

NO TRACE OF THE THEFT OR THIEF.

Every Nook and Cranny in the Mint Is Searched, but Without Avail.



Walter N. Dimmick, Who, as Chief Clerk of the Mint, Is an Important Figure in the Present Inquiry.

EVERY nook and cranny of the Mint was searched yesterday to see if by any chance any trace could be found of the \$20,000 that has been stolen from the cashier's vault. Taking advantage of the holiday and the unusual shut-down, Superintendent Leach closed the doors to everybody and put his most trusted employes at work in the search. There was no expectation of getting any trace of the six bags of double eagles, and there was no disappointment when the search proved fruitless.

There was nothing learned yesterday to give a clue to the thief or the whereabouts of the coin. Indeed, Director Roberts and his principal expert assistant, Cashier More of the New Orleans Mint, went to San Rafael for the day. Superintendent Leach was at his desk all day, but he said there was absolutely nothing new learned in the matter of the theft.

George W. Hason of the United States Secret Service was absent from his usual haunts yesterday and it was given out that he was absent from town. It was even said that he had not been consulted in regard to the matter at the Mint, and that he did not expect to be called on to assist in unraveling the mystery. Hason's sudden departure from the city, however, caused comment and aroused curiosity as to his whereabouts and his mission. It is looked on as altogether probable that he is making a quiet inquiry into the habits of the men who for any possibility of opportunity might have had a hand in robbing the great vault.

Thus far the greatest activity has been devoted to the clerical investigations by the experts who are going over the cash accounts of the different departments of the Mint. There does not seem to be any fear that the culprit will attempt to escape, as the detectives have not manifested any intention to make arrests.

The deliberation with which the authorities are moving is taken to be an indication that no action will be taken until an effective strategy can be made, and then swift punishment will surely fall on the guilty person or persons.

Walter N. Dimmick, chief clerk of the Mint, who is as well informed as any person in the building on the general state of affairs, was asked yesterday to give his opinion of the shortage. "I am as much in the dark as anybody," he said. "It is a great mystery. I am not prepared to go as far as Director Roberts and Superintendent Leach and claim that it is unquestionably a theft. I am inclined to believe that an error in counting or in the book accounts may be brought to light. I recognize the fact that I, as well as others, will come in for a rigid scrutiny, having been one of the few who had access to the vault. So far as I am concerned I have nothing whatever to conceal—in fact, I ask for a strict inquiry, and will assist in every way in my power to fasten the crime, if there is any, where it belongs. There may be a selfish feeling in this, as the discovery of the guilty party will remove suspicion from the others.

There is a possibility, of course, that a man in the confidence of the doorkeepers might pass out through the main door with a bag of gold on his arm under his overcoat. But it is very unlikely that this would be done. The doorkeepers are supposed to watch everything and everybody closely, and it is the rule that every employe on leaving shall exhibit anything he is

taking away to the doorkeeper. A head official might pass without scrutiny, but even he could not carry off anything easily without arousing suspicion."

In view of the discovery of the \$20,000 worth, Superintendent Leach and Director Roberts have determined to open every sack of gold in the Mint, dump out the coin and weigh it. Weighing is the only way of counting money accurately on a large scale. It is far more accurate than a tally or count of individual pieces of money. The limit of tolerance in weight of double eagles is extremely small. No other metal has been found that can take the place of gold and give the same weight in the same approximate bulk. Therefore, the Mint officials argue, there is hardly a possibility that there could have been substitution of base metal for gold in any of the bags in the Mint. Nevertheless, they will make sure by subjecting the contents of every bag to visual inspection and weighing.

This work will take a week or ten days, as there are \$47,500,000 in the storage vault alone. Each bag must be opened, and after inspection and weighing must be tied up, sealed and tagged. But the work will be done, not only to satisfy the Government officials and the public that there has been no further stealing, but in order to supply the evidence, in case the thief is caught, that the six missing bags each actually contained double eagles to the amount of \$200.

There is one explanation of the mystery of the disappearance of the gold from the Mint vault that has been suggested, which would imply collusion by some one having access to the vault and some messenger or other person engaged in transferring large sums of money for the Mint. In the event of an understanding between two such persons the disbursing officer might have handed the six bags of bullion to the messenger. In addition to the amount properly called for by the transaction, and as a wagon would certainly be employed to transfer so large an amount it would be an easy thing to hand out the extra bags of gold, trusting to the future for making a proper division of the booty.

For more than a week the Mint has been watched day and night by detectives who have been employed in addition to the regular watchmen, but so far as is known, nothing suspicious has been noted. In the nature of the circumstances it would not be expected that any discovery would be made at night. It is admitted by all who have given the matter consideration that the robbery of the vault could have been accomplished only in the daytime, and only by some one who had access to the vault.

That the stealing must have been going on for some time is apparent from the fact that no man could have carried \$20,000 out of the place in one lump without detection. Men accustomed to handle coin recognize the fact that \$20,000 is a pretty good load for a man to walk away with. While it might be possible for a man to conceal \$200 under his clothing, to get away with six times that much would be next to impossible, especially as guards are on duty constantly to watch all who go in or out, and who naturally would note any suspicious circumstances, and certainly would halt any person carrying a large amount of coin out of the place.

Superintendent Leach said yesterday that at no time had there been less than \$2,000,000 in the cashier's vault for several months, and that, therefore, the theft might have been made at any time while the vault was so crowded, without arousing suspicion.