedar and oak piles. Loss, \$100,000.

The Danish West Indies.

Copenhagen, May 21.—It is officially announced that the Danish West Indies have not been sold. As previously set forth, the negotiations are progressing on matters of detail, but it is not likely that the treaty will be concluded before the rigsdag and congress meet.

Venezuela Objected to Arbitration.

Caracas, Venezuela, May 23, via Haytien cable.—Venezuela's refusal to accept the French protocol covering the renewal of diplomatic relations with Venezuela was due to the objection of Venezuela to a clause providing for arbitrating all pending claims which originated on account of the last revolution. Venezuela proposed coming to an agreement on a total sum without arbitration.

A GREAT RAILROAD KING



JAMES J. HILL

James J. Hill, chief in control of the Great Northern, Erie, Burlington, and Northern Pacific railroads—the latter in conjunction with J. P. Morgan—is in practical control of more railroads than any other man in the world. His dream is to own a line stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and this would have been realized had he succeeded in his recent effort to secure the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul. His friends are confident he will yet succeed in this pet project.

Mr. Hill is 63 years old. He was studying medicine near his birthplace in Canada when his father died in 1856. He went to St. Paul and became shipping clerk for a packet company. In ten years he rose to be owner of a similar company with wide extensions, due to his genius for seeing the trading and transportation possibilities of a territory. His connection with railroads began in 1870, when he, on behalf of a syndicate he had organized, began negotiating with the Dutch holders of \$27,000,000 of defaulted bonds of a "worthless" railroad, the St. Paul and Pacific, which, with extensions, is now the Great Northern. He built lines of steamers on the great lakes and on the Pacific to the Orient, and by thus creating an outlet for the grain grown in the territory tapped by the Great Northern made business for the road, which has not passed a dividend since he became its president in 1890. Mr. Hill's fortune is estimated at \$100,000,000.

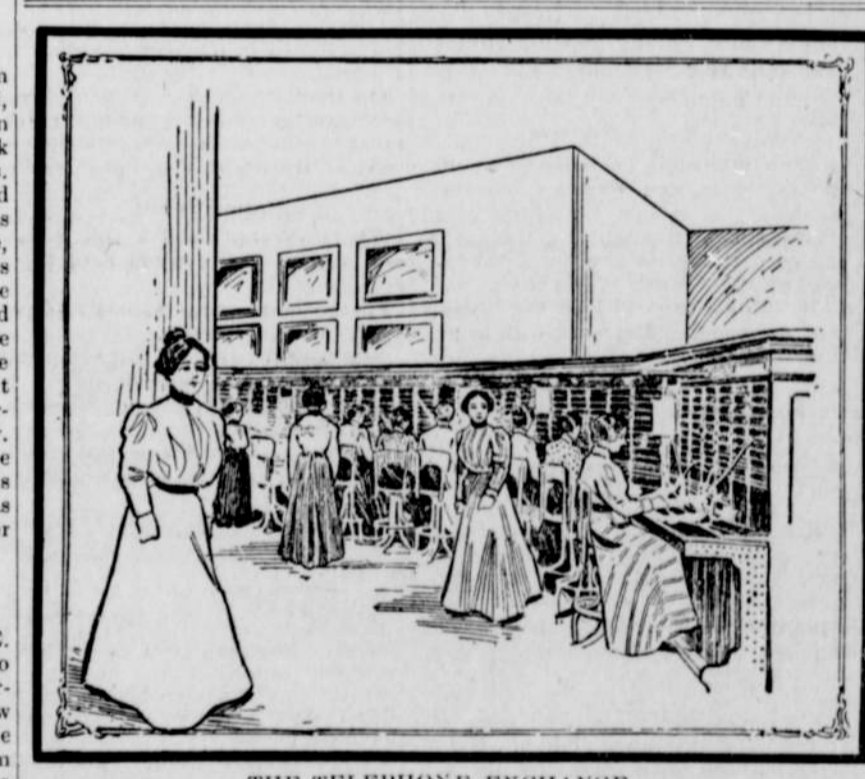
THE TELEPHONE GIRL.

She Works Hard for Small Pay—A Visit to a Telephone Exchange.

Our forefathers did not know the "Hello Girl." That was their misfortune. How they ever got along without her is a mystery. We suffered under like privation until a comparatively recent period, but we do not see how we did it and certainly we could not possibly do it now.

But few of the persons who have frequent occasion to ring up the girl at "Central" in a business way realize

Take the main exchange of a telephone company in a big city for example. Here, during the day, perhaps 200 women toil daily. At night a fifth of this number are likewise busy. On Sundays, half the usual force is on duty. And this is so that John Doe may, at any moment in the seven days and nights of unceasing vigil, instantly establish communication wheresoever and with whomsoever he wills. Such an arrangement furnishes employment to no less than 350 operatives, perhaps, which is but a part of the whole army of clerks, linemen and other employees.



THE TELEPHONE EXCHANGE.

how much they depend upon the humble, but indispensable, medium of conversation.

John Doe wants Richard Roe at the 'phone, and he wants him at once. John rings up "Central." "What number?" comes the answer in the soft voice of womankind.

"Gf me 6215."

In a moment John and Richard are exchanging words over miles of wire—or, maybe, "Line busy" throws John, who is a busy man, into a rage, and he says things under his breath about the line always being busy when he wants to use it, and he almost persuades himself that the girl made up the excuse in order to get even with him for that little petulant remark of his the other day. "What do corporations care for their patrons so long as they get their money?" John demands in a rage.

John Doe Grows.
If John's instrument gets out of order he sends a boy post haste to headquarters with a complaint charged with high explosives, while he executes a warden and chants anathemas on the company, its operators, and the hello girl in particular. A hundred annoying things may happen for which the girl is not responsible, but the patron public is very much indebted to the girl at the telephone exchange that it gets such prompt, excellent, and uncomplaining service.

a big desk, advantageously located sits the monitor, an experienced and trusted woman, whose duties include keeping a record of the work of each girl, the filling of vacancies in cases of sickness, transfers of operators and the like. This responsible position may pay the incumbent \$12 a week, and is one of the almost unattainable goals toward which the ambitious telephone operator strives.

Certain sections of the switchboard territory are under the supervision of a watchful supervisor, who keeps an eye on the girls and occasionally lends a hand when any one board is particularly rushed. There are six or seven of these, perhaps, besides a chief of the toll lines and a supervisor of the trunk lines.

A visit to this operating room is a revelation of the fallacy of preconceived notions. One would naturally suppose that a room in which 200 operatives were constantly at work receiving and answering calls would be a pretty fair imitation of pandemonium; but such is not the case in fact. The place is very quiet, almost silent. There is no conversation in this hive of 200 busy women. Only occasionally and by giving close attention can one hear a murmuring voice saying "What number, please?" or "Busy," or "Connected."

About the only audible sounds are given by the "click" of the upturned "cams" as the call is made, or the rustle of skirts as the operators move in their seats, reaching for plugs, etc., or the faint buzzing murmur of scores of low-pitched voices. Yet in this quiet place 200 girls are busy almost every minute all day long, maintaining a flow of conversation between subscribers.

It is a confusing sight to watch the face of the punctured boards, over which fly the nimble fingers, each with its trailing white cord crossing scores of others till the result resembles a snarl and tangle that would seem to defy extrication. And back of these figures and unwearied fingers are the supervisors, ever watchful, while the chief operator's eye seems to be everywhere. Silently, swiftly, almost unerringly, these 200 girls perform their duties for hours every day, and the thoughtless subscriber growls and grumbles and swears, if by chance there is an instant delay or a mistake occurs.

The trunk line boards are provided with illuminated buttons, which signal "connected," "through talking," and "busy," by fitful glowing. The pay station girls have extra duty to perform, as they must make out the message rate checks on which are shown the exact time of beginning and ending conversation.

Expert Work.
"The business of making connections," says an expert, "demands alertness and coolness of brain and hand. It is no position for a girl who is easily rattled."

"It would seem," says a visitor to a city exchange, "standing before the boards of the exchange, that the girls never had a moment of rest. They seem literally on the jump all the time." The business of making connections and calls is not the only duty. The plugs must be replaced as well as inserted. Then, too, many folks do not ring off, and the operator has to cut in and ask if they are through, as soon as she can get an opportunity.

It is said that girls brought up in the city are more satisfactory than country girls in telephone exchanges. "The city girls are of more even temperament and slower to resent the occasional harsh language that is used by subscribers," says a supervisor.

Usually a year's apprenticeship is required before a girl is regarded as first-class. A beginner gets about \$4 a week. A first-class operator gets \$9, a supervisor \$10. These figures vary somewhat according to circumstances, but they are the prevailing figures in the large cities.

Crushed.
The other day an old woman bounced into a city office with a notification that had been sent to her to the effect that a quarter's rates on some property of hers were due.

She asserted she had paid them. A clerk got out the books to prove that she had not, and suggested that she had made a mistake. She still declared, however, that she had paid.

"Don't you ever make mistakes?" she inquired.

The clerk assured her that he did not, and jokingly added:
"The only mistake I ever made was when I got married."

She looked at him a moment and then said:
"No; your wife made that mistake!"
—London Spare Moments.

Pigments of Vegetable Origin.

The madder plant is now cultivated on a great scale in France, Holland and Turkey for the sake of the beautiful pigments—rose madder, brown madder, carmine madder and others—obtained from it. Other pigments of vegetable origin are gamboge, from the gum of a tree that grows in Ceylon, and Indian lake, from the resin of another kind of tree native to Bengal and Siam.

Antiquity of Druggists' Scales.

A pair of scales, much like those of the modern pharmacists, is among the multitude of objects discovered this year in excavations about thirty miles from Thebes and recently exhibited in London. The scales are finely finished, having a beam about four and a half inches long.

Nearly every man who is mean to wife, manages to create the impression that he is a martyr.

When you are talking with people, do you divide the time fairly? So many do not.