ROBS VICTORIA OF A LARGE SUM

EPRIVED OF RIGHT TO TAX FIRE INSURANCE

Item of $15,000 a Year Struck Out of Civic Revenue by the Government

Legislative Press Gallery, February 20.

As if the original terms of the new Fire Insurance Act were not enough to deprive Victoria of the revenue which it is in receipt of, and which is applied towards the very heavy expenditure on fire apparatus which the underwriters insist upon as a return for half decent rates of insurance, Attorney-General Bowser has made sure of the job by repealing in specific language the power granted to this city over forty years ago to tax fire insurance companies.

This right was first given in 1869 and confirmed and extended in 1871, and it is the act of the latter year, the first after the province entered confederation, that is now to be killed. At last night's sitting Mr. Bowser moved an amendment to the bill before the House, repealing the act of 1871 as well as the Fire Inquiry Act, chapter 81 of the Revised Statutes.

The "Fire Companies' Aid Ordinance, 1896," referred to in, and amended by the act of 1871, is ordinance No. 121 of the united colony of British Columbia. This was designed "to enable the municipal council of the city of Victoria to establish a permanent fund for the support of the fire establishments of the said city." It provided for the levy of a fire rate not exceeding one quarter of one per cent. on property, and an annual rate not exceeding one-eighth of one per cent. levied upon all fire insurance agents upon the amount of insurance on all real and personal property within the city limits insured within the year ending December 31 preceding the fixing of the rate. Agents are obliged to make a return of the properties and amounts of insurance. A limit of $3,000 was fixed as the maximum to be raised under this ordinance and the money was directed to be handed over to "the managing committees of the several fire companies" for their "efficient maintenance and support."

The act of 1871 abolishes this limit and its main clauses are as follows:

"In addition to the rates levied and collected, or hereafter to be levied and collected, upon and from all agents of fire insurance companies issuing policies of insurance against fires within the limits of the city of Victoria, upon property situate within such limits, there shall be payable to the municipal council thereof by the agent or agents of each and every such fire insurance company so carrying on business within the said limits, the annual sum of three hundred dollars; such sum to be payable by four equal quarterly payments, each of seventy-five dollars in each year, on the 31st day of March, the 30th day of June, the 30th day of September, and the 31st day of December, respectively; and the first of such quarterly payments shall be made on the 31st day of March, A. D., 1871, and they shall continue thenceforth to be made on each such quarter day as above mentioned.

"Every such quarterly payment shall be made when due, as aforesaid, by the agent or agents of every such fire insurance company, to the clerk of the said council, at the council chambers, in the city of Victoria; and such clerk shall keep an account thereof; and if any such quarterly payment shall be in arrear for a period of thirty days, the same shall be recoverable by action, to be brought against such agent or agents, or the company which he or they represent, at the election of the said clerk, as a debt due to him and in his name, in any court of competent jurisdiction in the colony; and all moneys raised by virtue of this act, after deducting the expenses of collection or recovery thereof, shall be applied from time to time, by the said municipal council, towards the maintenance of the said fire establishments, in such manner and subject to such conditions as the said council shall in their uncontrolled discretion think most proper."

H. C. Brewster, on Mr. Bowser's amendment being read, asked if the attorney-general had made any inquiry as to the amount the municipalities would lose by being deprived of this source of income.

Hon. Mr. Bowser replied that he had underestimated the amount collected by municipalities, Vancouver's being very little, and he had not included the income in Victoria, where, he was informed, it was about $15,000 a year. The insurance commission, however, had gone carefully into the matter and recommended that, as the province was putting an extra tax on insurance and an extra tax on insurance companies, it would not be wise to allow municipalities to inflict any further taxation. This was similar to the law in regard to banks. In any case the companies pointed out that if taxed by municipalities they would simply have to charge so much higher premiums, so municipalities really would gain nothing. Victoria had not taken any objection to the proposal.

Mr. Brewster replied that no objection was taken because Victoria had an act of 1871, but in repealing that act a sum of $15,000 a year was being taken from the civic income. He asked the attorney-general how the change would affect Nanaimo, Nelson, Rossland and the principal provincial towns.

Mr. Bowser, replying from memory, said the total amount collected by municipalities from fire insurance companies was $30,000.

C. E. Tisdall (Vancouver) remarked that if Victoria collected $15,000 and Vancouver $5,000 this left only $10,000 scattered over the province.

Mr. Brewster contended that the sum was too large for the municipalities to lose—and not worth while to the province—and gave notice that he will move to restore the right when the bill comes up at a later stage.

Victoria collected $12,050 from fire insurance companies in 1908, $12,825 in 1909 and close on $15,000 last year.

DESPERATE CHINESE LOOT VILLAGES

FIGHTING REPORTED IN PLAGUE DISTRICTS

Unemployed Men Turn Bandits and Defeat Troops Sent to Restore Order

St. Petersburg, Feb. 21.—What is practically civil war prevails in the plague stricken district of Manchuria to-day. Thousands of unemployed men have turned bandits and are looting villages. Chinese troops sent to stop the plundering have been defeated repeatedly.

Fighting Plague.

Pekin, Feb. 21.—There is noticeable activity by the Chinese government to stay the spread of the plague, and sanitary measures are being strictly enforced in all the towns where a few weeks ago the disease was allowed full swing. Instructions have been issued that every village burn its dead.

The panic and fear of the plague have overridden the Chinese superstition against cremation of the bodies of the victims, and now almost daily the torch is applied to piles of hastily constructed coffins, among which are often seen bodies wrapped only in shrouds.

In Kwang Changtse, near the Manchurian railway, where the daily death list has numbered 100 or more, masked men go about with sleds and pick up the bodies lying in the streets where they have been placed by relatives. The sleds transport them to the west gate, and from there they are removed in carts to the cremation grounds. Every house is inspected daily.

The Mukden authorities are promptly dispatching physicians and nurses, with all the requisites for taking care of the sick, to villages where new outbreaks occur, and this precaution, it is believed will result in checking the disease.

A correspondent who visited Hu Lan, thirty miles north of Harbin, found that town sorely afflicted.

In one village nearby where formerly seventy people lived there are now thirty-four, the other thirty-six having died from the plague and been cremated.

According to government statistics, there have been few deaths in Pekin and Tien Tsin.

Experts Alarmed.

London, Feb. 21.—English experts today are growing more and more alarmed over the Far Eastern plague situation.

"In spite of some skeptics," says the London Morning Standard, "it may be doubted if, unless means can be devised to stamp out the infection, an epidemic of the most virulent type can be expected.

"That pneumonic plague has obtained a foothold in east Anglia is unquestionable. So far there is no evidence of its spread to other parts of England, but the past history of the plague contains many instances where the full force of the virus has been developed very slowly."

GRAND JURY AT WORK AT SEATTLE

New Chief of Police and Members of Force Give Evidence

(Times Leased Wire.)

Seattle, Wash., Feb. 21.—The secret session of the grand jury that is investigating the charges of corruption and graft in the police department under former Chief Wappenstein to-day had several prominent saloonkeepers before the inquisitorial board, and it is said that Gideon Tupper, saloonkeeper, will be compelled to give bond before he will be permitted to leave the city. Tupper is ill and wants to go to Hot Springs, Ark., for treatment. Tupper is said to have been an officer of the Northern club, a gambling enterprise that flourished here last spring under Mayor Gill.

A number of policemen have been called before the grand jury and it is said that these men are accused of having collected the regular weekly tribute from the unfortunate women and to have turned it over to their superiors.

Chief of Police Claude W. Bannick, who was a police captain under Wappenstein, was before the grand jury to-day.

SHOOTS HIMSELF.

Spokane, Wash., Feb. 21.—Herbert W. Counter, a former resident of Minneapolis, and who has been living in Spokane for the past four years, committed suicide at 2:30 this morning by shooting himself. Acquaintances ascribe the deed to worry over family affairs, followed by a drinking bout. Counter is said to have a family in Minneapolis. For some time he has worked at Hillyard, a suburb of Spokane, as a jeweler.

AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE.

WIFE—What's the matter, dear? Are you ill?

HUSBAND—Had a hideous nightmare last night. Dreamt that Premier McBride made a promise to Victoria—and kept it!

RECIPROCITY WILL PASS U. S. SENATE

RATIFICATION LIKELY BEFORE ADJOURNMENT

Money Kings Fear Disturbance of Business If Extra Session is Called

(Times Leased Wire.)

Washington, D. C., Feb. 21.—Following a conference this afternoon with President Taft, Senator Carter of Montana announced that the Canadian reciprocity bill would be ratified before the senate adjourned. As Idaho is lined up solidly against the measure, Senator Weyburn is expected to lead the opposition when the bill is brought up in the senate for final action.

Declaring that the introduction of the Canadian reciprocity has caused a reduction of seven cents in the price of wheat, representatives of farmers and Master Granges headed by N. J. Batchelder, master of the National Grange, to-day notified the senate finance committee that their organizations would fight the bill to a finish.

"The treaty is decidedly unfair to the American farmer," said Batchelder today. "It is a jug handled affair, with Canada owning the jug and the United States the handle. The farmers will endure free trade in farm products and continued protection to manufacturers, but they will not stand for the reciprocity treaty. The mere introduction of the measure has already caused a big decline in wheat and its passage would work a great harm to the average farmer."

Representative Gaines of West Virginia tried to force a bill through the committee on means and ways providing for absolute free trade between Canada and the United States for twenty years. The bill requires both countries to adopt the same customs duties upon products of other countries.

The committee adjourned leaving the measure pending.

Fearful of business disturbance if an extra session of congress is called, agents of the money kings to-day are bringing the greatest possible pressure to bear on President Taft to induce him to forego his declared purpose, no matter what the action of congress on reciprocity and his other pet projects.

"Let us have a rest," is the plaint to the president. "We don't want an extra session. It will keep business in a turmoil, because the Democrats are apt to start anything when they take hold of the reigns of government. We want a tariff rest until December, any way."

No indication as yet has been given as to how President Taft regards the plea of "big business," but it is known that every resource of the interests is being brought to play to induce him to allow the legislators to go quietly home, even if his reciprocity programme is not endorsed.

Defends Bill.

Cleveland, O., Feb. 21.—Prophesying that President Taft will hold congress in session all summer if necessary, to pass the reciprocity measure, Congressman Hill of Connecticut addressed the chamber of commerce here today on behalf of the bill.

"Reciprocity," he said, "will not affect prices—at least not perceptibly. That was not the intention of its authors. The benefits will come through the steadying of the markets in both Canada and the United States and by stimulating trade by the opening of a way for a freer exchange of products.

"In my opinion the only doubt as to whether the senate will pass the bill will depend on when the finance committee makes its report on the measure. If a vote is reached I am confident that it will carry. And it must pass, even if it takes all summer to carry it through.

"There are 41 schedules placed on the free list and reductions are made in more than 90 others. The changes sought would open up a great market for hundreds of other articles which have not been named."

TWO KILLED IN RAILWAY WRECK

Four Others Will Probably Die as Result of Their Injuries

(Times Leased Wire.)

Stillwater, Okla., Feb. 21.—Details of the train wreck near here in which two persons were killed and four probably fatally injured were received to-day. The dead: Dr. Albert Love, Greenfield, Okla.; Mrs. L. M. Rose, Stillwater, Okla.

Eight were slightly injured.

Three coaches were derailed. The wreck is supposed to have been caused by a slide of a section of water soaked track.

Mail Train Wrecked.

Palisade, Nev., Feb. 1.—A broken rail is to-day held responsible for the wrecking last night of the eastbound China and Japan mail, resulting in the injury of fifteen passengers. Railroad officials say that owing to the cold weather, the rail snapped when the weight of the engine and tender passed over it. None was seriously hurt.

Twenty-two Injured.

Teno, Nev., Feb. 21. — Twenty-two passengers who were injured in the wreck near Palisade last night when the eastbound China and Japan mail was ditched, received treatment to-day in the Elko hospital.

FALL PROVES FATAL.

Vancouver, Feb. 20. — Leong Jong Bow, a Chinaman living at 23 Pender street east, fell down the stairs of the building at a late hour on Thursday night, fracturing the base of his skull. His injuries were so severe that as a result he succumbed at the General hospital in the early hours of the following morning. The actual cause of his fall is not known, but it appears that the man dropped at least the whole of one flight, landing on the back of his head.

ANOTHER BODY RECOVERED.

Astoria, Ore., Feb. 21.—Another body, believed to be that of Captain Latham or Charles Larson of the schooner Oshkosh, which was wrecked February 13, has been recovered on the beach near the Columbia river jetty, according to word received here to-day.

This makes the fourth body recovered. Six men were drowned.

BRIDE ENDS HER LIFE.

Los Angeles, Feb. 21.—Mrs. Nellie Ybara Le Brun, 20 years old, and a bride of six weeks, committed suicide by strangling herself with a rope adjusted to a doorknob in her home. Ill-health is believed to have been the cause.

VETO BILL IN HOUSE OF COMMONS

MEASURE INTRODUCED BY PREMIER ASQUITH

Says Lords Committed Political Suicide When They Rejected the 1909 Budget

(Times Leased Wire.)

London, Feb. 21.—The Lords' veto bill to-day was introduced in the House of Commons by Premier Asquith. In speaking to the subject of the introduction of the measure, he declared that an unprecedented situation would result if the Lords' rejection of the 1909 budget went unchallenged. He said:

"If you leave this power in the Lords' hands it will revolutionize constitutional practice, enabling the Lords to force the resignation of the ministry by rejecting finance bills."

He called the rejection of the 1909 budget the "most stupendous political blunder ever perpetrated."

"On that fatal day," he said, "the Lords knew that they had committed political suicide. The Liberals are not in favor of abolishing the second chamber; they merely wish to remedy the evil of unlimited veto."

The bill provides that money bills passing the Commons shall be sent to the Lords at least a month before the end of the session and that if it is not passed or amended within a month after being submitted it shall become a law on royal consent. If any bill, other than a money measure, passes the Commons at three successive sessions, the Lords rejecting it at each session, it shall after the third rejection become a law, the King assenting. Failure to pass a bill shall be deemed a rejection.

If the Lords defeat the veto bill Premier Asquith will demand the creation of enough Liberal peers to change the political complexion of the upper house.

BURNED TO DEATH.

Melbourne, Feb. 21.—A fire broke out in a private house in Auckland, New Zealand, and two children were burned to death under tragic circumstances. The family took refuge on the iron veranda, where the two children were slowly roasted to death, the others being unable to render help owing to their terrible injuries.

CHAUFFEUR SENT TO PRISON.

(Special to the Times.)

Toronto, Seb. 21.—Russell White, a chauffeur, was sentenced to seven days in jail at the police court this morning for using his employer's automobile without permission. Hitherto fines have been imposed for this offence.

FIRE ON BATTLESHIP.

Boston, Feb. 21.—A board of inquiry to-day is investigating the fire in the dynamo room of the battleship New Jersey which last night imperilled that vessel. It is believed that faulty wiring caused a short circuit and started the blaze. The flames were prevented from reaching the magazine by the heroic efforts of the crew.

WILL CONTINUE FIGHT.

Fresno, Cal., Feb. 21.—Eight Industrial Workers of the World held in the local jail have rejected the proposal of the city to release them providing they would abide by an ordinance restricting street speaking to the court house block on K street.

The Industrialists declared they desired to speak in any portion of the city they chose, and announced that they would serve their jail sentences and continue their fight for free speech.

The designation of K street as a public meeting place was proposed by the supervisors and taken up by the city.

STRUGGLE LIKELY TO BE LONG ONE

U. S. Prepares to Keep Soldiers on Mexican Boundary for Several Months

Huachuca, Ariz., Feb. 21.—That the United States government anticipates a long struggle between the warring factions in Mexico, and the Mexican revolution, in the eyes of officials at least, has become more than an opera bouffe war, is seen here in preparations by the United States army for a long term of service on the border.

Acting under orders from Washington, Gen. Schuyler prepared to establish ration stations at regular intervals in the trouble zone and arranged to have supply trains carry enough food to them to last the soldiers engaged in patrol duty for several months. The word was passed out to the men to include summer clothes in their equipment.

A troop of the 12th Cavalry from Fort Huachuca arrived yesterday to relieve the 8th Cavalry. With the 2nd Cavalry, the 8th will sail for Manila on March 6.

BOILERMAKERS' STRIKE.

New York Central Declares Strikers Will Be Replaced on the Entire System.

Cleveland, Feb. 21.—The New York Central railroad, to break the strike of 800 boilermakers, to-day brought 50 strikebreakers from Chicago to the Collinwood shops. The strikers are to be replaced on the entire system.

Vice-President Weyand of the Boilermakers' Union, said to-day that unless the company comes to terms within a few days the machinists and their helpers will be called out.

Kansas City, Mo., Feb. 21.—President Franklin of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, said today that the New York Central was the only railroad affected by the boilermakers' strike. He announced that 2,000 men would be out by to-night.

SEATTLE CIVIC PRIMARY.

Members of Council Who Served Under Mayor Gill Seek Re-election.

Seattle, Wash., Feb. 21.—With sixty-eight candidates in the field, Seattle voters are choosing by primary election eighteen candidates to-day, nine of whom will be later elected to the city council. Every member of the present council that served under Mayor Gill is seeking re-election, but chances of more than two being successful are slim, according to students of the situation.

During the past few days the women voters have been holding congresses, having candidates at the meetings to answer questions regarding their fitness for office. Splendid weather today promises a heavy turnout of the women whose ballots, it is admitted, will swing the successful ones into office.

WANT CONTRACT WITH COMPANY CANCELLED

'Frisco Shippers Look to Secretary of War Dickinson to End Rate War

San Francisco, Feb. 21.—Local shippers to-day are looking to Secretary of War Dickinson for an action that will end the Panama freight rate war instituted by the Pacific Mail and American-Hawaiian Steamship Companies for the alleged purpose of driving the California-Atlantic Steamship Company out of competition in the isthmian freight carrying business.

Because of a contract between the Pacific Mail and the Panama railroad, which is federal property, the government is the party to attempt to throttle competition. Efforts will be made to have the government, through Dickinson, cancel its contract with the Pacific Mail Company.

TWO SUSPECTS ARRESTED.

Winnipeg, March 21.—Aaron Rafeit and Violet Cinclair have been gathered in by the police here on suspicion of having been connected with a big diamond robbery in San Francisco a year ago. The amount of booty secured was valued at about $10,000, and the couple have been travelling, presumably on the proceeds. They took in the prize fight at Reno on July 4, then visited South America, New York, Montreal and other points of interest. Word of their capture was sent to San Francisco and orders to detain them here received. It is expected that an officer and papers for extradition will be sent, but the prisoners say they will not go back without a fight in the courts here.

TO FORM NEW ASSOCIATION.

(Special to the Times.)

Toronto, Feb. 21.—The commercial travellers of Canada have decided to form a Christian Association of their own and no longer be a branch of the existing American Association of Gideon

TERMS FOR PIPE LINE AGREED ON

SETTLEMENT REACHED OVER WATER SUPPLY

Private Bills Committee Deals With Matter Between Oak Bay and Victoria

(From Tuesday's Daily.)

Before the private bills committee of the legislature this morning an agreement was reached in regard to the water supply of Oak Bay from the Esquimalt Waterworks Company, the city and the municipality officers at last reaching an agreement satisfactory to both. The agreement is that a pipe line shall be run from Esquimalt to Oak Bay, which the city of Victoria will eventually purchase, but the pipe line is not to take a more circuitous route than would be of due advantage to either the city or the corporation.

The matter of settling the route is left to the officials of the city and municipality, but failing these reaching an agreement, there will be arbitration proceedings before the chief water commissioner of the province, W. S. Drewry.

E. V. Bodwell, K. C., for the municipality, asked that several changes be made in the bill, and all were agreed to, being minor changes of a word here and there, with the exception to an alteration to clause 3, providing that the pipe line should be constructed with due regard to the finances of the municipality. He said the city might control the situation by not consenting to any but a pipe line which would make the matter impossible to Oak Bay, and the city might want to take the line round through Saanich so as to have advantage of it in later years. He said the city might compel Oak Bay to build a pipe line the municipality could not finance. Oak Bay, however, was willing to go to the extent of $100,000, and he suggested the liability of Oak Bay be fixed at that sum, and Victoria could then have any kind of pipe line desired and pay the additional expense.

W. J. Taylor, K. C., said the city did not want to take over an inadequate pipe line, or build by a circuitous route. He objected to any new conditions being brought in. The pipe line had to be of use to the city otherwise the money would be thrown away. Mr. Taylor said the city would not put Oak Bay to any unnecessary expense because eventually the city would pay for it.

The committee heard both counsel and then considered the matter. The conclusion was reached eventually and appeared satisfactory to both sides. The bill will now have to pass the House, and after becoming law the route and the size of the line will be determined between the municipality and the city, and if an agreement cannot be reached the provincial water commissioner will arbitrate.

BURNABY BOARD OF TRADE.

New Westminster, Feb. 20.—At the first annual meeting of the Burnaby Board of Trade officers for the year were elected, and a large amount of business transacted. The board was organized a year ago by Publicity Commissioner C. H. Stuart-Wade, and has become an important factor in the life of the municipality. Its membership has grown from the few who gathered together twelve months ago, to 78 recorded at the last meeting.

The close of the first year of the board was celebrated by a smoking concert, when addresses congratulatory and optimistic, were delivered by prominent citizens of the municipality. At the smoker 26 business men became members.

President B. G. Walker was re-elected to the presidency of the board for a second term. Reeve J. W. Weart was elected honorary president and ex-Reeve P. Byrne was elected honorary vice-president. C. L. Sprott refused the nomination for vice-president, and T. P. Morrison was unanimously elected to that office. Councillor Coldicutt was re-elected secretary-treasurer by unanimous vote. The following chairmen of committees were appointed: Agriculture, C. F. Sprott; navigation, P. Byrne; municipal, J. C. Allen; transportation, F. M. Britton; roads and bridges, W. Newsome; commerce and industries, T. P. Morrison; finance, P. B. Brown; legislation, L. C. Hill; advertising, G. S. Vickers.

HANGED HIMSELF IN BARN.

Cornwall Ont., Feb. 21.—Samuel State, aged about 60, hanged himself with a rope in his barn in the second concession of Canabruck near Farran's, yesterday. He started with his son to visit a neighbor's, but sending the boy ahead he returned and made away with himself.

"TAX" ON BACHELORS.

Money Will Be Used to Send Jewish Immigrants to Farms.

Chicago, Feb. 21.—To raise a fund to send Jewish immigrants from unhealthy tenement districts to farms, the Young Men's Associated Jewish charities of Chicago propose a graduate "tax" on bachelors 30 years old or over. The plan as outlined by George W. Alschuler has met with favor among Chicago Jews. According to present plans, the tax is to be increased $5 for every five years the bachelors are older than 30. Accordingly, a bachelor 50 years old would pay $20 a year tax.

SETTLES DOMESTIC TROUBLES.

New York, Feb. 20.—Friends of Robert Winthrop Chanler, husband of Mlle. Lina Cavalieri, claim to-day that he has settled his domestic differences with the prima dona and that all court proceedings have been dropped. It is said Mlle. Cavalieri relinquishes her marriage contract for a small sum. Oresto Cavalieri, brother of the singer, is said to have arranged the settlement.