

FIREMEN OVERCOME AT \$400,000 BLAZE

Foss & Co, Wool Waste House, Burned

Fighters Wear Gas Masks During Battle With Flames

Upward of a score of firemen were temporarily overcome while fighting the most serious fire Boston has known in months, yesterday morning in the wool waste house of Foss & Co, Inc, 595-597-599 Atlantic av and extending through to 238 and 240 Purchase st. The damage was about \$100,000. It was the first fire in Boston's history, according to Chief Walsh, where the smoke and gasses compelled the firemen to wear gas masks and breathing protectors.

Four alarms were sounded for the fire, which for more than an hour threatened the entire business section along Atlantic av and Purchase st, between Federal and Congress sts. The fire was discovered about 5:15 a m by patrolman Jesse Bradbury of the City Hall-av Station. His attention was attracted to the building by a flaming awning at the rear of the Foss building. He sounded an alarm from box 112, and shortly afterward patrolman C. P. Conroy sounded an alarm for the same fire from box 112.

With the arrival of the first firemen another alarm was ordered and 15 minutes later a third was sent in. The fourth alarm was sounded at 6:15 at the orders of Chief Walsh.

Flames Drive Firemen Off

The building was packed with bales of wool waste from the second floor to the top, and when the flames got going, the entire structure was a roaring furnace and firemen found it impossible to keep the ladders against the building. They were compelled therefore to fight the fire from the tops of nearby buildings.

The smoke was so thick and heavy that it almost strangled the firemen until they put on gas masks.

During the early stages of the fire a number of hot-air explosions took place on the fourth and top floors. A stout fire wall prevented the fire spreading into the Armour Leather Company, 601-603 Atlantic av, and 241-244 Purchase st. The smoke worked its way into the Armour building, however, and a considerable amount of cut sole leather on the upper floor was damaged by smoke and water.

Big Crowd on Hand

Fire Commissioner John R. Murphy arrived on the scene long before the fire was under control, and, with Chief Walsh, directed the fighting of the fire.

A big crowd gathered to watch the fire and shortly before 7 o'clock Atlantic av, from Federal st to Congress st, was roped off.

The men of Engines 8, 6, 25, 39 and 50 massed themselves on the Purchase-st side.

It was found that a fire door on the third floor was open and Chief Walsh believes that it was open before the fire started. Spontaneous combustion was given as the cause.

Dist Chief Alfred J. Caulfield and Acting Dist Chief James McMahon, with 13 members of Engine 15 and Ladder 39, who were working on the second floor on the Atlantic-av side, had a providential escape from death, just before 10 o'clock when the third floor collapsed.

The floor went quickly and with a crash.

But, fortunately, there was a minute's warning, and the firemen all succeeded in reaching the windows and gaining safety.

One unusual feature occurred after it was known that the fire was under control. It was pay day for the firemen of the district in which the fire was burning, and as soon as they could be spared from the fighting they were paid off in a nearby drug store.

During the fire the following firemen were injured by smoke, gas and falling debris:

John Kennedy of Ladder 13, overcome by smoke while at work on the roof.

John Shanley of Engine 25, overcome on street after he had withdrawn from building.

William Fallon of Engine 39 and Edward Coveney of Engine 25, overcome by gas and smoke.

John Gormley of the Boston Protective Department, injured about the face and hands by flying debris.

Fred Nowell and Edwin Chamberlain, Ladder 8, cuts about hands.

Charles H. Long Jr, son of the fireboat captain, and John M. Glynn of the Protective Department, overcome by smoke.

John J. Dunbar, Engine 39, overcome by smoke and taken to the Haymarket-st Relief Station in a chief's auto. Condition not serious.