MAY POSSIBLY AGREE

Burning Question of Oil Tanks Is Again Referred.

STORMY SESSION OF COMMITTEE

Matter That Has Been Perplexing City Council for Five Months Now in Hands of Representatives of Interested Parties.

As a means of settling the oil-tank question, temporarily at least, the select committee of the Council yesterday referred the entire matter to three men named by three of the interested parties, with instructions to reach or try to reach an agreement and report as soon as practicable. The chosen three are: Whitney L. Boise, representing the owners of a great deal of property affected by the extension of the tank system; Robert L. Darrow, representing the John Deere Plow Company, and George C. Flanders, special agent for and representative of the Standard Oil Company. They will endeavor to settle the question, which has been perplexing the minds of the Councilmen for the past five months, and to draw up an ordinance which they will submit to the select committee. The fourth party, the Pacific Insurance Union, did not wish representation.

This conclusion was arrived at by the committee after nearly three hours had been spent in speechmaking, during which some bitter references to the Standard Oil Company were made by the warehousemen and by the Standard Oil people to the Pacific Insurance Union, whose threat to raise rates in event of the passage of an ordinance extending the tank privilege had caused the furore. To all of which Councilmen Flegel, Sigler and Zimmerman listened attentively from 2 until 4:35 o'clock, when the temporary disposition was made.

When the meeting was called to order, Chairman Flegel explained the nature of the ordinances—the Rumelin ordinance limiting the storage of oil south of Killingsworth avenue on the East Side and the North Pacific Mill on the West Side, and the Bentley ordinance, granting the Standard Oil Company permission to erect a tank for the storage of fuel oil on the northwest quarter of East Salmon and East Water streets. The tank was to be surrounded by a retaining wall 28 feet in height above the law-water mark. Here Mr. Flanders interposed with two petitions. One was against any ordinance which would drive the Standard Oil Company from the city, and was signed by 28 property-owners, among them the Ladd Estate, Allen & Lewis, Mason, Ehrmann & Co., and Wadhams & Co., on the West Side, and the Standard Box Factory and the Troy Laundry Company, which is in the fire district, on the East Side. The second was signed by 10 consumers of fuel oil, among them four steamboat companies. These companies were: the Columbia River & Northern Railway Company for the Regulator line of steamers; the Willamette & Columbia River Towing Company, the Vancouver Transportation Company, and the Columbia River & Puget Sound Navigation Company.

Warehousemen Might Move.

"These petitioners," said Mr. Flanders, "own $30,000,000 worth of property and one mile along the river front. Our plant does not disturb them in the least. Nor did it disturb the only occupant of neighboring land, when we purchased the grounds upon which our buildings stand 19 years ago. That occupant was Mr. Hogue, who owned the sawmill, and when I spoke to him about the tanks he said he considered his plant more dangerous than mine. We heard no complaints until this one came from the warehousemen, who have been settled in the neighborhood about seven years. They ask us to vacate our place and move down the river. That is impossible. The only location we can get is two miles below St. Johns, on the East Side, and Linnton on the West Side. If we should move our retailers could never afford to make such a long trip for their supplies. We have about 200 deliveries a day, and if each retailer should have to go to the sites I mentioned it would mean a loss of $4 a day to him. Now, I would suggest that the warehousemen move out of the city. It would not injure them. They have no city deliveries to make, for all their farming implements are sold to the farmers of the Willamette and Columbia River valleys and Eastern Oregon."

Mr. Flanders read a letter from William M. Ladd, executor of the Ladd estate, in which he stated that during his recent visit to New York, he had had a conversation with Charles M. Pratt, a member of the executive board of the Standard Oil Company. Mr. Ladd had stated that he intended to improve the property of the estate just across from the company's tanks, and asked if there was any danger of a fire or an explosion. In answer Mr. Pratt said that never in the history of the company had there been an explosion in a plant such as the one located in Portland. The danger was in the refineries, which were a source of anxiety to the company, as well as to the property-owners.

"Is'nt it a fact that Mr. Pratt is a brother-in-law of Mr. Ladd?" asked Mr. Hislop.

"I think he is," said W. D. Fenton, attorney for the Standard Oil Company.

"And he is also banker for the Standard Oil Company?"

Mr. Fenton knew nothing about that, and Mr. Flanders did not answer the question.

No one had any further interrogations to make, and so Chairman Flegel gave the result of the private investigations of himself and his fellow-committeemen. Mr. Flegel had called on the surveyor of the Pacific Insurance Union and had asked what effect the proximity of the Standard Oil tanks to the warehouses had in relation to the rates of insurance, and whether the same buildings differently situated and having the same fire protection and the same exposures would receive a less rate. He was told that the same rating would apply to the buildings in any portion of the city.

Quote Insurance Rates.

"I learned," said Flegel," that the Studebaker Company was taxed $2 50 per hundred and an exposure of 50 cents on account of the Acme Harvesting Company; the Buffalo Pitts Company, $2 50 and an exposure charge of 25 cents; the Troy Laundry Company, $3 50; the John Deere Plow Company, $2 50 and 50 cents for exposure to Russell & Co.; Russell & Co., $2 50 and 50 cents exposure for the John Deere Company; the Acme Harvesting Company, $2 50 and 50 cents exposure for Studebaker Bros. In none of these cases was the Standard Oil Company or its tanks named as an exposure of the property insured, so we might as well eliminate the insurance feature from the question, excepting so far as it relates to the extension of the tank system provided for by these ordinances."

"The insurance feature is a very important one," said E. M. Brannick, of the Studebaker Company, and the spokesman of the remonstrants. "Our rates have been raised from 25 to 40 per cent since the fire of last Summer. We formerly paid 2 per cent and now we have to pay 2½ per cent, and since the first of the year, $15,000 of our insurance has been cancelled by the companies, who do not wish to assume such risks."

"The explosion on the steamship Progresso in San Francisco harbor showed that fuel oil will explode, and we may have the same trouble here. Of the theory that fuel oil is nonexplosive, you have an example in the Tucson accident. Two engines came together with tanks loaded with oil. There was a collision, a flash and a flame, and 35 people were burned to death in a trap, as it were.

"Despite these explosions, the Standard Oil people will tell you that fuel oil does not burn. When they tell you that, they tell you what is not true, and they are liars at heart. The whole object of the Standard Oil Company is to defeat the rights of others and look out for itself. Its history has been just one grand game of grab, and it has and is now grabbing all the oil fields in Louisiana and Texas. The passage of the ordinance granting the extension would be disastrous to us, and to Portland as a distributing point. No one would care to come here and locate, when they heard of the high insurance rates."

"The matter is serious," said Mr. Boise, "but," to R. M. Kelley, the local inspector of the Pacific Insurance Union, "how do you account for the scale of rates which Mr. Flegel just read?"

"Is it so," interjected Mr. Flegel, "that a building in the district so exposed would not have to pay a higher rate in another locality?"

Mr. Kelley nodded assent. In arranging a schedule for a city physical hazards were considered, and dangerous plants such as oil tanks, sawmills and foundries were taken into consideration. Upon this the city rate was based. All Portland had to pay for the mills and factories and the Standard Oil tanks. The Bentley ordinance would not only affect the river front, but the entire city."

"How about our fireboat?" asked Mr. Fenton, with a tinge of sarcasm. We were told that we would get a reduction of rates if we built one."

"The boat would result in a reduction of rates in the city," said Kelley, "but I do not know what purpose it would serve in event of an oil conflagration. If the oil should run into the river the boat would be burned. If you should fill the streets in the so-called oil district to the level, however, you would reduce the hazard from 25 to 50 per cent."

Committee Is Suggested.

Mr. Boise viewed the situation from all sides. After stating the interests at stake, he suggested that the committee appoint three men of the interested parties to make an investigation, draft an ordinance and present a report.

The suggestion received the approval of the committee. As for the filling of streets, Mr. Boise said that steps had already been taken by many of the property-owners in that direction. Of the retaining wall, Mr. Flegel said there was little danger of an overflow of oil. The City Engineer had furnished figures showing that the grade of East Water street was 32 feet above the level of the river. The Willamette had gone above 30 feet only once in 14 years. A retaining wall of earth, brick or stone, 32 feet in height and 30 feet in width, could be built around the tanks.

Mr. Hislop said he had an offer of $5500 for a quarter of a block in the district, but the sale would not be made if the ordinance were passed. The ordinance, he said, would depreciate the value of 106 blocks to the extent of $2500 a block.

"The oil company," said Mr. Brannick, "is simply resorting to the methods it employs in all cities. It locates its plant, and in seaport towns it brings its steamers right to the wharves. How do we know but that it will do this in Portland? We may have a tank steamer here, and it may meet the fate of the Progresso, and oil may be spread on the river and shipping endangered. My friend, Mr. Fenton, a very convincing lawyer, will soon tell you of the beneficial side of it. He will tell you of the endowment of churches and the establishment of libraries by Mr. Rockefeller, but he will say nothing about the advance of one-half cent in oil that generally follows these contributions."

The Oil Company's Side.

"I shall say nothing about those matters," said Mr. Fenton, with a smile. "I shall speak only about the troubles of the company. I am perfectly willing to agree with Mr. Boise's proposition. We do not wish to be driven out of town. When the motion to drive us out, was first made, we sought another locality, and although we were willing to spend $100,000 on improvements, the people protested against us. In our present location, we are willing to fill streets, erect a retaining wall, and spend $30,000 or $40,000, if necessary, in order to eliminate all risk. As for the insurance people they are not in the business for their health. Eliminate all risks and their premiums will be velvet to them. They are as much of a monopoly as the Standard Oil Company and others. They rate a town according to the manufacturing plants, and then they demand protection from fire. They asked a fireboat, and told us that if we did not build one they would cancel all river-front policies. But they have not done it. They talk about raising rates in the oil district. What do they pay in the district? The highest is $3 per $100. As agent for property on Fourth and Salmon streets, a wooden building with a stone basement, I pay $4 50 per $100, and the building is only a short distance from the houses of six of the principal fire companies of the city. In Seattle, the company's tanks are in the heart of the city, and no complaint is made of them.

"If we are driven out of the city, Portland will lose a great deal of business. It now has 70 per cent of the oil business of the Northwest, and this means a local payroll of about $12,000 a month. Drive the company out and the roll will drop to $3500, for all the business will be handled from Seattle as far east as The Dalles. The railroad companies will soon want to use fuel oil. The Southern Pacific is now using it as far north as Dunsmuir, and the O. R. & N. may prefer it to coal and wood. The Tucson accident may stand as a barrier, but I hardly think it will. If they should decide to use oil, they will undoubtedly ask for permission to erect tanks in the terminal grounds, a piece of the most valuable property in the city. They certainly would not wish to erect tanks there if they feared any danger from the oil."

Mr. Fenton's remarks ended the speechmaking, and the Boise motion was carried tacitly, and the only difficulty was in the selection of a committee. Mr. Brannick declined on the ground of prejudice, and Mr. Kelley because the consent of his superiors in the insurance union was required. Mr. Boise also declined, but finally he accepted as the representative of affected property interests. Owen Scott, manager of the Moline-Bame Company, also declined, but he was finally induced to reconsider and accept the honor. Robert L. Darrow, of the John Deere Plow Company, was the third member on the side of the warehousemen and property-owners, and George C. Flanders was appointed as the representative of the Standard Oil Company.

"We wish you would agree upon some sort of an ordinance," was the charge of Chairman Flegel. "If you cannot agree we shall have to take the matter up and act upon it in the Council."

The four promised to do what they could, and then they and a delegation of about 30 deserted the committee-room.

TO SEE HOW OTHERS DO IT.

City Councilmen Will Visit Puget Sound to Inspect Pavement.

The members of the Council, the City Auditor and the City Engineer will leave next Thursday for Seattle and Tacoma, where they will inspect the pavements now being laid in those cities. The style of pavement which they desire to examine particularly is the macadam-asphalt, which is said to have been tested and to have given good satisfaction in Tacoma especially. This pavement is composed of macadam and asphalt, and is reported to have all the good qualities of macadam without the dust, and the durability of asphalt. In Seattle there are several styles of pavement that the Councilmen have heard of and wish to examine.

BRIDGE AND FERRY

Multnomah Delegation Considers Both Projects.

CITIZENS GIVE THEIR VIEWS

Advocates of New Morrison-Street Bridge Are Confident of Favorable Concessions From Street-Car Companies.

The Multnomah delegation, or rather four members of it, had a heart to heart talk last night with citizens of East Portland, Sellwood and South Portland. The citizens expended their eloquence and persuasive powers to induce the lawmakers to authorize a new bridge at Morrison street across the Willamette and a ferry at Sellwood. The solons took the matter under consideration and will be further advised by committees of citizens who will visit them at Salem this week.

Chairman Hodson of the delegation had advertised an open meeting of the delegation and citizens, but the solons were so weary of lawmaking and the stress of a week of work that only four of them put in an appearance. They were Chairman C. W. Hodson, J. S. Hutchinson, G. M. Orton and John Gill. The other members of the delegation came home from Salem yesterday and when the meeting was mentioned to them on the journey home several of them sniffed and declared they were going to "let loose" for one evening in the week.

"I'm going to take a bath," said one of them.

"I'm going to see my babies," exclaimed another.

"I'm in for a good sound sleep," declared a third.

"And a good feed for once in the week," added a fourth.

A committee of East Side citizens was on hand last night at the City Hall, the appointed place of meeting, to inform the delegation what progress it had made with the City and Suburban Railway toward negotiating for the franchise now held by the company over the bridge. This committee had been named by Chairman Hodson the week before. It consisted of W. L. Boise, W. D. Fenton and E. M. Brannick. They said that they had not yet received a final statement of terms from the company but that they hoped to do so this week, and to appear before the delegation at Salem before next Saturday.

The committee announced that the new bridge would be self-sustaining and that it would not cost the taxpayers of the city one cent to build or maintain. They announced that the City and Suburban Railway Company had practically agreed to pay $6000 a year for the use of the bridge, and that they had good reason to expect that the company would pay more. It now pays $1800 per year. The committee said further that the annual cost of repairs to the present bridge was $8000. The cost of repairs to the new bridge would not be over $1500 per year at most. Therefore, the new bridge would save and earn $10,700 per year more than does the present structure. The two other street-car companies would pay not less than $6000 per year for the privilege of using the new bridge. Hence, the new bridge would bring in a revenue of $10,200 more than does the present structure, and the diminished cost of repairs would increase this gain to say $16,700 per year. The city would have to pay about $16,000 interest on $400,000 bonds to rebuild the bridge. Therefore, the new bridge would save and bring in enough revenue to free the city from any burden. The intimation was given out that the car companies would pay enough for franchises to meet all interest and repair charges.

Committees were present from the South Portland Improvement Association and the Sellwood Board of Trade to urge the need of a free ferry at Sellwood. South Portland was represented by W. T. Burney, J. H. Middleton, Joseph Webber and others. Spokesmen for Sellwood were C. E. Curtis, A. N. Wills, J. M. Nickum and T. C. Bell. The speakers said that the ferry was necessary to the convenience of the citizens of the southern part of the city, and that it would increase the trade of the city by bringing in business that now drifts toward Oregon City.

"This ferry has been promised to us," said Mr. Burney, "three successive elections. Each time the project has been killed. We feel that the ferry is due us, and that we should have it, as a matter of right."

"We ask you," remarked T. C. Bell, "not to deceive us in this as your predecessors have done."

Chairman Hodson asked whether the cost of maintaining the ferry would amount to $500 a month.

"Oh, no," broke in a chorus of voices.

"Well," replied Mr. Hodson, "let's figure it out."

Captain W. H. Foster was summoned to give testimony. Captain Foster ran the Albina ferry for 15 years up to last October. He said the wages of a crew would be: Captain, $100 per month; engineer, $80; fireman, $75; deck hand, $60. This number of men was required by Federal law.

"That makes $630 a month for men," announced Mr. Hodson. "Two crews will be required on account of the eight-hour law which will probably pass the Legislature. Add to this $150 per month for interest on $30,000—"

"And $65 a month for fuel and oil," put in Captain Foster.

"And the ferry," resumed Mr. Hodson, "will cost $1000 a month to operate."

This put a gloom over the assembly. Finally it was decided to calculate closely the probable cost of operating the ferry and to report to the delegation at the capital this week.

PICTURES OF OREGON.

Photographs Which Immigration Agents Will Exhibit Here.

The first exhibition before a commercial body of the 270 views of scenes in Oregon, Eastern Washington and Idaho, which the O. R. & N. Co. has had taken for the Harriman Immigration Bureau, was given at the Commercial Club last night, before a large number of members and friends from out of town. While the stereopticon was being operated, General Passenger Agent Craig, of the O. R. & N. Co., briefly explained each picture presented, and spoke of the portion of the state to which it bore reference. His remarks were as interesting as the pictures were instructive of the resources of the Northwest, and the applause was frequent.

The 270 views compose one of seven sets which will be placed in the hands of seven immigration agents, whose duty will be to display them in every town and farming community in the Middle Western States, from which the Northwest has of late drawn a large number of desirable settlers. The agents will give free exhibitions in halls and schoolhouses, and they will also give such other information as may be necessary. The views, which are from actual photographs taken at the instance of the O. R. & N. Co., are very interesting. They picture the fruit, wheat, hop and stockraising and dairying industries, and are thoroughly representative of Oregon, Eastern Washington and Idaho. To vary the monotony, Columbia River and mountain scenery is interspersed, and then come views showing the beneficial effects of irrigation—the change from an area of sagebrush to acres of fruit orchards.

Two of the most interesting views are those of Portland in 1854, and Portland in 1903. The few buildings of the early days are clearly shown, and first of them is the pioneer Oregonian building, with a large sign denoting that it was the home of a newspaper. The second shows Portland as it now is, with its numerous handsome structures, costly Government buildings, churches and school-houses. All in all, the views are a revelation of the resources and growth of Portland and the Northwest, and they will undoubtedly have a wonderful effect upon immigration from the Mississippi Valley States.

TIME TO CALL A HALT.

Judge Northup Argues Against Bonds for New Bridge.

PORTLAND, Jan. 31.—(To the Editor.)—Will you permit a word in regard to the proposed authorization of an issue of the bonds of the City of Portland, to the amount of $400,000, for the construction of a new bridge at Morrison street?

It seems to me that the Legislative Assembly will do well to pause before authorizing such an issue. Glance for a moment at the present indebtedness of the city, leaving out of consideration the water bonds, amounting to over $3,000,000, and carrying an annual interest charge of over $150,000.

City of Portland bonds	$ 486,500
Albina bonds assumed by city	150,000
East Portland bonds (not including water) assumed	50,000
City Hall bonds	675,000
Ferry bonds	50,000
Bridge bonds	700,000
Total	$2,111,500

This indebtedness carries with it an annual interest charge of over $110,000.

And mark this: All of this indebtedness save only $56,500, was contracted within the last 15 years. To what are we coming?

In addition, the county is in debt over $500,000, which bears an annual interest charge of over $30,000. And now it is proposed to add another $400,000 for another bridge! Is not the tax levy of 36 mills high enough? Must more indebtedness be created to make it still higher?

Let us pause, before creating this additional charge. Let us be wise and keep down the public indebtedness, for the time of payment will come. If it is now burdensome to pay the interest, how much more burdensome will it be when the principal too must be met?

In conclusion, if it is no longer prudent to use the Morrison-street bridge on account of its age, if it is not safe, then let it be rebuilt, as was the Madison-street bridge at a small cost.

Ah, but it is said we must have a grand bridge at Morrison street; one that is finer and better (and of course, more expensive) than the Burnside-street bridge. No, gentlemen, no! The Burnside bridge is not beginning to do the work that it can do. Use what we have, to the full capacity before requiring this large additional outlay.

Pause, gentlemen, pause! A day of reckoning and payment is coming.

H. H. NORTHRUP.

GOVERNMENT'S AID ASKED

Without It There Is Little Hope for the Drunkard.

TILLAMOOK, Or., Jan. 27.—(To the Editor.)—Happening to be looking over The Oregonian of the 9th inst. I noticed your editorial "The Drunkard's Wife." Passing over it to near the close in speaking of Mrs. Nation you say: "She seems incapable of any assault on the drink problem except at the wrong end. Prevention by training in the young lives is the only thing. There is little hope in picking up the ruins after the mischief is done. It is well enough to gather the dead and the treasures that come ashore after the storm, but it is a wiser philanthropy to put chart and compass, helm and anchor aboard the ship when the sailor leaves the happy port of youth."

Are you not a little unfortunate in your figures of a ship as applied to this question? Carrying out the illustration a little further you should have said: "Lighthouses all along the dangerous coasts, rocks blasted out of channels, and all other obstacles to safe navigation cleared away by the Government." Now, is this done for the youth of the land? Are not rocks cast in their way—maelstroms established indirectly by state and Nation—false lights permitted by municipal authority? Are not the state and Nation reaping the hard-earned wages of the drunkard and thus causing the sad plight of the drunkard's wife you describe? Next time, Mr. Editor, please do not stop at just the most interesting point. Carry out your own logic to the finish.

N. H. CULVER.
A Veteran of '61 to '65.

A PORTLAND HUSTLER

Has Returned From Chicago, Where He Made Large Purchases.

Paul Strain, proprietor of the Strain Tailoring Company and "The Hub," has just returned from a trip to Chicago where he made arrangements to handle in his Portland stores the uncalled-for stock of the Royal Tailors, Lamm & Co. and the Dixie Tailoring Company. It is Mr. Strain's intention to enlarge the premises now occupied on Washington street. While absent Mr. Strain did missionary work for the Lewis and Clark Fair, but was rather surprised to find how little the general public knew of Portland or the State of Oregon. He believes that the Fair will prove the best possible means for advertising the great Northwest and advises every citizen to put his shoulder to the wheel and whoop up the big show.

Transport Sails for Manila.

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 31.—The transport Thomas sailed today for the Philippines, with more than 1000 passengers. She carried 349 marines, four companies of coast artillery and three batteries of field artillery, in addition to a large number of cabin passengers, made up of officers, their wives and families and civilians in the employ of the Government.

Roman Catholic.

St. Mary's Cathedral, corner Fifteenth and Davis streets, Achbishop Christie, pastor. Morning services, low mass at 6, 8, 9 o'clock; solemn high mass with sermon at 10:30; Sunday school at 9:30; evening services, solemn vespers, benediction and sermon at 7:30.

NEW PLUMBING CLASS.

City Inspector Thomas E. Hulme to Be the Teacher.

Arrangements have just been completed with Thomas E. Hulme, City Plumbing Inspector, to take charge of the plumbing class in the Y. M. C. A. night school. For the benefit of those who wish to begin this work now, the term will be extended to June 1, and a fee of $4 will be charged for the four months. The class meets Wednesday and Saturday nights, and the theory of plumbing as well as practical work will be taught.

Killed by His Wife.

HAZLETON, Pa., Jan. 31.—Adam Reichert, aged 50 years, died today as a result of bullet wounds inflicted late last night by his wife during a quarrel. Mrs. Reichert is under arrest.