



A SCENE FROM "THE BUTLER'S SECRET," A POLITICAL DRAMA COMING TO THE STEWARD NOV. 22.

PAVING PROJECTS AND OTHER CITY WORKS ARE COMPLAINED OF

(Continued from Page 1)

vide that the rock shall be crushed until it will pass through screens of certain sizes. It is plain that if the rock were caused to pass through Warren brothers' letters patent pro-

that prescribed by the Warren brothers' patent, there would be no conflict and the city of La Grande or any other private company could lay a pavement chemically identical with the pavement laid in La Grande, without in any way infringing upon Warren brothers' patent. But when the city authorities prescribe in their specifications a name patented by Warren brothers, no other company can bid without coming in conflict with that patent. For this reason the Warren Construction company always strive to make its first "deal" with a city so that the name "bitulthic" will appear in the specifications on which bids are called. This having been accomplished, competition is cut out, and that company names any price it sees fit—"Charge all the traffic will bear"—without let or hindrance.

A paving engineer from Salt Lake City recently told me that Warren brothers set aside, as an item of expense, forty cents a square yard for what they call "overhead expenses"—(underground expense)—that is, the expense of securing contracts. That they count on having to incur that much expense before anything whatever is done towards actually making pavement on the street. This information was given me by Mr. R. E. Caldwell, the well known Salt Lake engineer. I cannot vouch for its correctness, because I have not personally had any experience with this line of work. Bitulthic pavement is composed of rock and bitumen, of which about 90 per cent is stone and 10 per cent asphalt. The stone is found in abundant quantities adjoining the city of La Grande, and costs nothing but the getting out. It is probable that the river gravel now used costs in hauling and handling from 50 to 60 cents a cubic yard, and each cubic yard will lay 7 or 8 yards of pavement. The asphalt costs from \$17.50 to \$22.50 a ton and it simply has to be melted, mixed and laid. It is safe to say, that the material which makes up each yard of pavement does not cost to exceed 25 cents in La Grande. I am not prepared to say how much the labor going into each yard would cost, but probably not to exceed 25 cents per yard. Yet this is costing the people \$1.47 1/2 a yard, and all because the Warren Construction company has a cinch on all contracts; first because they succeeded in working into the specifications the word "bitulthic" and second, because our city council has insisted on letting separate contracts on small pieces of work, which prevents any outside company from bidding, because such outside company could not afford to bring a paving plant here for a few blocks of pavement. But when the city lets a contract to pave a street, it also lets a contract to the same people for putting in curbing for excavation and filling, and herein lies the worst abuse of the present system. A local contractor can't bid on the excavation because unable to bid on the paving.

Recently the city council, after one week's advertisement, let a contract to the Warren Construction company to grade and pave O avenue from First to Fourth. This required a couple thousand yards of earth to be excavated from the top of the hill and filled in at the bottom of the hill. The contract price for this was 80 cents for excavation and 70 cents for filling, making \$1.50 a cubic yard for moving this earth from 100 to 500 feet. A reasonable price would have been 35 cents per yard and 50 cents per yard would have been extravagant. Yet nobody else could bid under the specifications and the advertisement except the Warren Construction company.

much lower price than the Warren people are getting, and at the same time J. F. Hill & company of Chicago and Spokane, one of the largest and most responsible paving companies of America, had an agent here looking over the field with a view to bidding on our work, but the local company withdrew its bid and the J. F. Hill company refused to file one unless the city council would so change the specifications as to leave out the word "bitulthic". I have a letter from J. F. Hill in regard to this, in which he says that if the people of La Grande want this inferior pavement, he will put it in for less than \$1.25 a yard, if the city council will take the word bitulthic out of their specifications, so that they would not purchase the patent of Warren brothers by bidding. He says that he would put down a pavement containing "exactly the same mineral ingredients but the crushed rock entering into it is not so large by a quarter of an inch to a half inch." This would not infringe any patent, and the Hill company is laying it on crushed rock foundation in Golden-dale, Washington, at \$1.25 a square yard. Mind you this is not river gravel but crushed rock, which will coat on the street more than twice as much as the river gravel, and is substantially the same material as used by the Warren Construction company on Adams avenue. This is a fairly good pavement where traffic is light, but if for any reason the subway will become wet and soft, heavy traffic is likely to sink it into soft earth and it will become full of holes and low places. Undoubtedly the best pavement made has a concrete base, which hardens like rock, and no amount of traffic or heavy loads will bend or break it. A surface may then be put on of bitumen, mixed with powdered stone making the ideal pavement.

The city of Moscow, Idaho, recently let a contract to the Bird-Mendenhall Construction company of Salt Lake city to pave the principal streets of that town. This contract calls for a concrete base five inches thick, made of crushed rock and cement mixed dry, in proportion of one barrel of cement for each cubic yard of concrete. On top of this is a wearing surface, made of a bitumenous mixture, making the pavement 6 inches thick, of which the lower five inches is hard and compact as basalt itself, and all this for \$1.28 per square yard. Think of it, and then compare with what we got. But the contractor also agrees to put in curbing at 37 cents per running foot, the curbing to contain at least 1-4 barrels of cement for each cubic yard of concrete, an inch thicker than is being put down in La Grande, without any extra charge for curved lines. The contractors also agree to charge 37 cents per cubic yard for street excavations, and will place the earth removed from excavations anywhere on the street as directed by the street superintendent within 1600 feet of the excavations. Under this contract there is no extra charge for filling, but the street superintendent directs the fill to be made out of the same earth removed from the excavation, without any additional charge for a haul of 1600 feet—a quarter of a mile is 1320 feet. Compare this with what we are paying. Besides, in Moscow the contractors have to haul their rock 16 miles. These same contractors would be glad to duplicate these prices in La Grande, if they can have an opportunity, but our city council insists on having that patented word "bitulthic" in the specifications, which perpetrates upon us an inferior pavement at a fancy price, accompanied by other abuses always attending public contracts where there is no competition.

The Dolarway Paving company is now doing business in the principal cities of the United States. Ann Arbor, Michigan, was the first city to adopt this pavement. It consists of a bitumenous surface on a concrete base, but the bitumenous surface is not so thick as the sheet asphalt. The principal thoroughfares of Central Park in New York city are now being paved with Dolarway. This pavement is not patented and under favorable conditions costs about \$1.00 a yard. It would probably cost in La Grande about \$1.20 per yard. The Dolarway Paving company, with its

western office at 530 Central building, Seattle, would like to have the privilege of bidding on our work. There is no question but that this pavement would be vastly superior to the gravel bitulthic now being laid in La Grande, and like Burn's "Auld Brig" it would be a brig when the new fangled brig "is a shapeless cairn". Why would it not be to the public interest to open up this public work to honest competition? Why are we not entitled to get the best possible values for our public money? Why should it be incumbent upon our city government to compel our property owners to pay 50 per cent more to a favored company than the work is really worth? How long, O, how long will a suffering public stand the public abuse of the trust reposed in public officers?

Respectfully,
TURNER OLIVER

To Beautify Small Cities.

Baltimore, Md., Nov. 19.—The eighth annual convention of the American Civic association began here today with a good attendance of municipal officials and civic leaders from all parts of the country. President J. Horace McFarland called the gathering to order and will preside over the three days' session. The programme calls for an exhaustive discussion of city planning with special reference to the problems of the small cities and towns. Other matters that will receive attention are the billboard and smoke nuisances, markets and markets and market places and the extermination of the house fly.

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

- November 19.
- 1794—Jay's treaty between the United States and Great Britain signed.
- 1805—Ferdinand de Lesseps, builder of the Suez canal, born. Died Dec. 7, 1894.
- 1858—Statue of Franklin, first public statue in Rhode Island, unveiled in Providence.
- 1861—Gen. Halleck assumed command of the department of Missouri.
- 1863—Confederate forces under Gen. Longstreet assembled before Knoxville.
- 1871—Grand Duke Alexis, son of the Czar of Russia, arrived in New York.
- 1882—Standard time adopted throughout Canada.
- 1891—William J. Florence, famous actor, died in Philadelphia. Born in Albany, N. Y., July 26, 1831.

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International Field Trials. Ruthven, Ont., Nov. 19.—The annual field trials of the International Field Trial club gear on the club preserves near here today. Many prominent sportsmen from a distance were on hand with their high-class dogs, having been attracted by the rich stakes offered.

Fights Scheduled for Tonight. Frank Conley vs. Johnny Dundee, 20 rounds, at Vernon, Cal. Young Saylor vs. Andy Bezenah, 10 rounds, at Cincinnati. Harry Thomas vs. Jimmy Duffy, 12 rounds, at Cleveland. Joe Sherman vs. Harry Trendell, 8 rounds, at St. Louis.

ANNOUNCEMENT. I hereby announce myself as a candidate for the office of city recorder, and will deeply appreciate any assistance given me in the coming city election. LEE WARNICK.

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