B. R. T. TAX COMPLAINT.

"ABSORBING PROFITS."

Tax Board Petitioned to Reduce Assessments $43,666,644 38.

The Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company has applied to have its tax assessments reduced, on the ground that they are so excessive that the taxes will eventually absorb the net earnings of the company. Justice Platzek, of the Supreme Court, granted yesterday seven writs of certiorari, directing the State Board of Tax Commissioners to show cause, in Special Term, Part I, of the Supreme Court, on August 25, why the assessments should not be reduced as illegal and excessive.

The total valuation of the special franchises fixed by the tax board is about $60,000,000, and the reduction asked for is $43,666,644 38.

The companies which asked for this enormous reduction were the Brooklyn Union Elevated Railroad Company, the Brooklyn Heights Railroad Company, the Nassau Electric Railroad Company, the Coney Island and Gravesend Railway Company, the South Brooklyn Railway Company, as lessees of the Prospect Park and Coney Island Railway Company; the Brooklyn Heights Railroad Company, as lessees of the Brooklyn City Railroad Company, and the Brooklyn, Queens County & Suburban Railroad Company. George D. Yeomans, the general counsel of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit system, is attorney in the action. T. S. Williams, acting as president of the seven subsidiary companies, is the petitioner.

The petition says that in the case of the Brooklyn Union Elevated Company, the taxation of all kinds, state and local, amounts to $3,632,356 a year, or 61 per cent of the net earnings, and that the same relative conditions prevail in the other companies. A slight reduction made last March is declared inadequate.

In the case of the Brooklyn Elevated Railroad the petitioner contends that there is an overvaluation in the final figures of the Brooklyn franchise of $2,900,458 78, and $60,000 for Queens. It declares that the corporation owns no special franchises in Queens, and that a fair valuation of the Brooklyn franchises is $5,399,541 22.

Mr. Williams says that in the case of the Brooklyn Heights company $16,537 07 would be a fair assessment, but that the Tax Board assessed it at $115,000. The Nassau Electric Railroad Company's assessment was first fixed at $11,285,000 for Brooklyn and $15,000 for Queens. These figures were reduced to $10,950,000 for Brooklyn and nothing for Queens. Mr. Williams declares that the figure for Brooklyn should be $1,361,701 47.

From $161,000 to $140,000 was the reduction made in the case of the Coney Island & Gravesend Company's assessment, but the petitioner says that the fair valuation would be $56,190 43.

Nine thousand one hundred and five dollars and thirty-two cents is considered the fair valuation of the South Brooklyn Railway Company's franchises, but the board put the final figures at $20,000.

The franchises of the Brooklyn City Railroad Company, now leased by the Brooklyn Heights Railroad Company, were assessed at $19,800,000 for Brooklyn and $2,010,000 for Queens. The Queens assessment was reduced $200,000, but Mr. Williams says that the figures are still $1,481,193 45 too high, and that the figures for Brooklyn should be $3,025,476 87.

Mr. Williams contends that the franchises of the Brooklyn, Queens County & Suburban Railway Company are overassessed in Brooklyn by $2,517,353 61, and in Queens by $151,439 06.

The letters written to the state board in March point out that the total assessment for the roads constituting the Brooklyn Rapid Transit system amounts for the year to $54,436,000, and that the increase over the previous year is 54.26 per cent, or $20,905,000. Mr. Williams points out that the increase in the valuation of the Interborough company was only 33 1-3 per cent, the Manhattan 1-23 per cent and the New York City Railway Company 33½ per cent.

Mr. Williams says that in 1907 the total of direct assessments, state and local, against the system was as follows:

Tracks on private right of way	$5,285,800
Real estate	9,258,535
Local capital stock	89,450,000
Special franchises	59,436,000
Total	$163,410,335

PLAN MILITIA CHANGES.

Clothing Allowance, Drill Pay and No More Sleeping on Ground.

Radical changes will go into effect in the state militia if the suggestions which have been sent in to the commission appointed by Governor Hughes to investigate the National Guard are adopted. One of the principal recommendations is that the payment of monthly dues, which vary from 25 cents to $2 a month, be abolished, and that each enlisted man be paid 25 cents for each company drill, this amount to be paid annually or semi-annually. Another important suggestion is that the enlisted men in the National Guard be granted a clothing allowance, the same as the enlisted men in the army.

In the army each man upon enlistment is credited with a certain amount for his uniforms. At the time of his discharge he receives in cash the remainder of the allowance he has not had to use, and it serves to make the men careful of their clothing. In the National Guard a man receives only one issue of clothing for his five years' enlistment. Officers of the guard are allowed a credit of $30 a year for their uniforms, payable yearly. It has been recommended that every officer who has served five years be allowed $100 a year for his uniform expenses.

The suggestion is also made that regimental delinquency courts for the trial of enlisted men be abolished, and that brigade courts be established in their stead. The practice of compelling men to sleep on the ground at the state camp at Peekskill is condemned as unhealthful and unnecessary in a permanent camp, and it is said that many uniforms are ruined in consequence. It is advocated that each man be provided with a camp cot in his tent, as was done by the War Department for the enlisted men who took part in the recent exercises at the harbor forts.

These recommendations, if adopted, is is said, will entail extra expense to the state for the present, but it is said that in the end they will make for economy.

SCHMITZ FAILS TO GET WRIT.

San Francisco, July 13.—The District Court of Appeals refused to-day to grant Mayor Eugene Schmitz a writ of mandamus compelling Judge Dunne to set a date for settlement of the habeas corpus proceedings in the case in which he was convicted of extortion and sentenced to five years in the state prison at San Quentin.

MEN RESCUED AT SEA SAFE ASHORE.

Stonington, Conn., July 13.—Four men of the government tug Pontiac, which was disabled southeast of Montauk Point, were put ashore last night by the fishing smack Whitford, of this port, which had found them in a boat the night before. The men were D. Peery, chief boatman; F. E. Kennedy and F. P. Camp, seaman, and E. P. Smith, fireman.

The men had been sent from the tug to land to telegraph to the Brooklyn navy yard as to the predicament of the Pontiac. The sea was so rough that the food and water were made unfit for use. The men were exhausted when picked up, and the boat was drifting seaward thirty miles off land.

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MUST PAY P. S. BOARD

MR. PENDLETON'S OPINION

Corporation Counsel Does Not Find Law Unconstitutional.

Corporation Counsel Pendleton, as predicted in The Tribune, fails to find the public service law unconstitutional. In an opinion rendered to Controller Metz yesterday Mr. Pendleton advised the Controller to pay over the money remaining to the credit of the old Rapid Transit Board to the new commission and to honor all legitimate and duly certified bills of the commission.

In reply to a letter from Commissioner Bassett the Corporation Counsel said the Controller could pay the present employes of the commission without a reclassification under the Civil Service, and that the offices of the old board were available for the commission.

In his opinion, however, Mr. Pendleton took occasion to make a bitter attack on the public service law. He also digressed from his subject to indorse heartily Mayor McClellan's views on the measure and to pronounce the latter's "stand on the measure undoubtedly sound." "The statute is in many respects most unjust and objectionable to the city," is the opinion Mr. Pendleton expresses of it.

In many respects the new Corporation Counsel's opinion on the legal phases of the bill is identical with that prepared by Corporation Counsel Ellison. In some instances the two opinions are word for word. The main difference is that Mr. Ellison seemed less antagonistic to the bill and more certain of its validity.

Mr. Pendleton, after citing various authorities, reaches the conclusion that the law is a general measure, declaring that, had it been local, it would have clearly been unconstitutional.

The second point considered was one arising from a section of the measure which provides that all the expenses of the commission for the 2d District shall be borne by the state, while all the expenses of the commission for the 1st District shall be paid by the city of New York, with the exception of certain salaries. The legal question arising from this provision is whether the city of New York is discriminated against unjustly. Again Mr. Pendleton was forced to decide in the negative.

The third point urged against the constitutionality of the measure was the section providing that the new commission "shall in addition hold and exercise all the powers heretofore conferred upon the Board of Rapid Transit Commissioners." After citing many cases, Mr. Pendleton gives it as his opinon that the secton cannot be held unconstitutional.

The fourth constitutional question passed on was whether "the payment of the expenses of the commission for the 1st District by the city of New York is for a city purpose." This, again, was decided in the affirmative.

A fifth question was whether the commissioners were city officers. If they were they should be elected, not appointed. Mr. Pendleton decided that they cannot be considered city officers.

The sixth and last point discussed was whether the bill imposed non-judicial functions on the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. Mr. Pendleton held that it, on its face, did not, and, while not passing on the point positively, held that the bill should not now be declared unconstitutional on that ground.

In commenting on the position of Mayor McClellan in regard to the bill, the Corporation Counsel says:

"The question before me, however, is somewhat different from that presented to the Mayor, who, as the chief magistrate of the city, was under a duty to vigorously oppose the enactment of an objectionable law, whether its vicious features rendered the statute entirely unconstitutional or whether they merely made it a vicious statute which, while it might be technically constitutional, would be most unjust to the city and detrimental to its interests.

"It may also be noted that the question presented to the Mayor was a legislative rather than a constitutional one. The sole question which I must decide, however, is a much narrower one—whether the statute on its face violates the constitution of the state in particulars which affect the interests of the city.

"That it does in a larger sense attack the principle of home rule cannot be disputed, but on this point I must base my decision upon the theories of home rule and self-government as laid down by the courts, which give to these terms a much narrower sense than that in which they are ordinarily used."

Before taking up the consideration of the bill from a legal point of view, Mr. Pendleton states "that every presumption is in favor of the constitutionality of a new law."

Now it is believed the city officials will no longer continue their antagonistic attitude toward the measure, but will endeavor to assist the commission in every way.

None of the Public Service commissioners would discuss the opinion yesterday.

PELHAM MURDER WITNESS WARNED.

Man Who May Know Rosenheimer Slayers Gets Black Hand Letter.

Benjamin Scott, of Mount Vernon, who was held up a few minutes before the murder of Julius T. Rosenheimer, the wealthy resident of Pelham, received a letter from alleged agents of the Black Hand Society, who threaten him with death. Mr. Scott, it is believed by detectives, could identify the two men who robbed him, and who, it is thought, were the slayers of Mr. Rosenheimer.

The letter was headed "Black Hand," and below these words are the drawings of a closed hand with the forefinger pointing to a skull and crossbones. Beneath this is inscribed the following:

"You stop this business and keep your mouth shut or we will kill you."

Below this sentence is the drawing of a coffin and these words: "Look out for yourself."

GEORGIA MAY JOIN "DRY" STATES.

Atlanta, July 13.—The Hardman Covington bill, which prohibits the sale and manufacture of liquor in the State of Georgia after January 1, 1908, passed the Georgia Senate to-day. Thirty-three votes were registered for the bill and seven against.

A MEETING IN THE ARCTIC.

Captain Amundsen Tells of an Incident in the Far North.

Captain Amundsen, discoverer of the Northwest Passage, tells this incident of camp life near the north magnetic pole, quoted in "The Chicago News": "On October 29 the first Esquimaus made their appearance. Expectation on this point had always run high, and we talked daily about meeting with them. Sir John Ross, in his description of his voyage, gives the word 'Telma' as the usual salutation between white man and Esquimau, and we had therefore carefully laid this word to heart in order at once to check any warlike desires, should they be apparent. This first meeting was exceedingly ridiculous, and is one of our liveliest reminiscences. With two companions, armed to the teeth—namely, Anton Lund and Helmer Hansen—I started off to meet the Esquimaus, walking first myself, with my two comrades following me at about three paces distance. They had shouldered their guns, and had such a fierce expression on their faces that it alone would have been enough to put a warlike detachment to flight, to say nothing of the five unfortunate Esquimaus who were approaching us. The step and set-up of my detachment were unexceptionable.

"Arrived at about one hundred paces from us, the Esquimaus stopped, and we, not wishing to show less strategic ability, did likewise. Now, I thought, is the moment to set this matter at rest, and shouted 'Telma!' at the top of my voice. It did not seem to affect them in the least, and, after a short parley among themselves, they recommended their march on us. They were five in number, had formed in a sort of fighting line, and now advanced toward us, smiling and humming. Two of them had their boks firmly secured to their backs, and the three others were apparently unarmed.

"We on our side, of course, resumed our advance, repeatedly shouting, 'Telma, telma!' and the Esquimaus answered, but with quite another word, namely, 'Manik-tu-nit!' We now approached one another quickly, and finally ended by meeting. It was a remarkable encounter. The Eskimos stroked and patted us both in front and behind, all shouting 'Manik-tu-nit!' as hard as they could. We, true to our original plan of campaign, copied our adversaries, and shouted and howled, patted and slapped to the best of our ability.

"They were fine men, these Esquimaus, tall and strongly built, and in their appearance reminded me more of Indians than of Esquimaus, having the redskin type of complexion; they were, moreover, slim. The ordinary broad and fleshy Esquimau nose was exchanged for one better in shape, somewhat hooked; their hair was cut short, with the exception of a small crest of long hair which stretched from one temple round the nape of the neck to the other temple.

"We now proceeded, laughing the whole time, to the vessel. These Esquimaus called themselves 'Oglull Esquimau,' and looked upon the North American coast from Back River westward to Adelaide peninsula as their hunting fields. We made many good friends among this race, but it was not till later, when we met with the Nechjilli Esquimaus, that we made inseparable allies."

ELECTRIC CORN POPPING.

The day has passed when in order to get an evening's enjoyment out of a pan of crisp popcorn some one has got to burn his fingers or face over a hot stove or grate. The electric corn popper is one of the latest inventions applying electricity and is meeting with considerable favor and pleasant reception. The popper is a dainty little affair, shaped very much like an old fashioned quart dipper. It has a pair of little rubber tired wheels under it to aid in circulating the corn and all that is necessary is to make the proper connection to a lamp socket, put in the corn and begin shaking. It costs about five cents an hour to operate this popper, which means that any one with appetite to make it could easily pop a bushel basket full of crisp kernels with half the cost and none of the trouble incident to the old fashioned way.—Boston Transcript.

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LE VINO LIKES HIS FARM

CLAIM NOT HIGH, HE SAYS.

Can't See How City Officials Made It $545,000 in Aqueduct Case.

Herman D. Le Vino, of "The Dry Goods Economist," owner of a farm three or four miles northeast of Peekskill, across which the city desires a right of way, whose claim for damages is reported by the Law Department to be $545,000, says that he does not expect any such bill of damages, and, in fact, never made claim for any such sum. Henry T. Dykman, counsel for the city in connection with water rights in Westchester and Putnam counties, has a mass of papers on file in the Law Department, some of the letters suggesting specific sums for damages and apparently signed by Mr. Le Vino. Mr. Dykman is generally regarded as an accurate man. He figures out Mr. Le Vino's aggregated claims to be $545,000, as stated in The Tribune yesterday.

Mr. Le Vino was greatly surprised yesterday when he saw in The Tribune pictures of his queer railroad and spring house. He is about thirty-five or forty years old, has been for years with "The Dry Goods Economist," and he says that his farm is costing him a good deal more year by year than he receives for his products, but he does not mind that, as he is having a good time watching things grow.

"There are a number of inaccuracies in the items purporting to have been obtained from Mr. Dykman and published in to-day's Tribune," said Mr. Le Vino yesterday to a Tribune reporter.

"I never made a claim for $545,000 damages. I don't know how those items aggregating that sum happened to get into Mr. Dykman's papers. I never wrote him anything which would warrant him making any such computation or deduction.

"Again, the article stated that I bought the farm in the summer of 1903, the inference being that I got hold of the property with the idea of making the city pay a stiff price for right of way. I bought the place in 1901, largely for sentimental reasons. I married a Gale, and this was the old Gale place. The place had been in the Gale family since 1795. It was sold in 1901 to Lewis Tompkins, and four weeks later I bought it from Tompkins. It's a fine place, and I'm very fond of it.

"I stand by my guns with reference to the statement that it is a natural park for game and wild fowl. A wild deer strolled into my barnyard last winter, and partridge and quail are abundant. If the city runs its aqueduct line through it the blasting will drive off all the wild fowl. It is not all stony ground. I have spent thousands of dollars in improving the place, and raise a great deal of wheat on it every year. I keep four men at work there pretty nearly all the time, and part of the year a team is busy drawing manure from Peekskill. I had an offer of $25,000 for the place about a year ago."

"How about that railroad? It does not look like a railroad built in good faith," it was suggested.

"Well, it was built in good faith, just the same," said Mr. Le Vino, "and ultimately I hope to connect it with the Putnam & Westchester trolley line of which I am vice-president and which has about three miles in operation. The road cost me only a few hundred dollars to build. The rails weigh only twelve pounds to the yard, but they are heavy enough for the traffic of the road, which will be slate from a quarry on the place. There is a large deposit of slate on the place."

"Do you wish to be understood as saying that a twelve-pound rail is heavy enough for a freight road over which you are to operate cars loaded with slate?" was asked.

"Why, yes," said Mr. Le Vino, without hesitation, "that is as heavy a rail as contractors use for their private railroads."

"Ever see a twelve-pound rail used on a standard gauge railroad devoted to heavy freights?" asked the reporter.

"Don't know as I have," was his reply, "but I am confident that the rail is heavy enough for my purposes."

"If you go to blasting out slate and running a trolley line and a quarry, what becomes of your deer, quail, rabbits and partridge? Wouldn't that be worse than a trench for the buried aqueduct?"

Mr. Le Vino did not make an audible reply to this question. He went on to tell of the scenic beauties of his farm, and spoke eloquently of the view from Gallows Hill.

"From Gallows Hill," he said, "you see all around the country. From Gallows Hill"——

"That's where you'll land, Herman, before the newspapers get through with you," said one of Mr. Le Vino's office associates, jocularly tapping him on the shoulder. Mr. Le Vino joined in the mirth at his own expense, although he looked reproachfully at his tormentor.

Mr. Le Vino produced a Geological Survey map and directed attention to a small pond on his farm.

"There is the pond which Mr. Dykman's engineers could not find," said Mr. Le Vino.

"How about the Miracle Spring? It is alleged that it is dry at this time?" was asked.

"Well, that is true," said Mr. Le Vino. "I don't understand why it is dry, either. It never has been dry before. It has been a running spring for generations, and the old settlers always called it Miracle Spring. I am not making any charges, but it is just possible that certain people who are interested in getting a right of way through my farm for little or nothing know why that spring is dry. Why, a lot of old men and women around the countryside have been in the habit for years of going to that spring and filling their jugs. Its water possesses curative properties of a high order, in their judgment.

"I want to say that my farm is not for sale. Some time my farm may be profitable. As it is now, I suppose my hay costs me $20 a ton and my apples five cents apiece. I don't want the city to take even ten acres of it."

Among the papers in Mr. Dykman's possession there is an unsigned memorandum in connection with the letter of December 31, 1906, which says:

"I have just learned that most of the farmers around Peekskill have placed their claims in the hands of lawyers. Mr. L. is in a position to manipulate these people over the lawyers' heads in the interest of the city if the city wishes him to do so. This is a mere suggestion, and take it for what it is worth."

When the attention of Mr. Le Vino was called to this he said: "I don't know who wrote that. If I had written such a thing as that I would not have spoken of myself as 'Mr. L.' That paragraph may have been turned in to Mr. Dykman by some one who wanted to do a little grafting. I do not know anything about it."

GENERAL MANAGER HONORED.

When Henry Meyers, general manager of the Hamilton Press, the printing department of the New York News Bureau and Wall Street Summary, some months ago superintended the removal of his plant from No. 54 Broad street to No. 40 Stone street he hardly expected to win the praise of his employes under such disagreeable circumstances as moving. Yesterday, however, Mr. Meyers's birthday anniversary, the employes of the Hamilton Press gave to him a silver smoking service, accompanied by a letter expressing their esteem.

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DEPOSITS AND NUMBER OF CLIENTS.

December 31, 1902	$2,707,116.46	349
December 31, 1903	7,382,107.29	2,219
December 31, 1904	13,150,280.00	3,807
December 30, 1905	17,081,246.13	5,214
December 31, 1906	21,384,142.39	6,951
July 1, 1907	25,060,209.48	8,171

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MOTOR TRADE IN AFRICA

Large Use of Automobiles—Little American Representation.

While an automobile was a rarity in most parts of South Africa five years ago, the use of machines is rapidly becoming almost universal. The extent of the growing trade and the valuable field for American exportation is ably covered in a report made by Special Agent Crist, of Cape Town, to the Department of Commerce and Labor. According to this authority, South Africa, and especially Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand, presents a most attractive field for the sale of autos, and one which has engaged the close attention of the manufacturers of Europe and England, with the result that large numbers of cars of all descriptions have been sold from those countries. American makers apparently have almost entirely overlooked this fine market, for inquiry fails to show a representative of more than one American factory in the British South African colonies.

American manufacturers seem to be content with occasionally forwarding to South Africa beautiful catalogues. This method, while probably calling for no great outlay by any one concern, is nevertheless declared to be an absolute waste of printed matter, postage and time. "It cannot be said, however," continues Mr. Crist, "to involve a waste of time on the part of present or prospective automobile users of South Africa, for from all indications and comments it is perfectly safe to state that no one here pays any attention to them."

Live, hustling representatives are in South Africa from English, German, French and Italian automobile factories, whose efforts have been richly rewarded by large sales of their makes in this market, which probably differs in many respects from any other market of the same size in the world. Automobiles in South Africa are not luxuries for those desiring a car for pleasure, but are as necessary to the business success of every man who has relations with the mining industry as the subway is to the busiest New Yorker. This is readily seen from even a cursory consideration of the area covered by the mining industry. The Witwatersrand Reef extends in a more or less unbroken line for over seventy miles east and west, with Johannesburg approximately in the centre.

Many important mines are situated over fifty miles from that city. It is a daily occurrence for a mining engineer or some officer of the large importing houses to be obliged to visit a mine forty or more miles distant, which can be accomplished with expedition only by an automobile. The railways and electric lines around Johannesburg satisfy the requirements of ordinary interurban traffic, but cannot cope with the needs of those engaged in the mining business, who find the automobile almost vital to reaching many different points at short notice. The readiness of the automobile to go anywhere at any time is its chief point of value, with which the transportation lines cannot possibly compete. Carriages or other horse vehicles are unable to give the satisfaction either in point of time or endurance obtained by the use of the automobile. In fact, so great a factor is time in supplying machinery "parts" and "spares" that in emergencies automobiles are often used in their delivery.

THE NUMBER OF MOTORS IN USE.

The register of automobiles in Johannesburg shows a total of 768 cars for this year, while a few years ago an automobile was a curiosity. Over 200 are reported by dealers to be in use in Cape Town. Prices range from $1,750, the average being $2,000. The value of the automobiles in daily use in Johannesburg is estimated at $100,000, and in the entire "Reef" at twice that figure. The life of the automobile in South Africa has been found to be from two and a half to five years. There is a continually increasing demand for cars to supplant those worn out and to supply new recruits in the field of ownership. There seems to be an exceptionally excellent field for American makers, who are practically unrepresented. They are advised to send out competent salesmen, prepared to meet the competition of makers of European cars who have already demonstrated the value and fitness of their products for the needs of the market.

Motor cycles, ranging from $200 to $300, are also in demand, and are chiefly supplied at present from Germany, although England shares the trade. They are capable of from 20 to 25 miles an hour. While the Witwatersrand field is the most profitable, there is also an increasing demand for cars throughout the different colonies. In Durban and Cape Town automobile and motor cycle clubs have regular runs, and enthusiasts are to be found everywhere.

British South Africa imported motor vehicles to the value of $826,685 in the fiscal year 1906.

While the class of cars in demand are varied according to the individual fancy of the buyer and the ability of the salesman to present the particular good points of his product, there are certain basic principles which should govern in the manufacture of cars for the market. The roads and climate must be especially considered. The average car is selected for use along the "Reef" for its hill climbing ability, ability to withstand the hard knocks of rough roads, and its ability to produce the maximum mileage for the petrol or gasolene consumed. From fifteen miles a gallon of petrol is now required of new cars. Grades of one in thirty are frequent in railway travel, while one in fourteen is not uncommon in the ordinary country road.

THE CLASS OF CARS IN DEMAND.

Cars range from 6 to 26-30 horsepower, but great speed is not a factor, high speed cars, except on rare occasions, being compelled to run at from one-fourth to one-half capacity, by reason of the roughness of the roads. Steam cars have been found less economical in fuel expenditure than gasolene cars. Both chain and direct shaft drive cars are popular. In chain drive the centre drive chain is impracticable because of the great quantity of obstructions found, only side drive chains being in use. The direct shaft drive is usually preferred, however, the sand which is found all over South Africa cutting chains so rapidly as to materially reduce their life and cause many breakdowns. A high clearance is imperative to all cars. From eleven to twelve inches is demanded, and space in excess which does not produce a topheavy effect is desirable. An increased clearance is obtaind by using wheels of unusual diameter. Many wheels measure 920 by 120 millimetres, giving a 14-inch clearance.

Four forward speed gears and one reverse is a requirement of the better cars. With only three forward gears it has repeatedly been found that the usual lowest forward gear is too fast to produce enough power to plough through the frequent sandy stretches, making necessary a constant resort to the reverse, which badly damages the car.

As the climate of South Africa is exceedingly dry, with the exception of the narrow coast belt, and the rays of the sub-tropical sun are nearly direct, the effect upon all wooden construction is evident in motors after a few months' service. All veneering, boxwork and fittings of wood are dried up, warped and twisted out of shape. To meet this action of the climate all cars now sold have these parts finished in aluminum. Because of the heat of this latitude the air cooled engines are valueless, according to past experiences, only water cooling proving satisfactory. With regard to tires, the heaviest and best quality only are satisfactory.

The roads immediately surrounding Johannesburg, Kimberley or any of the centres in the mining area, and, in fact, throughout South Africa, are only fairly well maintained at best, while within a short distance they become mere tracks worn in the veldt, and in other places completely disappear. They consist of two ruts, of varying depth and roughness, flanking two paths worn by the hoofs of oxen or horses, while the centre is plainly marked by a ridge of from four to eight inches of rough earth and bowlders, at times surmounted by a growth of rank vegetation. In many instances the trackless waste presents a far more attractive path than the roadway in spite of the irregularly recurrent ant heaps, bowlders and gullies. The country is essentially mountainous, or, at best, one of steep hills and heavy gradients, the roads not yet boasting of bridges, fills or cuts.

TOO FEW TUBE TRAINS.

Continued from First Page.

possible. Although the cars for the then unopened subway had been contracted for, the company did purchase some three hundred steel cars, which were put into use when the system was opened.

WOODEN CARS NOT REPLACED.

It was understood that the company intended to replace all wooden cars with steel. The City Club investigations have shown that no new steel cars have been added to the equipment of the subway since it was opened. This fact was ascertained in the same manner as the other figures were obtained, by actual observation. It was found, for instance, that it took a given express train one hour and forty-seven minutes to complete the circuit of the subway from the Grand Central station. The trains that passed during that time comprised all the equipment actually used in the express service on an average day. It was found that all told there were 336 cars in this service. Of this number it was ascertained that 181 were wooden and 155 steel cars. In the service for the period observed there was one train with four wooden cars and three with three wooden cars each.

The terms of the contract between the city and the Interborough company governing the operation of the subway are general. The contract says:

"The contractor shall, as far as practicable, meet all reasonable demands of the public in respect to frequency and character of its railway service to the full limit of the capacity of the railroad."

"The contractor covenants to and with the city that he will, during the term of the lease, operate the railroad carefully and skilfully according to the highest known standards of railroad operation."

Even though it is general, some say that under the last clause the company can be compelled to make the improvements to its equipment necessary to relieve or prevent altogether the present overcrowding of subway trains during the rush hours.

NEWS THAT LAGGED.

All of us have heard legends of the rapidity with which news travelled before the era of telegraphs by means which have been compared to the apple thrown from hand to hand. To-day, however, is the centenary of an event in the Napoleonic epopee which clearly illustrates how far we have progressed in this respect during the last hundred years. On June 14, 1807, the meteoric Emperor defeated the Russians on the bloody field of Friedland, capturing 160,000 prisoners. Only about midnight on Saturday, June 27, did a courier reach Saint Cloud to convey the news to Josephine, whose feminine mind did not penetrate the figurative significance of the "160,000 fusils," and Paris only learned the news on the afternoon of the 28th, when it lost no time in throwing itself into raptures. They danced all night through in the streets.—London Globe.

A STORY OF MAINE HAY LANDS.

Because of an unplugged gap of less than 30 feet in width 400 acres of the finest hay land in Washington County is rendered valueless. The story of how railroad engineers and other engineers have grappled with that gap is interesting, not to say graphic. The fight, which has now been given up, has cost the railroad company more than $10,000 in money and three lives have been lost. Over forty years ago men owning land along Middle River, realizing that some of the best hay fields of the section were inundated by the waters of the river, decided to build a dyke across the mouth of the river, at its junction with the Machias River. The necessary money was raised and the work begun. It is estimated that the loss to the farmers of Machias will be $2,000 a year. Once, $25 would have mended the gap.—Kennebec Journal.

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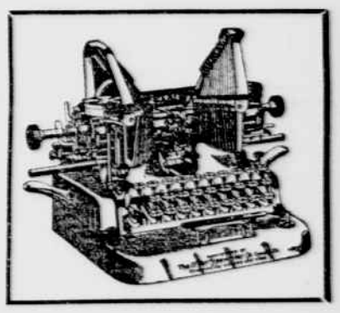

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Whenever you see the letters "U. S." branded on the left fore shoulder of an animal make up your mind at once that that beast is or was at one time the property of our rich old "Uncle Sam," says "The Washington Post."

Then, again, if you knew the key to the system of branding utilized by the quartermaster's department, U. S. A., you would in a moment be able to tell the organization of the army to which that animal was assigned immediately after purchase by the government.

Last October, when the army of Cuban pacification was being embarked from Newport News, Va., many of the army horses and mules awaiting shipment became mixed with those of other organizations, but it only needed the knowledge of Sergeant Casey to decipher the hoof brands and dispatch the animals to their proper organizations. In other words, these brands serve as "identification tags."

Branding public animals is not a matter of choice, but is provided for by the army regulations, which directs that "public animals shall, upon the day received, be branded with the letters 'U. S.' on the left fore shoulder. Horses assigned to organizations will also be branded on the hoof of one forefoot, one and one-half inches below the coronet, with the designation of the company. Branding irons of uniform size and design will be supplied by the quartermaster's department. Letters 'U. S.' to be two inches in height. Letters and numbers of hoof brands on the same line to be three-fourths of an inch high, the letter to precede the number, and blocked so as to penetrate the hoof one-sixteenth of an inch. For example, the hoof brands on horses assigned to band, 9th Cavalry, would be CB9; to Troop A, 5th Cavalry, would be A5; to Company A, Battalion of Engineers, would be BEA."

A GREAT SECRET.

In a small town in the Midlands there is a rich congregation which is not characterized by lavish liberality.

Time after time the minister had vainly appealed to his people to contribute more generously to the funds of the church. The members would, indeed, give something, but it was nearly always the smallest silver coin of the realm that was placed on the plate.

A shrewd Scotchman who had recently come to the place and joined the church was not long in noticing this state of affairs, and a remedy soon suggested itself to his practical mind.

"I'll tell you what," he said to one of the officials; "if you mak' me treasurer, I'll engage to double the collections in three months."

His offer was promptly accepted; and, sure enough, the collections began to increase, until by the time he had stated they were nearly twice as much as formerly.

"How have you managed it, Mr. Sandyman?" said the pastor to him one day.

"It's a great secret," returned the canny Scot; "but I'll tell you in confidence. The folk, I saw, maistly gave threepenny bits. Weel, when I got the money every Sabbath evening I carefully picked oot the sma' coins and put them by. Noo, as there's only a limited number of threepenny pieces in a little place like this, and as I have maist o' them at present under lock and key, the folk maun give saxpences, at least, instead. That's the way the collections are doubled!"—Tit-Bits.