

INVESTIGATION OF CONDUCT OF WAR.

Yesterday's Session of the Commission of Inquiry

Devoted to Examination of Complaints Made to the President.

The Taking of Testimony by the Commission Expected to Begin Next Week—General Wheeler Likely to Be One of the First Witnesses Called.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 29.—The War Investigating Commission confined itself largely to-day to the examination and classification of complaints which have been made to the President. A large number of such complaints have been received at the White House. They come generally in the form of letters, and are for the most part from relatives of the enlisted men.

Those examined so far at this session deal in the main with Camp Wikoff and Camp Thomas, but some of the letters also make charges concerning other camps. They relate especially to the food served to soldiers and to hospital accommodations, and none of them were of a very striking character.

One lady, whose son is stationed at Honolulu, wrote that he was encamped on a centipede hill and said his food was insufficient to meet his demands. She asked the President to see that he had better care.

Circular letters were sent to the writers of all the complaints asking them to make their charges specific, and to state whether they spoke from personal knowledge.

One of the letters read to-day was from Dr. Sims of Chattanooga. It was written to a friend in Ohio in response to an inquiry for the facts in regard to Camp Thomas, and was forwarded by the person that had received it to the President. Dr. Sims said in this letter that there was no justification for the charge that the site of the camp was not desirable. It was, he said, admirable. The doctor said that in the beginning of the camp's career the hospital facilities were limited, but that these had been increased until they were able to meet the demands upon them.

The commission expects to begin to take testimony next week. General Wheeler is expected to be among the first witnesses called.

The examination of complaints to the President was continued at the afternoon session.

A decision was reached at this session to include in the work an inquiry into the conduct of the War Department in the Pacific as well as the Atlantic, and to this end letters were written to General Merriam, in command of the Department of the Pacific; to General Otis, in command of the Philippines; and to General Merritt, who occupied this latter post until recently. The letter to General Merritt is as follows:

"We have the honor to request you to furnish us as early as possible, with such information as you have as to the adequacy or inadequacy of the quartermaster and commissary and medical supplies and medical staff for troops under your command while in this country, while en route and while you were in command at Manila, and whether or not such supplies were promptly and sufficiently issued to all troops."

"Also as to the proper or improper preparation of the transports for the transportation of your troops to that station. We will also be pleased to be informed as to the rations issued to the troops."

The letters to Generals Merriam and Otis are copies of the letter to General Merritt, except that Merriam is asked to supply information concerning the expedition to Hawaii.

MCKINLEY'S TRIP WEST.

Many Cities Wish to Be Included in the Itinerary.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 29.—Many cities not heretofore considered wish to be included in the itinerary of the President's trip West in connection with the Omaha Exposition. With the outlining of the plans for the trip, invitations of a most urgent character, both by telegram and letter, have been dispatched to the President in the interests of those anxious to entertain the President. Mr. McKinley, however, has planned to spend only a fortnight away from Washington, and this will necessitate a reluctant declination of numerous invitations.

Assistant Secretary of War Melckeljohn had a long interview with the President to-day, going over the arrangements for the trip. The results of the interview were unimportant, no changes nor additions being determined upon, as the President has not fully made up his mind on the subject.

The skeleton of the itinerary as already published remains unchanged, and the President will reach Omaha about 10 o'clock on the night of October 11th. The 12th is the special day, and what is to be done between that time and the 16th, when the President is expected in Chicago, is not fully determined, though the Omaha authorities look for the President to arrive on the 13th, and it is likely he will be in St. Louis on the night of the 14th.

It is also probable he will reach Chicago before the 18th, to be the guest of personal friends. The disposition of the balance of the fortnight, however, has not been definitely settled.

The President had a busy time seeing visitors to-day. Before 10 o'clock the lobby just outside of his office was crowded with visitors, including several members of Congress.

THE CRISTOBAL COLON.

The Navy Department Will Aid Hobson in Raising the Vessel.

EMPIRE STATE DEMOCRACY.

Augustus Van Wyck, Brother of New York City's Mayor,

Receives the Nomination for Governor on the First Ballot.

Contrary to All Expectations, the Convention Was Very Harmonious, the Only Contest Being the Selection of a Candidate to Head the Ticket.

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From the White House Colonel Hay went to the State Department. He was accompanied by Spencer Eddy, who for years past has served as his private secretary. Touching the personnel of the State Department, Mr. Hay said that his present purpose was to make no changes, being satisfied that the department was in excellent condition in that respect.

VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS.

As Brave and Patriotic a Body of Men as Ever Took the Field.

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"The volunteer troops of the United States in the war with Spain," said he, "were as brave and as patriotic a body of soldiers as ever took the field in any campaign the world has ever seen. The battles they fought were won as gallantly as any recorded in history, and yet the peril which our soldiers had most cause to dread was not bullets, but disease, which swept over our camps and destroyed hundreds where bullets killed one. Our soldiers entered into the fever-stricken camps as they went up the hill in the face of the enemy with a courage and devotion that must open to them the glorious pages of history."

"Those who say that these men sickened and died because they wished to; those who blame the soldiers and officers of our army for the disease and death that devastated the camps and the ranks; those who assert that our soldiers suffered through their own fault, insult a quarter of a million of the bravest men that ever carried arms."

"These men did not suffer and die because they wished it, and whoever says they did insults our army and the men who offered it. It is an affront to reason. I have nothing to say of the blame for the death of those brave men."

SAVED BY A CLOTHES LINE.

How a Number of People Escaped From a Burning Building.

CHICAGO, Sept. 29.—A clothes line attached to a window saved the lives of a number of people to-day in a four-story apartment building at 201 West Erie street, fire having cut off other means of egress. A dozen persons, including a number of women and children, slid down the line and escaped. Seventeen other people were rescued by firemen with ladders. Five persons were injured by the flames or by jumping from windows.

Injured hands were seen. Jumped from third story, fell in heap of broken glass, will die; William Benson, jumped from third story, badly bruised and cut; William Olsen, shoulder dislocated; Fireman John Thrane, thrown down two flights of stairs by explosion, legs and hands lacerated; Fireman Thomas B. Mulcahey, thrown down with Thrane, face and body injured. The fire broke out in some druggists' stores in the basement, and the burning chemicals made a quick fire, spreading a panic among the inmates who rushed for the windows.

The financial loss was small.

CANDID INDIAN SIXTEEN TO ONE.

CHICAGO, Sept. 29.—Leonard J. Hackney has withdrawn from the Democratic State ticket as a candidate for Judge of the Supreme Court from the Second District. It has been understood that Judge Hackney has never been able to bring himself to an endorsement of the 16 to 1 plank of his party.

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COMMISSIONERS ON PEACE QUESTION.

American and Spanish Members Formally Introduced.

Meet at a Luncheon Given by the French Foreign Affairs Minister.

The Disposal of the Philippine Islands the Difficult Problem the Commission Will Have to Solve, Owing to the Divergent Instructions of the Two Governments.

PARIS, Sept. 29.—The United States Peace Commission held another session this morning, after which, accompanied by the United States Ambassador, General Horace Porter, they drove to the Foreign Office, where the Commissioners met and breakfasted with the Spanish Commissioners. In addition to the Commissioners and the Ambassadors, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Del Casse, had invited three head officials of the French Foreign Office, the First Secretaries of the Embassies and General Hegron, Secretary of Elysee Palace.

The breakfast at which the Peace Commissioners met for the first time to-day was purely an informal affair, given at the home of the private apartments in the Foreign Office. The Spanish Commissioners arrived first, accompanied by the Spanish Ambassador here, Senor Leon y Castillo, and the Secretary of the Spanish Embassy, the United States Ambassador, General Horace Porter, and Henri Vinard, Secretary of the United States Embassy, arrived at the Foreign Office, and awaited their turn.

The American party arrived on the stroke of 12:30, the hour fixed, and the rapping of a halberd by a doorkeeper on the marble floor announced the arrival of the Americans, who were received in a private salon near M. Del Casse's official quarters. The Minister greeted each American in turn, and then presented them to the Premier, M. Briand. Simultaneously Senor Castillo bowed forward to the General Porter, whereupon the two groups moved together, and introductions to each other were effected by M. Del Casse.

After Senor Castillo and General Porter had had a brief chat, the party retired to the breakfast room, where M. Del Casse presided in the center of a long table. The breakfast, or luncheon, as it will be termed in the United States, occupied eighteen minutes. Coffee and cigars were served in an adjoining apartment, and after a half an hour's further chatting, the party broke up, both Commissions leaving simultaneously with courteous adieus.

The French newspapers continue to comment upon the difficulties which the commissions will have to face by reason of their divergent instructions, beyond which, it is said, they cannot go. "Gil Blas" says: "The Spanish Government has given its Commissioners very precise instructions. They are that there can be no question of disputing the rights of Spanish sovereignty over Manila, the Island of Luzon and the rest of the archipelago, outside of the Marianas Islands. On the other side, the American Commission, before leaving President McKinley, again received very precise instructions from which the Commissioners cannot depart. Following is the text of their instructions: 'First—Spain cedes absolute sovereignty over the whole of the Island of Luzon. 'Second—The other islands of the archipelago will be replaced under the dominion of Spain on condition that the liberal government is accorded to the inhabitants. 'Third—Complete separation of church and state in the Philippines. 'Fourth—Spain will not cede any other islands in the group, any other foreign power without America's consent. 'Fifth—The United States shall enjoy for all time the commercial privileges as the most favored nations, not excepting Spain herself. 'The 'Gil Blas' concludes with remarking: 'It is therefore to be feared that for unhappy Spain the negotiations which open on the 1st of October will give no satisfaction.'"

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FOREST FIRES CONTINUE TO RAGE.

Those on West Side of Colorado Divide Beyond Control,

People Residing in That District Fleeing for Their Lives.

No Way of Getting Direct Information as to How Many, if Any, Lives Were Lost—Belief That the Fires Were Started by Ute Indians With Malicious Intent.

IDAHO SPRINGS (Colo.), Sept. 29.—

Forest fires burning on the west side of the Divide are beyond control and people are said to be fleeing for their lives. How many, if any, have perished cannot be known as there is no way of getting direct information at this time. A light breeze gives the mighty sea of fire a new impetus, and onward it goes, burning everything before it, with no chance of saving livestock or property. Cattle are known to be perishing, and bear and deer and other wild animals are running to the east side of the Divide. The damage will be tremendous. The timber