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RAILROAD BILLS

JOINT COMMITTEE VOTES FOR A TWO-CENT RATE.

WILSEY DECIDES THE TIE

HOUSE MEMBERS FOR TWO AND ONE-HALF CENTS.

SUB-COMMITTEES ARE NAMED

TO FORMULATE ANTI-PASS AND COMMISSION BILLS.

Commissioners' Salary Fixed at \$3,000—House Kills Plan to Give State Fair a Levy of One-eighth Mill.

WEDNESDAY

Sub-committees to draft bills were appointed by the joint railroad commission at a meeting last night held in the senate chamber. It was decided to draft separate measures providing for a two-cent passenger fare; for an anti-pass law; and to empower the railroad commissioners to have authority over all rates. The committee decided to fix the salaries of the commissioners at \$3,000.

Walsh of Douglas started the work of the evening by moving that it be the sense of the committee that a sub-committee be named to draft a bill providing for a two and one-half cent passenger fare. Of the members present, Representatives Marsh of Seward, Harrison of Otoe, Keifer of Nuckolls and Walsh of Douglas were favorable and Senators Gibson of Douglas, Aldrich of Butler, Epperson of Clay and Hanna of Cherry were opposed. Chairman Wilsey, senator from Frontier, voting to remove the tie decided against the motion.

Senator Aldrich then moved that a committee of four draft a two-cent passenger fare and the proposition carried, the committee naming Senators Wiltse of Cedar, Hanna of Cherry and Representatives Keifer of Nuckolls and March of Seward.

Walsh of Douglas moved that the compensation of the commissioners be fixed at \$3,000 each per annum. Senator Wilsey rose to interpose the objection that he was opposed to any officer of the state receiving greater compensation than the governor. Commissioners Winnet and Williams were present and they were asked what they desired to state to the committee concerning compensation. Dr. Winnet said he would merely give the figures paid in other states. Out of fifteen states north and south where there were elective commissions, six northern states paid an average of \$3,133 and nine southern states paid an average of \$2,600.

The average salary paid where there were elective commissions was \$2,762 and the average of appointive and elective commission was \$2,816. Senators Aldrich, Hanna and Representatives Keifer, Walsh and Harrison voted for the \$3,000 salary and it was declared carried.

Power of Commission.

Then followed a good deal of discussion as to the proper way to proceed to draft a bill empowering the commission with authority to fix rates. Senator Epperson favored separate bills, one on the organization and com-

mission of commissioners and another defining their duties and the mode of procedure. Senator Aldrich was just as much in favor of one bill as Senator Epperson was in favor of two. Senator Epperson said the constitution expressly stated that only one subject could be included in a bill and he feared that if the whole matter was covered in a single bill the constitutionality might be successfully attacked. Senator Aldrich said that the laws of Texas, Iowa and Florida had been in effect a long time and that they had withstood attacks in court. These were single comprehensive bills. He thought by far the better way was to cover the entire subject at one time. Walsh of Douglas moved that a committee consisting of two from the house and two from the senate be appointed to draft a single bill covering the commission's duties. This carried and Senators Aldrich and Epperson, with Representatives Walsh and Harrison were named by Chairman Wilsey.

More discussion followed as to the advisability of one or two bills and Epperson made a motion for the second committee which was seconded by Keifer. This motion failed.

On motion of Walsh of Douglas a committee of four on anti-pass bill was appointed consisting of Gibson of Douglas, Gould of Greeley, Farley of Hamilton and Knowles of Dodge.

This completed the business of the evening. It was understood that the action of the evening was simply to get the committees at work at something definite. The vote does not bind the entire committee to the determination arrived at as to vital points but simply divides the members up to the end that progress may be made. The committee adjourned subject to the call of the chairman and meanwhile the sub-committees are expected to take steps to cover the duties assigned them.

Firemen Visit Lincoln.

Four captains of the Omaha fire department with a delegation of firemen numbering fifteen in all, held a session with the house labor committee yesterday on the Leeder double shift bill, which Omaha business men have been opposing. They stated that the cost of the innovation for Omaha has been overestimated and that in taxation it will amount only to a tax of 75 cents on every \$2,000 of property. The committee will meet this morning to act on the measure.

Telephone Bill in Committee.

The standing committee on railroads of the senate, Wilsey, chairman, which has the Epperson telephone bill before it, met during the afternoon and after considerable discussion, which disclosed much opposition to the bill, adjourned without action. The bill places telephone companies under the control of the state railway commission and requires such companies to connect for the transmission of messages. The provision regarding connection is "viewed with alarm" by many members of the committee. Some say it is unfair to require a big company to connect with an exchange comprising a few members, such as many of the farmers' exchanges. The independent telephone companies are said not to desire such a bill and the Bell company opposed anything of the kind two years ago, but not a few senators believe the Bell favors the bill more than the independents do. The Bell is reported to have connections at the present time with 170 independent companies in Nebraska, representing 37,000 phones. A man is on the road constantly making contracts of this kind. The fate of the bill is as yet unknown.

Church Favors County Option.

At the First Baptist church last Sunday morning, the membership and congregation adopted unanimously by a rising vote, resolutions referring to the county option bill, known as house roll No. 5. The resolutions are as follows: "Whereas, A measure known as the county option bill, house roll No. 5, is now pending in the legislature, being in the hands of the judiciary committee, and

"Whereas, We believe that this measure is an eminently fair and reasonable one, being calculated to place some salutary restrictions upon the liquor traffic, placing the responsibility

for the saloon, where if properly belongs, and gives promise of doing much to eliminate the whole saloon problem from partisan politics, therefore,

"Resolved, That we hereby express our hearty endorsement of this measure and trust that it may receive favorable action in both houses of the legislature.

"Resolved, That we hereby earnestly and respectfully request our representative, Hon. E. P. Brown, chairman of the judiciary committee, with our other representatives and senators, to use their utmost endeavors to secure favorable action on this bill in the committee, and in both the senate and the house.

"Resolved, That a committee of three be named to convey to the gentlemen named above, the resolutions herewith offered."

E. E. Bennett, M. J. Waugh and R. O. Williams were appointed by the chair as a committee to present the resolutions passed.

Impeachment for Keeping Lid Off.

Senator Sackett of Gage, has introduced S. F. No. 180, which if it becomes a law, will place the responsibility of enforcing all laws directly upon the governor. That officer will no longer be able to do as Governor Mickey did when asked to enforce laws, say that the local officers are responsible and if they do not carry out the intent of the law the people must go into court to get redress. The act makes it the duty of the attorney general of the state, when directed by the governor to oust from office any officer, including mayors, who wilfully neglects to enforce a law and it makes such neglect punishable by ouster from office. During the first three years of Governor Mickey's term of office he was appealed to by citizens of Omaha to remove the Omaha fire and police commissioners because they neglected to enforce the laws against gambling and the sale of intoxicants. He replied that he had no power to do so and told the citizens to get redress in the courts. He was asked to stop prize fights and he usually notified the sheriff of the county where the complaint came from of the provisions of the law prohibiting such contests. He was asked to prevent the exhibition of a carnival company in a town where the local officers had declined to act, and he replied, backed up by a decision of the attorney general, that he had no power to do so. The Sackett bill is intended to remove local officers who refuse to enforce a law and it is made stronger by making it the duty of the attorney general to proceed against such officers, when directed by the governor. The bill is as follows:

Section 1—Any county attorney or prosecuting officer, sheriff, police judge, mayor, police officer, or police commissioner or other officer who shall wilfully fail, neglect or refuse to enforce any law which it is made his duty to enforce shall thereby forfeit his office and may be removed therefrom.

Section 2—The attorney general of the state, when directed by the governor, shall institute and prosecute quo warranto proceedings in the supreme court against any such county attorney or prosecuting officer, sheriff, police judge, police officer or police commissioner, mayor or other officer, and if the court shall find that such officer has wilfully failed or refused to enforce any law which it is his duty as such officer to enforce, then the court shall render judgment of ouster against such officer and the office shall thereby become vacant.

Senate's Funny Man.

Senator Epperson of Clay county is adding to his reputation as the funny man of the senate. Although he is a lawyer, it is difficult to tell when he is joking and when he is in earnest. He is chairman of the committee on military affairs and recently announced that he intended to have a joint meeting of his committee with the Salvation army. Yesterday a resolution was introduced by Gibson of Douglas authorizing Senator Epperson to borrow and wear a uniform of the rank of adjutant general and to act as escort of the senate to the McKinley banquet at Omaha.

Senator Epperson distinguished himself two years ago by making an attack on a bill to make a close season for the killing of squirrels. Yesterday

when a bill came up for consideration providing for an open season of two months in the year, Senator Epperson said:

"Mr. Chairman, two years ago I made a very able and eloquent speech on this subject. I have forgotten what I said, but I ask that the clerk of the committee of the whole read the speech from the records to apply to this occasion."

Gibson of Douglas who was in the chair, said: "The gentleman from Clay must remember that his speech two years ago was made in committee of the whole where no records are supposed to be kept. Therefore his speech would not have been printed unless a special act of the legislature had been passed embalming it in print. I have heard of no such special act, so the speech will probably be lost to posterity."

The gentleman from Clay informed the senate that he hardly ever said the same thing twice so he would not endeavor to repeat the speech.

The failure of the bill to make an open season of two months will be sad news to ex-Senator Jones of Otoe who is now living on the Pacific coast. There was no closed season in the Nebraska game laws and he introduced a bill two years ago to close a portion of the year. The senate got into a wrangle over it and closed the entire year against the introducer's wishes, and the house passed the bill in that form and it became a law. "By all means, repeal that law," said Mr. Jones to Senator Buck of Otoe when the former left for his new home on the Pacific coast. "Carry the news to Jones," said a senator yesterday after that body refused to change the law which he admitted he was responsible for by mistake.

AN ISLAND WAS ENGULFED

Tidal Wave of January 11 Caused Great Loss of Life.

THE HAGUE, Jan. 22.—The tidal wave which devastated some of the Dutch East Indian islands south of Atchin, as announced January 11, practically engulfed the island of Simalu. According to the latest information received here Simalu has almost disappeared. It is said that probably 1,500 persons lost their lives. Violent earth shocks continue to be felt daily.

According to the brief official dispatch which first announced the destruction wrought by the tidal wave in some of the Dutch East Indian islands, 300 persons perished on the island of Tana and forty on Simalu.

Simalu is situated off the northwest coast of the island of Sumatra.

MORE PAY FOR MAIL MEN

Two Millions Needed for This Purpose Says Hitchcock.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22.—First Assistant Postmaster General Hitchcock recommended in his annual report that the salaries of the officials and clerks in post-offices and the salaries of letter carriers be increased to enable them to meet the increased expenses of living.

In his testimony before the house committee on postoffices and postroads, Mr. Hitchcock has reiterated that recommendation, supplying the committee with considerable data on the subject. At the recommendation of the committee he has estimated the amount necessary to carry his proposition into effect. According to these figures the system of increase which Mr. Hitchcock suggested will require \$3,000,000 for the officers and clerks of post-offices, not including postmasters and their deputies and \$2,000,000 for letter carriers. The committee has not yet reached a decision on the matter.

TWENTY-NINE WERE KILLED

Result of Disastrous Wreck on the Big Four Road.

TERRE HAUTE, Ind., Jan. 21.—A revised list of dead and injured from the explosion and wreck of Big Four passenger train No. 3 Saturday night at Sanford, Ind., shows twenty-nine dead and thirty-two injured.

Of the dead eighteen have been identified. Coroner R. H. Leavitt began work on the cause of the disaster today. The cause of the explosion is as much a mystery as ever.