

PATHEMIC SCENES IN THEATRE CRASH

Hundreds Hoped and Prayed as
Bodies Were Taken From
Ruins

CHURCH USED AS MORGUE

By a Staff Correspondent

Washington, Jan. 30.—In a desperate encounter with steel, concrete and biting wind, rescuers early today bent their energy to save one or more persons they believed to be suffering from the effects of the Knickerbocker Theatre, which collapsed Saturday night. No additional victims were found, however, and the search was suspended.

While these men were working as rapidly as possible, long lines of mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers, friends and neighbors were pushing against ropes in vicinity, grabbing at stretchers and praying that the rescuers might succeed.

Some of them stood there, be-

Near Death in Crash



E. M. SHUGHNESSY
Second Assistant Postmaster General, who was badly injured in the Washington theatre disaster

I heard a crackling overhead, I've worked forty years in coal mines and I knew what they meant. It sounded to me exactly as though the slate of the miners were falling on my head."

The thought flashed across my mind, "I can beat it to the doors. Although

more than a fourth of the 400 spectators who went to see the comedy "Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford" found their tombs in the temple of mirth,

In the cold gray morning yesterday, surveying ambulances and trucks, with beds of straw and blankets, drew up six abreast to cover the gurgling doors to which a screaming, terrified in-

As a crushed form was lifted into stretchers the bearers rushed into the first-aid station established in the corner drug store, where cool-headed physicians, surgeons and nurses did all they could. Then the ambulances whisked the sufferers away.

Now on row after row yesterday and last night in the Strand school rooms of the Christian Science Church around the corner from the theatre, it had been converted into a temporary morgue. Into its crimson-smeared interior came hysterical women, screaming children and faltering men.

All day and all night they tramped.

Woman's Cry of Agony

Sometimes the delirious word was not used. The shrill, agonizing cry of a woman, seeing on the floor the form of a child, the dress she had pains-takingly made, said that mother had found her offspring. Early this morning there were those same heart-rending occur-

rence of heroism, of miraculous es-

cape and of tragic death flitted from mouth to mouth of the thousands who lined the snow-bound concourse outside.

Snoot's Sister-in-Law Dead

The theatre is located in a fastidious district. Its clientele was of the diplomats and attaches from the embassies of the families of Senators and Congressmen, of Government officials and clerks, who abound in the Columbia coal apartment house district.

Senator Reed Snoot, of Utah, was one of the first on the scene Sunday evening. His sister-in-law had been killed.

Representative Alben W. Barkley, of Kentucky, frantically tore away at the concrete and steel for three hours while his wife awaited outside.

At the end of three hours he stopped to call for help, and the rescuers' admiration froze on to his face. She, smiling through the tragedy, told him their son Murrell was safe. Murrell had intended to go to the theatre, but when he arrived he found he had seen the picture before.

The rescuers labored under an

immense thorn of extinction. Ex-

amination of the debris, which discussed weakness that might permit their collapse at any moment. It was a monstrous job for the marines and soldiers to keep the anxious, the grief-stricken and the curious, sufficiently far away from the structure to prevent a double tragedy.

Two Babies Survive Tragedy

An idea of the manner in which the victims were caught in the debris was explained by a physician who found an injured doctor sitting upright with a man's head resting in his lap. He said he saw two bodies hanging by their feet from the banister of the balcony.

When dawn broke at 4 o'clock yes-

terday two babies, sleeping soundly, were uncovered. Only one injury was frozen hands. No one identified them as they cooed and the supposition is that their parents are sleeping the last sleep.

One Young Man gave up his life that others might live. He, Albert Buehler, was not securely pinned, but to lift the weight from his body would have required precious minutes.

"I'm not badly hurt," he told two men who tried to dig him out. "I got some of the others who were hit out now if they're going to be gotten out at all."

Three hours later some of the "others" had been removed. He didn't object when told that he had to be moved to clear a path. They lifted his tortured, numb frame onto the stretchers and carried him to the dressing room. With a smile freezing on his pursed lips he looked up and died—twice minutes after his birth.

Boy Is Pathetic Figure

One of the most pathetic figures was Grant Kranston, a nine-year-old boy. His head buried in bangs, he lay in the Morgue to discover that he was the only survivor of his family of five.

With sobbing, gasping, ears agitated with the sound of the crash, he lay in the District government building, holding on to the remains of his mother and his two young sisters. He had just left a hospital where his father, Oscar Kranston, had died in a quarter of an hour before.

A fashionably dressed woman, screaming hysterically, identified the body of her dead friend, Mrs. Cora Seeger. She fought with the guards and attendants who tried to restrain her until she was composed.

Text of Resolution

The resolution reads:

Whereas, it is congruous to reward contractors and builders, especially during and since the World War, have

labored, evaded or treated lightly the rules and regulations provided in the building code of the District of Columbia; and finally those rules which made mandatory provision for assurance against such terrible calamities as has just occurred; and

Therefore, it has been persistently

urged that contractors and builders

determine to save money on the execu-

tion of the safety and health of

the public welfare, and

therefore, it is the imperative duty of

the Senate of the United States to know

all the facts relating to this inexcusably

tragedy and also to learn what, if any,

truth there is to be reported concerning

the safety and health of tens of thousands of buildings in the District of Columbia; and

Whereas, it is the imperative duty of

the Senate Committee on Education and

Labor to make a search

for the last thing I remember seeing in the theatre was the baton of the

chieftain of the District of Columbia be-

cause on the District of Columbia be-