

## VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE

### Better Fire Protection Demanded.

### FIRE OUT THE GIRLS FROM UPSTAIR ROOMS

### Dawson's Prominent Business Men on the Situation.

### Government Officials Willing to Do All They Can for Protection—Auxiliary Company From Field Force—Unanimity of Opinion.

[From Tuesday's Daily.]

Since the disastrous fire of last Wednesday considerable discussion has arisen concerning the efficiency of the fire department, as it is comprised at present, and plans for the improvement of this important branch of the public service are being formulated now.

At this season of the year it is impracticable to attempt to secure additional apparatus; but the number of firemen can be increased, if necessary. It may be possible to induce Major Heming to permit the formation of an auxiliary fire corps from among the Yukon field force, the capabilities of whom in his line of work were most satisfactorily demonstrated a week ago. It may be true that better arrangements can be had to secure a supply of water. In fact, several confidently assert that they can provide a good water system to the people of Dawson within the next 60 days; such a system as will afford the property holders on the principle business streets ample protection from destruction by fire. This system, however, if constructed at this season of the year would be costly; but the expenditure involved, great as it might be, would be only a modicum in comparison to the losses sustained by reason of the conflagration of last Wednesday.

Many business men are of the opinion that strict inspection should be maintained relative to flues and chimneys. In the past, this duty has devolved upon the fire chief, whose time and attention did not permit the exercise of proper care. It is contended that a special officer should be detailed on this inspection service, whose sole occupation should be confined to the examination of stove pipes, chimneys, etc. The recent fire might have been avoided had rigorous inspection been made of the Monte Carlo premises.

With few exceptions the property holders are in favor of a police ordinance forbidding the occupancy of rooms over saloons and places of amusement by variety actresses and dance hall girls. It is coincident that the last two destructive fires which Dawson has experienced, started in rooms occupied at the time by this class of people.

As a precautionary measure, it has been suggested that those owning buildings in the business district be compelled to provide them with brick chimneys. Many are in favor of this idea. It would certainly appear reasonable to enforce this rule as to those buildings which are now in progress of erection.

The fact that no loss of life has been incurred by reason of former fires is attributed more to good luck than to anything else; and the proposition is being considered to require the proprietors of places of amusement to provide proper exits and fire escapes. Such a regulation would oblige all owners of houses of more than one story to construct exits from the upper stories.

The trustees of the Board of Trade will meet tomorrow night, and all these questions will be given careful consideration. Certainly some measures will be proposed looking to the better securing of property from loss by

fire. A representative of the Nugget ascertained the opinion of a number of prominent business men relative to the subject.

Major Perry, when approached, refused to commit himself for the reason that as a member of the Yukon council he may be required to act on these matters in an administrative capacity.

Mr. Heron, of the A. C. Co., is of the opinion that a more powerful engine should be ordered immediately, thus insuring its arrival when navigation opens, and that the number of firemen should be increased now. Continuing he said:

"I consider it a bad scheme to have both engines located in stationary positions as they are now. This method requires the use of too much hose. After the last fire, every inch of hose was rendered useless for 24 hours. If the department would house the engines in the vicinity of the fire halls, they could be taken to any point on the river opposite a fire in the business district, with not much greater loss of time than is now required to reach them with hose. I have no criticism to make concerning the management of the last fire; under the circumstances and condition, as they were, I think that the department acquitted itself in the execution of every detail.

"I certainly believe that all buildings should be inspected thoroughly and frequently by a man detailed for that particular purpose, and whose duty should be confined to this special line of work. I do not deem it feasible to require owners of buildings to erect brick chimneys just now; iron stove pipes, with air spaces around them, are practically safe.

"I think that it is impossible to construct a good water system in this country during the winter season. If the council, however, should levy additional tax for fire purposes, my company would willingly pay.

"I am strongly opposed to permitting variety women and dance hall girls to occupy the upper stories of buildings used as theaters and dance halls. Of course, all houses of more than one story should be provided with fire escapes.

"I am interested in any movement or measure which tends to improve the efficiency of the fire department, and will give it my support."

Tom Chisholm expressed the following opinions:

"The stovepipes and flues should be looked at carefully in all buildings and the greatest care taken that there is no break in the pipes.

"I did not notice any mismanagement on the part of the fire department, but there were not enough men to do the work.

"I would be willing to pay a fair tax to promote any proposition which the people would think necessary for the better protection of the town.

"About the women in rooms over business houses, I think all danger from fire can be obviated by employing watchmen to look after the halls.

"Another suggestion I would make is that an ordinance should be made making it compulsory to place brick flues and chimneys in all large buildings. All places of amusement should have more than one exit and two story houses should have fire escapes. I have ordered one for the Hotel McDonald."

J. L. Macauley, of Macauley Bros., said:

"I think our fire department is adequate; but I think it would be a good idea to prohibit the use of canvas linings in all buildings, as this stuff is as inflammable as lint. I think the firemen worked nobly during the fire but that the force is not sufficient to combat a large fire successfully.

"I cannot see how we could have a better water system than now in use under the circumstances and I would oppose any taxation of property for the purpose of inaugurating any other system. I believe that all variety people should be excluded from rooming in business blocks."

Mr. Doig, manager of the Bank of

British North America, when interviewed, answered:

"I don't think that our fire department is sufficiently adequate to give us the protection that a city of this size should have. I am not well enough acquainted with the fire fighting business to suggest any improvement; but I should say that there are men in town who are qualified in the premises, and whose services should be secured.

"Personally I am willing to do anything which the business men and property owners deem necessary relative to the improvement of the department. I have always understood that a regulation was in force requiring brick chimneys in the business district; and I should say that it would be expedient to have such a measure passed and enforced immediately."

Mr. McMullen, manager of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, said:

"I consider our fire protection inadequate. I would suggest that two additional engines be ordered immediately, and also a large quantity of hose. My idea is that we should have a trained auxiliary fire brigade composed of volunteer firemen to act in conjunction with the paid force and under the control and orders of the department chief. I did not notice any mismanagement during the recent fire; but it is a fact, patent to all, that the number of firemen is insufficient to combat and confine within reasonable limits a large fire.

"If it can be demonstrated that the construction of a good water system at this season of the year is practicable, I am in favor of it, and am willing to pay a fire rate of taxation for that purpose.

"I think that it is a grave error to have the upper stories of places of amusement tenanted by variety women and dance hall girls. Experience has taught us that their careless habits are a menace to property. I deem it advisable to compel business men to construct brick chimneys this winter. Stove pipes should be properly arranged and frequently inspected. An inspector should be detailed for this special duty."

Mr. Fulda, of the A. E. Co., said:

"At present I consider our fire department inadequate to afford the required protection; but I have not given the matter enough consideration to warrant me in offering any particular improvements. I am always willing to stand my share of taxation, so long as the levy is made to better the town.

"If buildings are properly constructed and frequently inspected, I see no objection to the occupancy of upper stories by variety actresses and dance hall girls; but all such places should be compelled to erect brick chimneys."

F. H. Ames—Our fire department is adequate except in cases of large fires. I am willing to pay a reasonable tax for a good water system. Of course, my opinion is to exclude actresses and dance hall girls from rooming in the upper stories of buildings in the business district.

Rogers, of Cribbs & Rogers—The number of paid firemen should be increased. I do not believe a good water system can be secured, and am opposed to further taxation. The variety women should not be allowed to tenant houses located on the business streets.

Mr. Gandolfo—I think that the recent fire was mismanaged. The wind was blowing south, and I see no reason why buildings north of the Monte Carlo should have burned. The government has done its duty in providing apparatus, and all that is lacking is good management. I will pay a tax for a good water system. If amusement houses are properly constructed it would not be dangerous to permit variety women to occupy them; but as they have been arranged in the past, such places have proven nothing but veritable fire traps.

Bob Cahill of Cahill & Fazon—Paid force should be increased. We are in favor of a water system, and would pay our share of the tax. Good buildings, if frequently inspected, would not be materially dangerous even if occupied

by variety women and dance hall girls. J. L. Timmins—There are not enough men in the department. I do not think that it is possible to secure a good water system now. The occupancy of the upper stories to amusement buildings by actresses and dance hall girls has been a disgrace in the past and is a menace to the safety of property.

W. H. Parsons—The department needs more men. I will pay my share of a tax for a good water system. Women—I mean a certain class—should not be permitted to tenant buildings in the business district.

## FREIGHTING OVER THE ICE.

### But Little Being Done and for Excellent Reasons.

### Shippers Were Drained of Their Last Dollars When They Left Bennett—Will Await Navigation.

But a very small per cent of the freight which was en route down the river when navigation closed will see Dawson before next spring. Considerable hauling is being done from Scow island and intermediate points, but from there on southward the cargoes are not being molested.

There are two reasons for this inaction on the part of owners of stranded freight, the first being that the trail for heavy teams above Scow island is in very bad condition, and the second is that in many instances, the owners already have as much money invested in their stock as it would sell for in Dawson if here, and cannot therefore afford to expend upon it the additional amount which would be required to freight it down.

Hundreds of tons of freight now lying strewn along the Yukon were purchased and shipped from below in ample time to have been delivered in Dawson in the early fall, "when the snow was on the pumpkin and the yellow on the corn," had the various transportation companies been able to fulfill their contracts. The consignments were dumped on wharves at Skagway where for weeks they awaited the pleasure of a badly managed railroad, and when the stuff did move it was at an enormous expense, and before it moved its owner was, in the majority of cases hanging around Skagway endeavoring to drown his worry at a big outlay of cash. On reaching Bennett the situation was not in any degree illumined. There the steamboat companies by whom the consignments were billed found themselves overwhelmed with business, but in many instances the shipper was led to believe that their part of the contract would yet be fulfilled, and the poor shipper hung around Bennett as he had done at Skagway and again attempted to drown his worry at two bits per dampen. Finally, on realizing that the shipping companies were acting in bad faith with him he had them release his freight, when he set about having a scow built in order that he might bring his goods down himself. There is where another great vacuum was made in his purse. Lumber was higher at Bennett last fall than it is in Dawson today, and the result was in nine cases out of every ten when the owner of the cargo left Bennett after being again robbed by a tow boat he had his every dollar invested in his goods, the season was far spent and all that was left him to do was trust in Providence, stand by his sweep and keep his eye peeled for rocks and sand bars, with the result that when the ice closed upon them they were found forced to accept the inevitable and leave their possessions where winter overtook them until nature permits of their concluding the voyage next spring and early summer. And this condition of affairs accounts for the fact that such a small percentage of stranded freight is being freighted down the river. Every transportation company that the shipper dealt with since the purchase of his goods bilked him and he prefers to take no more chances.