

THE NEW BUILDING PLANS

WHAT THE NEW WESTERN UNION WILL BE LIKE.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE RECONSTRUCTED EDIFICE WILL BE WHOLLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE OLD.

The reconstructed Western Union Building will not have many of the structural peculiarities that made the old edifice a landmark in Broadway. It will still stand at 195, and it will probably be roomier than ever, but the great mansard roof will be replaced by a structure that follows more nearly the lines of the lower stories, and the peaked tower will disappear. The old flagstaff upon which the time ball has been raised so often will have to go too, but another staff will be erected somewhere on the building to help regulate the timepieces of New-Yorkers. In fact, the reconstructed building will generally resemble in plan most of its neighbors among the down-town office edifices.

All this was settled yesterday at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Directors of the Western Union Company. There were present Jay Gould, Gen. Eckert, the General Manager; John T. Terry, Russell Sage, and ex-Gov. Cornell. It was voted to authorize Gen. Eckert to go ahead with the repairs made necessary by the big fire, acting in his operations on this general plan: All the upper part of the building above the fifth floor is to be renewed; the new stories are to be full sized and are to follow the lines of the lower floors. This will give a building which from top to bottom will have its stories of a size. Moreover, the company owns the property at the Dey Street end of the building, and a structure will be raised on this lot to the full height of the main building and joined to it. The Dey Street lot is about 25 by 100 feet.

The new Western Union Building will be nine stories in height. The sixth floor will be devoted to offices. Both the seventh and eighth floors will be turned into great operating rooms, one on each floor. It was estimated yesterday that each room would be about 170 by 70 feet. At the end of one floor commodious quarters will be set aside for the use of the Associated Press for offices and working rooms.

Much attention will be paid to supplying means of egress from the operating rooms. There will be a special entrance from Dey Street, from which an elevator will run to the top floor. Besides this one, there will be three other elevators in the building. Hallways and stairways will be so arranged as to give ample facilities for clearing the rooms quickly in cases where need for such a step exists. The talk of what might have happened in the way of a panic had the operating rooms been crowded when the fire broke out the other day has had results in the shape of a determination by the company to reduce chances for loss of life to a minimum.

The ninth floor—the top one—will be devoted to the restaurant, to kitchens, and to rooms for the servants. In future there will be no battery room in the upper part of the building. All the battery power will be in the cellar, where the dynamos used by the company now are. Not very long ago the dynamos were up stairs, but it was decided to put them in the cellar and the plan was carried out. The change proved to be a very lucky thing for the Western Union Company, for had the dynamos been in their old place the fire would have ended their usefulness and left the company almost helpless, so far as securing electricity for the wires was concerned. This fire has been full of lessons for the Western Union, and one of them has been that the cellar is the best possible place for storing away batteries and dynamos.

Work on the changes will begin at once, the operations being in charge of J. B. Smith, who put up the building. Brick, iron, and bluestone will be used for the walls. Since the fire proved its capabilities in the way of crumbling and splintering, granite has had no friends among the officials of the Western Union Company.

Gen. Eckert was too busy with the architects yesterday arranging the details of the work of rebuilding to see reporters, but Jay Gould was found in his office on the second floor.

"The fact of the matter is," he said, "that we have needed more room in the building. We have been talking about enlarging it, and now that the fire has given us an opportunity we intend to do so. Perhaps, if one looks at it in that light, the fire wasn't such a bad thing after all."

"We open on an average four new offices a day somewhere in the country. That means new business to be handled every day. For some time the operating rooms have been cramped, but the new rooms will give us space for a thousand operators at once, and it may not be a very long time before we need that number. In fact, we have needed more room all over the building. The new sixth floor will be used for offices of the company."

"What will be the cost of rebuilding? Probably about \$60,000 to a floor, or say \$300,000 all told for building and equipments."

The question of the company's damage through business diverted or lost through inability to handle it for a time after the fire, Mr. Gould said, was hard to answer. The business of the Western Union has been running about \$25,000 a week above that of last year. Last week showed an increase over the figures for the corresponding time in 1889 of only \$10,000. This falling off might be due to the fire or to dullness in Wall Street.

"It is very dull in Wall Street just now," Mr. Gould explained.

He thought, too, that the building had proved its fire-proof qualities pretty well. The damage had been confined to the upper floors. To be sure, the floors had not proved absolutely watertight, but it could hardly be expected that they would when such a deluge was poured into the upper stories. But Mr. Gould's office showed no traces of the presence of the water from the upper floors, and he thought that it had fared no better than the others below the burned district.

The cleaning-up process was carried on with energy yesterday all through the building. Cartload after cartload of debris was sent down through the chute on the Dey Street side. A good deal of progress was made in tabbing the wires of the cables that had been cut. The floor of the old battery room in the sixth story has been calked thoroughly, and now forms what is practically a second roof, which will doubtless prove useful in case of a storm while the old roof and the walls of the upper stories remain in their present condition of liberal ventilation. The tower has been shored up with wooden beams. It is supported by four strong columns, but the effect of the interior heat upon them was such as to render the additional support of the shores advisable. It will probably be left in this condition until it is taken down.

So far as the service of the company was concerned, a good deal of improvement had been made over the previous day. Wires were once more furnished to the United Press, and it was able to work from its New-York office. The Press News Association has secured its usual night wires. The Associated Press did not succeed in moving into its new quarters on the fourth floor of the Western Union Building as speedily as was expected. Arrangements had been made to resume the service from this city yesterday morning, but there were unexpected delays, and the day news was handled from the Pennsylvania Railroad Station in Jersey City. When "Good day" was sent out, however, the association returned to this city. Its night force was ordered to report for duty half an hour earlier than usual, and the usual news service was resumed.

The sporting news service, to which an eighth of the old operating room of the Western Union was given up, is now handled from a room on the fourth floor of the building. Its quarters are cramped, but it will get more space before long. Carpenters were engaged yesterday in fitting up tables for operators wherever a room could be had on the lower floors, and it is likely that most of the fourth story will be given up to this department of the company until the repairs are completed.

A good many of the old special wires were put in use again yesterday. Some of the sporting news wires used by the afternoon newspapers were in operation. The down-town Exchanges, Mr. Somerville of the press bureau of the company said, were getting a pretty good service, with the exception of two—the Cotton Exchange and the Butter and Cheese Exchange. These were still without their usual telegraphic facilities.

There has been more trouble with the pneumatic tubes. Those leading up town are working satisfactorily, but there has been need of repairs to some of the others. The tubes ran through the operating rooms and had to be cut off there. To this the trouble was largely due.

Chief Dealy of the operating force said that business was being handled without difficulty at 415 Broadway and at the main office. No extra call was now being made on the branch offices. Even city business was handled at the main office. As the facilities for operating were increased at the latter place the force at 415 Broadway would probably be withdrawn gradually. It might be retained there for some time, however, as the room was a large one and well adapted to the purpose for which it was now used.

WANT TO SELL THEIR PROPERTY.

Judge Andrews, in Supreme Court, Chambers, yesterday granted an order requiring any parties interested to show cause why Mrs. Mary E. Field should not be allowed to sell enough of the property between One Hundred and Forty-eighth and One Hundred and Forty-ninth Streets and Tenth Avenue and the North River, to pay taxes. The property was conveyed in 1846 by John M. Bradhurst and Elizabeth Bradhurst, his wife, to Hickson W. Field, Jr., and Mary E. Field, his wife, to be held by them during their lives, and at their death to go to their children. Hickson W. Field is now dead, and Mary E. Field, who makes the petition, says that the property, which is of great value for purposes of improvement, brings in only \$400 per year, being rented for market gardening. The taxes are \$2,500 per year.

The Princess Elizabeth Bradhurst Brancacio, the wife of Prince Brancacio of Rome, joins in the petition. She is the only surviving child of Hickson W. and Mary E. Field, and at the death of Mrs. Field would therefore receive the property.