

## Commission Considers Congestion

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nature the rule was offered, betrayed his surprise at the language of the rule when he read it. He said in a hesitating, uncertain manner, that "if the—er—Commission—er—could—er—er—." He acted like he had never seen that thing before and betrayed his unfamiliarity with it unmistakably. This but emphasizes the want of preparation on the part of the Railroad Commission for the business that their office imposes on them. It makes emphatic also the need for the services of the people's attorney to attend to so important a branch of the people's business as that entrusted to the Railroad Commission. But the Attorney General was NOT AT THE HEARING, nor did the paper submitted for consideration show evidence of preparation by him.

There were several amendments proposed to the rules promulgated by the Railroad Commission, but the one under chief consideration was the new rule which was aimed at the solution of the congestion of terminals. This rule declared that any transportation company engaged in the business of common carrier in this State, which should fail to furnish cars upon demand within four days, should pay to the shipper making such demand \$5 a day per car for each day of delay.

Representatives of the Railroads were unanimous in opposing this demurrage. Mr. Riddle, of the A. C. L., said that "no demurrage penalty will cure the evil." Mr. Haskell of the S. A. L. Railway, said that the best way to proceed was to impose fines as was done now for failure to furnish cars. Mr. Denham said that there is no remedy for the congestion evil, that the railroads have been trying to find one for years without success, that the business had simply outgrown the facilities. The railroad men wanted the shippers to put up a deposit when they asked for cars because of the fear they expressed that the chance to get \$5 a day demurrage would be taken advantage of by dishonest persons to impose upon the railroads by making demands for cars which they did not want and KNEW THAT THE RAILROADS COULD NOT FURNISH, simply in order to collect the demurrage. The railroads did not, however, offer as a suggestion that they should also be required to put up a deposit. They seemed to think that they could easily be made to pay. "Railroad companies," said they, "can be sued in the courts by shippers who are damaged." They failed to make mention of the fact that Railroads may employ attorneys by the year at large salaries to defend suits against them and that the road of the small shipper suing the Railroad Company for damages is long and tedious and so expensive that few can travel it.

With one accord the representatives of the railroads pronounced the proposed rule inadequate and unjust. Inadequate because it would not cure the evil, unjust because it would work a great hardship on the railroads. Just here was developed the fact, from the railroad standpoint, that

the small railroads would be put out of business by the operation of this rule because, having no cars in some cases, and but few cars in others, they are unable to furnish cars to any one calling for them unless through the courtesy of the big railroads, and if this rule was adopted, the big railroads would see to it that their cars were used to supply the demand for them by shippers on their own lines at the expense, in all cases, and the putting out of business in some cases, of the small railroads on account of their inability to get cars.

After a detailed discussion of this particular rule it was passed for future consideration by the Commission, and the amendment to the rule governing the switching and transferring of cars from one railroad to another, which amendment provided that "no railroad shall decline or refuse to switch any such car demanded to be switched by another railroad." Mr. Riddle of the A. C. L. voiced the sentiment of the railroad men present when he suggested that this amendment amounted to an absolute confiscation of property. He made clear the fact that under the operation of this amendment a railroad could be built into a port and, without spending one dollar for terminals, require another railroad, which had spent large sums for terminals, to do its switching of cars and delivery of freight and thus, if the business was large enough, confiscate the terminal property of another railroad. This, he it said, was so reasonable and well founded an objection that there was apparently no doubt left upon the minds of the members of the Commission as to the inadvisability of adopting this amendment.

The next amendment considered was the one which required the railroads to keep their depots open from 7 o'clock in the morning to 5 o'clock in the afternoon, with a dinner hour of one hour, in cities of over 10,000 people. The question was at once raised by the railroad men, "From whence comes this demand?" and it was brought out that one wholesale grocery company in Jacksonville had made complaint of the short hours in force for the receipt and delivery of freight in that city. Judge Raney made the point that no one else had complained, and that he did not think one shipper complaining could give rise to the necessity for the promulgation of this rule. "There is," said he, "no general complaint." Mr. Parrott suggested that the question be settled by a discussion between the railroad men and the business men in Jacksonville and offered for his railroad to meet any reasonable demand for longer hours. Mr. Capps of the S. A. L. agreed with this and this sentiment became general.

It was at this point that Mr. Beckwith of the East Coast Railway declared himself as being opposed to his road being penalized in any way through the failure of other roads to provide proper facilities. He said that no complaint had ever been made against the Florida East Coast Railway about the manner in which it handled business offered it; that his road was equipped to do business and able to take care of all business offered and had demonstrated this ability by taking

care of the business as it was offered. Mr. Burr said that complaints had been made to him that the East Coast Railway had discriminated against certain shippers; that these complaints were to the effect that certain drays were turned away from the East Coast Railway warehouse and afterwards other drays were received. In answer to this Mr. Beckwith said, "We are ready to pay any and all damages that can be established against us for failure to furnish facilities to any one or for any discrimination. We do not discriminate, we have not discriminated, we simply deny any statement charging us with it." Mr. Burr said, "I have the shipping receipts here and can go into the matter fully." Mr. Beckwith said, "Do so. We are ready to respond in damages to any complaint that can be proven against us or that can be justly brought against us. Enforce your rule or any rule you please to make. Let the Commission adopt any rule it chooses. If it in any way increases our expenses or decreases our revenue we shall fight it." To this Mr. Burr said, "That threat will not deter me one moment from doing my duty, Mr. Beckwith." "I don't give it as a threat," answered Mr. Beckwith, "I simply state our position."

The hearing then adjourned and the railroad representatives left the capital city. In executive session afterwards the Railroad Commission did adopt the rule as printed elsewhere in this article, changing the amount of demurrage to be collected from \$5 to \$2. The reciprocal part of the rule was not put in when it was adopted. It is likely, however, that another hearing will be had on this question and that the rule will be further amended so as to incorporate the reciprocal feature, which will make the railroads pay \$2 per day for failure to furnish cars and the shippers and consignees pay \$2 per day for failure to unload cars when placed.

It is rumored in Hamilton county that there is a movement on foot to place a full county ticket in the field by the Republicans. The plan is to qualify the negroes in that county to vote, to gather together dissatisfied Democrats, old line Whigs, Socialists, and what not, and from this collection of the elements of discontent, to weld a mass that shall be compact enough to form a force sufficient to overwhelm the regular Democratic party. This movement has not yet shaped itself to a definite outline, but rumors of it fill the atmosphere, and will be listened to with at least the interest an experiment along these lines always demands. There are about three hundred negro votes in Hamilton county, which, added to the few white Republican votes and the flotsam and jetsam of other parties, might be amalgamated into an opposition of respectable proportions. To meet this opposition, if the rumors prove to be correct, it behooves Democrats to bring out their full strength to the polls to arrest and overcome it. This will be an entirely efficient method of meeting any such opposition and Democrats should see that it is made use of.

Berlin—Dr. Schultze, the chemist, figured out that any person drinking a pint of beer out of a glass swallows one millionth part of lead, inasmuch as beer absorbs the lead oxide of glass. He advises the use of steins or silver goblets, and says the Bavarians can swallow more beer than the rest of the Germans and remain healthy because they invariably drink their tipples from steins. Germany is eminently a beer drinking country. The consumption of wine is only 5.9 litres per head and year; in France the consumption is above 137 litres per head and year, in Italy 110, in Spain above 80, in Portugal 83 and in Switzerland 74 litres. Five years ago the Germans drank 125 litres of beer per head of population annually, that is 37 litres more than ten years before. After that the temperance people opened a crusade and the consumption of beer fell to 116.5 litres per head of population annually. The Germans also indulge in eight litres of spirits per head of population annually, being the third in the list of whiskey toppers. Whenever the consumption of whiskey decreased that of beer materially increased, which caused the German temperance people to regard beer as the temperance drink par excellence until recently, when they began to fight beer. They tried to get the medical authorities to back them up, but the doctors, who are good tipplers themselves, refused and maintained that moderate use of wine and beer is beneficial rather than otherwise.

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