

# The Chronicle

## Insurance & Finance.

R. WILSON SMITH,  
Proprietor.

ESTABLISHED JANUARY, 1881

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

VOL. XXIV. No. 7 MONTREAL, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1904. SINGLE COPY - 10c  
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION - \$2.00

### THE BALTIMORE CONFLAGRATION.

THE BUSINESS DISTRICT DEVASTATED, HUNDREDS OF MERCHANTS BURNT OUT; DOZENS OF SPLENDID WAREHOUSES IN RUINS, HEAVY LOSS TO INSURANCE COMPANIES.

Baltimore is now amongst the cities that have acquired world-wide and ever-enduring fame, from having been the scene of a historic conflagration.

For the first three days of this week the business district of that magnificent port was being devastated by fire. The flames were first noticed at 11 a.m., on Sunday, the 7th inst., in the wholesale dry goods store of John E. Hurst & Company. The fire must have been developing for some time without being observed, for, in half an hour after the alarm was given, there were a dozen large warehouses burning fiercely. Early in the afternoon thirty of the largest warehouses in the city were being burnt like fuel in a furnace, as the fire brigade was utterly powerless to check the progress of terrible flames, or lessen the appalling heat, which of itself was so intense as to spread the fire from building to building, which, in their turn, communicated the fiery blast to their neighbours, even to those on the opposite side of the street.

Though every bit of fire-fighting apparatus in the city was called into requisition, the firemen realized that they had a task before them which was too great for them to accomplish. Telegrams for fire engines were sent to Washington and Philadelphia and about 1 o'clock six engines arrived from Washington and four from Philadelphia, and joined in the battle to subdue the flames. New York also gave valuable help.

Engines from stations in surrounding districts also arrived as soon as possible. Some of the apparatus traveling a distance of thirty miles and more. Water plugs in every section within a radius of half a mile from the fire were in use, and it is roughly estimated that there were 350 hose all playing at one time upon different parts of the conflagration. Owing to the great congestion of fire apparatus, the

crowds of people and the general confusion, many of the engines from several out-of-town cities were unable to find a place where they would be of any service. With loud roars, wall after wall toppled into the streets and firemen ran for their lives. Street after street fell victims to the conflagrations. Blazing embers flew like winged torches, carrying destruction to wherever they fell. Sheets of tin six to eight feet square, were lifted into the air by the furious current caused by the heat, and floated some distance like kites.

At 3 o'clock, p.m., four hours after the fire was discovered, a tremendous explosion of about 150 barrels of whiskey stored in the upper floors of No. 24 Hanover street hurled tons of burning matter across the street upon the roofs of the buildings opposite which the firemen were drenching with water in a vain hope to make that street, the eastern boundary line of the conflagration. The flames quivered for a few moments under the water, but soon ate into the buildings on the east side.

Two truck wagons caught fire and were consumed, and an engine was buried by a falling wall, the firemen fleeing for their lives.

The whole of the business section of the city rapidly became a vast furnace, out of which were projected innumerable blazing missiles like the bombs thrown out of a battery of mortars. The sky seemed to rain fire. The roar of flames, the crash of falling walls, the continuous outburst of fiery embers, the dense clouds of smoke, the rattle of explosions, constituted one of the most appalling scenes that human eyes ever witnessed. Amid this scene of terror, crowds of citizens were struggling to secure books from offices that were in the path of the flames. Fire brigades were hustling to secure a position for working their engines, some being driven from one point to another to avoid the men, horses and apparatus being cremated. All through Sunday night and up to a late hour on Monday the fire raged without any check. The docks were the latest to take fire, but the vessels were saved by