

THERE IS A COMBINE

Inter-State Commerce Commission Reports on the Scarcity of Fuel in the Northern States

Washington, Jan. 10.—The cause, but not the cure, for the car shortage in the northwest and the consequent coal famine in North Dakota, have been discussed by the members of the interstate commerce commission...

It is a fair inference, from all the testimony, that the real cause of the coal scarcity in North Dakota was such an abundance of west bound traffic at the head of the lakes that cars were not available in the congested state of that terminal...

It is his letter of transmission to the president, Mr. Lane says the report will be forwarded in due course with the special recommendations of the commission as a whole as to what legislation, if any, may be deemed advisable.

Referring to the report that the coal famine was due to the presence of a trust or combination between dealers in coal which fixed the price in the northwest and refused to sell to outsiders or "irregulars," the report says:

A COMBINATION. "The commission has gained indisputable evidence of an agreement between coal dealers to maintain prices and to boycott all who do not agree, but there is no evidence at all justifying the contention that this combination is chargeable with the coal shortage prevailing, nor that the railroads were party in any way to such conspiracy."

The report of the commission deals with the coal famine in North Dakota and presents the conditions of distress found to have existed in the state. The remedies which the commission proposes to work out include a proposed plan for a car clearing house or car pool and reciprocal car demurrage.

Financial loss to a large amount in the northwest is shown to have been caused by the failure of the railroads to prepare for a large movement of grain. Mr. Lane shows that the railroads tapping the great grain belt of the northwest seem to have been overwhelmed by this year's crop, although, in fact, the crop did not exceed that of 1905, and did it equal that of at least one other preceding year.

A CLEARING-HOUSE. In considering the evidence taken, Commissioner Lane says that a plan for a proposed car clearing house or a car pool between connecting lines is regarded with much favor. The details of such plan have not been worked out. Car appropriation between carriers is treated at some length, and the adoption of a rule is suggested fixing a minimum of 50 cents a day during those months of the year when traffic is light, and increasing it fourfold during the latter half of the year, when the cars are needed.

A PENALTY. This phrase means, in a word, that carriers shall be penalized on failure to furnish cars demanded, and it arises out of the universal railroad practice of imposing a per diem penalty when a car is held by a consignee for unloading beyond a certain fixed number of days. The commissioner says this plan alone would not overcome the transportation difficulties if the measure merely provides for the punishment of the railroad for the non-placing of cars or non-movement of same. Mr. Lane in his report sums up the conclusion of the commissioners as follows:

"The problem is much deeper and broader than a mere lack of cars and engines. It is one in which is involved every factor in railroad construction, operation, maintenance and financing of the railroad. The inability of the shipper to secure a car may be only a symptom of a deep seated and organic trouble. The real cause of car shortage may lie in the two conservative character of the management of the road, or in the unfitness and incompetency of its operating officials. It may arise out of a policy in railroad operation which gives primary consideration to speculative stock operations. It may come from an inability to secure funds so as to fit itself so as it can discharge its duties. It may follow in time of exceptional prosperity from an increase in traffic which could not be entirely prevented. It may arise from an inability to secure labor and materials necessary to the proper enlargement of the railroad's facilities."

"This enumeration of causes is not exhaustive. It could not well be complete without giving consideration to many industrial and economic factors, which, at first glance, would appear remote and unrelated. Clearly the problems of transportation is so closely interwoven with the fabric of our commercial system and so closely related and so interdependent are the various activities of our industrial life that one may not lightly say, what are the multitudinous considerations which necessarily enter into so complex a question as the reason why a railroad car is not at once forthcoming when ordered."

DEMURRAGE BILL. "The enactment of a reciprocal demurrage bill will not build a railroad track, equipment, enlarge and simplify the traffic, but it might stimulate, energize and in some cases revise methods of delinquent railroads, so that they would render the service which they were created to render."

The need for additional legislation to reach the seat of the trouble, is shown by the conclusion, where it is said: "If the interstate commerce commission is to be vested with power to make rules under which railroads shall be required on penalty to furnish cars to shippers, this commission should also be empowered to make rules under which free interchange of cars shall be made, or to require railroads engaged in interstate commerce to make such rules for their own protection and provision for their enforcement."

TO PLAY FAIR WITH C. N. R. Board of Trade Decided not to Push New Comers Unduly—Less Than Forty Cars Here—Wire From Mr. James

With the shipping interests thoroughly aroused over the C.P.R. refusing cars for the north line, a special meeting of the board of trade was called to deal with the matter, and in the heat of the moment, indiscretion might have prevailed had not the commissioner obtained a letter from R. J. Burdett, C.P.R. and C.N.R. agent here, and had not T. McAra, J. F. Bole, J. A. Cross and J. P. L. Embury taken the strong view that Mr. Laird's resolution should not be sent to Ottawa till the Canadian Northern officials had a chance to remedy the situation created by the refusal of the C.P.R. to furnish cars from this point.

Mr. McAra characterized the clause of Mr. Laird's motion respecting the operation of the north line as an unbusinesslike proposal and after some debate Mr. McAra's amendment carried and the transportation committee were given the charge of the matter with instructions to communicate with the C.N.R. management before taking any further action. Mr. McAra stated that the city should not fly into the face of the Canadian Northern without giving them a chance, and the people of the city had much to expect from them in the near future. However if the C.N.R. failed to respond satisfactorily then he would favor further steps being taken but not to ask the C.P.R. to interfere.

Mr. Bole was much interested as a merchant but he thought the city should play fair with the C.N.R. and if they did not make good, then further action should be taken and he would support it.

THE KILLED RESOLUTION. The following is the motion of Mr. Laird rejected by the meeting: "Whereas, Reginald shippers have been notified that shipments of freight for the Prince Albert branch of the C.N.R. will not be accepted at the freight sheds until such time as the Canadian Northern freight cars are available; and whereas, practically no Canadian Northern freight cars are now in commission at this end of the line, and an almost complete tie-up of freight is imminent, thereby causing serious loss to Regina shipping interests and rendering still more acute the present strained conditions as regards supplies of fuel and food for the people on the north line; therefore, be it resolved, that this board of trade appeals to the federal government at Ottawa to press upon the railway's attention the urgency of placing such rolling stock on the branch as will meet urgent public requirements and that if necessary the railway commission be asked to order the Canadian Pacific Railway to relieve the present blockade by furnishing the necessary power and rolling stock."

And that a copy of this resolution be wired to Sir Whitford Laurier at Ottawa. THE AMENDMENT. Mr. McAra's amendment seconded by Mr. Embury provided that the C.N.R. be communicated with and on their failing to provide a remedy the first part of Mr. Laird's motion to stand, but that the C.P.R. clause be eliminated.

AGENT'S LETTER. The following are the principal features of the letter from the C.P. and C.N. agent here: "It is a fact that we have had some delay in the transportation of consignments to the north, but I cannot say that this applies to a great extent on general merchandise. As a matter of fact we have not over 50 or 40 cars of merchandise freight for points on the Prince Albert branch in the Regina yards at present, and these have all arrived here from connections, I judge since Jan. 1st. If the delay to freight has been as stated, it must have been on the Canadian Northern railway to the north of here, or after leaving this station, and as stated before, I am not at present in a position to give you any statement as to the delay when goods have left this station or before arriving at destination. This matter I will have to take up with our general freight agent."

"I do not consider that there is any necessity for investigation to be made into the condition of the Regina yards. It is quite true that we have considerable freight on hand for the north, but a great deal of this consists of lumber and building material, which at the present period of the year is not urgently required, and in fact two trains could clear out entirely the merchandise on hand at this station at the present time for the north."

"I must say that we have today received instructions that no more Canadian Pacific Railway cars are to be loaded at this station for Canadian Northern points. Up to the present we have been allowed to use Canadian Pacific equipment for the carriage of merchandise to north points, and for a few days this will materially set back local shipments from Regina to points north. We will be unable to accept consignments for the north line until Canadian Northern cars are supplied us, which I anticipate there will be no great difficulty in doing, and in a few days the situation, as far as the above referred to is concerned, will be relieved. It is simply a question of the C.N.R. running their equipment north from Regina."

After the general meeting the transportation committee met and the next day wired E. A. James, manager of the C.N.R. receiving the following reply: "Winnipeg, Jan. 11. 'A. E. Boyle, Regina. 'Wired you yesterday as follows, and am after Canadian Pacific why not sent: We have more power on Regina line by far than necessary to move all traffic offered if weather conditions would permit. If we had the power of the system as this we could not do more than we are doing until such time as weather permitted. You can appeal to the federal government if you wish, but it will not help you any, and certainly will not help move the freight we are doing everything possible to get freight moved and everything that can be done will be done by us as we are just as anxious as anyone. No matter how big a company were operating this road they could not do it a bit better than we are doing."

R. A. JAMES. TRANSVAAL CONSTITUTION Great Britain Gives South African Colonies Self Government

London, Jan. 10.—The Chronicle has a very interesting editorial on the granting of self government to the Transvaal. The article begins with a quotation from the new constitution, and is as follows: "And, whereas it is our will and pleasure that all persons within our dominions shall be free from any conditions of employment or residence of a servile character, the government shall reserve any law providing for the introduction under contract, indenture or license of laborers into the colony from places outside South Africa. From the Transvaal Constitution published yesterday. Self-government is the antipode of Liberalism, and it has proved the cement by which the vast Imperial fabric is held together. To leave to the white races who people distinct possessions under the British flag the right to govern themselves in their own way is for us the path of wisdom, of safety and of honor. The new constitution conferred on the people of the Transvaal harmonizes with the best traditions of our Imperial policy. True, there is one important reservation from the large powers devolved on the new colony but it is a reservation that will be approved by the most resolute champion of self government. The Imperial government expressly reserves any laws that may be proposed by the new Transvaal legislature providing for the importation into South Africa of servile laborers. Without any such express proviso the power of veto resides in the crown, a power sufficient of itself to nullify any such law. But we rejoice that the government have inserted boldly and clearly in the new constitution this express stipulation. Taken in conjunction with another provision that no further license for the introduction of laborers into the colony shall be issued under the Labor Importation Ordinance—it shows that the government are in earnest in their determination to cleanse the Transvaal of a hidden infamy. In justice to the people of the Transvaal let it be said that the Chinese came to the Rand not by their own wish. This was a policy imposed from without, not springing from within. It is the Imperial government acting through Mr. Chamberlain which was responsible for bringing these yellow hordes into the Transvaal. Happily the Imperial government, acting through Lord Elgin is now taking steps to atone for that calamitous blunder, which has been so fruitful of mischief, moral and economic. The new constitution is genuinely democratic. Those old radical ideas of manhood suffrage and payment of members, are made actualities in the Transvaal. Piles get quick relief from Dr. Shoop's Magic Ointment. Remembers it is made alone for piles—and it works with certainty and satisfaction. Itching, painful, protruding or blind piles disappear like magic by its use. Try it and see! The Regina Pharmacy Stores."

SUDDEN DEATH

Ottawa, Jan. 8.—J. A. Phillips, a well known Ottawa newspaper man, died at 9 o'clock this evening in the press room of the House of Commons, where he had worked for many years. During the past six or seven years he was associated with the local press, but occasionally visited the ga gallery. He walked into the press room about 8:30 this evening, complained that he had difficulty in breathing, and half an hour later was dead. He passed off peacefully, shaking hands and bidding goodbye to those around him. Medical aid was at hand but it was futile.

The late Mr. Phillips was a son of Arthur P. Phillips, of the Barbican, and was born in Liverpool in 1842. He started his journalistic career in New York in 1865 and came to Canada in 1870, when he joined the staff of the Montreal Star. In 1877 he joined C. R. Tuttle in preparing his history of the Dominion. Later he became connected with the press gallery, and was for a few years in the public works department. During the short session of 1896, he was president of the gallery, being the Ottawa correspondent of the Montreal Star. The deceased could write a good story and was the author of some patriotic pieces such as "The Flag for Me." He was a staunch Conservative and leaves no family.

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