

WOLFE DECLINES DISCUSSION OF FLOOD FUND SUIT

"All in Mayor's Hands,"
His Only Comment.

Richard W. Wolfe, commissioner of public works, remained silent yesterday on the charges that money contributed by school children, city employees and others in 1927 for the relief of flood sufferers in the Mississippi valley had not been used for that purpose.

In the bill of complaint filed in Superior court on Saturday in which Mayor Thompson is accused of failure to disburse \$103,855 of the \$139,772 contributed for relief, Wolfe was revealed for the first time as treasurer of the fund and of the Waterways and Flood Control Association of the Mississippi Valley. According to the allegations in the bill, some of the relief money was diverted to the latter organization.

Wolfe Declines Comment.

Wolfe refused to answer queries about the fund when questioned on the phone at his summer estate in southern Michigan.

"I don't know a thing about it," he said. "It is all in the mayor's hands. I won't discuss it."

The bill of complaint recited the conditions that existed in the flooded regions of the Mississippi valley three years ago, describing the sufferings of the flood victims. Then it quoted Thompson's proclamation calling for relief contributions. "The need is great. Your response should be immediate," the proclamation said.

In a reply to the bill, issued on Saturday, Thompson declared that approximately \$90,000 of the fund collected for purposes of relief is now in the Foreman-State National bank.

Money Withdrawn from Bank.

After listing checks that had been drawn against the fund in 1927, 1928, and 1929, the bill of complaint charged that the total amount used for the authorized purposes of the fund amounted to only \$18,500, and that during 1929 and 1930 there was still \$103,855 left in the fund. Documents attached to the bill showed that all of the balance of the fund was withdrawn from the Prudential State Savings bank in December, 1930, and January, 1931, and turned over to Commissioner Wolfe.

Former City Controller George K. Schmidt is president of the Prudential bank. Thompson's statement said that he withdrew the fund when Schmidt announced his candidacy for mayor. Schmidt announced his candidacy on Jan. 13, resigning as controller.

James W. Breen, assistant corporation counsel, who with Thompson and Wolfe was one of the incorporators last December of the Waterways and Flood Control association and was named a co-defendant with them in the bill of complaint, said yesterday that he had opened the new account of the fund at the Foreman bank. He said he does not know how much the account now contains.

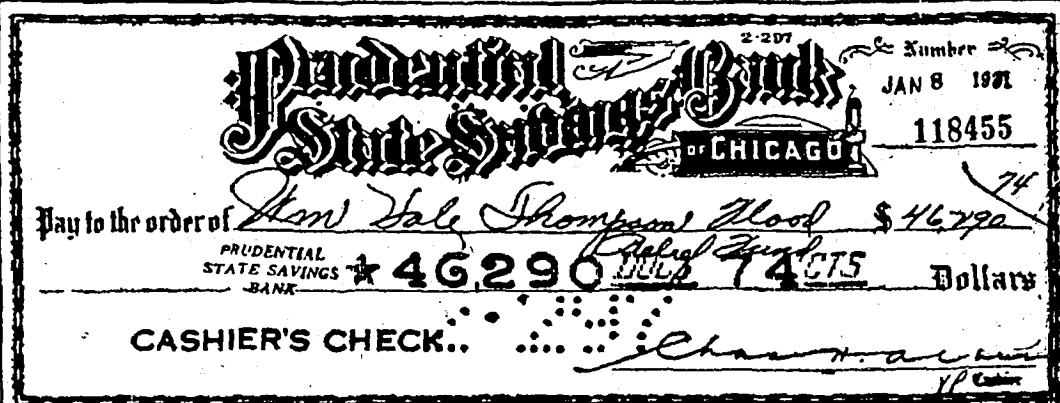
Payment to Bishop Carey.

Among the earlier payments from the relief fund noted in the bill was one to Bishop A. J. Carey, colored member of the civil service commission, also made a defendant. This check for \$3,500 was drawn on May 1, 1928. This payment, according to the bill, was a "personal transaction" between Thompson and Carey and was not made in accordance with the terms of the trust fund.

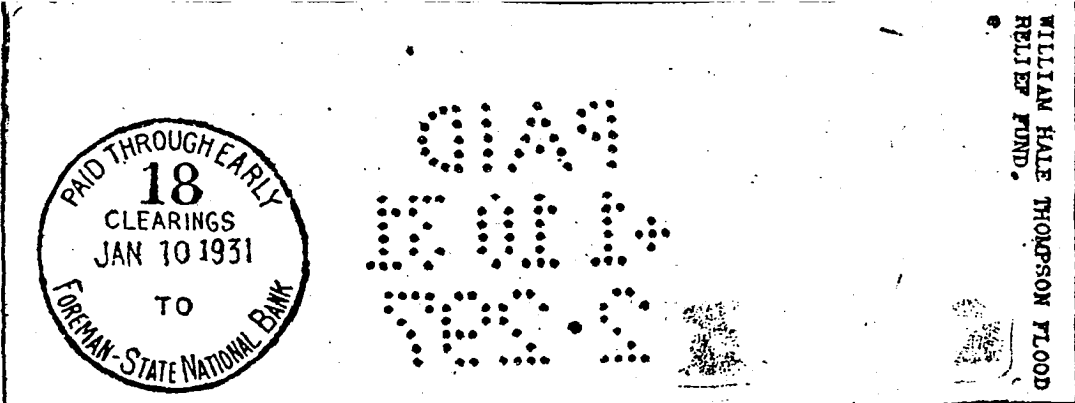
Associates of Bishop Carey recalled that he attended the Republican national convention in Kansas City in June of 1928. At that time it was reported that Thompson was courting colored delegates with the assistance of Bishop Carey for his "Draft Coolidge" movement.

Another defendant named in the bill of complaint is James P. Davis, who is not otherwise identified. The documentary evidence shows that seven payments were made from the fund to Davis in amounts ranging from \$150 to \$220. These checks were drawn at intervals of about two weeks, according to the records. The suit charges that they were "a private arrange-

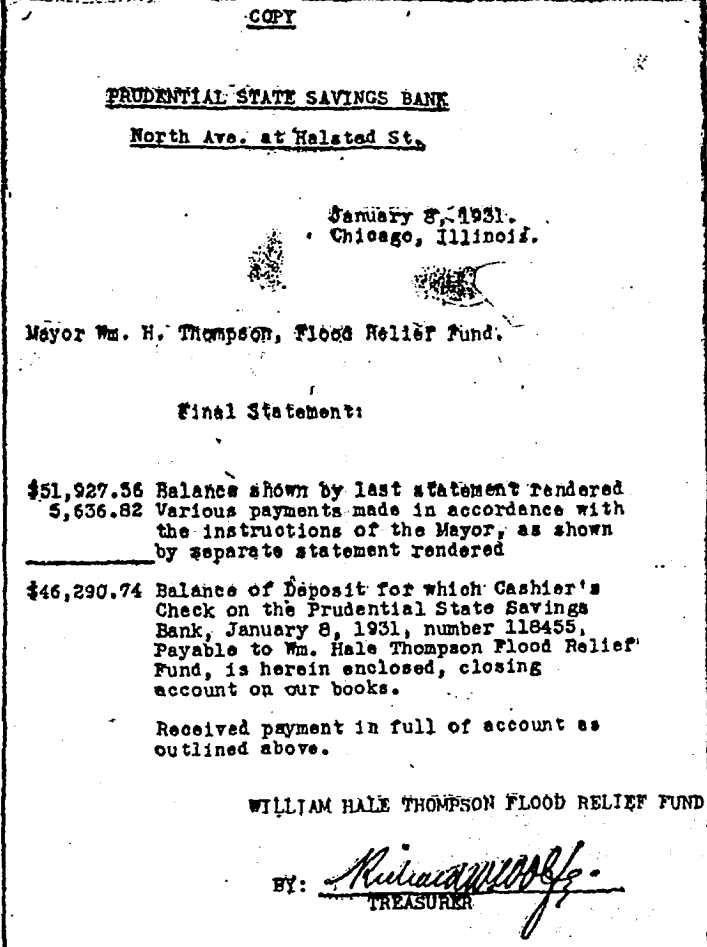
Flood Relief Fund Treasurer Fails to Explain



Facsimile of the \$46,290.74 cashier's check, made out to the order of the William Hale Thompson Flood Relief fund, through which the money in the fund was paid out of the Prudential State Savings bank on Jan. 8.



Reverse of the above facsimile check, showing the stamp that indicates it was paid on Jan. 10 to the Foreman-State National bank. There is nothing to indicate to what account the money was credited and the only indorsement is a typewritten one, "William Hale Thompson Flood Relief fund."



Receipt given by Commissioner of Public Works Richard W. Wolfe to the Prudential State Savings bank on Jan. 8, 1931, for the cashier's check covering the \$46,290.74 left in the flood relief fund. He signs as treasurer of the fund. Other documents show he was also treasurer of the Thompson waterway fund.

ment between Thompson and Davis." The records show, according to the complaint, that the last check drawn against the fund before the withdrawals from the Prudential bank was dated Jan. 31, 1929. This was near the time that Thompson virtually went into retirement, it is charged, and the fund lay dormant, according to the allegations, until the mayoralty campaign became active. The documents accompanying the complaint include the three large checks by which most of the fund in the Prudential bank was withdrawn. These were for \$26,831 on Dec. 18, \$25,095 on Dec. 23, and \$46,290 on Jan. 8. Another document attached to the bill is Wolfe's final statement of the account at the Prudential bank. One item of \$5,636 is explained in this statement as "various payments made in accordance with the instructions of the mayor, as shown by separate statement rendered." Counsel for the complainant, a Charles S. Smith, described as a contributor to the fund, announced that witnesses will be served with summonses today and that an effort will be made to get the witnesses before a master-in-chancery for the taking of depositions.