

SLOT METERS ARE HIGH GAS GRAFT

Council Inquiry Shows Greedy Methods.

EVIDENCE IS UNSHAKEN

Witnesses Tell of Their Many Grievances.

LOWER RATE, BIGGER BILLS

Taking of Testimony Against the Gas Company Is Concluded—Corporation Will Put in Its Defense Next Tuesday.

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY.
J. H. COURTNEY—Although he showed his financial standing, meter deposit of \$5 was exacted.
JOHN H. ADAMS—Lacking gas caused accident on Burnside street bridge.
HENRY MEYER—Although price of gas has been repeatedly reduced, his bills are higher, though no more gas is used.
ALFRED B. BLOOMER—Cost of running gas stove has doubled in seven years. When he cut off the use of his gas heater on account of the high price his bill showed an increase, although he used no gas for lighting.
H. C. WHITTIER—Controlled use of gas, but bills remained the same. Overcharge of 1500 feet in one month was discovered.
ALFRED B. BLOOMER—Bills have almost doubled in a year.
JOHN ANDERSEN—Refused to pay bill for water service. Meter was removed from his residence.
A. H. MORRILL—December bill shows large increase. Had to remove gas heater on account of bad odor.
GEORGE ESTES—Exposed the slot-machine or prepaid meter graft, showing how company received an excessive rate for the gas furnished.

The taking of testimony against the Portland Gas Company in the City Council's investigation into the methods of that corporation was concluded last night. Nine additional witnesses were called and a large amount of incriminating testimony, the strongest and most direct in many respects that has yet been brought out, was given by them.

Shortly after 9:30 o'clock Attorney H. E. McGinn announced that while there were a number of witnesses whose testimony had not been heard, he would be satisfied to submit the case as it stood. The legal representatives of the gas company did not take up their side of the case, as had been expected. Attorney J. N. Teal, leader of the Gas forces, pleaded fatigue after a hard day's grind, and a postponement was taken until Tuesday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock.

One More Session Planned.

One sitting will suffice, Mr. Teal stated, to examine such witnesses as the company will call, after which the work of gas experts and expert accountants will be taken up. It is generally believed that the date is not far distant when the case will be given into the hands of the Council committee for a verdict. Attorney J. N. Teal, leader of the Gas forces, pleaded fatigue after a hard day's grind, and a postponement was taken until Tuesday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock.

Graft Fully Explained.

He made it entirely plain that the people who use the prepaid meters are overcharged for no honest reason in the world, and that this system of graft nets the gas company several hundred dollars each month—even using their own figures as a basis for deduction.
Mr. Estes was the last witness on the stand. His statements were volunteered and he was not subjected to direct examination. He said he gained his knowledge of the prepaid meters through the use of them in the rooming and apartment-house conducted by Mrs. Estes at Second and Clay streets.
"What I've got to say is that the Portland Gas Company advertises its gas at \$1.25 per 1000 cubic feet, but the company does not sell it for that price. That figure is only true in part. There is a large class of patrons of the Portland Gas Company who pay \$1.50 for less than 1000 cubic feet of gas. I refer to those who use the prepaid meters. This is a machine whereby the consumer gets a quantity of gas by depositing a 25-cent piece in a meter.

Meters Are Guaged Short.

For their quarter the consumers are supposed to get about 150 cubic feet of gas. It is a fact, though, that half these meters are guaged at 160 and the other half at 165. So, you can see, they pay \$1.50 for even less than the 1000 feet that other consumers get for \$1.25. It is just the same thing as selling 12 ounces of butter to one customer for a period and giving another customer 15 ounces. It makes a difference to the gas company in this city of from \$500 to \$700 a month, if not more—and that's according to their

own figures of the number of slot meters in use.

"They say, though, that they don't encourage the use of these meters," continued Mr. Estes. "You might just as well say a grocer wouldn't encourage people to use second-hand sugar as that a railroad company wouldn't encourage people to use second-hand tickets."

Defense Pure Nonsense.

"The gas company also pleads that there is no danger of loss through slugs and counterfeits," added the witness. "That is absolute nonsense. Even if a washer or a bogus coin or slug is put into one of these slots the gas company does not lose a cent. No, the keeper of the house has to make good the amount. I say that if anything different from the rest, the slot meters ought to be cheaper. You have to pay in advance, so there's absolutely no danger of loss."

"I did not go to the gas company with my complaint, but brought it directly before this committee. To go to the gas company would be the same thing as going to a railroad company and complaining against the passenger rates in effect. As to this newly announced reduction to 55 cents I can't see that it will be effective unless it is made to include the slot or prepaid meters."

Favors Straight Meters.

"Do you not know that the company will put in straight meters and would prefer to do it?" asked Mr. Wood on cross-examination.

"No, sir. It is impracticable to put them in lodging or apartment-houses. As I understand your position, the bills among his tenants."

"You could have straight meters for each room," suggested Mr. Wood.

"That would not be feasible," said the witness. "It would mean a constant reading of meters as tenants moved in and out and the gas company would never do that."

"As I understand your position," said Mr. Wood in cross-examination, "you want your butter wrapped in gilt paper?"

"No," replied the witness; "I want 16 ounces of butter given to me for a pound."

Wood Makes No Headway.

"If I, as a householder," pursued Mr. Wood, "am taxed by the gas company on the straight meter system, while you, in your rooming-house, have the gas used by several families charged to the straight meter system also, I would consider that I had a kick against the gas company."

"Not at all," said Mr. Estes. "The gas company would not be responsible for the meter if it were as simple as the meter of the mill of main as possible. It is more profitable to the company to have a large number of consumers in one place, as the cost of connections is reduced to the minimum. A large number of meters in one house is favorable to the gas company."

"Well, I see no reason for prolonging this discussion," said Mr. Wood, and the examination of the witness ended.

Attendance Is Large.

There was no falling off in the matter of attendance last night. All the seats on the lower floor were occupied, the gallery was filled, and the examination of witnesses was proceeded with at once.

Five members of the committee were present: Messrs. Masters, Heston, Ketchum, Bennett, H. E. McGinn conducted the examination of witnesses for the committee. C. E. S. Wood and J. N. Teal were both present for the corporation. City Attorney McNary sat with the investigating committee but took no active part in the proceedings.

Forced to Make Meter Deposit.

J. H. Courtney, 77 North Third street, was called as the first witness. He had several causes of complaint against the gas company. This morning he was forced to make a \$5 deposit before the gas would be turned on in his place. Having been solicited to use gas, and having paid \$2 for lamps, he refused to submit to this imposition, and stated that he finally ordered the meter removed from his place.
Witness said also that he had great difficulty in getting his gas turned on. Although prompt service had been promised, he said a week elapsed before he was able to secure light. He told of a second and similar experience when he moved during the summer, being forced to wait several weeks before service was restored. For three months in the summer when he had no use for gas, he notified the company to this effect, and testified that he was charged 25 cents a month—proportionally for the rent of the meter, since he used little or no gas. No change in his testimony was brought out in the brief cross-examination by Mr. Teal.

Leaking Gas Caused Accident.

John H. Adams, brigadier at the Burnside bridge, was next called. Leaking gas had caused an accident on the bridge, according to his testimony, which severely burned him and might have resulted seriously.
"We have a switch on the bridge," said Mr. Adams, "and I was told to tap the light. There was a leak in the gascock, and a spark of electricity set off the leaking gas. It enveloped me in flames and burned my hands and face."

Price Reduced, Bills Higher.

Henry Meyer, 112 Grand avenue, was next called before the committee. In answer to questions by Judge McGinn, he said he had been a patron of the Portland Gas Company for a period of 21 years. His experience was that as reductions in price were made the size of his bills became larger. He had with him a comparative statement of his gas bills covering several years.
"There was a time," said he, "when I paid \$1.50 a thousand for gas. Then prices were reduced and higher bills. I find that where I used to be charged with from \$900 to \$600 cubic feet of gas I now have to pay for 800 to 900 feet."

"Is there any increase in the amount of gas used, so far as you know?" asked Mr. McGinn.

"Not that I know of. I have no additional lights," replied the witness.

"I have called the attention of the gas company to the high charges many times but have received no satisfaction. They

SENATE WARMS UP IN RATE DEBATE

Rayner's Speech Arouses Protests From Both Factions.

REVIEW PROVISIO THE CRUX

Foraker Denies He Is Railroad Senator, and Tillman Declares Hepburn Bill Not His Baby, but a Foundling.

WASHINGTON, March 14.—The railroad rate bill today reached the controversial stage in the Senate. The question came up in the regular order of business shortly before 2 o'clock and held the floor until the doors were closed for a brief executive session shortly after 5 o'clock. Rayner was the chief speaker of the day. Among the Senators who were named by him were Foraker, Lodge and Doolittle. Both the Ohio and Massachusetts Senators took exception to Rayner's contention that the railroads have interfered with the framing of the bill and Foraker also expressed himself as dissatisfied with the intimation that the railroads are represented on the floor of the Senate.

Avant With Such Support.

Doolittle expressed displeasure with the plea for amendments, and went so far as to say that the help of such friends as Rayner could never be dispensed with. Other Senators who participated in the debate were Aldrich, Tillman and Knox. Knox freely expressed his opinion that the bill would be unconstitutional without a provision of review. Tillman reiterated his objection to the bill and indulged in some characteristic phrases in stating his position, concluding with the remark that he believed that the bill could be so amended as to make it acceptable.

Rayner, in his speech, announced his adherence to the rate bill as it passed the House. After stating that the power to regulate commerce among the states is the greatest power conferred upon Congress by the Constitution, Rayner entered immediately upon the consideration of the various branches of his subject. He expressed the opinion that discrimination is the real issue, and continued:

Discrimination Among Localities.

If an accurate railroad discrimination map of the United States were published today there is hardly any one who could be made to believe that it truly represents the actual situation. We know, for instance, that the rate on certain lines of merchandise from Chicago to Denver is nearly three times as much as the rate on precisely the same line of merchandise from New York to San Francisco. We know that it costs less to ship goods the entire distance across the continent than it does to ship the same goods one-third the distance, and that when goods are destined from Boston to Salt Lake they are carried to California and back again to Salt Lake in order to obtain the cheap rate; and knowing these things we must realize that such a condition of affairs at least requires supervision upon the part of some tribunal outside of and beyond the railroads, that are simply building up their own territory to increase their own revenues and profits.

Admitting the difficulty of dealing with this subject because of the effect of water competition, Mr. Rayner said:

What we require is a little common sense upon this subject. We cannot pass a law

that will convert the towns and hamlets of Iowa immediately into great manufacturing centers, but what we can do is to take a broad view of the whole field and ascertain if we cannot endow a tribunal with adequate power, whenever cases occur where unnecessary discrimination is practiced, to apply a remedy without inflicting any injury upon the railroad.

Congress Has Ample Power.

Then he referred to what he declared to be the impotency of the Interstate Commerce Commission under the present law to enforce rate-making decrees, saying:

We may scheme and forge and fashion, but it is not within the realm of human ingenuity to furnish any plan except the rate-making power that will remedy the defect and supply the omission.

He contended that there is no doubt of the power of Congress to vest a commission with the power to establish rates, basing his conclusion upon decisions of the Supreme Court.

Referring to Foraker's contention that the holdings of the court are against this power, he declared the contrary to be true. Rayner replied seriatim to Foraker's points. He declared his satisfaction with the bill as it passed the House.

Reference was made to the claim that the enactment of the proposed legislation would demoralize the railroad system and the business interests of the country, and in that connection Rayner said he would admit that "it would be a great pity to destroy the equilibrium or destroy the proper balance of Vanderbilt, Morgan, Gould and Harriman."

Courts Will Protect Railroads.

On the question of a review of the findings of the commission by the courts, Rayner said he had reached the conclusion that the courts, with the power reposed in them, will give ample protection to the carriers in every case where the commission does not allow them just compensation and will not compel them to prove that a single rate is absolutely confiscatory. He said:

I am in favor of an amendment to the Hepburn bill vesting in the court the right to try the question of unjust compensation, with restraining orders absolutely and with the further right, if possible, to let the court fix the rate if it reverses the order of the commission. With these changes, I am in favor of the bill.

(Continued on Page 4.)



Senator Isidor Rayner.

PORTLAND LEADS IN GRAIN EXPORTS

All Puget Sound Ports Have to Combine to Surpass Her.

SECOND IN UNITED STATES

Greatest Wheat and Flour Shipping Port Year by Year—Value for Eight Months Is Nearly \$7,000,000.

| PORTLAND LEADING GRAIN PORT | |
|--|-------------------|
| Wheat exports in eight months ending February, 1906: | |
| Portland | 5,200,228 bushels |
| New York | 4,275,313 |
| San Francisco | 294,777 |
| Total United States | 9,770,318 |
| Flour exports in eight months ending February, 1906: | |
| Portland | 1,495,172 barrels |
| Puget Sound ports | 1,495,172 |
| Total | 2,990,344 |

OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, March 14.—The February statement of the Department of Commerce and Labor shows that Portland is exporting more wheat than any other port in the United States except New York, which is leading by a small margin, but what is more important, these official statistics demonstrate that, year in and year out, Portland is unquestionably the leading wheat port of the entire United States.

During the eight months ending with February, 1906, Portland exported 5,200,228 bushels of wheat as against only 1,451,203 bushels a year ago. New York during the past eight months has exported 4,275,313 bushels, but in that year Portland shipped 1,495,172 bushels, and in that year Portland shipped 1,495,172 bushels, and in that year Portland shipped 1,495,172 bushels.

Puget Sound Ports Combined.

From these same statistics it is found that the Puget Sound ports combined, which during the eight months ending with February, 1906, exported 2,990,344 bushels of wheat, have during the past eight months exported 4,275,313 bushels, their combined shipment being but 1,990,344 bushels ahead of Portland.

San Francisco, which a year ago exported 294,777 bushels, exported only 294,777 bushels in the last eight months.

The wheat export trade of the entire country experienced a great slump last year, but is recovering rapidly. During the past eight months the total wheat export was 9,770,318 bushels as against 4,936,022 bushels in the corresponding months a year ago. While Portland's increase has not been as great proportionately as that of the entire country, it is noticed that practically all the wheat exported a year ago left ports on the Pacific Coast, Portland in the lead, New York, which now heads the list, exported only 12,990 bushels last year and Galveston which

Wentley's Maximum temperature, 25 degrees; minimum, 20. Precipitation, none. TODAY'S—Fair, with slightly higher temperature. Northerly winds.

Foreign.

Germany gives up hope of settlement about the Balkan situation. Page 4.

New French Cabinet declares policy. Page 5.

Conspiracy at Russian court to restore despotism. Page 2.

German desperado captured after remarkable career. Page 1.

National.

Rate bill causes vigorous debate in Senate. Page 1.

Insurgents unwilling to go into statehood caucus. Page 4.

General Wood answers criticisms on slaughter of Moros. Page 5.

President speaks on need of consular reform. Page 4.

Oil inquiry at Kansas City completed. Page 2.

Domestic.

British steamer sinks off Atlantic Coast; gallant rescue of half her crew. Page 1.

Portland wheat-shipping port of Nation. Page 1.

Adverse decision causes rapid decline of California wheat. Page 1.

Grand jury wants to know if giving insurance money to politics is stealing. Page 4.

Hug to murder Dr. Parkhurst revealed. Page 1.

Fraud in New York traction merger under investigation. Page 1.

Sport.

Nelson has advantage of McGovern in unsatisfactory fight. Page 7.

Gardner and Foggenberg tied in billiard match. Page 7.

Pacific Coast.

Vincent St. John, released on habeas corpus, is immediately rearrested at Boise. Page 7.

Boy bandit at Walla Walla is sent to the penitentiary. Page 6.

Plan of joint debate proposed to candidates by Judge S. A. Lowell. Page 6.

Taroma schoolteacher is robbed as she sleeps. Page 7.

Children in settlement in Washington taught in foreign tongue. Page 8.

Commercial and Marine.

Advances in English wool market expected by trade. Page 15.

Eastern wheat markets bulled by reports of Russian wheat shortage. Page 15.

Heavy orders for rails placed in West. Page 15.

California hop market quiet. Page 15.

Dealings in stock are smallest in months. Page 15.

First office of British ship Eskalack frustrated attempt of sailors to desert. Page 14.

Bridge work causes trouble on Steel bridge. Page 14.

Portland and Vicinity.

Commercial Club to have 1000 members by end of month. Page 15.

Anti-Saloon League Superintendent Rader and Detective Kay bound over. Page 16.

Ministers hear prayer testimony in Police Court. Page 16.

Funerary of Colonel L. L. Hawkins held. Page 16.

O. R. N. to spend \$500,000 in improving road between Troutdale and Bonanza. Page 16.

Meat war breaks out between local commission men and packers. Page 12.

St. Johns declares for a double-deck bridge. Page 11.

United Railways claims 10 votes in Council for its Franchise franchise. Page 10.

President Levey of Portland & Seattle, sets view on bridge question. Page 10.

Anti-Ward Democrats held meeting tomorrow. Page 10.

Testimony for people in gas graft inquiry is concluded. Page 1.

PORTLAND LEADS THEM ALL.

The figures conclusively show that the wheat export trade on the Pacific Coast is more permanent than elsewhere, but San Francisco is dropping out, leaving the bulk of the business to Portland and Puget Sound, but Portland is well ahead of any other Coast port.

Portland is making rapid strides in the development of the flour trade. During the past eight months it exported 2,990,344 barrels of flour as against 1,495,172 barrels the year previous and against the combined export of 1,495,172 barrels from Puget Sound.

The Government figures show Portland's wheat export for the past eight months was valued at \$2,956,672, three times the value a year ago, while its flour trade represents \$3,023,988 against less than \$2,000,000 the year previous.

SENT BACK FOR CORRECTION

Senate Does Not Like Heyburn's Way of Drafting Bill.

OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, March 14.—The Senate does not like the way Senator Heyburn drafts his bills. After a brief discussion, the Senate today sent back to committee the Heyburn bill permitting railroads to transport livestock for periods of 30 consecutive hours instead of 24 hours, as now stipulated by law. Senator Lodge said the bill was poorly drafted and ought to be materially amended in a number of particulars. His opposition to the main purpose of the legislation save from Tillman. Western Senators appear to generally favor extension of the time of livestock shipments.

Northwest Postal Changes.

OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, March 14.—Postmasters appointed:

Oregon—Cayuse, Umatilla County, Martin Madison, vice James W. Flack, dead; Prosser, Jackson County, Martha Hallenbeck, vice S. S. Aiken, resigned.

Washington—Fort Casey, Island County, S. Lancaster, vice Allen Ward, resigned.

William B. Bleisoe has been appointed regular, David H. Funk, substitute rural carrier, route No. 1 at Monroe, Wash.

Commissionary Office at Seattle.

OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, March 14.—The War Department today ordered the establishment of a commissary purchasing agency at Seattle, to be in charge of Major Geary, now returning from the Philippines. This will probably result in giving Seattle and Tacoma dealers the call on food contracts Army posts on the Sound and in Alaska. The establishment of this office will not in any way interfere with the purchasing office at Portland.

CHASED OVER HOUSETOPS

GERMAN DESPERADO CAPTURED AFTER HOT PURSUIT.

Hennig, Marriage-Broker, Murderer and Swindler, Makes Butcher Rich by Rewards.

BERLIN, March 14.—Hennig, a marriage broker, whose swindling, murders and other acts of violence, and his bold escapes have given the Germans many thrills during the last few months, was captured at Berlin today after he had shot a policeman. The capture was made by a butcher, who will be made well to do, owing to the aggregate of the rewards offered for Hennig's capture.

Hennig is accused, among other crimes, of having deceived a bartender named Giernot to the forest of Grunewald, near Berlin, and there murdered him. Afterwards he is alleged to have impersonated Giernot and hypothecated his property. Hennig also is charged with having shot a Berlin policeman.

When arrested today, he was fleeing over housetops while being chased by the police and others, who were trying to capture him for attacking an aged and wealthy landowner, Baron Sitzw, in a railroad car. He shot the Baron six times, without killing him, and escaped from a moving train.

Wreck Plunges to Bottom.

Volunteers from the Mannheim, after a heroic battle with the waves, had taken off 11 men from the British King, but after the failure of the rescue, in consequence of the increasing gale and oncoming darkness, could make an attempt to reach the foundering freighter. Soon afterward the British King, which was taken water-logged and helpless, plunged to the bottom.

The British King sailed from New York last Wednesday, bound for Antwerp, with a miscellaneous cargo and 129 cattle. Previous to the appearance of the rescuing steamers, every small boat of the British King had been demolished, and there was no way in which the crew could leave the ship.

Fifty seamen, including a stowaway, were on board the British King, and of these, it is deemed almost certain, perished with their ship.

No Passengers on Board.

NEW YORK, March 14.—Sanderson & Son, the New York agents of the company which operates the steamer British King, said today that there were no passengers on board. The British King was "wrecked" at Newcastle in 1901. She registered 471 tons gross, and 292 tons net. Her dimensions were 46 feet long, 67 feet beam and 37 feet depth of hold. She was owned by the British Shipowners' Company (Limited) of Liverpool.

MANY CHEROKEES IN JAIL

Marshal Fears No General Uprising to Aid the Wickliffes.

VINITA, I. T., March 14.—Marshal Darrough arrived at Vinita this afternoon from Spavinaw and said that the reports of the trouble with the Cherokee Indians had been exaggerated. Mr. Darrough arrested 15 full-blood Indians on the charge of harboring and assisting the Wickliff boys. These Indians were brought to Vinita late today and will be lodged in the territorial jail. The Wickliffes had not been to Spavinaw when Mr. Darrough left.

The marshal said that, while most of the Indians are favorable to the Wickliffes, there is no danger of an uprising. A battle is expected before the desperadoes are captured. The 15 Indians arrested were taken without difficulty.

While at Spavinaw Mr. Darrough and his men ascertained the general direction taken by the Wickliffes and the officers will take the trail and stay on it until the men are arrested. Mr. Darrough will remain in Vinita and direct the general movements of the officers from here.

UTAH ROADS DEMORALIZED

Snow, Sand and Rain Delay Trains in All Directions.

SALT LAKE CITY, March 14.—Railway traffic both north and south from Salt Lake has been badly demoralized by the storm of the past three days. Trains from the north on the Oregon Short Line are 10 to 30 hours late. The train from Portland due at 7:40 last night did not arrive until this forenoon. Drifted sand along the Columbia River and snowdrifts near Weiser, Idaho, have caused most of the delay.

Trains from Los Angeles on the Salt Lake route are delayed by washes 30 miles south of Caliente, Nev. No trains have passed this point since Tuesday night.

HEROES SNATCH STORM'S VICTIMS

Gallant Rescues of Perishing Mariners From Sinking Ship.

HALF CREW GOES TO DEATH

Steamer British King Goes Down in Atlantic With 27 Men, Others Being Rescued—Lifeboats Dashed to Pieces.

BOSTON, March 14.—Suffering, mental and physical, and numerous acts of heroism in saving life rarely equaled in the record of tragedy of the sea, attended the loss of the Phoenix line steamer British King, which, on Sunday last, in a raging Atlantic storm, foundered about 120 miles south of Sable Island and carried to death 27 members of the crew.

Thirteen members were rescued from the sinking vessel by the Leyland liner Bostonian, bound from Manchester to Boston, and 11 by the tank steamer Mannheim, Rotterdam, for New York. Five others, who had been taken down in the vortex in which the British King was engulfed, were picked up by the Bostonian from a frail bit of wreckage which they had grasped after a desperate struggle for life in the whirlpool. The Bostonian arrived here this afternoon, and the details of the disaster became known.