

HUMBUG IN THE HOUSE

Foolish Attack on Rapid Transit Franchise.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. BALLENTYNE

He Shows That Tramway Statesmen Don't Know What They Are Talking About.

C. G. Ballentyne, superintendent of the Rapid Transit Company, was interviewed last night about the attack in the Legislature on the franchise of his road.

"In regard to the charges made by certain members of the Legislature," said he, "it is very evident that they are not so much in opposition to the Rapid Transit Company as they are inclined, if possible, to influence the Legislature in favor of the Tramways Company."

"To any observant person the object in view is very clear indeed. This is not a matter which concerns the Legislature, as that body has absolutely nothing to do with the method of construction adopted by the Rapid Transit Company, such responsibility resting entirely with the Superintendent of Public Works."

"As to voiding, or causing a forfeiture of our franchise by legislative action, this is the veriest bosh, and is quite in keeping with many other efforts made during the present session. The franchise of the Rapid Transit Company is a vested interest and constitutes a contract between the Government and the company, which the Legislature has no more right to violate than it would have to violate any other contract."

"To make the matter plain to the public, I will outline the situation, showing that our franchise does not, as some legislators ignorantly stated, expire in July, and that we have not, by any action, forfeited our rights or broken the contract."

"The franchise of the Rapid Transit Company was approved on the 7th of July, 1898, construction to begin within one year. Construction actually did begin on July 6, 1899. We were required under the franchise to have ten miles constructed and in operation within two years from the date of commencement, and ten miles additional constructed and in operation by July 6, 1901, at which time any streets specified in the franchise and not then occupied, are to be forfeited by us, but there will be no forfeiture previous to the 6th day of July, 1901."

"The franchise required that we should deposit a bond with the Superintendent of Public Works in the sum of \$5,000, which may be forfeited in case the ten miles shall not have been completed by July 6, 1901, but should we be prevented from completing either the first ten miles or the second ten miles by reason of injunctions, or suits, or other causes within the control of the Government, the time during which we are delayed in our construction by such cause or causes, shall not operate against us."

"It will be remembered that in September, 1899, a proclamation was published by the President of the United States, invalidating all land sales made by the Government and all franchises granted by the Government between the date of the signing of the joint resolution annexing the Islands, on the 7th day of July, 1898, and the date of the approval of our franchise by the President of the Republic of Hawaii, and the date of the transfer of the sovereignty of the Islands, the 12th day of August, 1898."

"This proclamation was based upon an opinion of the Attorney General of the United States, and while it did not invalidate our franchise it cast a cloud upon it, which made it inoperative until approved by the President of the United States, on the 25th day of June, 1900, under authority granted by the Organic Act, wherein all the land sales and franchises granted between those dates were confirmed, subject to the approval of the President."

"The effect of the proclamation was that we were deprived of the advantages of our franchise from September, 1899, to June, 1900, a period of nine months, during which nine months the time limit of two years from the date of commencement of construction will not operate against us, so that the time for the completion and the operation of the first ten miles will be extended from July of the present year to April, 1902."

"Even had we not been deprived of the use of our franchise during the period of nine months, there would be no forfeiture until July of 1905."

"In regard to the construction of our track on Liliha street, it must not be forgotten that before we begin construction on any street, we must apply for and obtain the established grade on such street and in construction we must conform to the grade given us by the grade commissioners. Owing to the very extensive changes in the grade of this street made by the grade commis-

sion, we were compelled in some places to excavate as deep as seven feet and in others to fill in as high as five feet, and owing to these requirements it was a physical impossibility to construct the road on Liliha street without occupying more than one block at a time, as it is impossible now for the Department of Public Works to bring the street surface to the grade given us by the commission without occupying more than one block at a time.

"While there was considerable interruption in traffic during the construction of our tracks, it must not be forgotten that this was not so much due to any neglect on our part to keep the street open as it was due to the unfavorable condition of the weather during that construction, as it rained almost daily from the time of beginning until we had gotten as far up as Kuaikini street. In fact, at times the weather was so bad that construction had to be abandoned entirely.

"As to Hotel street, the cause of the interruption of traffic there is not so much on account of our construction as it is the narrowness of the street, which renders it impossible for us to use the street while the excavation is being made and at the same time keep it open for traffic; as all surplus earth is being removed as rapidly as possible to remove it, and as the ties and rails are being laid and the necessary ballasting and macadamizing being done with all possible dispatch, the public will not be deprived of the use of the street, or such portion of it as we are working upon, longer than is absolutely necessary."

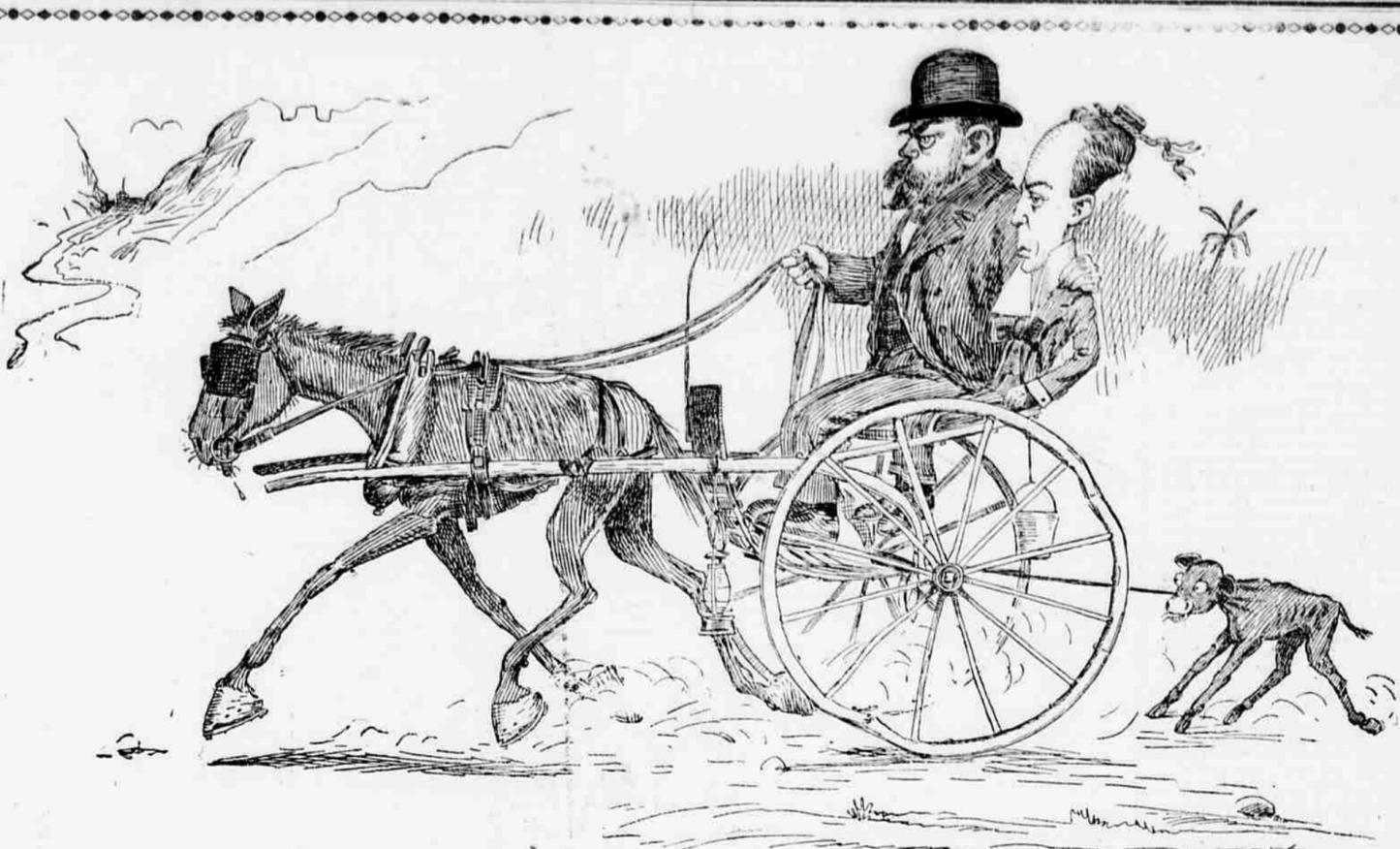
"We can quite appreciate that the public, not being very familiar with the class of construction, may believe that there is more of the street kept unopened than is necessary, but an investigation will show any reasonable and observant person that this is not so and that we are doing the best we can to accommodate the traffic and to carry on the work at the same time.

"For the general information of the public, I give an outline of the procedure of track construction.

"First comes the excavation to the requisite depth, and where there is no change of grade, to nineteen inches, upon the bottom of which excavation rock ballast is placed and rolled by the steam roller to the depth of six inches; upon this is placed the ties, six inches in depth, and upon the top of these again the rails, seven inches in depth. The ties are then tamped with small stone and brought to a perfectly even surface and the rails lined up. Then between the ties and up to the top of the rail, broken stone is again placed in, thoroughly well tamped, and surface with smaller stone, as soon as the excavators finish work in one block, the trench is taken possession of by the track-layers, and the excavators move on to the next block, followed by the track-layers as soon as they have completed their work.

"In this method of procedure, while it is true that more than one block is under process of construction at the same time, it is to the interest of the public that his should be done, as the work is completed much more rapidly than it would be if it were confined to one block only, and consequently the people are not so long deprived of the use of the street.

"From this explanation I hope the public will understand that we are trying to accommodate it as much as we can, and that we have considered the question carefully and have adopted the method that will least inconvenience the people, in our judgment."



WILL GO OVER THE PALI TOGETHER.

DR. WOOD, IN AN OPEN LETTER, CALLS DR. ALVAREZ TO TIME

Alvarez Says There Was No Bubonic Plague in Hawaii Last Year and is Asked Some Very Pertinent Questions.

DR. L. F. ALVAREZ having issued a signed statement that the epidemic of 1900 was not bubonic plague, Dr. C. B. Wood, President of the Board of Health during plague times, responds in the following open letter:

AN OPEN LETTER TO DR. L. F. ALVAREZ.

Dr. L. F. Alvarez: Dear Sir—You state in an article appearing over your signature in the Republican, of April 11th, that "we have never had plague here" (in Honolulu).

Because of the publicity of this statement and some others, equally bald, which you have permitted yourself to make—rather than because your opinion is of any weight upon this particular subject—I have taken the liberty of addressing you in a public manner.

Of course, Doctor, you will admit that as you took no trouble to inform yourself of the nature of the sickness of last year during the time of its prevalence, your opinion upon the matter is of very little importance among physicians, as you are not in a position to discuss intelligently an illness of which you did not see and examine a single case, although the epidemic lasted three months; and for the further reasons that you were present at only one post-mortem examination, and that one on the 25th of March, at the very end of the epidemic, and by special invitation of the president of the Board of Health, and that during the post-mortem at which you were present, together with fifteen or sixteen other physicians, and at which discussion was free, you never expressed the slightest doubt as to the nature of the sickness from which the patient had died. Further, you never, as far as any one knows, made a single microscopic slide, or a culture, or inoculated a single animal during the prevalence of the sickness, although material was abundant, and you could have had it for the asking.

As this letter is written in a friendly spirit, I hope you will not take offense if I recall to your apparently somewhat feeble memory a statement which you made to Dr. Raymond last year in answer to a question of his. Perhaps by thinking hard, Doctor, you will remember that Dr. Raymond asked you why you did not get some material from the Board of Health, or go into the board's laboratory and make your own experiments, carry on your own cultures, and satisfy yourself as to the nature of the illness about which you

seemed to have some doubt, and that you in reply stated that you had a family depending upon you and did not care to handle such dangerous material as that which was causing the deaths in Honolulu at that time, and in explanation of your wholesome fear of such intimate association with the dangerous material, mentioned to Dr. Raymond the death of Dr. Postana, who became infected by the plague because of his temerity in doing that which you preferred to leave to others with more courage, or less discretion. Are you not just a little ashamed of expressing or having an opinion in the matter at all, Doctor, under the circumstances?

For reasons which are sufficiently evident from what has been stated above, it is not worth while to argue with you upon the question of whether the sickness of last year was plague or something else. Your knowledge upon the subject is too limited to enable you to an opinion.

However, you have made some statements which require correcting, and I shall devote the remainder of this friendly epistle to that purpose.

You did NOT keep alive plague germs in the Kailahi laboratory for over three years. Your cultures were as dead as Julius Caesar when your successor assumed charge.

The cultures were NOT sent to you from Hongkong. I got those cultures in Hongkong myself, in 1896, and sent them to Dr. Day, through Dr. Beach, of the steamer China.

It was NOT the opinion of the majority of the physicians connected with the Board of Health, at a meeting held at the Pacific Club, that there never had been any plague here.

This meeting was held at the very beginning of the epidemic, only five days after the first case, and every physician present who had seen a post-mortem, or examined a slide (and they only were entitled to an opinion) expressed the belief that the illness under discussion was plague.

Dr. Raymond stated that he did not consider the diagnosis yet proven. You yourself, my dear Doctor, were the only physician present who stated that he did not believe the disease to be

plague, and you forgot to give it a name. "Haemorrhagic Septicaemia" had not yet been coined. As there were fifteen or twenty other physicians present, you could hardly be called a majority.

I beg to respectfully deny your statement that there was no high mortality among the rats. The rat population in the infected localities was practically wiped out; for instance, in Iwilei. You must admit that I know more about this than you do, Doctor, as I went into all of the infected localities and you stayed out of them.

The disease DID spread in Chinatown in an increasing ratio until the population was removed.

You state that there were no cases recorded here which would prove that the sickness was dangerous to attendants or any one else, and that it was not contagious, and yet you, yourself, admitted to Dr. Raymond that you were afraid to handle it—and later, before many witnesses, stated in answer to a direct question that you would not take your family and move into a house in which a case had occurred, even after the most thorough disinfection conducted under your own direction.

Have you forgotten the fate of Ma-chida, the young assistant of Dr. Kobayashi, who died of plague on January 10th with a bubo under his arm from an infection of the thumb, contracted while assisting Dr. Kobayashi at a post-mortem upon a plague victim? And how about the two victims from the small force of men working upon the odorless excavators—and the four guards, who also died, of the plague?

Is your memory playing tricks upon you again, Doctor?

You state that the epidemic of last year was not plague, but Haemorrhagic Septicaemia. I presume, of course, you carried out in full all of the experiments which you enumerate as necessary—including animal experiments, before making your diagnosis.

By the way, do you not think that "Haemorrhagic Septicaemia" is a pretty terse and comprehensive definition of black plague, Doctor? Yours very respectfully,

AMALGAMATION OF STEAM LAUNDRIES

New Concern Buys out Old One and Will Remove Its Plant.

The Honolulu Steam Laundry is a thing of the past. It has been absorbed by the more recent Honolulu Sanitary Steam Laundry and the deal will be consummated at 3:30 o'clock tomorrow afternoon. The Sanitary Laundry company has purchased the goodwill, plant, wagons and general paraphernalia of the old company and there will be but one company in Honolulu.

L. R. Burns, one of the stockholders of the Sanitary Laundry stated yesterday that absorption had been on the tapis for sometime and only in the last day or two had the companies reached an agreement. The plant of the old company will be removed from Iwilei and erected on the premises of the Sanitary company on South street below the Honolulu Stock Yards.

COAST SHIPPERS MUST HEED LAW

Commissioner of Agriculture May Destroy all Blight-Covered Products.

Commissioner of Agriculture Wray Taylor says that the purple blight which has appeared on oranges of recent importation from California is a serious menace to the country and that the sooner such fruit is headed off the better.

He says the oranges in question were shipped here by one of the leading firms of San Francisco to a firm of white merchants in this city. The latter sold them to a Chinese, Professor Koebke heard of the purple blight and after searching in every store in town found three shops where the oranges—navels—were for sale. The blight was very much in evidence.

The Commissioner states that the oranges were shipped to Honolulu because they could not be offered for sale in San Francisco under the law prevailing there. Oranges to be offered for sale in San Francisco must be clean, and were certainly much to the contrary. The blight is known by the technical term myrtle-blight, or purple scale.

According to the law, the Commissioner has the right to destroy anything of this kind, and there is a heavy penalty reserved for any infringements thereof.

Wanderer is Safe.

The British bark Wanderer, which sailed from Tacoma October 12th, and concerning which there has been considerable speculation of late, resulting from a London cablegram, is reported safely arrived at Bristol, her destination.

The cablegram announcing her arrival proves the theory of her Tacoma charterers, Balfour, Guthrie & Co., to have been correct. They believed that the Wanderer, after being spoken inside of St. Ann's Head, had again been blown out to sea. She arrived at Bristol in safety Saturday, March 14.