

## CHICAGO'S FIRE IS DWARFED BY MONEY CRISIS

Catastrophe of 1871 Less  
Serious Than Present  
Pleit, Is View.

Chicago's history is one of recurrent catastrophes and brilliant recoveries. Early settlers built the city on a swamp. Their sons and daughters rebuilt it when fire nearly wiped it out. Now, with the city facing bankruptcy, rich and poor work together to avert ruin. This installment of a series tells what they are doing. Thursday's story will estimate the price of this.

RAY BLACK

United Press Staff Correspondent

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CHICAGO, Jan. 13.—Chicago is

a city besieged by financial adver-

sity and with no ammunition that

will fit its guns.

With coffers almost empty, debts

skyrocketing, employees unpaid, the

nation's second city seems to be

waging a losing battle.

But the fighting spirit is here. Militant Mayor Anton J. Cermak, an army of loyal city workers, and an aroused citizenry of 3,500,000 persons are withstanding what amounts to siege. The state legislature, in special session at Springfield, may prove as ally if political obstacles do not prevent.

"The Chicago fire of October, 1871, seemed a terrible catastrophe," said D. F. Kelly, State street merchant and civic leader. "The importance of the present crisis is so much greater as to make the two incom-

parable."

"We're a foreign army encamped about our city with every prospect of being able to destroy it unless a huge indemnity were paid, immediate steps would be taken to secure from those able to pay a guarantee of the amount demanded."

"Metaphorically speaking, a like condition now exists in that the integrity of our financial structure is in peril."

Perhaps the weakness in the ranks comes from divided leadership and conflicting strategy. Some leaders advise issuing \$600,000,000 in bonds. Others counsel revamping the tax machinery so bankers will lend the city money on tax anticipation warrants.

State Senator Harold Kissenger of Aurora, in the legislature went as far as to threaten introduction of a bill putting the city into the hands of a receiver, with powers of a dictator.

Civic Leaders Aroused

Meanwhile many Chicagoans have dropped their personal business and rallied to help the city.

Kelly, chairman of a committee for the sale of tax anticipation warrants, has worked virtually day and night trying to persuade moneyed men to buy warrants.

Mayor Cermak led Cook county legislators to Springfield, with the warning, "we must have aid now or we are lost."

Lewis E. Myers, president of the board of education, gave his personal note for \$4,000,000 to meet the December pay roll of 14,000 teachers. Their total pay in seven months has been for six weeks of teaching.

"Shylocks" Reappear

Bankers have spent many hours analyzing the financial problem, suggesting what must be done before the city's credit can be established and its tax warrants will be issued.

Fathers in a half dozen suburban areas have gone from house to house trying to sell tax warrants.

No group has shown more civic loyalty than the teachers. Not a one was missing when schools reopened Jan. 5. Some have accepted script. To cash it, they must take a heavy discount.

These teachers have "carried on" by borrowing at high interest. One Chicago "financing company" recently turned over an entire floor to its loan business with teachers.

"Salary purchasing companies," driven out several years ago by legal action, are functioning again. One teacher, a man, already has paid 600 per cent on the amount borrowed.

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## 'SIS' HOPKINS JUST GREW UP ON STAGE

Sam Young of Terre Haute Tells How Rose Melville Made a Hit in a Rural Comedy Drama Years Ago.

INCIDENTAL to the revival of "Sis Hopkins," perhaps the most famous of all rural comedy dramas, by the Berkell players at Keith's this week, comes the story from Sam M. Young of Terre Haute revealing the facts concerning the origin of the character of Sis Hopkins, portrayed for many years by Rose Melville, a sister-in-law of Young's, and who, during her career as a star of the American stage, was considered to be one of the greatest comedienne before the public.

In a letter to Henry K. Burton of Keith's, Young, formerly a theatrical manager and producer, but who long since retired from theatrical activities and now owns and manages a hotel in Terre Haute, states that he himself first conceived the character of Sis Hopkins, and with Miss Melville in the role introduced it in a melodrama which he wrote and staged nearly forty years ago.

The play in which "Sis" made her debut was called "Zeb, the Clodhopper." It was a melodrama of the Indiana Gas Belt, and Zeb, the hero, was a country youth who hailed from "nun" Melville.

At that time Young managed a repertoire company which included the Melville sisters, Rose and Ida, Charlie Murray, who later joined hands with Ollie Mack, the team of Murray and Mack becoming famous as stars in Irish farce comedies and others who have since scaled the heights in the realm of the theater. More recently Murray became one of the most popular of Mack Sennett's movie comics.

"Zeb, the Clodhopper" was retained in the repertoire of Young's company for two years, and according to Young the character of Sis Hopkins "stole the show."

How It Started

Then "Zeb" was produced as a road show, with Ida Melville, in private life Mrs. Young, in the role of Sis Hopkins. Young says that Ida Melville considerably elaborated the character, originating the braided hair, striped socks, high comb and other distinguishing features destined to become inseparably associated with the quaint and whimsical country girl.

The success of both Rose and Ida Melville in the character of Sis inspired Young to play a sketch entitled "Two Little Jays," in which the sisters appeared as Sis Hopkins. It was a feature in E. E. Rice's celebrated extravaganza "1492," a fore-runner of the modern big revue.

Soon afterward Rose Melville was engaged to play "Sis" in a musical comedy starring Mathews and Bulger, called "By the Sea and Waves." The part of "Sis Hopkins" was especially written into the show for Miss Melville's benefit. It was while thus engaged that she decided to incorporate the character which has so easily and completely captivated public fancy, into a play of the same name as a starring vehicle for herself.

Revival Is Lavish

Young is not certain as to who wrote the original script. He says, however, that it was later "doctorized" by Edward Kidder, one of the most prominent playwrights of the era, and several other playwrights. The result was, with Young's original lines and Rose Melville's truly great talent, "Sis Hopkins" scored a tremendous hit, placing Miss Melville in a niche entirely her own in the affections of the theatergoers of America.

Charles Berkell's revival, at Keith's, is even on a more lavish scale than was Rose Melville's original production of "Sis Hopkins," for Berkell has augmented his cast with Extra Berkell's Rube band, eight musical fun makers who fit the show like the proverbial glove, making an emphatic hit. There are twenty-six people on the stage at Keith's this week.

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PETTIS—street floor.

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THE INDIANAPOLIS TIMES

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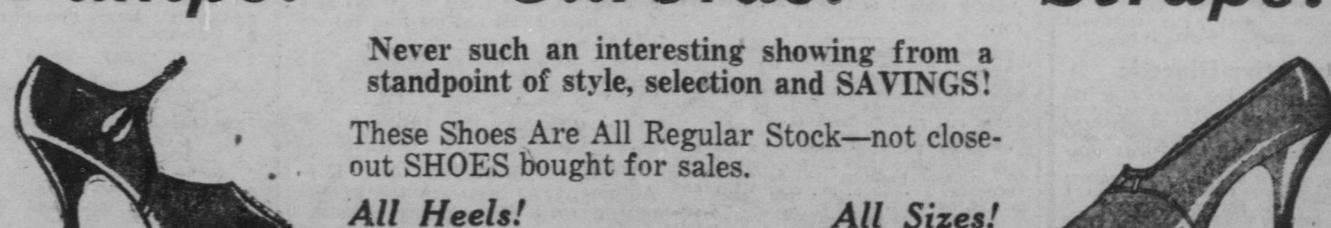
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