

Medford's Victorious Fight for Freight Rates



Main Street on a Gala Occasion

Medford's chief commercial accomplishment during the past year has been its successful fight for lower and more equitable freight rates, which will enable it to become a jobbing and distribution center for tributary territory. Three substantial victories have been secured during the year, one through the state railroad commission and two through the Interstate Commerce Commission. Other cases are pending which will still further relieve the situation.

A fourth victory, greater even than the decisions referred to, was the submission to the people of Oregon at the last general election by initiative petition of the equitable rate bill, providing uniform charges on mileage basis, and increasing the spread between car load and less than carloads, thus destroying the jobbing monopoly enjoyed by Portland and enabling any small town to do a jobbing business.

This bill was the first attempt ever made to fix railroad rates by the people and is, as a matter of course, violently assailed by all railroads and corporate interests, as a dangerous precedent and by the Portland jobbing monopoly as well as the state railroad commission which it renders superfluous. Temporary injunctions have been secured in the Federal courts against the measure and hearing will be held in January.

In its fight against the railroad monopoly, Medford has stood alone in the state, with the exception of Baker City. It has financed its fight and secured benefits for all the small cities and people of the state in the way of reduced transportation, without substantial co-operation from them. For years Oregon has groaned under the toll paid its single railroad, yet the lethargy of the people has been such that no intelligent effort was made to remedy the situation.

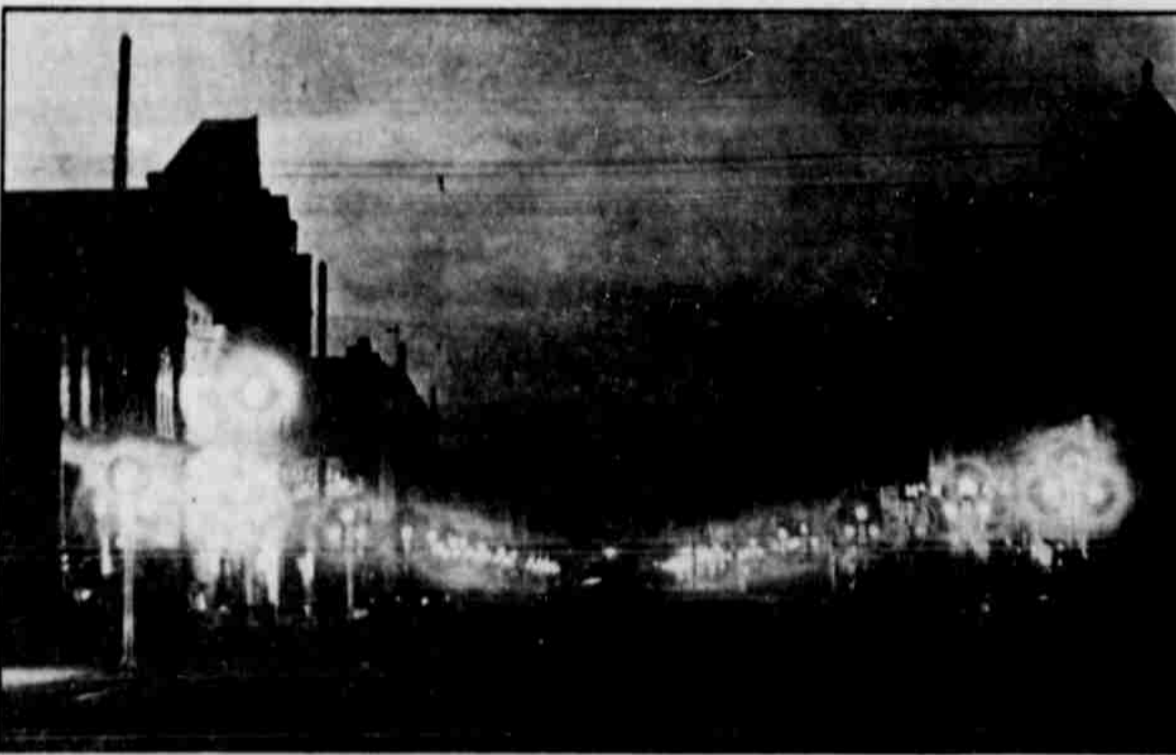
Medford's efforts have attracted national attention. Every traffic expert in the nation has been interested in its aggressive, militant campaign. It has pointed the way to relief from corporate injustice and before the fight ends, will thoroughly shatter the pernicious theory of making rates on "all the traffic will bear"—a theory that is the foundation of rate making in coast states.

Three Years' Fight
Medford's battle for rate reform began three years ago with the organization of the Medford Traffic Bureau, with H. C. Garnett as president, and E. A. Welch as secretary, and a membership comprised of the shippers and progressive citizens of Medford. It has been supported by monthly assessments. The same officers and executive committee have ever since managed its affairs.

The first move of the bureau was to secure the services of Frank H. McCune as traffic expert and attorney for the bureau. He has an enviable record as a rate expert, having won the Spokane rate case, the Reno rate case, the Wool Growers' rate case, and many other cases before the Interstate Commerce Commission. The various cases were prepared by Mr. McCune and presented by him at the various hearings, some of which were held in Medford, some at Salem, others at Portland and Washington, D. C. He has been uniformly successful and his work highly complimented by the Interstate Commerce Commission. In a majority of the cases, Med-



Medford Furniture and Hardware Building



Cluster Lights Illumine Medford Streets

ford has not only had to fight the railroad, but the Portland Chamber of Commerce as intervenor, and in some of them, the state railroad commission which intervened in behalf of other cities, to complicate and embarrass Medford's contention.

Does it pay for any community to be wide-awake enough to tackle the octopus and single-handedly make the fight in behalf of a dormant people. The answer can be gathered from the reductions secured in 1912 in the following cases:

Does it pay to fight for your rights as to lower freight rates according to the above?

The initiative rate bill reads as follows:

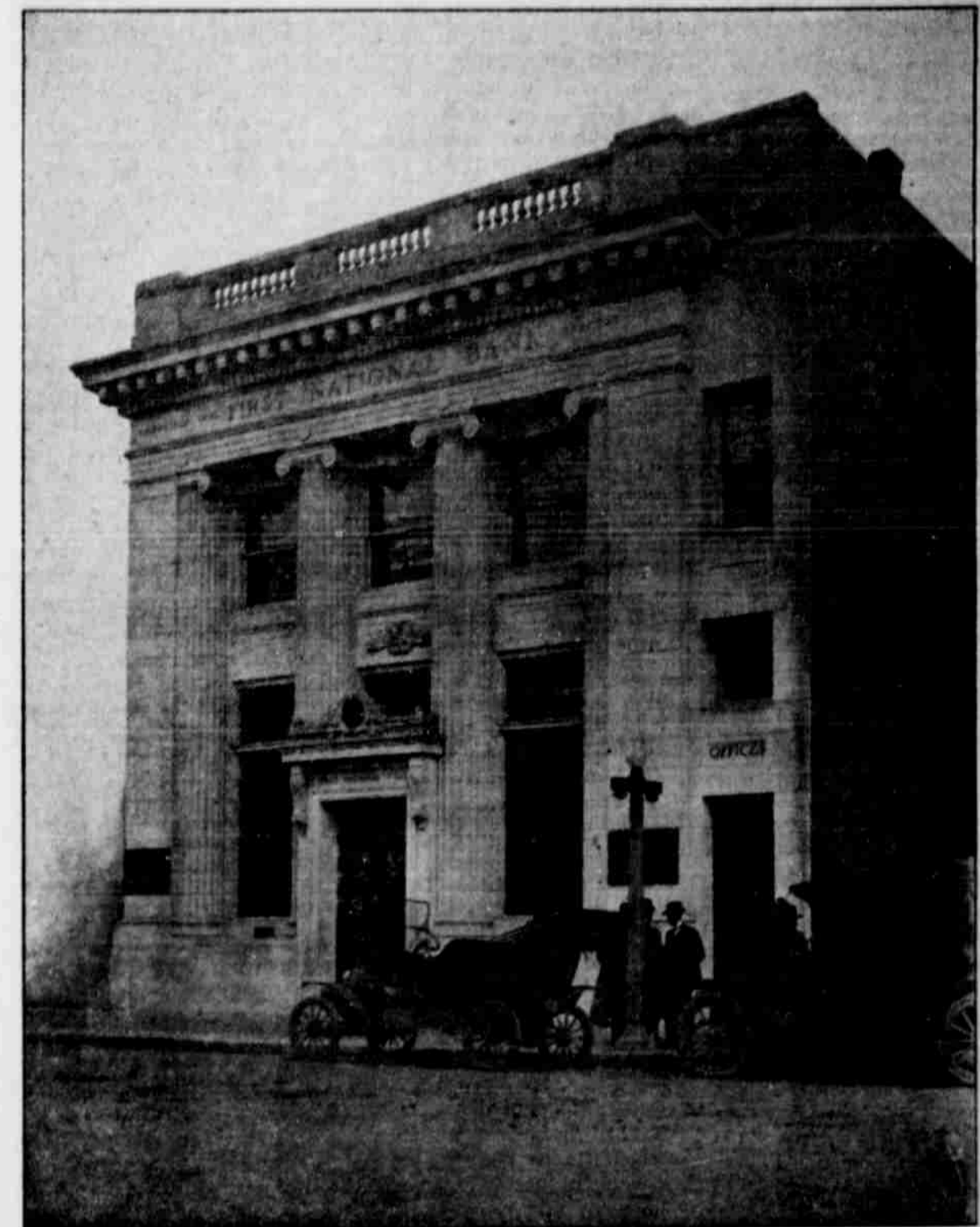
Initiative Rate Bill

An act entitled "An act to provide for a uniform percentage in the relationship of the classification ratings, providing for the establishment of minimum carload weights, to fix the maximum rate on basis of the less than carload rate of the article and the minimum carload weight that may be charged on carload shipments of property, defining the rating upon which the carload rate shall be computed, and prescribing penalties for violations of the provisions of the act."

Be it enacted by the people of the state of Oregon:

Section 1. The classification ratings of freight shall bear a uniform relationship of one class to another class, and the percentage of the first class shall be 100, and the other classes shall be the following percentages of the first class:

Section 2. A minimum carload weight shall be provided for each ar-



First National Bank Building



Garnett-Corvy Building

icle, but no minimum carload weight shall be greater than the actual weight that can be loaded in a car, nor shall a minimum carload weight be fixed with the sole object to secure a high carload rate. Where no minimum carload weight is provided for each article by a railroad, or fixed by an order of the Railroad Commission of Oregon, the minimum carload weight shall be 20,000 pounds.

Section 3. It shall be unlawful for any railroad, as the term is defined in chapter 52, laws of Oregon for the year 1907, creating a railroad commission, to demand, charge, collect or receive a greater compensation for the transportation of property in carload lots than the following:

When the minimum carload weight for an article is fixed at more than 20,000 pounds and not in excess of 30,000 pounds the carload rate shall not exceed 50 per cent of the less than carload rate provided for the article.

When the minimum carload weight for an article is fixed at more than 30,000 pounds and not in excess of 40,000 pounds the carload rate shall not exceed 50 per cent of the less than carload rate provided for the article.

When the minimum carload weight for an article is fixed at more than 40,000 pounds the carload rate shall not exceed 50 per cent of the less than carload rate provided for the article.

When two or more less than carload ratings are given an article the carload rate shall be computed on the lowest less than carload rating given the article, and when two or more articles are permitted to be shipped, or are provided to be shipped, as a mixed carload the carload rate shall be computed on the article contained in the carload which is given the highest less than carload rating.

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land press as well as the railroads, but through the vigorous campaign waged in its behalf by the Medford Traffic Bureau and Baker City Commercial club, carried by nearly 13,000 majority, only two small counties returning a majority against the measure. Its majority in Jackson county was 2300.

The arguments in favor of the bill, which is similar to laws in effect in Iowa and Illinois, are that it will enable any community to build up a jobbing industry. The bill does not affect commodity rates in effect lower than the new rates, but establishes a maximum rate.

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