

Million Immigrants Received In Six Months of 1906.

Grand Jury Probing Delayed "Earthquake" Telegrams.

HERE is trouble over on the Pacific coast, with the Western Union Telegraph company as the center of it. It is accused of obtaining money under false pretenses, and the accusers have succeeded in getting an indictment from a grand jury in the premises.

The case will be specially interesting to Salt Lake, because this city shares with Portland and Los Angeles the responsibility of being the first large office outside of the earthquake zone, and as Salt Lake was directly on the line eastward across the continent it is probable that this city figured more prominently than any other in the "fairy" work it is alleged was done, if any such was done.

The trouble dates back into the hysterical week following the great earthquake when the telegraph offices in Salt Lake were thronged to the doors with weeping women and anxious men, all demanding that the company take messages for loved ones, "and get them through as quick as possible."

A DAY OF UNCERTAINTY.

It was certain knowledge then that the wires were down, and that the service was precarious and uncertain, and that the company, like everybody else in the great emergency, was in with its coat off, doing all that human power could do to bring San Francisco back into the world from ground walls.

"Therefore the telegraphers themselves got word to hundreds thousands from friends without the earthquake zone, who had hero and good cheer to offer them. The newspaper men who went from Salt Lake to the coast during the fire week well remember little telegraph stations rushed into emergency use, where operators worked till so exhausted they couldn't take their messages, while their wives cooked food for all who came and asked for it. To them it seems odd that any parties would take advantage of the tremendous handicaps and record breaking emergencies that were met, to call for a strict accounting on rules made for normal times, and to protest the public from intentional fraud.

The charge made is that the mails were used to forward messages where the wires would not work. Everybody who had a press or, if he had no informed conditions, knew the wires were down, that important government and relief messages were swamping what lines were up, and that other messages must wait, or be forwarded in the nearest station outside the fire zone by express or mail, to take up their journey there by wire.

WHAT NEWS MEN FOUND.

The "News" representatives on the coast, who made use of the wires a great deal, frequently found that mail matter went through quicker, and to a large extent relied on this service. They were also informed that a great many messages for far eastern points, which had been filed, and for which there was no hope of getting wires, were sent by express to the Salt Lake office, and sent on their way by wire from there. That money was taken for these messages "under false representations" will hardly appear to those who enjoyed the service for no money was turned down, and everybody's credit was good, just as it was with the terriers, the railroads, and the big-hearted folk who threw open their doors and houses to all who could be accommodated.

The San Francisco Chronicle has the following in its news columns on the grand jury and the Western Union:

GRAND JURY CHARGE.

To the charge made by the grand jury that the Western Union Telegraph company was guilty of obtaining money by false pretenses, and other violations of the law, in that it accepted money for messages and then sent them by mail on the days immediately following the fire, the officials of the Telegraph company reply with the declaration that the charges are absolutely false in every particular. They charge also that the report presented by the sub-committee appointed to investigate the telegraph companies was prompted, in the main, by malice.

It is said that the Western Union company, in an effort to purge itself from the sensitive allegations of the grand jury, will demand that the matter be investigated in a representative public body, either the chamber of commerce or the Merchants' association of San Francisco.

The officials of the Western Union declare that there is absolutely no evidence to justify the finding of such a report as was submitted by the grand jury, and declare that the whole thing is absurd. Supt. Frank Jaynes, who has charge of the corporation's affairs in this city, declares that in order to prove the company was guilty of no wrong-doing in its treatment of the public during and following the great fire, he will present the matter to one of the city's public bodies, with a view to justifying the actions of the company during the fire in its efforts to transmit messages.

MAKES STRONG DENIAL.

Mr. Jaynes cites the prompt action of his company in placing its facilities under the control of the various relief organizations during the trying times immediately following the fire.

MALICIOUS SAYS JAYNES.

"There is absolutely no evidence to

justify such a report," said Jaynes. "It is malicious in its instigation, and the true facts will be presented to the public in due time. We propose to call upon some public body, possibly the chamber of commerce or the Merchants' association, to make an unbiased investigation of all that the Western Union has done since and during the disaster. We wish to call attention to the prompt action of the company at the command of the relief organizations of every class throughout the whole country. We point out the fact that, without solicitation, we have been, and are still, handling an immense volume of free messages relative to the relief work.

"Also, realizing the condition of complete demoralization which ensued immediately after the earthquake and fire, and the great anxiety of relatives and friends for those residing in San Francisco, this company immediately commenced preparing for the issuing of bulletins containing the latest and most reliable information obtainable, and these bulletins were transmitted free of all charge and were delivered at every one of our 23,000 offices in the country. This information was continued until the great fire was subdued and the extent of the damage approximately known.

"In answer to the charges, I will state that all of our offices were instructed to accept messages for the Pacific coast subject to indefinite delay. The large amount of business which was offered, notwithstanding this restriction, was handled in the manner calculated to serve the best interests of the public according to the experience and judgment of all our operating officials.

TOO BUSY TO TALK.

"At the present time we are too busy restoring our service to its normal condition to give much attention to the slanderous statement promulgated by the grand jury. The company believes that the law is ample to protect R. and in due time the matter will receive attention.

"We do not believe that any intelligent citizen of San Francisco believes the extravagant and malicious statements contained in the report prepared by the secretary of the grand jury. We went before that committee, believing that the charges would be investigated, inasmuch as they had been made against the company.

"It is true, however, that before our facilities had been fully restored, and owing to the congestion of the few lines in working order, messages were accepted at eastern points subject to indefinite delay, and with the understanding that we would get them through to Oakland or San Francisco as soon as possible. Upon one occasion messages were sent by special messengers from Chicago with the idea of dropping them off at stations enroute as fast as wires could be reconnected.

"Several thousands of these messages were taken to Oakland by special messengers, but to prevent any misconception as to how far they reached their destination, each message was stamped across its face with the words 'Forwarded by train from Chicago.' This was done in order that the addresses might know the reason for the delay.

HOW SOME WERE MAILED.

"After the earthquake and fire a great number of messages were received here by wire from points both on the Pacific coast and from places in the east addressed to places in the burned district, or, in some cases, to places in the unburned district which could not possibly be reached by messengers. After the most careful consideration by the officials of the company, it was decided to place a postage stamp on each of these messages and drop them in the postoffice at San Francisco, with the expectation that the parties to whom they were addressed would call there daily for their mail. Thus, nearly all of these messages reached the addressees. This is the only foundation for the statements that messages were mailed.

"In view of the fact that the fire destroyed all the property of the company in the city of San Francisco, including its power plant, supply depot, main office and warehouse, we were left without any instruments or appliances necessary to the operation of our wires.

"The celerity with which these facilities were restored has been commented upon in the most favorable terms by everybody connected with the telegraph service or having knowledge of the great difficulties which were surmounted. Our main operating station, temporarily located in West Oakland, was constructed, fully equipped with all the necessary complete facilities for handling business by automatic quadruples and duplex Morse systems, within six days.

On the Saturday following the beginning of the work 180 operators were at work. While this building was in process of construction a large force of men was at work testing out and repairing our submarine cable under the bay and our underground system in San Francisco.

"Whenever a message has been brought to us and it appears that adequate service has not been rendered by the company, we have returned the charges and we will continue to do so whenever the matter is brought to our attention. Of course we will not refund any money to the addressee at this point upon which charges were paid at distant points; that is to say, unless the claim is made at the station where the money was paid."

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A FEW OF THE MILLION IMMIGRANTS THAT WILL HAVE LANDED AT NEW YORK ALONE BY THE END OF JUNE.

This is to be our greatest immigration year, according to the immigration authorities. Last year, at all our ports of entry, we received 1,026,499 immigrants. Already we have received thousands more than that number, and through the port of New York alone, Commissioner Watchorn expects more than a million. Up to June 1st, 870,000 immigrants had been passed through Ellis Island, and the great rush of the last four months goes on unabated.

Austria Hungarians predominate among the immigrants; Italians are next, then Scotch, Irish and English. Thirty-one percent of the immigrants passed at Ellis Island settle in New York state, 29 per cent in Pennsylvania, and six states—the two mentioned, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Ohio—get 16 per cent of the total.

A few of the million immigrants that will have landed at New York alone by the end of June.

In the photograph above, a large crowd of immigrants is shown waiting on a sidewalk. Some are carrying luggage, and others are looking towards the camera or each other. The scene is outdoors, likely near a port or railway station.

Waiting for friends and relatives.

Every boat from Ellis Island is met by a group of women, most of them young, and all only a short time over from the old country. But in that time they pick up American ways, especially dress, and so they are more American than otherwise when they greet friends and relatives fresh from the hands of the immigration officials.

The sidewalk in front of the Barge office is a favorite waiting place for these.

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