

# FIRE CHIEFS CHOOSE AND CHEER CROKER

## Select President of Their Association by Unanimous Vote.

### He Asked for "Vindication" and Received It When Delegates Gave Great Demonstration of Approval.

With great enthusiasm and loud acclaim the Fire Chiefs in convention at Grand Central Palace yesterday elected Edward F. Croker, the youthful head of the New York Fire Department, President of the International Association of Fire Engineers.

The first mention of Chief Croker's name was the signal for tremendous cheering long continued. As soon as the eloquent nomination speeches were ended a motion that the nominations be closed and that the Secretary cast the unanimous ballot of the association for the New Yorker was carried with a demonstration that approached pandemonium.

There was no opposition to Chief Croker. From the time immediately preceding the first session of the convention last Tuesday, when he told the early arrivals that he wanted their vote for the Presidency "as a vindication," until the election yesterday, no other name was mentioned for the place. Atlantic City had been selected for the 1903 meeting by a small majority of votes over Seattle, Washington, when President Humphreys announced that the next thing in order was the election of officers.

Some one suggested that the election be postponed until after luncheon; as it was then nearly 2 o'clock, but there was a loud general protest, and Capt. William Brophy of Boston, one of the oldest members of the association and one of the ablest speakers at the convention, addressed the President and stepped to the front. Capt. Brophy had not declared in favor of any man, and it was not certain that he would not spring a "dark horse."

Capt. Brophy said that the convention owed something to the City of New York, something more than the vote of thanks to the Entertainment Committee and the resolutions for the splendid reception that had been accorded them. The action he was about to propose, he said, would reach the hearts of the people of the city, and was exactly what the people themselves wanted the convention to do.

He then named Chief Croker for the Presidency. The cheering was deafening, and continued for several minutes. Chief Devine of Salt Lake City addressed the Chair, and explained his position, which he thought was the position of the convention. He said in part:

"It is with extreme delicacy that I ask your attention to say a few words about the candidacy of the man who has been nominated for the Presidency of our association. Circumstances, I believe, warrant me in feeling justified in what has already been said, notwithstanding the fact that we have ignored certain conditions that exist now in this great city. As a man who was opposed to Chief Croker in his effort to bring the convention to New York last year, as one not interested in his party success, as one who believes party politics has not entered into the association or the department in this city, as one who believes the nominee is far removed from the party of which he is an honored member, I feel that when we have taken this action to-day our case is closed.

"With all respect and deference to his Honor the Mayor and to the Commissioner, who honored us with their presence at this convention and welcomed us to the city, I think it is fair to this convention to explain the attitude I assume when I cast my vote for Chief Croker. I believe that a man goes forth innocent of any charge until he is proved guilty. This remark should not be construed as a slur on the gentleman who acts as Fire Commissioner, but as the almost unanimous sentiment of the people of the City of New York."

That the speech of Chief Devine expressed the sentiments of the convention was shown by the great cheering that followed it. Then Chief Benedict of Newark spoke briefly, seconding the nomination, and with a deafening shout the Fire Chiefs passed the motion for Croker's unanimous election.

Chief Croker read a brief response, thanking the convention for the honor it had conferred upon him. Chief Damarell of Boston proposed "three cheers for Chief Croker, our new President," and they were given more than once noisily. Cheers were also given for Chief Humphreys of Pittsburg, the retiring President of the Association.

The other officers were re-elected, as follows: First Vice President—Major Edward Hughes of Louisville, Ky.; Second Vice President—John Stagg of Paterson, N. J.; Secretary—Henry A. Hills of Wyoming, Ohio. Mr. Hills has been Secretary of the association since its organization, thirty years ago.

Several papers and discussions and the reports of the committees and officers occupied the session previous to the elections.

The rain during the afternoon prevented the Fire Chiefs from seeing advantageously the work of the life-savings corps and the various stations of the local Fire Department. Last evening there was a final entertainment, with a band concert and dance, at the Grand Central Palace.

## SAFETY FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN.

### Application Concerning Fire Escapes at St. Agatha's School Refused.

Perez M. Stewart, Superintendent of Buildings, yesterday refused to grant an application that had been made for a modification of the plans for St. Agatha's School, at the southwest corner of Eighty-seventh Street and West End Avenue. The school belongs to the Trinity Corporation. It consists of two old four-story buildings that are being remodeled, together with a fire-proof extension in the rear of one building. A permit for the alterations was granted some time ago by the Bureau of Buildings.

A formidable petition, signed by a number of neighboring property owners, was presented to Superintendent Stewart, asking that fire-escapes should be put at the rear of the school, instead of in front. The petitioners, it is said, feared that the presence of a building with fire-escapes in front would injure the value of property in the neighborhood.

Mr. Stewart assigned three experts to investigate. They were unanimous in the opinion that escape in the rear would not insure safety to the two hundred young children in the building. Superintendent Stewart then announced that he would deny the request for a modification of the plans, as asked in the petition.

### Accused Lawyer Cohen Discharged.

Lawrence B. Cohen, an attorney of 346 Broadway, obtained a warrant yesterday for the arrest of Cora Lee on the charge of perjury. The latter while a prisoner in the Tombs, charged with the theft of \$50, claimed that Cohen had fraudulently received \$325 from her, \$200 of which she alleged was to "fix" the District Attorney's office. Cohen was discharged by Magistrate Mayo in the Tombs Court yesterday afternoon, as the complainant, her counsel, or witnesses did not appear.

### Death in Crowded Street Car.

Richard Oppenheimer, a salesman for Richards & Co., portrait painters, at 3 West Thirteenth Street, and who lived in East Orange, N. J., was taken ill in a crowded south-bound Sixth Avenue surface car near Seventeenth Street yesterday afternoon and died before he could be taken to the New York Hospital. His death was due to hemorrhage of the lungs. Through letters and papers found in the dead man's pockets his identity was promptly indicated.