Astounding Revelations Made by the Senate Investigating Committee--The Timber Wealth of the State Ruthlessly Looted.

The following is a synopsis of the report of the senate committee to investigate alleged irregularities in the sale taxation. etc., of school and other state lands as presented to the senate: The Report.

The Report.

The results of the committee's investigation will be a source of astonishment to the senate and to the people of the whole state. It is not too much to say that no committee ever appointed by any legislative body in this country has, for the length of time it has been able to give to the subject, exhumed such a mass of starting evidence. This evidence establishes, in the judgment of your committee, the conviction that the State of Minnesota has been robbed of millions of dollars' worth of its property during the past fifteen years, and that the most gigantic frauds have been practiced upon the school fund, a fund which every good citizen has hoped to see preserved undiminished for the benefit of the present generation and posterity. We find the laws for the collection of taxe in a vast area of the state made a farce and a laughing steek. in a vast area of the state made a farce and a laughing stock.

## School Lands.

We will first turn to the consideration of the frauds upon the school fund. This seems to be a boundless sea of iniquity. It is impossible to tell how many million dollars have been stolen from the school fund, for we have not had the time to cover with our investigation either the whole period of the past or anything libe the whole scope of the state. The evidence before your committee shows that in many, if not a majority of cases, the state received but a little over one-quarter of the amount justly its due. This great fraud is accomplished by false returns of the amount of timber cut and by low prices put upon the same, as is abundantly shown by the evidence before the committee.

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It appears by the testimony of one witness (see page 146 of festimony) that on section 36, town 56, range 24—a school section—the scaler for the surveyor general had returned about 450,000 feet of timber, or 1,550 logs, as the amount cut upon the section, while the witness going over it exrefully found by actual scaling that it had produced about 3,100 logs or 870,220 feet of timber. The school fund was of course robbed of the difference between the amount returned by the scaler for the surveyor general and the amount hat was actually taken from the land. This would show upon this single section, a loss to the school fund of about \$1,000.

It appears by the testimony of one witness (see page 158 of testimony) that on section 36, town 133, range 34, there were 600,000 feet of pine and 400,000 feet of oak. The witness testified that he would have been willing to have given \$3,000 for the section, and he further testified that the whole timber on this section has been cut. The letter of the state auditor, attached to the evidence and marked "Exhibit B" shows that from that section the state derived only the sum of \$176, which was for oak sold at \$2 per thousand upon an estimate of 55,000 feet of oak upon the whole section. It does not appear that the state received anything for the 600,000 feet of pine upon the section.

The vidence before ever committee shows

plae upon the section.

Lost Over \$2,500.

The evidence before your committee shows that 1,500.000 feet of logs, probably worth in the neighborhood of \$4,500, were cut from section 16. town 54, range 25, while the books of the state auditor show that the amount received by the state from the section was less than \$2,000. The school fund has therefore been defrauded out of over \$2,500. This occurred twelve or thirteen years ago, while Mr. Whitcomb was state auditor. Appended to the testimony will be found the letter of the state auditor in reference to this section, marked "Exhibit C."

The same witness testifies that it was

auditor in reference to this section, marked "Exhibit C."

The same witness testifies that it was general talk among lumbermen that if they could get a stumpage forty or school section, they could make a good deal of money out of it and their stumpage would not cost them much. It also appears by the evidence that a certain lumberman, whose name is in the possession of the committee, cut 39,000 feet of timber from forty acres of internal improvement land, for which the state never received a dollar. Section 36, town 42, range 26, was bought by another lumber company at \$2 per 1000 upon a fraudulent estimate that it contained only 250,000 feet, while the testimony taken before your committee of a witness who run upon a fraudulent estimate that it contained only 250,000 feet, while the testimony taken before your committee of a witness who run the line along the edge of it and carefully exacuned the adjoining sections goes to show that it contained nearly five million feet, worth at least \$3 per thousand. It is testified by another witness that section 16, town 133, range 33, had been antirely stipped of the timber and three of the forty acre tracts therein, containing pine, has been sold as agricultural land. Another witness, who had been upon this land at the time and made examination of it, testifies that there was at least 2,000,000 feet of pine timber upon the section, and that some had placed it as high as 2,500,000 feet; that in addition to this, he thought there was fully 200,000 feet of oak timber: that the section was upon the edge of a lake so that the logs corel easily be rafted to a mill close at hand and within forty rods of the Northern Pacific railroad. The value of this timber, as sworn to by this witness, was \$7.525, while the state auditor shows by his letter appended to the testimony and marked "Exhibit D," dated April 5th, 1893, and addressed to the chairman of this committee, that the whole amount derived by the state from that section for timber for the school fund amounted to \$309.14, and that amount has not yet been paid.

## The Mass of Fraud.

It must not be forgotten that we are dipping in here and there into the mass of fraud, and that these witnesses, few in number, have generally been discovered by fipping in here and there into the mass of traud, and that these witnesses, few in number, have generally been discovered by accident or by voluntary statements made by citizens who had knowledge of the facts. It is fair to presume that if such a gigantic fraud as this, involving a robbery of over \$7,000 on one section is true, it must have been a sample of thousands of other cases of the same kind. There is no doubt upon the mind of your committee that school lands, as well as other lands belonging to the state, have been the subject, during many years past, of combination between the buyers for the express purpose of preventing competition and beating down the price and defrauding the state. While it appears that \$3 per thousand has been the ruling price for stumpage in the state at large, in a great many cases the school fund has received but \$1 to \$1.50 per thousand feet. It appears in this connection that section 36, town 57, lange 23, was estimated by the state cruisers to contain 500,000 feet, valued at \$2 per thousand, while the real value of the same was at least \$3.50 per thousand (see page 170 of testimony). We have not been able to ascertain whether the estimate of the quantity of pine upon land was as far out of the way as the estimate of the price. We would also call the attention of the senate to the letter of the state auditor to the chaliman of the committee, dated April 5, 1893, marked "Exhibit E," and appended to the testimony, in which he refers to the amount of pine sold upon the same section. It shows how grossly inaccurate were the estimates of the parties employed by the state to estimate the amount of timber upon state lands. It seems to our committee that such errors must have been committee that such errors must have been committee that such errors must have been committeed that such errors must have been committeed purposely, and in the interest of

ber upon state lands. It seems to our committee that such errors must have been committee that such errors must have been committed purposely, and in the interest of those taking timber from the state.

Your committee would also report that the evidence before them shows that the surveyor general of logs and lumber for the Second district, employed as one of his deputies, a certain party whose duty it was to scale on the river bank in 1891 the amount of pine cut by one J. T. Welsh, on the Willow river, to sell to the Ackley Lumber company. A very small amount of the whole of the logs hauled was reported to him as being hauled from a school section to-wit: Section sixteen (16), township on hundred and forty-two (142), range twenty five (25), and the rest from land owned by private parties; but the witness learner from the teamsters who hauled the logs that the whole of them were being taken from the said school section. When the surveyor general visited the place the witness told him that he had learned that

Robbed of Its Timber. Robbed of its Timber.

the school land was being robbed of its
timber, whereupon, as the witness testifies
the surveyor general, who was the pail
agent of the state to protect its interests
told him that "it was none of his business—you attend to your scaling and let these
fellows go. Don't pay any attention to that.
You take what they give you; we have
nothing to do with it." It appears from
the testimony of the deputy that he kept a

record of the amount of timber so taken; and that while but 359,230 feet were ostensibly taken from the school land the amount really taken therefrom was 3,305,960 feet. The witness notified the state auditor of the facts, and the clerk of the land adepartment afterwards sent for him and said to him that he had rescaled the land and found his statements correct, and that he had collected \$5,000 from the lumber company for the pine so taken; and he paid said witness \$100 as a present from the state for his valuable information.

Books Badly Mixed.

Books Badly Mixed. Your committee is constrained to say that when it became necessary to ascertain certain facts from the state auditor, they found the books and accounts in such a state that the information could not be obtained until a certain clerk was brought in compain matters. It seems to them that the books and accounts should be rescued from their present condition of confusion.

the books and accounts should be rescued from their present condition of confusion. In saying this we do not desire to reflect upon the present state auditor. The confusion began long before he assumed the duties of his office.

The evidence taken forces your committee to the conclusion that the school fund of this state has been robbed by these and similar arts of millions of dollars of its property. We have only been able to find a comparatively few isolated cases, but if we apply the same ration of fraud to all the school lands in the pine region, the loss to the state must have been enormous. We will not go so far as to say that the state officers were a direct party to these frauds and shared in the plunder, although some of the witnesses have so testified, but we of the witnesses have so testified, but we can certainly hold them responsible for great neglect of duty; nor do these wrongs seem to have been confined to any one seem to have been confined to any year or any one state officer; they ra back as far as our investigation penetrated. The lumbermen seem have banded themselves together. evidence shows that no assistance has beginn to facilitate the statements. given to facilitate the state in any research that were attempted to be made, and fact impediments were thrown in the wor all investigation. One witness testi directly that offers of money were made him to induce him not to make honest emptes for the state could be stated and the state of t him to induce him not to make honest estimates for the state auditor, and your committee is satisfied that a vast amount of corruption has surrounded the entire business. It is a horrible part of this whole matter that men of large wealth and high social position joined in this scheme to plunder the little children of the state of their patrimony. It would have been bad enough if the ignorant and victous had resorted to such practices, but when the

Pillars of the Churches.

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pillars of the churches and the ornaments of society have joined in the work, it seems to evidence the rottenness of our whole social conditions.

These robberies were not confined to the pine lands alore, but it appears that the state has been plundered of its hard wood timber to large amounts, although there is no law, as your committee believes, to justify the state auditor in selling a single stick of the oak, ash, elm, basswood, etc., except with the land at public sale. In some cases wood' has been sold as cord wood, although the officers of the state must have well understood that when the land was so stripped and nothing left but the stumps that it would be very difficult to sell it for agricultural lands.

Your committee is informed by high legal authority that there is no law which authorizes the sale of hard wood timber on lands belonging to this state; and they understand that the price of oak is rapidly advancing in consequence of the demand for it for manufacturing purposes; and that from the Mississippi river to the Pacific coast there are no large supplies of oak timber except in this state; and that it is in the interest of the state that all its hardwood timber should be carefully looked after and protected from depredation. The evidence shows that oak timber on state lands has recertly been sold for \$2 per M, while in many parts of the state it is worth \$8 per M.

We find that the most cunning and ingenious practices have been reserved to the

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We find that the most cunning and ingenious practices have been resorted to to perpetrate these frauds; for instance, a price would be offered for the stumpage—which had probably been estimated at one-fourth its true amount by the state officers—which could not properly be paid by any person not being in the ring and not knowing the true amount. This drove out competition, while the man who was guilty of the fraud made up for the loss on what he paid for by the vast amount he stole or what he did not pay for.

University Lands.

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University Lands.

The statement your committee has made as to school lands applies with equal force to the university lands. That great institution, which is the head of the public school system of this state, seems to have been plundered in an equalty outrageous manner. The committee proposes, during the renainder of the session, to go still more fully into this branch of the subject. It appears that the timber has been sold in many cases at prices ranging from \$1 to \$3 per thousand upon an estimated amount of pine upon the section, and one witness testifies that where the state scale showed but 150,000 feet cut upon a tract of land, twelve times that amount had really been 150,000 feet cut upon a tract of land, twelve times that amount had really been taken from the land, and the state university had loss the difference. Another instance is given where section 31 town 57. range 24, was sold to an individual at \$1.75 per thousand, while the testimony shows that it was worth \$3.50 per thousand.

## Swamp Lands.

we pass now to the subject of swamp lands. These seem to have been also a prolific field of fraud. The evidence shows that prominent lumbermen have large contracts with the railroad companies under which they send men to examine the state swamp lands, and when they find tracts that are well timbered and desirable they make application to the railroad companies, and the companies then apply to the state for the land as a part of their grant from the state. As soon as they get title to the land they turn it over to these lumbermen at an agreed price ner acre. The tracts of land thus selected freeally not swamp land except in a technical sense for pine does not grow in swamps. In this way the very choleest part of the timber lands of the state are culled out for the benefit of speculators and the refuse left in the hands of the state. Not satisfied with this ingenious scheme these men go still further. It is in evidence that they do not place their deeds on record, and the title to the land appears to still remain in the railroad company, and the land thus escapes taxation. These lands are some of them covered with a magnificent growth of pine timber. In some cases a forty-acre tract will have on, it from \$3,000 to \$4,000 worth of pine. One witness testifies that it is useless to attempt to contest the right of the purchaser, because the state officers appear to be in sympathy with the lumbermen. Your committee on this point are not able to speak authoritatively, but trust the matter will be a subject of future investigation.

United States Government Land.

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There is a mass of evidence before your committee as to the fraudulent manner in which pine land has been obtained on this subject; but your committee did not feel that it had any authority to inquire into matters outside of the state lands. The evidence shows, however, that shanties worth \$5 each were made of a few sticks, with fragments of broken glass or bottles stuck through holes as an excuse for windows, and a few grains of corn and beans were planted with a stick in the ground, so that the claimants would be able to swear they had a lawful residence and garden. By these shameful devices the United States government has been cheated out of millions of acres under the pre-emption and homestead laws, while the parties who went through this pretense of a residence sold aut for from \$200 to \$500 each to some wealthy lumberman who had employed them to go there and who was well aware that the claimant must commit perjury before the title of the land could pass to him. It is claimed before your committee that not to per cent of the entries made in the timber regions are genuine, and that 90 per ent are a cover for fraud.

The Revenues Defrauded.

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We now approach another and very important branch of this investigation, to wit: The extent to which the revenues of this state have been defrauded by failure to assess them for what The extent to which the revenues of this state have been defrauded by failure to usess lands or to assess them for what they were really worth in proportion to other lands assessed in this state. The evidence discloses the fact that the county of Itasca embraces about 5.400 square miles, or one-fourteenth of the whole state. About one-third of this area, or in the neighborhood of one million acres, has been patented to individuals from the United States, and of this land over one-half, or in the neighborhood of six hundred acres, has been assessed and taxed at a verage valuation of a little over \$3 per acre. About one-half of the personal estate of the county also escapes taxation. The county has been miserably mismanaged and the result is it has an indebtedness of nearly \$20,000, while it has about \$10,000 of improvements to show for it. Nearly all the officers of the said county, as shown by the evidence before this committee, are employed by the great lumber companies operating in said county,

or by individual lumbermen. The evidence also shows that at the time the county was organized a resident of the city of Minneapolis, who was largely interested in a lumber company in said county, was appointed as one of the commissioners thereof. This was the same man who bought the timber claim just referred to, and who was a member of the lumber company who furnished supplies for the United States surveyor. While acting as county commissioner of Itasca county he continued to reside in the city of Minneapolis with his family, and he appears to have been made county commssioner simply to assisst the lumber company in the operations by which it was to deprive the state of its taxes. It is claimed by witnesses who appeared before this committee that while parties resident in the county, or small concerns not in the ring, were assessed upon their property at a high valuation, the great lumbermen, who were the favorites of the combination, got off entirely from payment of taxes or were assessed for much less than the real value thereof—in some cases for less than one-tenth of a fair valuation. The assessment of the property of the county, seems to have been conducted in a shameful manner. The present assessor has been in the employ of another of those lumber companies, and we

present assessor has been in the employ of another of those lumber companies, and we have reason to believe is still so employed Could Have Added Millions. While the law of the state requires the assessor to personally visit and examine the land to be assessed, his own evidence shows that out of seventy towns in the county he visited but thirteen. This witness admitted to your comittee that where he had made personal inspection of, the land he had raised the assessment, in many cases, to a high figure as compared with the former assessment, in one case raising a tract of land from \$120 to \$1,800, and he admitted that if he had personally inspected the rest of the county and had made a similar increase it would have added millions to the taxable real estate of the county. It is but justice to say that the reason the county assessor did not visit all the towns in the county was that he was prevented to some the county was that he was prevented by the actions of the county was that he was prevented to the county was that he was prevented to use his cract words, "That a man in Winona could make as good an assessment of the county as he had made of the towns that he had not visited." Your commuttee its forced to the conclusion that millions of dollars' worth of property have escaped assessment in that county alone, and that the undervaluation of such as has been assessed will amount to a vast sum. It is in evidence before your committee that the county of Itasca and the state itself has never received one-tenth its just proportion of taxes on real estate in Itasca county, and it appears by the statement of one witness that a part of the Cannon Falls Improvement company's land, now owned by private parties and therefore subject to taxation, has not been assessed at all. Your committee are of the opinion that one man cannot assess a county of the size of Itasca county, but it would require three men with several assistants several months to properly do the work required by law. It flso appears that there are in the said county of Itasca county, out if would require three men with several assistants several months to properly do the work required by law. It flso appears t

Gross Undervaluations
The evidence taken before your committee goes to show that in assessing land no distinction has been made between lands that are valueless and lands that are valuable, both being assessed at the same rate. Thus certain lands in section 11, town 58, range 24, from which all the timber has been cut, were assessed at \$50 per forty acres, while land one mile east of it belonging to a lumber company, containing range 24, from which all the timber has been cut, were assessed at \$50 per forty acres, while land one mile east of it belonging to a lumber company, containing \$2,000 worth of timber per forty acre tract, was assessed at precisely the same rate. This undervaluation seems to run all over the county and is especially applicable to the lands held by the great lumber firms. A former assessor, a late auditor of the county of Itasca, who had also been in the employ of lumber companies, testified that he made no effort at all to assess logs, except that he had assessed the logs of the Grand Rapids Lumber company was composed of the members of the Hall & Ducey company, now the Shevlin-Carpenter company and that the Grand Rapids Lumber company atter May 1 so as to escape taxation in Hennepin county, where the taxes were three times as high. The logs being manufactured in Hennepin county were taxable there under the present law. While these gigantic frauds have been practiced upon the revenues of the state, the bona fide settlers of the county of Itasca have been compelled to bear unjust and needles burdens for the purpose of supporting the government and protecting the property of the lumber firms. While the total assessment of the county for the present year is but a little over \$2,000,000, we believe the cash value of the timber alone standing in the county, which is subject to assessment. amounts to \$20,000,000. The annual cut of logs amounts to about 205,000,000 feet, worth \$1.500,000.

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the frauds upon the revenue refer altogether to one county.

The Remedy.

The Remedy.

The committee feels that it would be a crime on the part of the state when the knowledge of these robberies is brought home to the legislature to stand still and do nothing to punish the plunderers of the people and prevent similar atrocities in the future. Such a course would simply encourage every adventurer in the state to join in the spollation. The committee therefore recommends that some body, commission or committee be created, with ample power to carry on the work after the close of the session, as the committee proposes to keep on taking testimony up to the last hour. Each member of the new commission could be given power to administer oaths and send for persons and papers and employ agents to inspect the lands which have been sold. To prevent the appearance of creating lucrative offices, the committee suggests that these commissioners be paid only their expenses, believing that there is public spiritenough to be found to undertake the work. The commissioners could go to separate portions of the state and send out agents and collect the facts. The statute of limitations does not run against the state, and if the matter is properly pushed, suits can be brought against those who have defrauded the state and millions turned into the public treasury. If the facts revealed are as striking and terrible as those laid before the committee, the governor could call an extra session next, winter to take the proper and necessary steps in the premises. The report is signed by Senators Keller, Donnelly. I. D. Shirth, Dedon and Leavitt, the committee. They accompanied it with a joint resolution to carry into force and effect the suggestions which close the report, and appropriate \$5,000 to pay the expenses. The names of the commissioners were not inserted and the joint resolution was laid over until to-day to give senators an opportunity to give some refiection to the matter. They also introduced a bill, which was passed under susp

## BAD DAY IN BELGIUM

STRIKERS AND SOLDIERS COME TOGETHER.

Four Strikers Killed and Many Are Wounded in a Fight With Soldiers at Mons --Beginning to Look Serious.

More Blood Shed.

Brussels, April 18.—At Mons to-day the strikers indulged in all manner of threats against the government, and as the day wore on they became emboldened and determined to take possession of the town for a labor procession. When the mob attempted to march through the streets they were met by a strong de-tachment of the civic guard. No attention was paid to the order to disperse Hooting and yelling, they attempted to march on, and notified the guards to fire upon them. The guard fired upon the crowd, but this did not effect their dispersal. On the contrary, it only infuriated them, and a charge en masse was made upon the guard. A desperate handto-hand conflict ensued. The main body of the strikers was broken up, but groups of struggling men could be seen in the side streets leading from the main thoroughfare. The battle was long and bitterly contested, but finally the guard were victorious. It is known that four of the miners were killed. Many of the rioters were wounded and a number were taken to the hospital. The killing of the four strikers has added greatly to the excitement in the town, and there is danger of a more serious outbreak. Men and women from the adjacent mining villages are flocking into Mons, and the authorities are anxiously awaiting the events of the night. Mons is the center of the great Borinage coal mining district. Three-fourths of all the miners in Belgium are employed in this district. To-da, a thousand of the dock laborers

in Antwerp joined the strike movement. Many of the men in loading and discharging vessels and in other work about the wharves did not quit work, in obedience to the order of the men engineering the strike. This inflamed the strikers, who to-day made an attack on the workers. The latter made a weak attempt to defend themselves, but they would, in all probability, have been driven away had it not been for the gendarmes, who took a hand in the affray. The strikers were armed with revolvers, and used them. The gendarmes, who also had firearms, were quick to respond, and it is thought that several strikers were wounded. A number of ringleaders among the strikers were captured. The feeling of unrest continues to spread. There is no denying the fact that the crisis is acute. Excited meetings in favor of universal suf-frage are being held throughout country. Everywhere impassioned appeals are made to those who live by to join the great demonstration now in progress. In the Charleroi district, progress. In the Charleroi district, where 30,000 miners are employed, work in the mines may be said to be at a standstill, for 20,000 of the miners have quit work and are riotous. Most of these miners are miserably poor, and they and their families are bound to suffer. The their families are bound to suffer. cotton, yarn, lace. linen and woolen mills and factories in Grammont, in East Flanders, are affected by the movement, a large number of the operatives in these industries having joined in the strike movement. Some of the more enthusiastic and hot-blooded strikers at Grammont assembled in the Cafe Hollandaise at that place and held an impromptu meeting, at which fiery speeches were made by some of the leaders. The gendarmes attempted to break up the meeting, but met with stout resistance. The fight was transferred to the street, and though the gendarmes had the advantage of arms and disci-pline, the strikers struggled desperately, and were only dispersed after a long contest, and after two of the gendarmes and a large number of the rioters were seriously wounded.

In the fight between the workingmen and civic guard in the streets of Mons, to-day, fourteen soldiers were wounded. Three will not recover. They were re-Three will not recover. They were re-moved to the hospital where their antemortem statements were taken for the

public prosecutor.

Dispatches from Antwerp this evening show that the situation in that city has grown more threatening since noon. The strikers had gathered repeatedly in large crowds throughout the northern district before 3 o'clock. A squadron of police riding with drawn swords against the workingmen were overwhelmed with showers of stones and timbers. The whem. timbers. ... While the police retreated in confusion. While the reserves were being summoned the strikers threw up barricades in the side streets, women and children hastened from the houses with firearms. Another squadron of police supported by a detachment of the civic guard tried half an hour later to drive back the mob. They were met with volleys from the re-They were met want voneys from the re-volvers and rifles of the men behind the barricades. Many of the soldiers were wounded and removed to the hospitals. More of the guards were summoned and after ten charges carried the barricades. The strikers retreated, firing. Crowds are still gathering in the northern district this evening, and more fighting is ex-pected. The concert halls of the city are empty. Several theaters are closed.

Collision in Michigan. Farwell, Mich., April 18.-A collision oc-curred on the Toledo, Ann Arbor & North-

curred on the Toledo, Ann Arbor & Northern Michigan road about four mi'es north of this city this morning between a working train and the north-bound passenger. Two men were killed, several badly injured and one is missing. None of the passengers were injured. The killed are: J. W. Unger and Isaac Rischnell.

The injured are: Frank Thompson, thigh broken and otherwise injured, may die; O. S. Crouthers, James Pickering, badly bruised.

A Mine on Fire. Hazelton, Pa., April 18.-Fire broke out this morning in the pump house at the bot tom of the first lift of Crystal Ridge colliery operated by A. Pardee & Co. Two pump nen endeavored to extinguish the flames out were unable to do so, and fled, reach ing the surface in safety. Five gangways men, Mike Burke, Edward Boyle, William Dinkey, Henry Cook, Sr., and Henry Cook, Jr., are in the mine, but it is thought they have reached a place of safety. The flames spread quickly, and in a short time had climbed the 300-foo slope and shot fifty fee

Mrs. Maybrick Would Die. London, April 18.—A report has been cir-culated and generally credited in Woking that Mrs. Florence Maybrick tried to kill that Mrs. Florence maybrise their of kinherself in the Woking prison on Saturday. She is said to have stabbed herself severely in the throat and chest with a table knife, which was taken from her in time to prevent her from inflicting mortal wounds.

Losses From Prairie Fires. Huron, S. D., Special, April 18.—Last week's prairie files in Hand, Hyde and a small part of Sully counties were the sever-est ever experienced in that part of the state. The property losses aggregate many thousands of dollars, and it is not improb-able that one or two persons will die from burns received. DEATH IN THE DEBRIS

Many Lives Los. ... an Earthquake Athens, April 18.—The Island of Zante, one of the principal Ionian islands, was visited by a most destructive earthquake this morning, resulting in great loss of life and property. The shock appears to have been most violent in the city of Zante, the greater part of which was destroyed. The people are panic-stricken and the authori-ties helpiess. The streets are impassable, being filled with masses of stone and tim-ber, the wreckage of the houses which were thrown down by the earthquake. Thus far the bodies of twenty persons killed by falling walls have been removed from the debris, and it is feared that many more

ing walls have been removed from the debris, and it is feared that many more dead are still in the ruins. The number of persons injured runs up into the hundreds. Most of the buildings that stood erect after the shocks of February and March were either thrown down or shattered so as to be unsafe for occupancy. The church of St. Dionysius and the government offices were thrown down.

Advices from the interior show that the whole island has been devastated. Many villages have been destroyed, and it is thought that the loss of life has been very great. News of the disaster comes in very slowly, as communication with the interior of the island has been greatly interrupted by the destruction of the telegraph lines. War ships will be dispatched from the Piraeus with clothing, provisions and medicines for the sufferers.

Queer Religious Body

St. Louis, April 18.-Eight years ago Col. Alsus Price of this city mysteriously disappeared, and a short time later Dr. Sylves-ter Nidelet, a prominent St. Louis physician. left the city under equally inexplicable circumstance. Nothing was heard from either until their unheralded return about a month ago. Since then stories have been rife that both were in India devoting their time to a study of theosophy, Buddhism and other Oriental theories of religion. Now it ap-

oriental theories of religion. Now it appears, however, in a private leter from Gunston, Va., that both men have for several years been inmates of a theosophical institute conducted there by Dr. G. S. Howard. When the institution was opened the impression in the neighborhood was that it was intended as an asylum for inebriates, but soon grewsome tales of the performance of somber rites and queer methods of worship began to float out from around the asylum. It was conducted, however, on a basis of strict secrecy and martial discipline. No one was allowed to stir beyond its boundaries without permission from Dr. Howard, and the converts were compelled to perform the most difficult manual labor in order to fit themselves for communion with the Blavatsky god. Dr. Howard, however, seemed to be exempt from this hard labor and thereby earned the sobriquet of "The Fakir Who Does Nothing." It has also been said that Mrs. J. A. Specht, wife of a wealthy retired St. Louis merchant now owner and occupant of Gunston Hall, near the so-called institute. Mrs. J. A. Specht, wife of a wealthy retired St. Louis merchant now owner and occupant of Gunston Hall, near the so-called institute, was the patroness and financial backer of the little community. Since the return of Nidelet and Price frequent efforts have been made to find out where they have been, but without success. Both to-day positively declined to talk about the Gunston story. It is said they will return there and that several prominent St. Louis women will also enter the institute.

Syrine Text of the Gospels Washington, April 18 .- Much interest has been excited among scholars in the Capital City by the publication of the cablegram stating that Prof. Fendel Harris, of Cambridge, had discovered in the convent on Mount Sinai a palimpsest containing the complete Syriac text of the four Gospels. "The Gospels," said Dr. Cyrus Adler, of the Smithsonian institution, "it is believed, were originally written in a dialect current in Palestine, especially, in Galilee, a mixture of the Hebrew and Syriac. We know that it was not pure Hebrew from the presence of such expressions as the one Christ used on the cross, "Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabacthani" (My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"), which is of Syrian origin. So ever since the modern search for sources of the Scriptures began it has been directed in part to the discovery of what was believed to be this original text of the Gospels. If that is what is now discovered its value and importance cannot be averagingted. stating that Prof. Fendel Harris, of Camthat is what is now discovered its value and importance cannot be overestimated. The common version is from Greek trans-lations of the original. Prof. Harris, whom I know quite well, is particularly well qual-ified to judge of the authenticity of such a discovery."

The Mille Lacs Settlers. Washington, Special, April 18. -- Representative Baldwin had an interview with sentative Baldwin had an interview with Commissioner Lamareaux to-day in regard to the settlers on the Mille Lacs lands, and laid the facts before him in such a way as will probably result in allowing matters to rest as they are until congress has auther opportunity to act. It is an interesting feature to Minnesotians here that Castle did not put through the Washburn resolution, which would have settled the matter and quieted the title of these settlers. Castle thought he had the matter settled with the department before he went away. Castle thought he had the matter settled with the department before he went away. Senator Washburn was also of the opinion that he had fixed up things, but it seems that the administration prefers to consult regular Democratic members and for that reason Commissioner Lamareaux had this conversation with Representative Baldwin to-day.

Two Mills.

Coney Island, N. Y., April 18. Coney Athletic club to-night Johnny Van Heest defeated Danny Russell in three rounds and Billy Smith of Boston knocked out Tom Williams of Australia in the second round. A large audience witnessed the contests. Russell was clearly outclassed, but made a game fight. In the first and second rounds both men scored knock-downs, but Russell was badly winded. Van Heest found little trouble in the third in landing when and where he pleased. The Smith-Williams contest was fast and furious, neither man paying much attention to science. Knock-downs were frequent in the first round, and when the gong sounded Williams was nearly done for. The second round lasted two minutes and thirty-five out Tom Williams of Australia in the se williams was nearly done for. The second round lasted two minutes and thirty-five seconds, when Williams went down and out. Both men were badly punished, and Smith was quite unsteady on his feet when he planted the blow that did the business for Williams.

Union Pacific Workmen Strike. Omaha, April 18.-Six hundred men em-

ployed in the Union Pacific shops here struck to-day. The men who went out were the machinists, boilermakers, blacksmiths, molders and patternmakers. The employes claim that the company has acted in bad faith concerning the fulfillment of an agreement entered in to allow the force of men employed to reduce itself when the time was below the standard of nine hours a day. The Knights of Labor among the shop men refused to strike. The strike extended along the entire line where machinists, boilermakers and blacksmiths are employed. The strike affects about 2,500 men on the system, and only interests the workers of iron or those men who are working eight hours instead of nine, as they alleged they were promised on Jan. 15. The towns to be most affected by the strike in addition to Omaha are Denver, Cheyenne, Salt Lake, Rawlins, Armstrong, Pocatello, Evanston, Laramie, La Grande and Shoshone. ployed in the Union Pacific shops here struck

No Troops for the Fair. Washington, April 18.—Secretary Lamont said to-day that the plan of having United States troops at the world's fair had to be states troops at the world's fair had to be abandoned on account of the refusal of the park authorities to let the troops have part of Washington Park. He thought arrangements could be made to have a corps of cadets visit the fair during the summer. Gen. Schofield and Rear Admiral Belknap have been assigned as military and naval aides to the president on the occasion of the naval review in New York harbor.

Appointments Rejected. Duluth, Special, April 18.—The city council to-night again rejected the mayor's appointments to fire commission and board of public works. The mayor appointed A. C. Bartlow, Democrat, to the board of public works, and E. R. Jefferson, Republican, to fire commission. His previous appointments have been rejected. They were both rejected—12 to 2.

Slavin and Hall. London, April 18.—Paddy Slavin and Jim Pall have signed articles to box twenty rounds for a purse of £1,000, at the National Sporting club in Derby week.

THEY ARE A BAD LOT.

WANTED FOR THE KILLING OF POLICEMEN.

Arrest of Two of a Band of Three Desperadoes Who Have Committed Sundry Depreda-tions in the Vicinity of Dubuque.

Three of a Kind.

Dubuque, Iowa, Special, April 18 .-Two of the three men wanted for killing officers Frith and Talcott in the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul yards Friday were brought to Dubuque to-night and placed in jail. They were seen at Greely, Delaware county, and Marshal Longford organized a posse and captured them at a country school house, where they had stopped to rest. They are Kid Healy of La Crosse, who has done time in the Waupun penitentiary, and Kent of Omaha. The Sioux City man, the one supposed to have done the shooting, is still missing. The trio came to Dubuque last Wednesday and paid for their board a week in advance. Wednesday night the Sioux City man, who said he was the cousin of a Dubuque man named Duane, tried to shoot a bartender, who took his revolver from him. This revolver was found at the scene of the murder Friday morning filled with bloody cartridges. It is supposed the trio committed the highway robbery perpetrated up town Thursday night, and that they fled to the railroad yards, where the officers were hunting them when killed. Detective Gadboies, of the Illinois Central, had followed them into Dubuque. After leaving Sioux City for Dubuque they broke into a car at Webster City and stole some revolvers, and further on they burglarized an American express office.

"John Bull."

New York, April 18 .- The queerest railroad train that has been seen in many a long year drew out of the Pennsylvania depot to-day amid the cheers of a big crowd of curiosity seekers. The train consisted of Engine No. 1, of the Pennsylvania railway, and Cars No. 3 and 5. Engine No. 1, of th Pennsylvania road, is also Engine No. 1 of the United States, being the first railway the United States, being the first railway locomotive used on this side of the Atlantic. It is called "John Bull," and started this morning to puff its way laboriously to the world's fair, where it will be an object of wonder to millions. John Bull shows no sign of his great age except his antique construction. He is painted and polished and burnished so that he shines as fair as the latest born of modern locomotives. The coaches look like stare coaches on railway coaches look like stage coaches on rallway wheels. They, too, are in gala attire, being painted a bright green, with the inscrip-tion, "John Bull train." It is expected that tion, "John Bull train." It is expected that the John Bull train will carry some distinguished passengers before it reaches Chicago. The passengers this morning were all railway officials. They included General Superintendent F. W. Jackson. General Passenger Agent George W. Boyd and General Passenger Trainmaster E. T. Mander, who will all go clear through to Chicago. The throngs of passengers on the local and express in-coming trains this morning all gazed curiously at the John Bull train. John Bull puffed more smoke in a minute than all the rest of the engines in an hour.

No Fear of Cholera. New York, April 18.—The World this morning thus summarized a four column article on the likelihood of a cholera epidemic this summer: "The World has gathered the opinions of the leading physicians of New York, and the health officials, on the probabilities of a cholera epidemic this summer. On the whole, a careful review of what these medical experts say leads to the conclusion that a cholera epidemic is not probable. There is an almost unanimous belief that we will have some cases of cholera during the hot months. The doctors, however, point out very clearly the reasons why these sporadic cases are not likely to become epidemic."

Hallfax, N. S., April 17.—The British article on the likelihood of a cholera epi-

become epidemic."
Halifax, N. S., April 17.—The British steamer Numidian, from Liverpool, lies at quarantine, where 1.200 immigrants and their effects have been undergoing the process of disinfection.

A Swift Cruiser.

New London, Conn., April 18 .-- It has been a long, tedious wait, but it has proved of advantage to the builders of the United States cruiser Detroit, and the United States cruiser Detroit, and the United States will pay the expenses of the ship during these several days of delay in attempted trial, which will average at least \$2,000 per day, besides some \$15.000 for extra speed developed above the contract, which called for 17 knots. She has proved herself the fastest cruiser of her displacement in the est cruiser of her displacement in the world, developing a speed of slightly over twenty knots, or upwards of twen-

ty-three miles per hour.

From the data taken on deck her average speed is estimated at 1842 knots, but this may pe slightly affected by the tidal data.

The Indian Exhibit. Washington, Special, April 18 .- Owing to the change that has been made in the Indian office and the appointment of a commissioner and assistant commissioner, the work of the Indian exhibit for the world's fair had been held up. This exhibit was formerly in charge of Commissioner of Railroads Taylor, who was appointed by Secreroads Taylor, who was appointed by Secretary Nobie to have charge of the interior department exhibit at the world's fair. Taylor was working in conjunction with the Indian office up to the time his successor was appointed. The Indian office desired to continue the work right along and hurry up the exhibit so as to make a creditable showing, but Secretary Smith held the whole matter up untit the new commissioner should be appointed. People who are interested in the Indian exhibit think that the secretary has made a great mistake, because the delay will probably prevent the first-class exhibit which the Indian office Intended to make.

Cuban Filibusters.

New York, April 18.-In New York is brew-Ing to-day what may develop into a revolution in Cuba within the next few months. The project is one of loug standing. The possibilities of its climax within a short time is the result of the recent elections in Cuba, which were unsatisfactory to the people there and to the Cuban patriots in America. Instead of starting an expedition from Key West or Tampa, Fla., it is probable that if one is undertaken it will be organized if not actually started from here. In Harmon hall was organized last evening the New York-Cuban revolutionary party, its avowed purpose being to uphold the movement for independence and a lasting republican form of government in Cuba. ing to-day what may develop into a revolu

A Town Burning.

Detroit, March 18, 1 a. m.-A brief tele-phone message just received from Plymouth, Mich., twenty-five miles west of here, states that a block of buildings has burned and the entire town is in danger of destruction. The operator was compelled to leave the exchange, as it was then burning. Engines have been sent from here. Plymouth is a town of about 2,000 inhabitants.

Miniature, Duluth.

Washington, Special, April 18.-There is being made in this city a model of Duluth 21x26 feet in size for exhibition at the world's fair. It is on a scale of 250 feet to the inch, and is expected to show to the Inch, and is expected to show the topography, water line, all the streets and blocks and about fifty of the most prominent buildings. The surface representing the water will be dotted with lake craft of all kinds that visit Duluth, while there will be shown the docks, grain elevators and railroad connections. Victor Mindeler is preparing the model, and expects to have it done by May 1, but he has been informed by Secretary Thompson, of the Duluth chamber of commerce, that if the model is completed and reaches Chicago by May 10 it will be there in sufficient time.