

Indiana Daily Times

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA.

Daily Except Sunday, 25-29 South Meridian Street.
Telephones—Main 3500, New 28-351

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POSSIBLY the purpose of that conference was to determine just how much work would be required to make Mr. McClure Speaker of the House!

A GUEST in an Indianapolis hotel had a fight with a robber who appears to have believed that the hotel failed to get all the money he possessed!

NO ONE expected Goodrich's tax board to do anything else than laud Goodrich's tax law and its own work. That may account for the opposition of Mr. McCray to its perpetuation.

THE CIVIL CITY of Indianapolis yesterday sold \$400,000 of its bonds. This is in addition to the \$6,000 increase of bonded indebtedness which Mayor Jewett modestly admitted a few days ago.

WHOEVER would have suspected that 197 passengers who transfer from Stock Yards to Virginia avenue cars could have created such a "popular demand" for a south side cross-town line!

AS DOC MORGAN SAYS, if there was bubonic plague and we handled rats we might contract disease, provided the rats had the plague and we handled them and didn't wash our hands thereafter. Consequently, you see, it isn't the loathsome rats but the horrible possibilities that make the rat campaign necessary.

Let's Strike a Balance!

In pointing out recently to the people of Indianapolis the urgent need of taking steps toward the re-establishment of confidence in public officials and men prominent in the public life of Indianapolis, the Times declared that remedies for a deplorable amount of distrust were not readily discernible.

Since that time several methods of dissipating the suspicion that attaches to things governmental have been suggested and among them there are some that are so obviously expressions of good sense that they are worthy of advancement.

It has been suggested that the people of Indianapolis be taken into the confidence of the city administration to the extent of being informed as to the true financial condition of the civil city of Indianapolis, the school city, the park board district and the sanitary district.

Strange as it may seem there is no real balance sheet available from which a ready estimate of the financial condition of any of these taxing units may be obtained.

Doubtless the members of the city administration have fair conceptions of the financial conditions of these units, but they have none of them seen fit to make any statements that would enlighten the taxpayers as to the true financial condition.

We have now established in Indianapolis a Taxpayers' League, whose members are deeply interested in the amount of taxes they will pay on their property.

It is an even question as to whether any member of this league knows either the bonded indebtedness of the city of Indianapolis or the sum of its current expenses. About all the information that has been given by our city officials, or our county officials, is contained in the statement relative to the tax rate. Every citizen knows that the tax rate has been raised more than 50 per cent over last year. Few citizens have any conception of the purposes of this increase and not one in one hundred is able to tell for what purposes it is proposed to spend the vast sum of money that will be paid into the county treasury in 1921.

Much could be accomplished toward a restoration of confidence in Indianapolis if the Taxpayers' League or some other civic organization would conduct an investigation of the finances of the city of Indianapolis and the County of Marion and give the public some adequate view of our financial condition.

We limit this statement to an investigation by some civic organization for the reason that we have no faith in any such a survey conducted under the auspices of a political organization. The recent misstatements of Mayor Jewett relative to our bonded indebtedness stand as an evidence that no politically prominent official may be trusted to tell the truth about the community pocketbook.

We believe that one of the most proficient steps toward a real of better feeling and greater confidence in Indianapolis would be an analysis of our governmental finances made by some such an organization as the Taxpayers' League or the municipal research bureau of the Chamber of Commerce.

Misguided!

In a recent statement on the conditions of the schools in Indianapolis, the school board made it exceedingly plain that the physical condition of the school system was too serious to permit of experiments or unwise policies.

The statement indicated plainly that the time has arrived when Indianapolis must either provide proper buildings for her school children or admit inability to afford the children the educational facilities to which they are entitled in the pursuit of proper education and health.

In a way the statement was a direct answer to the plea of a group of taxpayers who have asked the board to forego contracting for much needed school buildings because of the high rates in Indianapolis and the unstable condition of the building material markets.

There may possibly be two sides to this question of better schools, but there are few citizens of Indianapolis who will recognize more than one.

The welfare of the children of this city is so vital to its future that it transcends all other considerations.

School buildings we need and school buildings we must have, even if we have to forego the political pleasure of housing a city administration's pet mules in a fine new barn.

We have no fault to find with the position of the taxpayers who implored the school board to help relieve them from an almost unbearable burden. They ought to be relieved and naturally they are seeking every means of relief.

But we said at the time of their appeal that it was misguided and we repeat that it is misguided as it pertains to the construction of schools in Indianapolis, for the reasons:

The housing of school children in the insanitary, unsafe buildings that are now being used in this city is little short of criminal.

Only a match is needed to cause a holocaust in some of our school buildings. We are so close to criminal neglect that any day may bring about a parallel to the horrors of the Hollywood school disaster.

We have too much regard for the gentlemen who constituted the committee that protested against further school building in the interests of economy to believe that they wish these deplorable conditions to exist longer in this community.

There is not one among them who would not willingly give all his property to save the lives of the school children of Indianapolis.

But they are today objecting to carrying the burden of taxation that will insure health and education for the children because that burden is added to the tremendous burden of waste and incompetency in our government.

Unfortunately, these taxpayers have not studied the situation sufficiently to act in a manner that reflects their true feelings.

If they had, they would not now be publicly opposing more school buildings and supporting by their silence a project to build a fancy barn for the city's mules!

Belated Discovery

Truly the person who inquires, "Ain't nature grand?" struck a chord which reaches our hearts. Now it has been discovered that a tree called the balsa wood, a second growth in tropical countries, is more elastic and stronger than cork and weighs about half as much. It can be used wherever cork is used at half the weight.

This late demonstration of nature coming at a time when corks for some purposes have passed into oblivion or will pass, is entertaining to say the least. The dispatches say that this wood grows in great abundance in the Panama Canal and within five years the tree will attain a height of fifty to eighty feet.

Of course, cork is used for other things than bottles, and this discovery will be very useful anyhow.

A Preposterous Plea

The theory on which the Citizens Gas Company seeks permission to increase the cost of gas in Indianapolis from 60 cents to 90 cents is that there exists an emergency of such a nature that the public service commission is justified in setting aside the statutory rate of 60 cents and prescribing a higher rate.

The public utility law says:

"The commission shall have power, WHEN DEEMED BY IT NECESSARY, to prevent injury to the business or interests of the people, or any public utility of this State, in case of any emergency TO BE JUDGED BY THE COMMISSION, to temporarily alter, amend, or with the consent of the utility concerned, suspend any existing rates, schedules and orders relating to or affecting any public utility or part of any public utility in this State."

The questions for adjudication raised by the gas company's petition are:

1. Does an emergency exist such as makes it necessary to suspend the statutory gas rate in order "to prevent injury to the business or interests of the people," or to the Citizens Gas Company?

2. If such an emergency does exist and such a suspension of the statutory rate is necessary what rate should be substituted for the existing 60-cent schedule?

In the opinion of the great majority of the people of Indianapolis, which opinion is shared sincerely by the Times, there exists nothing even remotely resembling an emergency that would justify the public service commission in tampering with the gas rate in Indianapolis, let alone raising it to the requested 90 cents a thousand cubic feet.

As the basis of its petition for 90-cent gas the Citizens Gas Company sets up that an emergency exists in:

1. That owing to the demand for gas and the condition of the petitioner's plant the requirements of the consumers cannot be met without an additional capital outlay of at least \$2,750,000.

2. That the company has mortgage and other indebtedness that must be met in 1921 amounting to \$1,500,000.

3. That these necessary improvements and demands for payment of indebtedness can not be met with a revenue no greater than is produced by the sale of gas at 60 cents.

These allegations present to the public service commission the grounds on which it must determine whether there exists a justification for the exercise of its emergency power to increase rates.

With the first two of these allegations there will be no dispute. It is a generally known fact that the gas company either can not or will not meet the demand of its patrons for an adequate gas supply and the charitable viewpoint is that it can not meet these demands without improvements.

That the gas company has obligations that must be met in some manner no one will have the hardihood to dispute.

However, before the citizens of Indianapolis will agree with the gas company that they must pay 90 cents for gas, the company must convince them:

1. That the conditions which it alleges really constitute an emergency such as justifies the public service commission in setting aside the existing contractual and statutory price for gas.

2. That such an alleged emergency can only be met by an increase in the rate for gas.

3. That the company comes into court with clean hands pointing to a real emergency that exists in spite of and not because of its earnest endeavors.

The city of Indianapolis has already defined its antagonistic position against the gas company's petition.

In opposing the petition of the street car company for emergency relief the mayor declared that the city's policy was to oppose increased rates as long as there existed any other method by which the utilities could operate.

Later Mr. Ashby declared that it was the city's policy to oppose emergency relief to any utility that was paying dividends on its capital stock.

The facts are, in reference to the Citizens Gas Company, that it has not exhausted its own resources in seeking to meet the demands of the public for gas and it has never failed to pay dividends at the rate of 10 per cent on its capital stock.

Therefore consistency demands that the city oppose the attempted increase in gas rates for both of the two reasons advanced by the city officials for opposing the emergency increase asked by the street car company.

Waiving the question of whether the conditions alleged by the gas company constitute an emergency in the meaning of the law, opposition to the increased rates should be successfully based on the theory that all these conditions can be met without recourse to increased rates.

The gas company, in a statement made public with its petition, admits that it is now paying 10 per cent dividends on \$2,000,000 of stock, or \$200,000 annually.

It claims the necessity of raising a capital outlay of \$4,500,000 to meet the "emergency."

By the simple expediency of diverting its dividend fund of \$200,000 annually to the payment of interest on borrowed capital it should be able to borrow \$2,000,000 of the \$4,500,000 needed capital at 10 per cent interest, \$4,000,000 at 5 per cent interest and \$4,500,000 at 4.4 per cent interest.

In the present period of high interest rates the last enumerated possibility is not a probability, but either of the others are, and according to the same statement from the gas company only \$1,000,000 additional capital is urgently needed at this time.

Only one-half of the company's dividend fund need be withheld from its stockholders at present to pay 10 per cent on the \$1,000,000 of additional capital which the company says it needs immediately to overcome the "emergency."

Yet, under these circumstances, the directors of the gas company come before an already over-burdened public and do their best to disrupt what little confidence remains in the public mind by demanding an increase of 50 per cent in gas rates!

According to the company's own statements it sold in the year ending Dec. 1, 1920, a total of 3,014,327 feet of gas. Assuming that under a 90-cent rate its sales would shrink 20 per cent, its increased revenue from the higher rate sought would be approximately \$730,000 next year.

This sum would enable the Citizens' Gas Company to pay 10 per cent interest on \$7,300,000 additional capital and in its wildest estimates the company has claimed the necessity of only \$4,500,000 additional capital.

The petition of the Citizens' Gas Company for an increase of 50 per cent in its charges for gas fails of obtaining the approval of the citizens of Indianapolis, for the reasons:

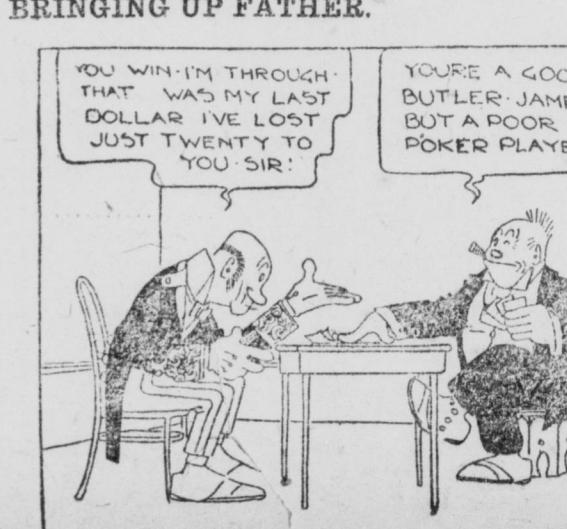
1. That no emergency exists which the company can not dissipate by the application of its dividend funds to the payment of interest.

2. That no emergency exists which has not been created by the company itself with the result, if not the object, of supporting an attempt to obtain higher gas rates.

3. It is a bold attempt to take from the citizens of Indianapolis in excessive charges for gas a sum equal to a 10 per cent dividend on at least \$2,800,000 more capital than the company claims to need to meet all demands longer in this community.

It is too preposterous to merit the consideration of the public service commission.

BRINGING UP FATHER.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Any reader can get the answer to any question by writing the Indiana Daily Times, Information Bureau, Frederick H. Hart, Director, Washington, D. C. This offer applies strictly to information. The bureau cannot give advice on legal, medical and financial matters. It does not attempt to settle domestic troubles, nor to undertake exhaustive research on any subject. Write your question plainly, in full name and address, and enclose 2 cents in stamps for return postage. All replies are sent direct to the inquirer.)

ORIGIN OF ALSIKE CLOVER.

Q. What is alsike clover? G. T. H.

A. Alsike clover is a native of northern Europe and is known also as Swedish or hybrid clover. The word "hybrid" was applied to it because it was thought to be a cross between red and white clover. The flowers of this variety are pink or white, or pink and white mixed. This clover prefers a cool climate, and will grow on low, wet lands, and sets low in lime content, where red clover will not thrive.

JEWS IN WORLD WAR.

Q. Is it true that most of the Jews in the Army were from New York City? H. E. F.

A. New York State and City supplied nearly one-third of the Jews who served in the United States Army in the World War, the greater proportion of these coming from New York City.

MOISTURE ON WINDOWS.

Q. Why can't moisture collect on the inside of window panes, and what will prevent it? C. W.

A. The difference in temperature between a warm room and the cold air outside will cause the moisture inside to condense on the window pane. A good circulation of air through the house will stop this. A kitchen window should be opened slightly from the top when food is cooking, to prevent such condensation on windows and walls.

FIRST PAID BALL GAME.

Q. When was the first baseball game, to which admission was charged? I. D. S.

A. The first time admission was charged to see a baseball game was on July 20, 1859, when 50 cents was the fee for a game between teams from Brooklyn and New York. Over 1,500 people attended this game at the Fashion Race Course on Long Island.

GIANT GRAPES.

Q. What grapes are the largest, and what are their sizes? B. V.

A. The largest grapes are those grown under glass. This method is used extensively in England for commercial purposes. The variety grown is known as the Giant Grapes. These grapes frequently measure 4½ inches around and sometimes there are enormous clusters weighing from twenty to thirty pounds. The grapes are black in color.

FROSTING ON LIGHT BULB.

Q. Can you advise me how to remove the frosting on an electric light bulb? C. L. D.

A. The Bureau of Standards says that after the frosting on an electric light bulb is ground into the glass, there is no way of removing same.

PUSS IN BOOTS JR.

By David Cory.

Now in the story before this I left off as Puss Junior and the bandit prince went to the back door of the house where the wicked witch had lived. But you mustn't forget that he had just now been the giant's slave, so we mustn't be afraid of him. But, oh, dear me! Sitting on the door step was her old black cat. And wasn't she a dreadful looking thing!

Well, I guess she was. Her eyes were as green as grass, and right in the middle of each was a little red spot that looked like fire. And her tail was as big as a feather boa, and the hair stood up straight as the quills on a porcupine when he's angry enough and through and through she was.

Well, when she saw Puss, who was a bit afraid, she looked all around for something to fly away on. And before you could say "Winkerty blinkerty," she jumped into an old dustpan and away she went through the sky after her wicked old mistress, but what became of this dreadful black cat, I'll never tell you, for I don't know, except that a little bird told me, that she had turned into a little black mouse when she put it up in curl paper at night.

And while Puss and the handsome prince stood gazing up into the sky after the old black cat, a funny little man dressed in a green coat and a red cap jumped out of the ground and sang this little song:

I come from the earth, deep down below,
Where the diamonds and rubies and emeralds grow.

Where the blind mole digs his winding way,
And you never see the light of day.

But we little men with our lanterns bright,
Don't care if it's dark as a stormy night.

Ha, ha! ha! ha! ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!