

FIRE CAUSES CLOSING OF SECTION OF CANAL ST

\$50,000 Loss to Haymarket-Sq Furniture Firms—Three Alarms Sounded Following Explosion of Enamel Spraying Machine—One Man Badly Burned—Firemen Battle Flames For an Hour



VIEW OF THE FIRE FROM HAYMARKET SQ. AT THE LEFT IS MERRIMAC ST, AT THE RIGHT, CANAL ST.

The city of Boston Building Commission acting with the Department of Public Works decided at 2 this afternoon to close Canal st between Market and the Haymarket-sq Relief Station on account of the weakened condition of the front wall of the six-story brick block bounded by Canal, Market, Friend and Merrimac sts in Haymarket sq. The building was swept by a fire which caused damage estimated at close to \$50,000 this morning.

It is feared that the action of the heat and water on the bricks will cause them to fall. Up to this time the building inspectors have been unable to make an examination of the premises; but they will do so as soon as the interior cools sufficiently to permit them to enter.

A flash from the pilot light of an enamel spraying machine, shortly after 9 o'clock, started the fire. The block is occupied almost exclusively by furniture dealers, and four of these suffered damages that are estimated at close to \$55,000. Three alarms were sounded, and it was not until after a stiff battle that the flames were declared under control at 10:30 a m.

The firms in the building include the Brooks, Gill Company, above whose premises the fire started; William Leavens & Co, who own the whole building and had leased the first two floors to other furniture stores; the New England Show Case Company, occupying the first floor of the Leavens property, next to Brooks, Gill Company; and the Stout, Scanton Company, a furniture dealer, which also held part of the ground floor of the Leavens building.

How the Fire Started

According to the story told by Vittorio Dallorusa, a furniture worker in the employ of the William Leavens Company, he was working on the fourth floor of the building, on the Canal st side. All the firms have entrances on both Canal and Merrimac sts. While he was using an enamel spraying machine in coating some furniture, the pilot light exploded.

The inflammable paints and enamels burst into flames. Another workman ran to the nearest alarm box, No. 1213, on Canal st, but in his excitement he failed to pull in the alarm after he had opened the door. After this he went back into the building to assist Dallorusa, who was trying to battle the flames in spite of a badly burned left forearm which he received at the first flash of the light.

The first notice that the Fire Department had came several minutes later, when an automatic sprinkler alarm sounded in the station house of Ladder 1, just across the street from the rear of the burning building, at the corner of Friend and Merrimac st. By that time the fire had made considerable headway and thick clouds

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of brown smoke were coloring the sky, the sky.

Second Alarm Given Immediately

District Chief Stickles was the first on the scene, and ordered an immediate second alarm. In the meanwhile he directed the fight against the fire, from two sides, the Canal-st entrance to the building, and the rear entrance on Merrimac st. By the time that the second alarm force arrived and Deputy Chief Sweeney took over the command, the fire, which started on the fourth floor, Canal-st front, had eaten its way through to the rear, and flames were showing at the sixth-floor windows of the structure.

With the firemen hampered by the heavy smoke, and unable to check the spread of the fire to the parts of the building occupied by Stout, Scanlon Company and the adjacent quarters of the William Leavens Company, which extend all around the northern end of the block, a third alarm was turned in, bringing additional apparatus and Chief Daniel F. Sennott. The successive alarms also brought a large force of police reserves, who worked overtime to handle the crowd of several thousand persons attracted from long distances by the heavy smoke, or caught in the fire lines on their way from the North Station to their offices in the downtown district. All traffic was stopped for at least an hour in Haymarket sq and its surrounding streets.

All Occupants Driven Out

Before the fire was brought under control all occupants of the northern end of the block had been ordered out of the building, and all onlookers were pushed out of Canal st when it became evident that the front wall was in danger of crumbling. High-pressure lines directed against the front of the building brought a shower of loose bricks near the windows and the wall was seen to be swaying.

Dallorosa Only Person Injured

After this lower pressure was used in some of the hose lines and the high pressure water was shot only intermittently through the windows, deep into the building. The firemen were greatly aided in their fight by the accessibility of the burning area, as the fire was almost in the middle of an irregular square of buildings, and the roofs of these offered the firemen a chance to combat the flames from all sides.

The heavy smoke caused the fire chief to order that the men work in short shifts, and due to this no one was reported as having been overcome. The only person who sustained injuries was Dallorosa, whose burned arm was treated at the Haymarket Relief Hospital, across Canal st from the burning building.

The Heaviest Losers

On the first floor of the William Leavens property, at the corner of Canal and Market sts, the Atlantic National Bank's Haymarket branch was thought to be threatened for some time, and the alarm gong outside the building was ringing incessantly, but officials of the bank declared that their part of the building was absolutely fireproof, and no transfer of funds was made, though the bank

branch suspended business for the morning.

The heaviest loss was sustained by the William Leavens Company, which, besides owning the building, also occupied the upper floors. Its loss is estimated at \$30,000, which sum will probably include damage to the building, part of which was on the three upper floors, burned out, and the loss of furniture stored there.

The Brooks-Gill Company, which occupied the first two floors of the Leavens Building, suffered a loss that has been estimated at \$15,000. A large collection of Oriental rugs is said to be their greatest loss. In preparation for the dissolution of a partnership, a special sale of these was going on, and the entire stock, it is reported, was either burned or ruined by water beyond repair.

The New England Showcase Company suffered about \$2000 loss, mostly from the water that poured down into its premises, next to the Brooks-Gill Company furniture shop. Stout, Scanlon & Co's loss has been estimated at \$8000, which should cover the damage from fire and smoke.