

## CITY DEFRAUDED OF THOUSANDS IN BIG WATER GRAFT

One Inspector Arrested and  
Sensational Revelations Are  
Promised as Inquiry Begins

Nicholas J. Hayes, Commissioner of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, has discovered that the city has lost hundreds of thousands of dollars through systematic tampering with water meters located in concerns whose annual water bills are unusually large. As a result a sweeping investigation has been ordered.

The first step taken by the commissioner was the arrest of John Klapp, a city water meter inspector, who will be arraigned later in the Jefferson Market Court on a charge of violating Section 142 of the Penal Code. This concerns tampering with water meters.

Seals of sixteen water meters in the Bronx alone have been discovered to have been tampered with. Like conditions have been found in Manhattan and in other boroughs. A special probe is being made of Brooklyn.

A concern which manufactures water meter seals called up Commissioner Hayes last Monday and said a man giving the name of "Clarkson" had called and wanted to buy a water seal with a certain serial number. The commissioner told the manufacturer to arrange a further meeting and Clarkson obtained the seal he asked for. The serial number it contained, investigation showed, was the same as that installed in the Armstrong Corporation, a steam laundry at Nos. 540-548 West 55th Street, Manhattan.

When "Clarkson" called for the meter seal at the office of the manufacturer two detectives were hidden in the room. Thomas M. Murphy, Chief Clerk of the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, says, "Clarkson" and Klapp are the same.

"Our inspectors visited the plant of the Armstrong Corporation," said Mr. Murphy, "and the seal which had been handed to Klapp was found on the Armstrong meter. The counter of the meter showed evidence of having been tampered with. That is, one of the points had been pushed back."

Commissioner Hayes called Commissioner of Accounts Hirschfeld to his aid. The latter issued subpoenas for President Armstrong and Secretary Ferguson of the Steam Laundry company.

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## SLAUGHTER'S LOOT LEFT HIDDEN IN TIRE

He Was to Have Told Where  
\$102,500 Lay Buried, but  
Death Came First.

PINE BLUFFS, Ark., Dec. 12.—Buried somewhere in an automobile tire in Northern Texas is \$102,500 worth of securities. Tom Slaughter's share of loot obtained by his band in numerous bank robberies, according to A. W. Mills, agent for an insurance company.

Mr. Mills said he had had an appointment to meet Slaughter at the penitentiary to-morrow, and the bandit was to have told him the hiding place so the money could be returned before Slaughter went to the electric chair.

Following Slaughter's conviction he professed religion and was told he would have to return the money before he could be forgiven. The outlaw had agreed to do this, but he saw his chance to escape and did so, being killed in the attempt, without revealing the hiding place.

James C. Howard, fellow convict, who killed Slaughter, was hurried to the penitentiary here for safe keeping. Feeling against him was running high and officials said to-day there had been talk of lynching him.

## EDISON FINDS FORD SCHEME AT MUSCLE SHOALS "GREAT"; WOULD KEEP UP ARMS TESTS

Back From Inspection Trip, He  
Approves Fertilizer Plan  
Heartily.

WANTS U. S. PREPARED.

Inventor Says America Should  
Continue Submarine and  
Gas Experiments.

Thomas A. Edison, who has been looking over the Muscle Shoals project for which Henry Ford has made an offer to the Government returned to West Orange to-day.

"Ford is a great mechanic, but he is a little shy on chemistry. That is the reason he asked me to go down there," said the inventor. "I think it's a great project. This country needs fertilizer; needs it for its cotton. You see, cotton seed in some places just sprouts and dies. I am heartily in favor of the scheme."

Mr. Edison, turning to the Arms Conference, declared himself for going ahead in experimentation with death-dealing materials.

"America must keep ahead of the other fellow," he said.

"It would be a great mistake to stop experimenting. I, for one, would have it ahead of any other country in its experiments with gases and submarines."

Discussing an invention by his son, Theodore, the inventor said of the War Department that it was like a man with concussion of the brain, dazed by the war. It accepted nothing and adopted nothing.

He described the invention as a gyroscope run wild. It is a machine gun in the form of a wheel 3 feet in diameter with a velocity of seven miles a minute. It is run by a Ford motor.

"We tried it out at Montclair and we tried it on an island near Key West," said Mr. Edison. "We strung wire entanglements 100 feet wide and 100 feet deep and then set the gun to work on them. It penetrated them."

It was when he was asked whether the War Department had accepted the invention of the son, who is a student at the Massachusetts Tech, that the inventor gave his characterization of the War Department.

"The country," Mr. Edison said, "is coming through its fifth period of depression that I have seen. I expect pre-war conditions to be reached in four or five years. America is like a great curve, the angle being 14 degrees. It goes ahead, swings down and then comes up. Things are improving now."

"I hope the Irish peace comes through. It is hard to get two Irishmen to agree. The Irish Parliament will be a real argumentative body. There will be plenty of real hot stuff there and the American newspaper men that cover it specially will not lack for live copy."

## GERMANS SEEK TO OUST U. S. FILMS IN EUROPE

Big Organizations Unite to Compete With American Product.

BERLIN, Nov. 21 (by mail).—German motion picture manufacturers have perfected a co-operative organization, one of the prime purposes of which is to capture the European trade held by American producers. They are endeavoring to develop a "screen humor," which heretofore has been lacking in their productions. Virtually all Teuton films, until recently, have dealt only with historical, legendary and romantic subjects.

Some of the German companies have engaged American directors and are striving to put American "pep" into their plays, to meet home consumption as well as export demands, for American films smuggled into the country during the last several months proved surprisingly popular.

## B. R. T. BANKRUPTCY LAID TO PAYMENTS OF BIG DIVIDENDS

Receivership Might Have Been  
Avoided if Constituent Line  
Had Cut Annual Per Cent.

The Transit Commission's inquiry to-day revealed that the now bankrupt Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company might possibly have avoided a receivership had the stockholders of the Brooklyn City Railroad, one of the constituent lines, taken less than an annual dividend of 10 per cent. and put some of the profits back to form a surplus against impending hard times.

For many years, the inquiry disclosed, the Brooklyn City Railroad was a money-maker and up to June 30, 1919, paid an annual dividend of 10 per cent. The Brooklyn City Railroad amounted to 44 per cent. of the B. R. T. system.

"Nobody ever suggested to the directors and they never brought up the matter themselves that the dividend, in the light of the outlook, should be decreased?" Clarence

Shearn asked W. S. Menden, General Manager of the B. R. T. for Receiver Lindsey M. Garrison.

"Not to my knowledge," replied Mr. Menden, the witness through whom the condition described was spread upon the record.

Because the directors of the Brooklyn City Railroad collected their 10 per cent. per annum right up to the time when the grip of the B. R. T. slid off the end of the financial line upon which it had been long suspended, the system was disintegrated, many hundreds of transfer points were abolished and extra fares were imposed all over the borough.

Before Mr. Menden took the stand Mr. Shearn read a letter from James R. Sheffield, trustee in bankruptcy for the Interborough-Consolidated Corporation.

The letter explained certain points in the loan made Dec. 31, 1919, by Mr. Sheffield to the Interborough Rapid Transit Company. The letter cleared up any doubt about the Interborough Consolidated loaning the I. R. T. \$1,000,000 after collecting \$500,000—"which left the account just as it was before the checks were interchanged."

It was also shown by Mr. Shearn that the entire funds in the hands of Receiver Sheffield out of which he made \$1,000,000 loan on New Year's eve to the I. R. T. to avoid a receivership, came in part from his collection just previously made that same day from the Interborough Rapid Transit Company of \$500,000.

Mr. Menden said that when the disintegration of the B. R. T. followed the receivership the Brooklyn City Railroad Company, composed of 44 per cent. of the entire mileage, was dropped from the system. Mr. Shearn showed that the Brooklyn City Railroad had been paying its way until the lease was dropped.

The dropping of this lease, Mr. Shearn pointed out, could have been avoided by a slight reduction of the 10 per cent. dividend on the stock and

thus enable the B. R. T. to maintain the whole system.

Mr. Menden said he could not tell who was responsible for the failure to agree to a continuation of transfers between the disintegrated lines. He denied that the motive behind the dropping of the Brooklyn City Railroad from the B. R. T. system was to discontinue the free transfer privilege.

Mr. Menden admitted that the second fare zone on the Coney Island line from Delancey Street was moved farther west, "so that more people would pay a double fare than they did before."

Similar westward movements of double fare points were made on Franklin Avenue and other lines to exact more double fares.

The witness said that the fare zones have resulted in additional revenues at 10 cents per passenger. Mr. Menden supported Receiver Garrison's testimony to the effect that 1,370 transfer points had been dropped through the breaking up of the B. R. T. system. The average fare per passenger in 1919, including transfers at two cents, double fares, &c., was 53.2 cents. The average fare per passenger to-day on all lines operated by the Receiver, including two-cent transfers and double fare transfers is 54.2 cents.

Gross earnings of the B. R. T. in the past few months have improved according to the witness, operating expenses have decreased, and there has been an increase in labor efficiency. Surface cars are carrying more passengers with less cars.

Mr. Menden said he had no quarrel with the Transit Commission's plan, and he thought it desirable to pool joint expenses so as to distribute the maintenance charges, etc.

It developed that when the Brooklyn City Railroad was dropped out of the B. R. T. system, the Brooklyn City had to hire 500 cars from the B.

R. T. Mr. Menden denied there was a difference of 50 cents a ton between the coal prices paid by the B. R. T. and the I. R. T.

"It would be a decided benefit to the public and some material advantage to the company in the matter of costs," said Mr. Menden in answer to the question of existing franchisees were disregarded and all the Brooklyn lines reouted for more economical and more efficient service.

The financial reports of the New York Consolidated were put in evidence.

KENTUCKY LAW IS UPSET.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 12.—The Kentucky law requiring corporations to register before doing business in that State cannot apply to a corporation engaged in interstate commerce, the Supreme Court held in a decision handed down to-day.

## CITY AGAIN SUES FOR LOST RECORD

Second Suit Instituted Against  
Pottsville Man Who Picked Up  
Book as Antique.

POTTSVILLE, Pa., Dec. 12.—The City of New York, through local counsel, to-day filed a second suit against Jacob Spanuth of this city to recover Deed Book No. 1 of the City of New York, which Spanuth picked up as an antique collector while in the metropolis some years ago.

In the first suit the city's board of

\$10,000 to cover an action in reply was found to be defective. The book contains the only legal record of ownership of millions of dollars' worth of Astor and other property holdings. It had been thrown out as junk following the transfer of records to the new Municipal Building in New York. Spanuth demands \$2,000 for its return.

TWO TRY SLEDGE BY GAS. James Bozer, 55y., of No. 241 West 22d Street and an unidentified man, about forty-eight, five feet nine inches, gray hair and eyes, attempted suicide at Bozer's address to-day. They were removed to Bellevue Hospital suffering from illuminating gas poisoning.

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