

Alliance Co.
Salvages
Records

Future of Alliance Plant Pondered by Directors

JUL 17, 1952

Sprinkler System Status Questioned; Ruins Drenched

A decision on the future plans of the Alliance Furniture Company, whose Allen Street plant was destroyed by fire Wednesday morning, will be reached in a few weeks, according to Lester W. Berglund, Alliance president.

Mr. Berglund said company officials met Wednesday afternoon and another meeting is scheduled for Friday afternoon. However, he said that a decision as to whether or not the company will rebuild or move to another location will not be made for a few weeks.

The company's plant was leveled and all stock and equipment destroyed by the huge early morning blaze Wednesday which also destroyed buildings of the Creston Transfer Company, caused slight damage to the nearby Plomb Tool Company plant and scorched other buildings as far away as Barrows Street.

Insurance \$314,000

Alliance Company officials estimated their loss at half a million dollars. The loss was covered by some \$314,000 insurance, Mr. Berglund said.

All company records were recovered from a safe which fell from the second floor into the ruins but they were damaged by water and fumes. Mr. Berglund said the safe contained all payroll and invoice records along with order books, some \$600 in cash and \$80,000 in invoices. The safe was opened by Jerry Okerlund, contractor, who used a bulldozer to clear away much of the debris. Another contractor, George Patti, was employed to tear away the brick wall on the plant's south side.

Sprinklers Questioned

There was still some question this morning regarding the operation of the company's sprinkler system. Fire Chief Rudolph H. Swanson said it is believed the system was not in operation at the time of the fire. He inspected a sprinkler valve found in the debris and discovered it was closed.

Mr. Berglund said that through testimony taken from several witnesses, it is certain that the sprinkler alarm rang out at the time of the fire, but it is not known when the sprinkler valve was turned off.

Meanwhile, city firemen were still playing water on the smoldering debris this morning. Although the fire was under control by 6 A.M. when the building was leveled, city firemen remained at the scene throughout the day and night. Some flames kept licking at the ruins and huge billows of



SAFE RECOVERED IN FIRE RUINS—Stanley T. Anderson, center, general manager of the fire-destroyed Alliance Furniture Company plant in Allen Street, is shown examining records taken from a safe recovered from the ruins. The safe was opened by Jerry Okerlund, contractor, shown at right. Assistant Fire Chief Bernard Swanson is shown at left. The safe contained all company records, some \$600 in cash, and \$80,000 in invoices. The records were intact, although damaged by water and fumes.

—Post-Journal Stafffoto