

WATERWORKS AGAIN

Reports From Select Committee Appointed to Investigate Workmen's Grievances.

Robert Chipchase Appointed Sanitary Inspector and Mr. Watson Plumbing Inspector.

Ald. Marchant Denies Having Decried the City as Charged by the Colonist.

Last evening's meeting of the council was taken up chiefly in the reading of the report from the select committee on the water works and the election of sanitary inspector and plumbing and sewerage inspector.

The water commissioner submitted an estimate of the cost of extending the main as follows: Grand street, \$230; Fourth street, \$200; Dunedin street, \$102.25.

The city engineer reported that the piece of ground in front of the South Park school corner of Grand and South streets, \$250. Referred to the park committee.

Ald. Marchant rose to a question of privilege on the Colonist report of the last meeting and denied that he had decried the city.

Tenders for supplies for the sewers were referred to the committee and tenders for lumber were laid over for a week.

The finance committee asked directions from the council regarding an account of \$25 for repairing the street superintendent's carriage. Referred to the street committee.

The electric light committee recommended that the contract for carbons be awarded to F. G. Holden, his tender being \$10.71. Adopted.

Victoria, March 30, 1896. Gentlemen: Your select committee to whom was referred the complaint of G. White, D. Wales and W. Ferguson, in reference to the wages of bricklayers paid by the contractors at Beaver Lake, beg to report that D. Wales and W. Ferguson were reported to the committee by G. White as refusing to give evidence in their own behalf unless witnesses' fees were paid them.

Respectfully submitted, JNO. MACMILLAN, W.M. CAMERON, W.G. CAMERON.

To the Mayor and Council of the City of Victoria: Gentlemen: Your select committee appointed at a meeting of council on February 17th, in pursuance of instructions received from W. J. Dowler, Esq., C.M.C., on February 18th, "To enquire into the facts alleged in a letter received by the council from W. Payne, in which certain complaints have been made against the manner in which workmen who desire to live with their families in the city are treated by the contractors at Beaver Lake, and in which workmen employed on the works are treated by the foreman for the contractors," beg leave to report as follows:

The complaints of W. Payne referred to are: 1st. "That the citizens of Victoria are not treated as they should be as workmen, but are treated more as slaves with a cursing taskmaster as foreman."

2nd. That the hours of labor are arranged by the contractors with the design of preventing workmen from boarding with their families or elsewhere in the city, or as alleged by W. Payne, "The fact of the matter is, we are not wanted unless we comply with the contractors' wish, and board there, and I firmly believe they will put every obstacle in our way to prevent us from working unless we board there."

Section 25 of the specifications, which are a part of the contract of Walkley, King & Casey with the city provides, "The work is to be under the full and entire direction of the municipal council and the engineer in charge, whose orders and instructions the contractor shall obey, and should there be any doubt as to the meaning or intention of any part of the specifications, the interpretation put upon it by the said engineer is to be final and without appeal."

Section 27 and 28 provides: Sec. 27. "The contractor hereby agrees to pay all workmen employed by him or in connection with the work, the regular rate of wages connected with the trade for nine hours' work for each day as recognized by the trade, and further agrees that the whole of the laborers, skilled workmen and others engaged upon the work are to receive

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their full wages at least once a week and in cash." Sec. 28. "The contractor agrees that he will not directly, or indirectly, employ upon, about, or in connection with the work any Chinese or Japanese, or any person whose name does not appear in the municipal voters' list for the year 1895, unless they prove by written proof, signed by two well known residents of the city, that they are permanent residents of the city."

By the foregoing sections it is established, 1st, that the instructions of the municipal council in interpretation of the specifications which are a part of the contract with Walkley, King & Casey, are binding upon the contractors.

2nd. That all workmen are to be paid by the contractors the full amount of their wages in cash, without any deductions on account whatever.

3rd. That skilled workmen working as such are to be paid the wages of skilled workmen.

4th. That the contractor is bound by the letter and intent of the agreement to give preference to workmen who are permanent residents of Victoria.

Your committee wish to point out that the council in the exercise of their duty deemed it to be their right under section 25 of the specifications of the contracts, did on the 7th day of February adopt the following instructions to the contractors, of which they were duly notified as follows: "That the (the contractors) must comply in future with the 28th section of the specifications, and that they are required to allow all workmen employed in the work to board and lodge where they please, and that the workmen of this city be informed to that effect by notice to be published at the contractors' expense in the daily papers; provided that if it is found that sufficient men cannot be procured to carry on the work successfully, the mayor and water commissioner, after satisfying themselves that such is the case shall give the contractors permission to procure labor from any available source, (Chinese or Japanese excepted), but the contractors shall at all times give preference to the residents of the city."

Your committee wish to point out, that the contractors recognized the right and authority of the council by placing in obedience to the resolution of council in the Daily Times of February 10th the following notice:

"Wanted—At Beaver Lake, 50 men; residents preferred; board optional. (Signed) Walkley, King & Casey."

Although no direct statement has been made to your committee as to this council on behalf of the contractors themselves, that a sufficient number of resident workmen were not available to carry out the contract within the specified time, your committee wish to point out that such is implied in the report of G. E. Jorgensen made to this council on January 25th of this year, and that upon this assumption it is argued by the engineer that the contractors should be given an extension of time for the completion of the contract. The statement referred to is as follows:

"On the 26th November last a strike took place on which occasion over 30 men left the work, and on the 27th several of the men stopped work. I am informed on account of the weather, they were reducing the working force to such a minimum that on December 24th last only about a dozen men were available."

Your committee held two public sessions at the city hall in the council chamber, notice of which was given in the Daily Times as follows:

"The water works enquiry committee will hold its first sitting on Thursday evening next in the city hall at 8 p. m. By order, (Sd) WELLINGTON J. DOWLER, C.M.C."

City clerk's office, Victoria, B. C., March 17th, 1896.

Beyond this notice no intimation was given the contractors of the time, and place of the investigation, and no one appeared before the committee to represent them. A number of witnesses were subpoenaed. On March 18th five witnesses, Wm. Payne, James Wiloughby, Wm. F. McKenzie, Daniel McPadden, and Edward Young, were examined and the inquiry adopted by four others, John Hambly, Harry Wormwood, James Patterson and Harry Cole, was taken. The evidence all being to the same effect, it appeared to the committee that any further examination of witnesses under oath was unnecessary. All the evidence was taken down by a member of the committee and sworn and subscribed to by the witnesses, and is on file for the inspection of members of the council.

From a review of the evidence we find that the complaints of Wm. Payne are proven to be true. Payne, Wiloughby, McPadden and Wormwood agreed to waive the amount charged for board and wages by some of the foremen to the men.

It is shown by the evidence of Payne, Patterson, Cole and Wormwood, that the hours of labor were so arranged by those in charge of the work as to prevent the men from doing a full day's work if they boarded or lodged in the city, while during the same time D. McPadden, and others, working by the day for the city at the lake, were able to work a full day of nine hours and board and lodge in the city, going out in the morning and returning in the evening by train on the Victoria & Sidney railway.

The evidence shows that section 27 was not observed by the contractors, men were either told that at their own rates, or such arrangements were made as compelled them to do so or lose their employment. In making payment of wages the amount charged for board was deducted, and only the balance paid the men. The section referred to provides that wages be "paid in full and in cash." \$5.00 per week was deducted for board. All the witnesses agree that because of being improperly cooked, the food for which they were compelled to pay so high a price was unfit for use. That men were compelled to furnish their own blankets; that the sleeping room provided was of the most wretched character, men being uncomfortably crowded together, and the rain leaking through the roof drenching them in their beds. Men who spent Sunday with their families or friends in the city were charged the full rate for the week's board, and the same men were, when discharged in the middle of a week, charged 25 cents a meal for the part of the week including Sunday's board which they did not eat. Attached is a statement by the auditor

showing the amount of wages paid, and the amount of deductions for board, up to the week ending February 22nd. The total roll to that date is \$28,828.69, the deductions for board, \$9,360.94, or 32 1/2 per cent. of the total wages. At some times during the progress of the work the per cent. deducted for board was considerably over 50 per cent., thus, in the week ending September 21, the total wages was \$778.78 and the deduction for board \$428.23; during wet weather charging the full rate for board where men went home for a part of the time prevented men from living cheaply in periods of enforced idleness, owing to wet weather.

The evidence shows that at all stages of the work section 28, providing for the employment of residents of the city, was disregarded by the contractors, it being the opinion of witnesses that less than 50 per cent were Victorians, while residents of the city were being continually debarred from going to work, by regulations as to board and hours of labor, apparently having that object in view.

The evidence shows that section 27, providing that the contractors shall pay to skilled workmen "the regular rate of wage connected with the trade," has not been complied with. Carpenters who furnished their own tools and worked as skilled workmen being paid the same as laborers who furnished no tools.

In conclusion, your committee wish to call attention to the report of G. E. Jorgensen of January 25th to this council. Your committee shows to be incorrect, and misleading. The report referred to contains the statement that by reason of strikes the progress of the work had been seriously interfered with, and also because men were left "on account of bad weather, so that on December 24th last only about a dozen men were available." This statement is contradicted by the positive and direct evidence of McKenzie, McPadden and Young who swear that the time lost by strikes was only one quarter of a day; that no number of men left on account of the strikes; that only the cook was discharged, and that the men were sent to have left "on account of wet weather" were discharged by the contractors because although they wanted to work when the weather was fit, they refused to work continuously through wet and dry weather alike.

Even though the contentment of men was true, (which the evidence goes to show it was not) that delay was caused by strikes—the strikes themselves were caused by the bad food furnished and the men by the contractors, and consequently any disability to which the contractors would be liable on account of delay was due to the action of the contractors themselves. From the evidence submitted to your committee, no conclusion can be drawn other than that the statement of the engineer as to delay caused by strikes and that "on December 24th last only about a dozen men were available" was made solely in the interest of the contractors, and was misleading and incorrect.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

JOHN MACMILLAN, W.M. CAMERON, W.G. CAMERON, Select Committee.

Table with columns: Week ending, Total wages, Deductions for board, Balance. Rows for weeks ending July 20, Aug. 3, Aug. 10, Aug. 17, Aug. 24, Aug. 31, Sep. 7, Sep. 14, Sep. 21, Sep. 28, Oct. 5, Oct. 12, Oct. 19, Oct. 26, Nov. 2, Nov. 9, Nov. 16, Nov. 23, Nov. 30, Dec. 7, Dec. 14, Dec. 21, Dec. 28, Jan. 4, Jan. 11, Jan. 18, Jan. 25, Feb. 1, Feb. 8, Feb. 15, Feb. 22.

Victoria, April 7th, 1896. To the Mayor and Council of the City of Victoria: Gentlemen: As a member of the waterworks inquiry select committee I beg to present the following minority report:

Calling attention to the evidence given before the committee by James Wiloughby and Wm F. McKenzie, to the effect that a log of wood two feet in diameter and ten or twelve feet long has been put in the foundations of one of the walls of the filter beds at Beaver Lake by being placed under the instructions of the foreman in charge for Walkley, King & Casey; and I would recommend that the engineer be instructed to compel the contractors to remove at their own cost the log referred to, and to substitute proper material therefor.

I have the honor to be, gentlemen, very respectfully yours, JNO. MACMILLAN, Chairman of Committee.

Ald. Marchant moved that the reports be laid on the table for future consideration. This was seconded by Ald. Partridge.

Ald. Macmillan, although not objecting to the report being laid on the table, contended that it required immediate action. There was still considerable work to be done and residents of the city should be given an opportunity to do it. The report was laid on the table.

Chief Deasy presented his report for March making a number of suggestions for the prevention of fire. Referred to the fire wardens to report.

At the suggestion of Ald. Macmillan the conference re the Craighflower road will be held on the 21st inst. in the afternoon.

Applications were received as follows for the position of sanitary inspector: M. J. Conlin, Robert Chipchase, S. S. Lehman, Orlando Warner, C. F. Moore, John Smith and Alex. McDonald.

Robert Chipchase was elected on the first ballot, receiving six votes to M. J. Conlin's one.

Applications were received as follows for the position of plumbing and sewerage inspector: Chas. R. Blake, A. J. Clyde, T. H. Parr, M. H. Thompson and George Watson. The latter was elected on the fourth ballot.

The council adjourned at 10.10.

FROM THE ORIENT.

Very Long Passages by the Sealing Schooners From Victoria to Yokohama.

Rough Weather and Few Seals Reported by Those Who Have Been Out.

No Signs of the Black Plague When the Empress Left—Other Oriental News.

According to advices received from Yokohama by the Empress of Japan, Capt. Lee, which arrived early this morning, the sealers all made long passages across and experienced rough weather, but few accidents occurred. The fastest trip, 52 days, was made by the schooner Elsie. Many of them were over 80 days in going over. The name of the seaman who was lost from the schooner Vera was C. Larsen. He had just left a deep water vessel at Vancouver when he signed on the Vera, and was not known here. The schooner Vera did not arrive at Yokohama, but after spending twelve days looking for seals, none of which could be found, and experiencing very rough weather, she put into port. Two sealers, who were taken sick, came home on the Empress.

The Yokohama schooner Silver Pleace, in a month's cruise only took 40 skins. She too experienced very severe weather. A hunter and two boat pullers were lost. The three men were not sealing and through some mishap they were captured. No trace of the men could be found, but the boat was upset when picked up. The Katherine of this port took 85 days in going across.

The trip of the Empress across was one of the pleasantest in the history of the Yokohama sealers. No trace of the men could be found, but the boat was upset when picked up. The Katherine of this port took 85 days in going across.

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ROYAL BAKING POWDER

ABSOLUTELY PURE

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