

Fair and Warmer Tonight;
Rain Tomorrow.

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COMMERCE BOARD ORDERS RAILWAY TO REDUCE FARE

Finds Washington, Alexandria and Mt. Vernon Line Overcapitalized.

VERY BIG DECISION IN A SMALL CASE

Would Mean Much Consistently Applied to Railroads of the Country.

By JUDSON C. WELLIVER.
In a small case, the Interstate Commerce Commission today handed down one of the biggest decisions it has ever issued.

It ordered the Washington, Alexandria and Mt. Vernon Railway to reduce its rates between Washington and Four Mile Run, St. Elmo, St. Asaph, Mt. Ida, and Del Rey, from 15 to 10 cents.

The commission finds that the road is capitalized at \$207,000 per mile, and after a careful investigation of its actual valuation, assumes that it may represent an actual investment of \$50,000 per mile.

Gross Overcapitalization.

"This seems," writes the commission, "to be a case of gross overcapitalization." And thereupon, finding that the company is earning an excessive return on its real investment, it orders sweeping reductions in all the interstate rates over which it has authority.

The case is the first in which the commission has ever reduced rates because of overcapitalization. Applied to the railroad properties of the country—and such application is entirely consistent with the authority and disposition of the commission—it would mean that rates would be adjusted to the general purpose of enabling carriers to earn a fair return on a fair capitalization. Watered stocks would be cut out, and there would arise at once a necessity for a valuation of all the railroads, in order that rates might be adjusted to it.

Of Sweeping Importance.

An official of the commission said today, when the decision was announced: "The decision is of the most sweeping importance in its implications. It indicates the disposition of the commission, and the policy it may be expected to follow in future.

"The same rule, of course, can be applied to railroads in general; but the commission has no authority to make rates of fare for the Washington and Mt. Vernon line. Its authority over this is limited by law, and does not extend to fixing rates of fare.

The excessive capitalization of the street car lines of Washington thus appears to be beyond the reach of the commission, unless the commission's powers shall be increased in this respect. The case decided today is O. C. Beall vs. the Washington, Alexandria and Mt. Vernon Railway. It is the Alexandria, Va., branch of the Washington and Mt. Vernon line, and the commission's story of its big capitalization and remarkable prosperity is most interesting.

From Commission's Report.

This petition puts in issue the reasonableness of the defendant's single-trip fare from Washington, D. C., to Four Mile Run, St. Elmo, St. Asaph, Mt. Ida, and Del Rey, in Virginia. The complaint is that the fares mentioned are equal to those from Washington to Alexandria, Va., although the distance to Alexandria is about two miles more, than the average distance between Washington and the towns mentioned, which are intermediate to Alexandria.

The defendant is an electric railway carrying passengers and property between points in Virginia and Washington. Its tracks extend from Twelfth street and Pennsylvania avenue, Washington, south and west through to the Potomac river, which they cross by the Highway bridge. From the south end of the bridge the line runs through a portion of Virginia to Alexandria, thence to Mt. Vernon.

The distance from the terminus in Washington to the terminus in Alexandria is 7.5 miles. From the Alexandria terminus to Four Mile Run, the distance is shown by the defendant's time table to be 4.1 miles. The distance to Del Rey, the farthest point named, is 5.5 miles. The average distance between several points involved is said to be five miles.

The passenger fares are based upon a group of zone system. In addition to the single fare of 15 cents, defendant has established round-trip and commutation fares between Washington and points in the Alexandria zone. The line has been in operation fourteen years. It was established to—

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WEATHER REPORT.

FORECAST FOR THE DISTRICT.
Fair and warmer tonight followed by increasing clouds and probably rain early Saturday morning or night; lowest temperature tonight about 34 degrees.

TEMPERATURES.
8 a. m. 33 12 noon 35
9 a. m. 34 1 p. m. 37
10 a. m. 35 2 p. m. 37
11 a. m. 35 3 p. m. 37

TIDE TABLE.
Today—High tide, 9:55 a. m. and 10:21 p. m.
Low tide, 4:01 a. m. and 4:30 p. m.
Tomorrow—High tide, 10:36 a. m. and 11:04 p. m.
Low tide, 4:43 a. m. and 5:12 p. m.

SUN TABLE.
Sun rises 6:50 Sun sets 6:50

FIGHT ADAMSON FOR HOUSE COMMERCE COMMITTEE HEAD

Democrats Say He Is Not In Sympathy With the Work.

BITTER FOE OF ALL PURE FOOD EFFORTS

Carried States' Rights Views to Extreme In Opposing Railway Legislation.

Progressive Democrats both in and out of Congress are protesting against the possible selection of Representative W. C. Adamson of Georgia as chairman of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, basing their objections on the ground that Mr. Adamson is not in sympathy with the progressive thought of the country, nor in harmony with the majority of the Democrats in the House, with reference to legislative questions that will come before that important committee.

Mr. Adamson was the uncompromising foe of all Federal pure food legislation, although a great majority of the Democrats advocated and voted for the pure food laws.

Opposed Progressives.

Mr. Adamson was at war with the main body of the Democrats, and with the progressive Republicans, when he opposed the features of the Mann railroad bill, designed to give the Interstate Commerce Commission the power to supervise the issue of railroad stocks and bonds.

Mr. Adamson opposed giving the power to the Interstate Commerce Commission to make a general physical valuation of the railroads of the country, a measure supported by the progressive element of both parties.

Mr. Adamson was earnest in opposing the proposition to make railway companies responsible for bills of lading issued by them, although the chief champions of that measure were his own party associates in the House.

In opposing the progressives in these and other matters, the Georgian always has professed a degree of sympathy with the purposes of the proposed legislation, and has based his opposition on constitutional grounds.

He is a State's rights, of the extreme school. He holds, for instance, that the evil of poisoned food is less than the evil of passing a Federal statute that may perchance invade a State right, whether that right is exercised or not.

Opposed Pure Food Act.

When the pure food and drugs act of 1906, the most popular piece of legislation that has passed Congress in a quarter of a century, was before the House, the opposition was led by Mr. Adamson. He was able to muster but seventeen votes against the bill, but he made a game fight. He began his speech on that occasion in this fashion:

"It is unfortunate that in the practice and history of legislation, misleading names, sometimes high-sounding, moral and even pious names are used to deceive the people as to the character of vicious and pernicious legislation. I do not mean by this to oppose the bill, and how, in this respect, it is vicious in all respects, but in some respects I regard it as exceedingly so."

Mr. Adamson then proceeded to tell how he had been the foe of the pure food legislation for years, how others had not been by him, and how he had now he had but a handful of supporters. He then said:

Violates Principles of Government.

"The truth about it is, the bill from first to last violates every principle of our Government by proposing to go into summary legislation for the regulation of the contents of every food package in the next step will be to prescribe the table etiquette and dress."

Later on in the same speech he intimated a contempt for the chemists and other experts, who were advocating pure food laws. In this language:

"I believe there are millions of old women, white and black, in my country, who know more about good victuals than my friend, Dr. Wiley, and all of his apothecary shop."

This was neither the beginning nor the end of Mr. Adamson's opposition to pure food laws. In the last session of Congress he opposed, in committee, the bill to require the true measure or weight of the contents of every food package to be printed on the label, going to the extent of describing the bill as "foolish legislation."

On January 18, 1904, Mr. Adamson made a minority report against a pure food bill signed by himself alone. It was in this report that he took the ground that the evils of impure and adulterated food were less than the evils of Federal legislation on such subjects.

Cure Worse Than the Disease.

"Aside from my partiality for the old-fashioned idea of leaving the government to be administered by local authority, I object, as a member of Congress, to imposing on the Federal Government subjects of legislation and litigation wholly foreign to its purpose, and which, if at all effective, must prove burdensome, annoying, and expensive."

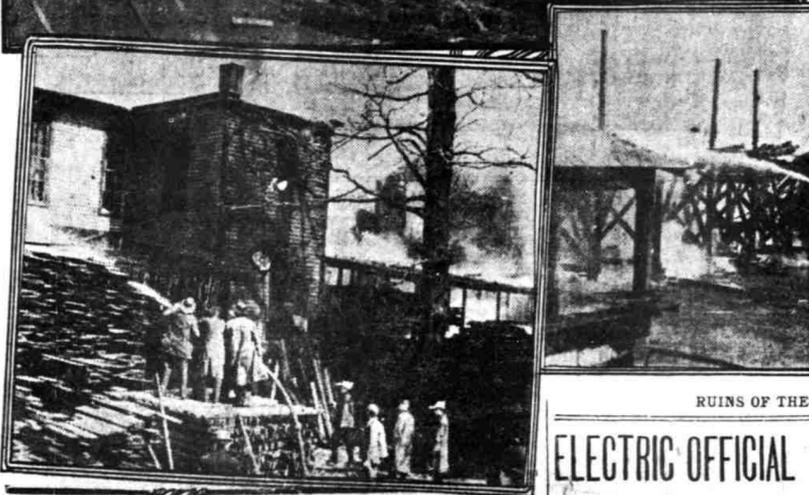
"The hearings have disclosed some had conduct in the food trade, as well as in some other departments of life and business, but it is all properly cognizable in the State courts, and in my

(Continued on Eighth Page)

Scenes at the Fire in Baseball Park and Lumber Yard



GRANDSTAND IN FLAMES.



FIGHTING THE FIRE IN THE LUMBER YARD.

DONATE MUCH, BUT NOT NEW HOSPITAL

Benefactors of Emergency Station Generous With Supplies.

Donation day at the Emergency Hospital brought many things of many kinds. It didn't bring a new hospital to put them in.

It brought extra feed and a handful of sugar to the two horses, the gray and the bay that dash valiantly hither, thither and yon, when men and women and children are stricken down. But it didn't bring a motor ambulance to give them a rest from their labors.

Still, those things may come later when people learn what a work the Emergency Hospital, with the little that the Government and the residents of the District give it, is doing.

And, in the meantime, the officers and trustees of the hospital very thankfully received today what the generosity of the people gave.

All Carefully Listed.

It was a typical donation day. Miss Fannie Carter, the superintendent; Miss Mary Rinker, the housekeeper; and Miss Mary Morgan, of 1615 Rhode Island avenue, a member of the ladies' auxiliary of the hospital, stood in the store room and checked off the brown paper bags that big William, the janitor, fetched in from the grocer's wagon, and milder's carriage. They all smiled in delight at the presents that came from a Lenten Santa Claus.

The party had a plenty of that spice called variety: linen for bandages, coffee in bags and coffee in cans, matches, mops, brooms, whisky, soap, evaporated and tinned fruits, towels, wines, bluing, rice, drugs, money. A big mail order catalogue wouldn't contain many more different kinds and sorts of things than the list Miss Morgan made today. They had been dutifully packed in the brown paper bags that the hospital auxiliary had distributed for the purpose.

Hospital Need Pressing.

One donation wasn't down on Miss Morgan's list—a piano that two women are going to give to the Nurses' Home, across the street from the hospital. But it is indelibly listed on what graduation assays call the tablets of memory; and it is delightfully portrayed, too, on the tablet of anticipation. The anticipation will give way to realization within a short time.

Miss Morgan said today that the need of a new hospital was becoming more pressing every day. Because of the emergency work done at the hospital his expenses are unusually great, and the demands for its space and facilities extraordinary. She expressed a hope that the District would come to an early realization of the need of a new hospital, and of the needs of the people for it. A lot near the Corcoran Art Gallery has been purchased, and the Hospital Association has a balance in bank, which is not, however, sufficient.

And the motor ambulance is nearly as badly needed, Miss Morgan said.

B. R. Coles, Upholsterer, Ph. M. 6316.

—Adv.

SCARLET FEVER IN PERSIAN LEGATION

Seifed Din Khan, Cousin of Charge, Slightly Ill, Goes to Hospital.

Seifed Din Khan, the twelve-year-old cousin of Mirza Ali Kull Khan, the Persian charge d'affaires, today is a patient at the Garfield Hospital, where he is being treated for a mild case of scarlet fever.

Although no entertainments had been planned at the legation, the Charge and Mme. Kull Khan, immediately upon the diagnosis of the physician, had the case reported to the Health Department and the youth taken to the hospital. Although the malady had not developed seriously, and despite the Health Office statement that there was no need of disinfection, the residence at 1230 Q street was thoroughly disinfected, as was the private school which the boy attended.

It was on Wednesday morning the symptoms developed, and at the request of the legation, he was taken to the hospital in a health office ambulance. At the hospital it was said today the boy is not ill enough to be in bed.

At the health office, it was said no disinfection was placed in the house, as this is not the custom when such precautions are taken and the patient removed immediately. In this instance, the health office could not have placed the house without the consent of the legation, and could not have entered the health regulations had it not been requested by the legation.

Labor Troubles Blamed For Two Big Explosions

MILWAUKEE, Wis., March 17.—Labor troubles were today blamed for two explosions that injured five persons and wrecked a 300-foot electric unloading crane at the plant of the Milwaukee Western Fuel Company last night.

The explosions threw the city into a semi-panic. Two policemen and three employees of the company who rushed to the scene, immediately after the first explosion, were thrown down and badly bruised by the second. The officials of the company declared today that the dynamiting was the result of labor troubles while the big crane was being built by the Hoyt-Patterson Company of Pittsburg last fall.

Mrs. Melber Prepares to Serve Prison Sentence

ALBANY, N. Y., March 17.—Mrs. Edith J. Melber, the self-confessed child murderer, who was yesterday found guilty of murder in the second degree, today began preparation for her trip to Auburn prison, to which she was sentenced, the minimum penalty being twenty years. Mrs. Melber today appears in better spirits than at any time since her incarceration. It is probable that a matron will start from Auburn today to return with Mrs. Melber.

ELECTRIC OFFICIAL ORDERED TO TESTIFY

Treasurer Ham Must Tell of Company's Deals With Subsidiaries.

BALTIMORE, March 17.—Despite the vigorous protests of counsel for the Washington Railway and Electric Company before Judge J. C. Rose, in the United States circuit court, the court today ordered William F. Ham, the company's treasurer, to answer all questions about the intercorporate relations of the company and its subsidiary companies, in the suit between citizens of Montgomery county, Md., and the Washington and Rockville Company over passenger rates between the District line and Rockville.

In attempting to ascertain the cost of operation of the Rockville road, Attorney George H. Lamar, counsel for the people of Montgomery county discovered that the Rockville company buys its electric current from the Washington Railway and Electric Company, which buys it from the Potomac Electric Power Company. The Rockville company and the Potomac company are both subsidiary corporations of the Washington company.

Refused to Testify.

Treasurer Ham giving testimony in Washington last week before an examiner appointed by the court, declined to tell how much the Washington company pays for the current which it sells the Rockville company. George P. Hoover, counsel for the Washington company, and Mr. Lamar today argued the point before Judge Rose. Mr. Hoover was assisted by Leon E. Greenbaum, of counsel for the company here.

Mr. Hoover and Mr. Greenbaum declared that if Mr. Ham were compelled to testify the whole history of the Washington Railway and Electric Company, its organizations, its contractual relations with all its subsidiary companies in the District, and all its affairs would be made the subject of investigation. They protested against this and decided that what the holding company pays for the current it sells to its subsidiaries has nothing to do with the point at issue, which should be determined by ascertaining whether the price paid by the Rockville company was fair or exorbitant.

Questions Are Relevant.

Judge Rose held that because all three companies have the same officials, and by the same officials sell power from themselves to themselves, all the facts in these transactions are evidence that should be given, having a bearing on determining whether the Rockville rates are fair.

Mr. Hoover says after the ruling that the company would interpose no further objection to giving this testimony, but would formally except to the ruling on the record. Hearings before William Herbert Smith, the examiner, will be resumed at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning in the office of the Washington Railway and Electric Company in Washington.

Battleship Victims of Gasoline Burns Better

NORFOLK, Va., March 17.—W. E. Joergers and W. Place, the seamen from the battleship New Hampshire, who were badly burned when a comrade put a lighted cigarette against Joergers' trousers which had just been gasoline cleaned, are better and neither will die, according to a statement made by their physician today.

GRANDSTAND AND BLEACHERS GO IN MYSTERIOUS FIRE AT BALL GROUNDS

OPENING GAMES MAY BE TRANSFERRED

I have called a meeting of the board of directors for late this afternoon, when a decision will be reached as to whether the opening games would be held here or transferred. The season is scheduled to start here on April 12 with the Boston Red Sox, with a series of four games, after which the New York Highlanders are listed for three games. Whether these games are to be played in a temporary plant at National Park, at Union Park in East Washington, or in Boston and New York I do not yet know, but we will decide when we meet. President Noyes to The Times.

BLAZE WELL UNDER WAY WHEN FIRST SEEN

Discovered Shortly Before Noon Sweeping Dry Tiers of Seats.

EISINGER LUMBER YARD ENDANGERED

General Alarm Sounded to Prevent Repetition of Previous Big Fire.

Fanned by a strong southwest wind, the fire which started about 11:30 o'clock this morning in the right field bleachers destroyed the bleachers and grandstand at the American League baseball park, and for a time threatened the destruction of the lumber yard of Eisinger Brothers, at Seventh and W streets northwest.

The flames reached one of the old frame buildings of Freedman's Hospital, now used as store houses by the lumber firm, and it was burned to the ground. Eisinger Brothers' loss is estimated at \$25,000. The firemen kept the flames from spreading to the main part of the lumber yard.

The damage done to the ball park is estimated at \$18,000. The club house in the northeast corner and a portion of the open bleachers in left field were saved.

Two Previous Fires.

The lumber yard is one of the largest in the city, and when it was seen that there was danger of a repetition of the fires which on two previous occasions destroyed every pile of lumber and caused damage in the neighborhood of \$100,000, a general alarm was sounded, calling off practically all the apparatus in the city.

The fire spread so rapidly that the grandstand and bleachers on the north side of the park were burned to the ground almost before the firemen got the first pipeline laid.

The origin of the fire is a mystery. Bicycle Policeman T. F. Sweeney, of the Eighth precinct; James P. O'Dea, superintendent of the park, and Joe Donders, who was standing at the main entrance when a small curl of smoke was noticed coming from under the bleachers.

Firemen Are Called.

Sweeney ran to the police telephone box at Seventh street and Florida avenue and called No. 7 Engine Company on a local alarm. When the firemen arrived it was seen that the fire was beyond the control of one engine company, and another alarm was sounded from a nearby box.

The second alarm brought Deputy Chief G. J. Sullivan, Chief Wagner being out of the city. Sullivan arrived in the chief's automobile, and seeing the flames shooting high in the air, and remembering the stubborn fights the men had when the lumber yard caught fire before, order a general alarm.

No. 7 Engine Company, the first to arrive, was powerless to cope with the situation. Two lines of hose were soon in operation, but the men had laid them through the main entrance to the park, and the flames, driven by the wind, were spreading in the other direction.

Soon in Outfield Row.

Sweeping around the north side of the grandstand the fire soon reached the outfield bleachers, and the next moment the storehouse in the lumber yard was in flames. The firemen confined their efforts to saving the open bleachers in south field and the main portion of the lumber yard. This they did effectively by keeping several streams playing on the piles of lumber owned by Frank Eisinger, president of the com-

(Continued on Second Page.)

Agents of Madero Say They Avoided Trap Set By Diaz

That James D. Hallen, arrested here as a spy of the Mexican government and a suspicious character, sent "fake" telegrams to Ambassador de la Barra, in New York, to gain the confidence of the revolutionary committee in Washington, was the statement made today by agents of Madero's agents here.

Hallen, who went under several aliases in Washington, and who has a criminal record, was advised last night that his presence here is not desired, and it is for this reason that the alleged secret agent of the Diaz government cannot be located today. He was released by the police last night, after having been shadowed for days by the revolutionary committee.

Tried to Win Madero Men.

There has come to light today the story of how Hallen attempted to get into the good graces of the attorneys for the Madero interests in Washington, which, it is now understood, was the mission on which Hallen came to Washington. Hallen, alias Lord—the latter name being used by the latter name—

(Continued on Fourth Page.)