

RELIABLE STORAGE. ROBERT CARRIE. FIFTEENTH YEAR. CLEVELAND'S CHEAP LIGHT.

The People of Cleveland Fight the Gas Companies and Effect a Saving of Three Million Dollars—How Millions Have Been Made by the World Reporter's Visit to Cleveland.

CLEVELAND, O., May 15.—It is a fairly busy day yesterday investigating the conditions of the price of gas in this city from 11 per cent to less than 75 cents.

Investigation leads me to the conclusion that the old war-time prices of gas are doomed to divide down from one-half to one-third of what they were and are. It is not so many years ago that the daily average of the United States dropped from war prices, which were five cents in the west and three cents in the east, down to two cents and one cent a foot.

West maintained the old prices later than those in the east, but now they are all on about the same low level. And they are all making more money and there are more of them. Street railway fares also manifest a downward tendency.

The people of Toronto enjoy a decent cut in old-time prices, but the city that still has the franchises which can make better terms than even Toronto did. The city of Detroit, for instance, will insist on eight-for-a-quarter tickets, good all day, from the company that gets a franchise to operate an electric system in its streets. It will not be long before those cities that exercise any reasonable control over their gas companies will enjoy the same low prices that obtain here, or even lower prices.

The history of gas production in Toronto gives very conclusively that we in Toronto are paying from 20 to 35 per cent more for gas than we should. I will proceed to give the result of my investigation.

General Meyer takes the facts. Early in the day I called upon General E. S. Meyer, the counsel who acted for the city in the legal proceedings that resulted in the reduced rates. The general has a suite of carpeted rooms in the Wilshire Building in Superior street. Here he was seated in his noise-proof library, engaged in abstract thought. No papers were on the table before him and he looked as if he were simply thinking, in the middle of a brown study of some sort. The large room was lined so thoroughly with acoustical tones that the walls were invisible. He consulted my cards and explained the object of my visit. The general politely asked me to be seated and then he outlined the salient points of the city's celebrated contract with its two gas companies.

He said in effect: According to our State law the city of Cleveland is empowered to regulate the price of gas supplied by its companies, and that price must be a reasonable one, and it is left to the courts to say whether it is or is not a reasonable price. In the early part of 1911 the citizens thought that \$1 per 1000 feet of gas was excessive, and they petitioned the city with the two gas companies to secure a reduction. The companies refused to do so, and the matter went to court. During these legal proceedings I was consulted by the corporation. The proceedings went on for more than a year. During this time 7000 feet of evidence were taken, and the proceedings terminated in a compromise.

A Profit Is On At 60 Cents. Our contention was that the gas sold in Cleveland at a fair profit for 90 cents per 1000. And I proved it, too. I proved it out of the mouths of their own witnesses. Mr. Miles, the gas man, testified that the Cleveland Gaslight & Coke Company, both established in fact by their own testimony, had charged the city into detail and I showed that the city's selling gas at 60 cents, earn a dividend of 12 per cent on the investment of 65 cents, and that the city's gas companies are managed more economically than any other gas company I know of. I may say 12 per cent on the investment of 65 cents, and that is more than any other gas company I know of.

Well, my submission is that most of evidence to the court, and the companies say the case was against them and they were agreed to a compromise. The terms of settlement are thus set out in my report as corporation counsel for the city:

Terms of Settlement. In May, 1911, your honorable body sought to accomplish a reduction in the price charged by the several companies for gas furnished to the city and private consumers, which resulted in a year's operation. The terms of settlement are as follows: The city shall pay for gas at the rate of 60 cents per 1000 feet of gas, the payment semi-annually on the 1st of January and the 1st of July. The city shall pay for gas at the rate of 60 cents per 1000 feet of gas, the payment semi-annually on the 1st of January and the 1st of July.

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that the total amount of capital put into the Cleveland Gaslight Company was just \$100,000. The capital stock today stood at about three millions, and except the \$100,000 all money required to buy and install their large plant was raised by the company.

The People's Gaslight Company is doing well in its competition with the Gaslight Company. You cannot buy stock in that concern.

They Exhibit Hostility. Calling at the office of the Cleveland Gaslight and Coke Company I had a short interview with Messrs. M. S. Greenough, manager, and C. H. Beardale, secretary. Mr. Greenough is reputed to be one of the cleverest men in business in the whole United States. These gentlemen mentioned they were acquainted with Mr. Pearson of the Consumers' Gas Company of Toronto. When they learned the object of my visit they answered my questions with studied politeness. It was evident that Mr. Pearson and the Toronto company had their corporate and personal affairs in order.

Mr. Greenough said the capital of the company was \$7,750,000 and one cent a copy. The paper in Toronto West maintained the old prices later than those in the east, but now they are all on about the same low level. And they are all making more money and there are more of them.

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A BUSY DAY AT THE CAPITAL. GOOD PROGRESS MADE WITH THE TARIFF IN COMMITTEE.

Several Items Passed Without Much Discussion—Mr. Brannan Charges Mr. Turcott With Violating the Independence of Parliament—O'Connor and Hogg Over-Charged Government.

OTTAWA, May 15.—The following bills from the Senate were read a first time: To amend the Insurance Act, respecting the arrest, trial and imprisonment of youthful offenders; to amend, and respecting the Red Deer Valley Railway and Coal Co.; and respecting the Manitoba and Northwestern Railway Co.

Mr. Brannan rose to a question of privilege. He begged to state that he was "credibly informed and believed" that he could establish that Arthur Joseph Turcott, M.P. for Montserrat, while member of the House between March, 1912, and February, 1913, was a member of the firm of J. P. Barrett & Fretwell, which had a contract with the Government in the name of J. P. Barrett & Fretwell, and that the contract was in reality for the use and benefit of the Government. That Mr. Turcott also had a contract with the Department of Marine and Fisheries for supplies. Mr. Brannan moved that these charges be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Immunities, and to report whether Mr. Turcott has violated his oath.

Sir John Thompson said that the motion, being one of privilege, was entitled to be read for a day or two. It could be printed on the votes and proceedings. From his casual reading it had reduced to more than two or three members could have understood it. It was agreed that the motion should stand as a notice of motion for a day.

Revision of the Voters' Lists. Before the orders of the day were called the leader of the Opposition brought up the matter of the revision of the voters' lists. We are now, he said, "within 10 days of the time appointed by law for the revision of the voters' lists, and he wanted to know whether it was the intention of the Government that the revision should take place under the present provisions, or under the law as it was proposed to be amended.

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CHARLES MOSS THE CHOICE. NOMINATED BY SOUTH TORONTO LIBERALS LAST NIGHT.

The Choice Unanimous—W. M. Hall Invited to Make a Contest, But Refused—Mr. O'Connor and Hogg Over-Charged Government.

Before the Public Accounts Committee Mr. O'Connor was again subjected to the cross-examination of Mr. Lister. They went thoroughly into the accounts of O'Connor & Hogg for the past year, and would trace a Philadelphia lawyer to follow all the intricacies of coats for trials, demurrers, consultations, etc., and to whether or not a judge's fiat had been obtained for certain expenses, and so on.

The examination was purely technical, and as nearly as the average layman could grasp it amounted to this: That O'Connor & Hagg had overcharged the Government and that the Government had paid for the law 50 per cent more than it should have.

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