

THE DESERET EVENING NEWS.

FIFTY-SECOND YEAR

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1901. SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

NUMBER 251.

BIGGEST FIRE IN HISTORY OF SALT LAKE

Oregon Short Line Building and Several Fine Stores Wiped Completely Out of Existence—Loss Estimated at From \$150,000 to \$250,000.

A Terrific Explosion That Tore An Immense Hole in the Building and Put the Flames Beyond Human Control—Origin of the Fire a Mystery—Charge That Powder Was Carried in Basement of Mine and Smelter Supply Company, Also Company's Denial—Several Firemen Hurt—Some Narrow Escapes.

THE INJURED.

Assistant Chief Edward McCarthy—Artery in head cut and leg cut.
Captain J. W. Love—Artery cut in right hand and fingers lacerated.
Otto Witbeck—Thumb of right hand and fingers of left hand badly cut.
Amos Moreton—Hands cut in several places.
C. E. Williams—Hands cut and bruised by a fall.
Walter Clawson, scorched hands.
Robert Pearce—Arms and legs cut.

What will easily prove to be the most disastrous fire that ever visited Salt Lake City occurred this morning. It started in the basement of the Oregon Short Line building directly under the store above, occupied by the Spencer Clawson Wholesale Dry Goods company. Its exact origin is a mystery that may never be solved. As a result of the fire all of the offices of the Oregon Short Line are wiped out of existence as are also the big store of the Mine and Smelter Supply company, Spencer Clawson's store, the Salt Lake Soda Water company and the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad offices, while the north-east corner of the High school building and a number of offices on the south side of the Dooly block are more or less damaged, as is also a boarding house at 244 South West Temple street, run by Mrs. T. G. M. Smith.

The exact loss is difficult to determine, but the most conservative estimate places it at from \$150,000 to \$250,000. The insurance, so far as could be ascertained, is about \$145,000, though further inquiry may cause these figures to be revised somewhat. Never did a fire department render more valiant service than did Salt Lake's today; and seldom did a department have more obstacles to meet or dangers to confront. It was promptly on the scene and would have had the fire under control in a comparatively short time had it not been for a terrific explosion which tore an immense hole in the building, making a large opening through which the draft carried the fire to the upper stories into the offices of the Short Line company where it soon got beyond all human control. That half a dozen firemen, including Chief Devine, were not blown to atoms, is little short of a miracle. They had just left the spot beneath which the explosion occurred when it rent asunder that portion of the building.

Preceding the big explosion there was a series of smaller ones. Some of those present are of the opinion that there was only one, but Spencer Clawson, who was on the ground at the time, and some of the firemen, declare that there were several distinct explosions. Of course it is going to be difficult to prove what these explosions were caused by. The firemen make the specific charge that powder was stored in the basement of the Mine, Smelter and Supply company, and that they were rushing in to remove the same when there was a violent shaking up that hurled them through the doors and windows on to the sidewalk. It is further charged that giant cups and other explosives were also in the basement of the building. So far as powder is concerned the smelter company deny absolutely that they carried a pound of it in stock. In answer to this the firemen say they care nothing for the denials and declare they do not count as they know beyond all question of doubt that the building exploded and that the powder explosion put the building in such condition as to make it beyond all human effort to save it.

The building was 145 feet by 150 feet, and of two stories pressed brick and stone. It was erected in 1897 by John E. Dooly for a London capitalist named Menzies, expressly for the Oregon Short Line company, which took the whole upper floor. The first floor was occupied by the stores whose names are given above. The Smelter and Supply company had the largest apartment in the building, and nearly the whole of the basement. The chief was at the north end of the building when the explosion is said to have occurred. From early morning until late this afternoon the police and fire departments have been on duty at the scene of the conflagration, each doing its best to put out the fire and keep back the crowds; these latter were very great. The spot was visited by thousands of people today who were anxious to gaze upon the ruins and to see the firemen at their work. They were kept back, however, the street being completely

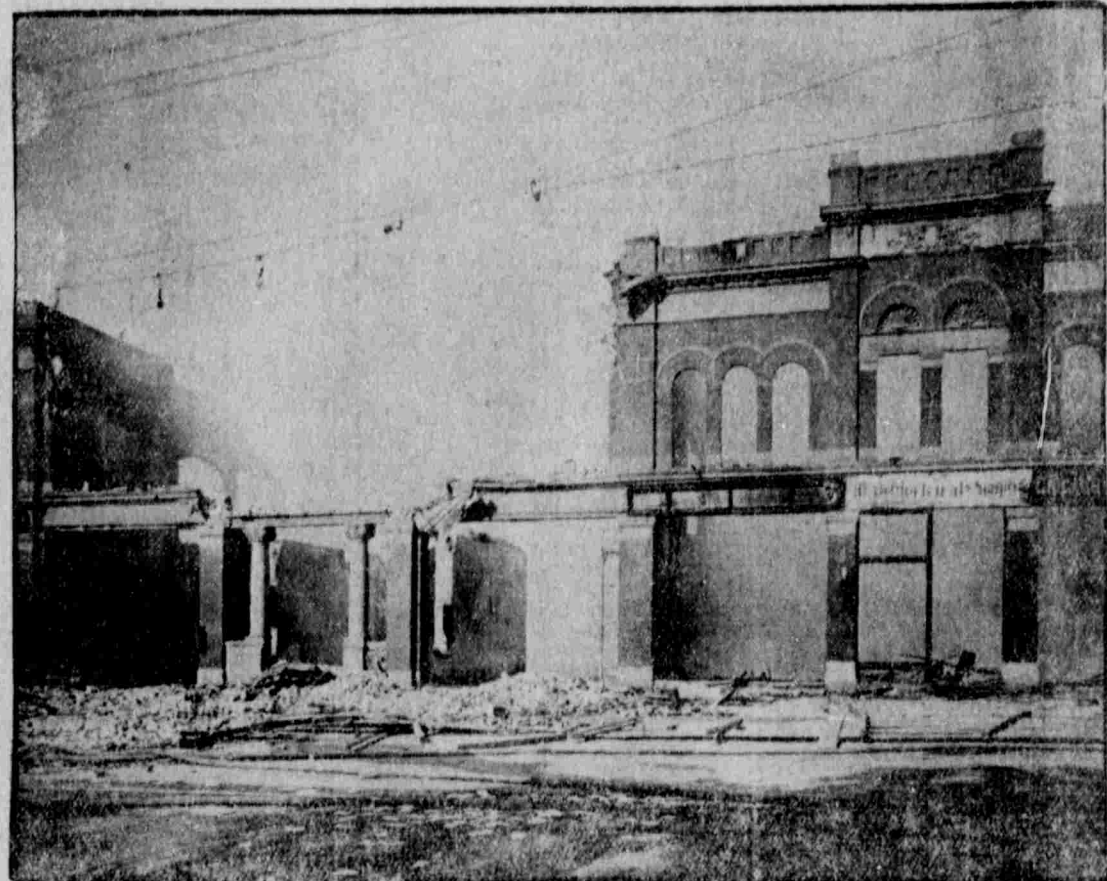
close questioning soon disclosed the fact that he did not believe the story that powder had not been stored in the basement of the destroyed building. It is safe to say that no man can convince him that he did not taste, see and smell the evidences of this explosive. He had been told that the explosion was caused by acid, but he is certain there was powder stored there as well. The chief narrated the thrilling story of the fire as follows: "The alarm was turned in from box 32 at 3:34 o'clock, and I was promptly telephoned to from the station at home. In a very few minutes I was at the scene of the fire and found the department already there hard at work with two lines of hose, a chemical in

majority of mortals would have done. Capt. Workman yelled to his men. They picked themselves up, grabbed the hose and amid a shower of debris, glass and bricks they stood to their post and did not leave it until they were ordered out by Chief Devine. In relating the affair to a "News" reporter, Capt. Workman said: "It was a great piece of luck that we were standing where we were for if we had been a few yards further south some of us would have got it sure, as it was we went flying like so many pieces of paper." "What caused the explosion?" queried the reporter. "Do you think that it was acid, as is claimed?"

The three men looked at each other and smiled and then one of them said: "It might have been acid, but I have not got the smell of it out of my nose yet and to me it smelled like powder." Then the men wiped away the grime from their faces and once more plunged into the fray.

satisfied we were not more than fifteen feet from the powder and I was blown clear across the sidewalk and through the fence the Elks' had put up. I was just opening the door, but the door frame, window frame, and two or three big pillars were blown out. "When I recovered somewhat from the shock, I heard some one say that Moreton was still in the building. 'My God,' I said, 'why don't you get him out?' and I ran back in to look for him when I heard him calling to me from the outside. I didn't notice until then how badly I was hurt. The blood was streaming down my face and my head was full. Moreton, Witbeck and Love got in the buggy with me and we went up to Smith's drug store." Chief McCarthy said they were at the drug store fully thirty minutes before they could get a doctor. Then Dr. Giesy showed up. In the meantime blood was streaming from his wounds and making a great pool upon the floor. Just as Dr. Giesy arrived, McCarthy fainted and did not revive until the doctor was making the finishing stitches in his wounds. It required four stitches to close up the gaping cut in the head and three in the calf of his leg. He says he hasn't the remotest idea what struck him, but he is positive he received both wounds at the same instant. The condition of McCarthy's being tells eloquently of the force of the blow he received, for the helmet is crushed in as though it were made of paper. After his wounds were sewed up, McCarthy insisted on going back to the fire. Not heeding the remonstrance of his friends, he went back to the fire and for two hours worked like a hero. Finally he became so weak he could scarcely stand and when Chief Devine noticed his condition he at once ordered him home. He drove to Goebel-Pitts drug store and from there was removed to his home by Dr. Wither. In the meantime the other firemen had their injuries attended to and were back on duty.

Asked if he thought there was more powder in the company's place than allowed by law, Chief McCarthy very emphatically replied: "No! I think there was some giant powder and possibly some giant caps there," he said, "but I am quite sure there was no black powder there because there was no raise to the explosion." He said that Chief Devine had a narrow escape, and but for the fact that he was looking for Capt. Workman he would undoubtedly have been in the explosion. McCarthy said in his opinion the fire started in the rear and center of the building and had a good start before they could get to it. The volume of smoke in the basement was so dense the men could only work a few minutes at a time. It is believed the injured men will be able to report for duty within a few days. The most serious injury sustained by McCarthy is the gash in his head above the right eye. One of the arteries is severed as clean as though done by a razor. He says it will always remain a mystery to him as to



Photographed especially for the "News" by Johnson.
FRONT OF THE DESTROYED SHORT LINE BUILDING.

SHORT LINES LOSS ENORMOUS.

All Its Priceless Records and Fine Offices Wiped Out of Existence.

No loss could be more complete than that of the Oregon Short Line Railroad company which had all of its offices in the building which was erected a few years ago for it by Mr. John E. Dooly, representing an English capitalist named Menzies. The building contained the directors room of the company, the offices of Vice President and General Manager Bancroft and his clerical force, the offices of General Passenger Agent Hurley, and Chief Clerk Dan Spencer, Acting Traffic Manager Schumacher and clerks, the offices of General Superintendent E. S. Calvin, Assistant General Freight Agent Reeves, Car Accountant Hickey and force, Chief Clerk Brewer and men, freight, claim and livestock departments, dispatcher's office, auditor's office, purchasing agent, Treasurer, Jenkinson, Superintendent of Machinery and Motive Power Dunn, draftsmen and clerks, Resident Engineer Ashton, Chief Clerk Critzer and others.

The offices were all finely equipped with the very best furniture and everything that went to make up a modern and up-to-date railroad headquarters. It cost the Short Line company a great many thousands of dollars a few years ago to furnish the second floor of this building which it occupied in all its entirety. When General Manager Bancroft was seen on the ground today, recently from the hospital and a sick bed, he said in answer to a question: "What have we lost? Why everything that we had. We have not as much as the state of a pen left. Everything is gone; everything."

And then he disappeared in the great crush of humanity that surrounded the roped enclosure into which no one and no newspaper men were permitted to enter. When asked as to what the company's total loss would be, Mr. Bancroft simply replied: "It is too early yet to say. You know. You know as much as I do. As I have told you, we have lost everything." It would be difficult for any one outside of the Short Line company to estimate what it has lost in this fire. It had many very valuable records stored in the different parts of the burned building upon which no money value could be placed. They were records of the company from its beginning—records which represented the company's entire history and holdings. There is no insurance or money equivalent that can replace these. They are gone, and gone forever. What difference their loss will make to the company is known best to its officers who naturally do not care to discuss that phase of the question. To illustrate how great the conflagration was it need only be said that remnants of the burned leaves of Short Line records were found as far east today as the Holy Cross Hospital, a mile and a half distant, extending up into the Twenty-first and Twentieth wards, across the Capitol Hill, and down the back almost to the Warm Springs. The fact is, the air was literally filled with these fragments of burned paper. Practically all their weight had been burned out and they floated through the air as lightly as feathers. The sidewalk in the business district were, in some places, entirely covered with them and many a pedestrian in raising his hand to ward off a flying fragment would do so only to rub it across his face and cause him to look like a chimney sweep, much to the amusement of that portion of the crowd which had been fortunate enough to escape a like experience.

STORY BY CHIEF DEVINE.

Early Stages of the Fire and How the Explosion Occurred.

Chief Devine, with dirt begrimed face, on which there was a liberal sprinkling of blood which had come from some slight wounds caused by flying debris, was seen upon the ground early this morning still giving direction to the men who were fighting the fire in its last stages. The chief was clothed in a specific statement, but



Photographed especially for the "News" by Johnson.
VIEW OF WALL ON PIERPONT AVENUE WRECKED BY THE EXPLOSION.

WERE AFTER THE POWDER.

Heroic Firemen Started to Remove It When Explosion Occurred.

One of the thrilling features of the fire was the heroism exhibited by Assistant Chief Edward McCarthy, Captain J. W. Love, Otto Witbeck and Amos Moreton. Lying in bed at his home, 236 West Second North street, is Assistant Chief McCarthy, congratulating himself upon his miraculous escape from a horrible death, and also the escape of his fellow fire-fighters. He is very weak and pale from the great loss of blood which flowed from ugly gashes in his forehead and left leg. Captain Love had the main artery of his right hand severed, and Fireman Witbeck and Moreton are nursing badly cut hands and arms. When a "News" man called at the home of Assistant Chief McCarthy this morning he found him in the condition described above. His physician had left orders to admit no one but Mr. McCarthy said he was feeling stronger and could talk. "My head and leg are pretty badly cut, but I am thankful it is no worse than it is," he said to the reporter. "It is a miracle," he continued, "that three or four of us were not instantly killed by that terrific explosion. I felt just like I had been struck in the head with a heavy club, and really I don't remember very much about it." Chief McCarthy said he believed it was shortly before 4 o'clock when, accompanied by Capt. Love, Witbeck and Moreton, he smashed in the windows of the front door of the Mine and Smelter Supply house. "Just before this," said he, "Chief Devine went to find Captain Workman who had inspected the building a short time before, and who knew exactly where the powder was located. We knew there was powder there, but just where and how much we were totally in the dark. After I smashed in the windows we got in and Love, Witbeck and Moreton were on the floor. I was standing up and was just about to open the door. I called to the boys to get to the powder as quickly as they could and remove it, but the words had hardly left my mouth before there was an explosion. I am

HOW THE MEN TURNED OUT.

Hitch at No. 1 Made in Fifteen Seconds—Plenty of Water.

The men who brave danger in a hundred forms, the humble fire fighters who may be called upon any minute to walk into the very jaws of death to save life and property, deserve unstinted praise for the promptness and efficiency with which they responded to the alarm. Only one man was on watch at the time of the alarm, and that man was George Reid. The other men were sleeping peacefully in their bunks when suddenly they were aroused by the rattle clanging of the gong. Instantly they sprang up, their feet and hands were rapidly to and fro but not in confusion. Every man knew his place and filled it in the twinkling of an eye. The noble horses upon which so much depends, pricked up their ears and dashed into their places under the harness. As found the men already at their posts and it was but the work of a second to snap the buckles, the drivers were on their seats and they were off. A flash. Only Captain O. E. Maddy was left behind to look after the department and supply the needs of the others as they came in from time to time. He stated that the alarm came in at exactly 3:44 a. m. from box No. 32, and less than fifteen seconds most of the apparatus was on the street and speeding away to the fire. It requires just seventeen seconds for the box alarm to come in, there being what is called "four rounds." Just as the first two rounds came in, the hitch was completed and they were off. At the time stated above, chemical No. 1, hose wagon No. 1, hose wagon No. 2 and truck No. 1 responded to the call. At 4:15 a. m. the truck and combination chemical and hose wagon from station No. 4 were called out and made a record breaking run to the scene of operations. At 4:43 steam No. 2 from No. 1 was demanded. Steam No. 1 was out of order owing to sucking up a rock at last week's fire. A delay was caused on account of an accident which happened

WHAT HE WAS STRUCK WITH.

He knows he turned a complete somersault before he smashed into the fence.

what he was struck with. He says he knows he turned a complete somersault before he smashed into the fence. "Yes," chimed in Dr. Wadsin, "and he has plenty of daylight behind him." Dr. Mynter said further: "I have never been really optimistic because I like to predict serious cases, but now I can say to you that everything in the President's condition warrants the statement that he is on the road to quick recovery." Dr. Wadsin said: "I have believed throughout that the President had a fair chance of recovery. I now desire to say that the chances against that recovery are very slight. His temperature is splendid and his pulse is getting normal." Dr. McBurney was in high spirits as he walked away from the residence shortly after the other physicians had gone. His face was wreathed in smiles. "Is the President out of danger?" he was asked by an Associated Press representative. "We believe he is practically out of danger," he replied, "measuring his words. Then he paused. "Of course," he added, "there are still possibilities in the case and we will know better when a week has gone by. But his improvement is so marked, his symptoms are so good that we feel safe in assuring the public that he will recover. Blood poisoning might still develop. We could not give a guarantee now, but the chances are remote. As for peritonitis I consider that the danger from inflammation of the peritoneum has passed."

NO SECONDARY OPERATION.

"Never," replied the surgeon. "That

Secy. Gage to Chairman Tappan.

Washington, Sept. 10.—Secy. of the Treasury Gage today sent the following telegram to F. D. Tappan, chairman of the clearing house association of New York City. "Recognizing the unavoidable influence upon general business of sales of the treasury of revenue beyond expenditures I have directed that incoming internal revenue receipts be placed

THE PRESIDENT IS OUT OF THE WOODS

So Says Dr. McBurney—"And He Has Plenty of Daylight Behind Him," adds Dr. Wadsin.

Milburn House, Buffalo, Sept. 10.—The President will live, but will probably carry the bullet of the would-be assassin with him to the grave. This is the expressed opinion of Dr. Charles McBurney of New York, in a statement to a representative of the Associated Press, after the consultation of the physicians this morning. He announced that the President had passed the danger point and now only the possibility of complications remained. He also announced that unless the bullet imbedded in the muscles of the back caused trouble, there would be no necessity to extract it. In his opinion it would not even be located with the X-ray. The only use of the X-ray would be to satisfy curiosity. All the other physicians were equally confident after the morning consultation that recovery was assured. Dr. Mynter said the President was out of the woods and Dr. Wadsin supplemented by the figure of speech by adding "with plenty of daylight behind him."

Dr. Roswell Park expressed it this way: "Unless unexpected complications occur, we expect him to recover." The day, which had dawned wet and gloomy, cleared as the physicians departed. The sun broke through the clouds and bathed the ivy-clad house in which the President lay in mellow sunshine. The faces of the sentries who paced their beats before the sun grew radiant, the tireless workers of the press began to plan a day of thanksgiving, the marine hospital corps specialists, not alone for the expedition, but one in which the whole country could join. It is to be given the aspect of a national day of rejoicing. They are arranging that on a certain day the bells of all the cities in the United States be set ringing and that the rejoicing be heralded with the tooting of whistles and the booming of cannon.

The members of the cabinet, Senator Hanna, Gen. Grosvenor (who only arrived from Ohio this morning) and all the distinguished friends of the President who have arrived here to await the issue of the morning bulletin, hurried to the Milburn residence to learn the particulars and join in the general jubilation. For hours carriages and automobiles streamed up Delaware avenue and down town, the people gathered in crowds at the bulletin boards and gave vent to their feelings in rejoicing, and at the exposition the thousands of visitors who read the bulletin, burst into cheers.

HIS DOCTORS ARE CONFIDENT. About 8 o'clock the doctors who have been with the President during the night began putting in an appearance for the formal morning consultation. Dr. Mynter was the first to arrive. He was followed soon by Dr. Wadsin, the marine hospital corps specialist, Dr. McBurney of New York, and the others in attendance. At this time, too, the night watch nurses were relieved, and those who had been in the sick room for the night came out for a period of relaxation. While the doctors remained inside there were no signs of animation about the house and there was a long wait for the results of their deliberations. Dr. Herman Mynter was the next of the consulting physicians to come from the house. He was followed by Dr. Eugene Wadsin, and they walked down the street together. To the queries of the newspapermen Dr. Mynter said:

IS OUT OF THE WOODS.

"The President is doing splendidly, and he is out of the woods, if I may express it that way." "Yes," chimed in Dr. Wadsin, "and he has plenty of daylight behind him." Dr. Mynter said further: "I have never been really optimistic because I like to predict serious cases, but now I can say to you that everything in the President's condition warrants the statement that he is on the road to quick recovery." Dr. Wadsin said: "I have believed throughout that the President had a fair chance of recovery. I now desire to say that the chances against that recovery are very slight. His temperature is splendid and his pulse is getting normal." Dr. McBurney was in high spirits as he walked away from the residence shortly after the other physicians had gone. His face was wreathed in smiles. "Is the President out of danger?" he was asked by an Associated Press representative. "We believe he is practically out of danger," he replied, "measuring his words. Then he paused. "Of course," he added, "there are still possibilities in the case and we will know better when a week has gone by. But his improvement is so marked, his symptoms are so good that we feel safe in assuring the public that he will recover. Blood poisoning might still develop. We could not give a guarantee now, but the chances are remote. As for peritonitis I consider that the danger from inflammation of the peritoneum has passed."

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piece of lead encased in the muscles of his back will cause no harm. Of course if it gives him trouble an operation will be performed." "But you will use the X-ray to locate it?" He shook his head. "Why should we?" he asked. "To satisfy our curiosity? That would be its only purpose." Dr. McBurney's supreme confidence in the outcome could not be overstated to the conviction of his fellow physicians. There were none of the reservations he made yesterday. Yesterday he plainly showed he was not yet satisfied. He then said a word which was a complete assurance that the President's condition was so eminently satisfactory that he felt safe in his announcement that the danger point had been passed and that the President was on the high road to recovery.

"We have looked door after door against the grim monster," said he in conclusion. "I am satisfied, and I am going to Niagara Falls today to see the sights." With these cheerful words, the surgeon turned into the grounds of the "Executive residence" of Mr. Sprague, where Secretary Root is stopping, to convey the good news to the secretary of war.

THE MORNING CONFERENCE.

The result of the morning conference was made known about 9 o'clock as the doctors came from the house although it was some time before that that the bulletin appeared. The faces of the doctors clearly indicated their satisfaction at the condition of affairs. As Dr. Roswell Park came to his carriage he paused long enough to give a general survey of the conditions prevailing. "The condition of the President this morning is entirely satisfactory," said he. "The bulletin will state this and its sums up the situation. The President spent the most comfortable night he has had since the shooting. He slept well and when he was awake he was cheery and even chatty. He is not receiving any nourishment thus far except by enemas. This is an altogether natural incident of the case at this stage."

"Do you regard the President as entirely out of danger?" Dr. Park was asked.

"I do not want to go that far. What can be said is that unless there are unexpected complications we expect him to recover." "Have you considered the prospect of his removal?" "No, it is too early for that, but when he is moved, he probably will go to Washington." Dr. Park referred to the fact that the bulletin very noticeably omitted any and gave results such as the medical fraternity would be expected to pass upon in the case of any citizen. "It would be well to have it stated," he added, "that the President is not being deprived of benefits of private citizenship. He is being treated exactly as any other citizen would be and it getting the benefit of it. We view the case just as the case of any other man who might be similarly afflicted."

Dr. Park's latter statement will explain the fact that the official bulletins are based on rigid scientific principles as they are applicable alike to all cases of surgery.

THE BULLETINS.

Milburn House, Buffalo, Sept. 10.—The following bulletin was issued by the President's physicians at 9 a. m.: "The President's condition this morning is eminently satisfactory to his physicians. If no complications arise a rapid convalescence may be expected. Pulse 104; temperature 99.8; respiration 28."

This temperature is taken by mouth and should be read about a degree higher by rectum.

CHAS. MCBURNEY,
P. M. RIXEY,
M. D. MANN,
ROSWELL PARK,
H. MYNTER,
EUGENE WADSWORTH,
GEORGE B. CORTELYOU,
Secretary to the President.

Milburn House, Buffalo, Sept. 10.—The following bulletin was issued by the President's physicians at 9:30 p. m.: "The President's condition continues favorable; pulse 112; temperature 101; respiration 27."

(Signed.) P. M. RIXEY,
M. D. MANN,
ROSWELL PARK,
HERMAN MYNTER,
EUGENE WADSWORTH,
CHAS. MCBURNEY,
GEORGE B. CORTELYOU,
Secretary to the President.

PRESIDENT WANTS TO SIT UP.

The President asked for the papers again today and also asked when he would be allowed to sit up. With the exception of the physicians and attendants only Mrs. McKinley and Secy. Cortelyou have been admitted to his presence. The report that his brother, Amer. McKinley, saw him yesterday is incorrect.

THE LATEST BULLETIN.

Milburn House, Buffalo, Sept. 10.—The following bulletin was issued by the President's physicians at 3:30 p. m.: "There is no change since this morning's favorable bulletin. Pulse, 110; temperature, 100; respiration, 25."

P. M. RIXEY,
M. D. MANN,
ROSWELL PARK,
HERMAN MYNTER,
EUGENE WADSWORTH,
CHAS. MCBURNEY,
GEORGE B. CORTELYOU,
Secretary to the President.

with National bank deposits until a loan with such is reached equal to the par value of the bonds held as security from such deposits. This will divert about five millions from the treasury vaults. "The secretary will today invite proposals for the sale to the government of \$20,000,000 of United States bonds, other than the new two's. It is believed that these steps will obviate the otherwise possible embarrassments which are pointed out in your telegram of yesterday."