

ACTS THE OUTLAW

STANDARD OIL IN KANSAS USES DETESTABLE TRICKS

Agents Invent New Meanesses to Destroy Business of Independents—People Rely on President to Banish Trust Tactics

Cherryvale, Kans., Dec. 2.—The tricks of the Standard Oil company are many and always up to date. No matter how apparently stringent the laws there is always a way to evade them. The motto of the Standard always has been, "There are more ways to kill a cat than by choking him to death with hot butter."

The last session of the legislature passed two laws. One was a maximum freight rate law prohibiting the railroads from charging more than a specified amount for a certain distance. This tariff is now in force on all the railroads in the state. Then it passed another law, the anti-discrimination law, which forbade the charging of more at one place than another for the same commodity, freight rates being equal.

Instance of Discrimination

The people thought they had the Standard harnessed up at least in a measure. But there are other ways than getting rebates and selling oil cheaper than your competitors. There are ways of harassment, especially when you control the railroads and their policy.

For instance, there was a car standing on the side tracks at Kansas City the other day. It was from the Webster refinery, a little independent concern at Humboldt. The car was

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all right. Next to it was a Standard car. Somebody during the night smeared crude oil all over the top of the Webster car, and then somebody else reported to the transportation department of the road that the car was leaking, and so it was set on a sidetrack, and left there for days and days, when as a matter of fact, and subsequent developments proved, there was no leakage to the car at all. But the Webster refinery lost the use of the car for a sufficient length of time to cripple it, because it has no more cars than it can use at any time.

Another Trick of Trade

Then there is the old trick of putting cheap oil in barrels with the best brands on them. The oil business is not like the whiskey business—a barrel can be used again. So they sometimes put a cheap grade of oil in a Perfection barrel and sell it to the dealer as Perfection. The dealers of Kansas are not educated to the oil business or the tricks of it and they take the cheap oil unquestionably, and, when their customer kick, charge it up to some error, refining that particular bunch of crude and explain it that way.

Then there is the other old trick of shipping oil in other barrels than those made by the Standard or for the Standard. A great portion of the barrels used in the trade in this part of the world at the present day are barrels made for the Republic Oil company by the Great Western Manufacturing company at Cleveland, O., and yet the Republic Oil company in the courts of Missouri, at this minute is denying that it has any connection directly or indirectly with the Standard Oil company.

Another trick—the independent refineries are none of them able to supply enough gasoline to take care of their trade. When the dealer applies to the agent of the Standard Oil company for gasoline the Standard Oil agent is always "just out." When the dealer presses him for an answer as to when he will be "in," the agent of the Standard answers that he does not know. One candid agent of the Standard when pressed to the naif for an answer as to when he would supply gasoline or why he would not supply it, frankly said: "Why don't you get your gasoline where you get your oil?"

Theft is One Trick

Trick No. 3—The independent refineries all have their own barrels and their own cans and their own cars. When the empty barrels are returned they are set on the platform. The Standard driver comes along and grabs them and carries them to the Standard warehouse. This applies to the barrels and the cans. When asked why he did it, he says that he supposed they belonged to the Standard. But it is noticeable that the Standard never returns these things till it is forced to do so, and in one case in Kansas City it required the threat of a replevin suit to make the Standard return some cans belonging to the Fidelity Oil company. The same thing has happened all along the line wherever there is an independent concern.

Independents Still Hope

Still the independent refineries have not lost heart. They are looking with hopeful eyes to the president to help free them from the thralldom of unjust freight rates and they are looking to the people of the west to buy their oil and the people of the west are doing it. A case in point—there came up at Iola a few days ago a question of experimenting with crude

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oil on the streets. The area was a block. The Standard Oil company offered to donate the oil. The council declined it and paid for the oil from an independent producer. And all of the grovers in this town signed a pledge that they would not patronize the Standard Oil company as long as they could get independent oil. It is the sentiment of the people. They are determined that the independent refineries are to have a fair show and they are giving it. In some of the towns none of the people will buy their groceries of a man who patronizes the Standard.

And the people are backing up the independent refineries in their fight for just freight rates. As it is now the refineries are limited to the boundaries of the state of Kansas for their business because of an unjust freight tariff. They have appealed for relief and the people are behind that appeal and are supporting it.

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