Miners' Journal.

POTTSVILLE, PA.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1868.

Be just and fear not;
Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
Thy God's and truth's.

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ALLEGED EXTORTIONATE RAIL ROAD CHARGES.

At the last session of the Legislature the Senate instructed the General Judiciary Committee to sit during vacation for the purpose of investigating the subject of alleged extortionate charges for passengers and freight, by the railroad corporations of this State, and to report at this session. The committee held, during the past summer, seven sessions in various parts of the State, at which witnesses were examined, and the testimony preserved. One session as our citizens will remember, was held in Pottsville, in July, commencing on the 16th and ending on the 18th.

The report of the committee and accompanying testimony have been published in pamphlet form and submitted to the Legislature. Senator Randall will accept our acknowledgments for a copy. The document is voluminous, and we are able in consequence of limited space, to make but a few extracts of the testimony in reference to the Reading Railroad corporation, and the manner in which its business is conducted in this Region.

Annexed is a portion of the evidence taken by the committee while in session in this Borough. To publish it in full would fill our paper:

HENRY ROSENGARTEN, SWORN.

Q. Where do you reside?
A. In Pottsville.
Q. What is your business?
A. Green grocer; also deal in fish, oysters, &c.
Q. Over what roads do you ship?
A. Principally over the Reading railroad, from Philadelphia.
Q. What freights do you pay?
A. I have always complained that they charge entirely too high. Sometimes they charge me as high as $19 00 a ton for some articles; and they charge me for empty barrels, which they never did before; they charge me seven cents apiece for them; they weigh at the highest 18 pounds.
Q. Do you ship in company cars?
A. No, sir; in my own. I can scarcely ever get any redress; if you don't do so and so, you can do nothing with them. If you complain, you cannot get it made right—there is no show for you.
Q. How much do you ship in the year?
A. I cannot mention in a great deal; they don't need to run as high as $500 a month. They have been charging me as high as $2 40 a hundred in my time. It was 70 cents a hundred, and then raised to two dollars. They have made some allowance on seven or eight car loads of truck; they allowed me some $460 at one time; I would not pay the charge, and they made a deduction of that amount.
Q. How are your bills made out?
A. N. is pretty hard for me to get at it; I will bring you some bills. Sometimes they name some weight out. I don't know whether it is correct. I believe they have their rates hung up in their office. In a great many things they calculate the weight.
Q. Do they charge according to the printed tolls-sheets?
A. On some articles they do; on others they don't; on others they charge more. If you have got anything bulky they won't weigh it, but charge you so much.—They first commenced two years ago, and would not put the weight on; if you had 100 weight, they would charge you for 200 weight in the line.
Q. Do the company charge one rate for you, and another for another shipper?
A. I don't know anything about that; I don't know that they charge me more or less than any one else. I was used to pay a little less in our car for certain articles.
Q. How did you ascertain the discrepancy?
A. We used to weigh after them; we kept an account; I weighed frequently; they have charged me 70 cents on a hundred, and then counted 400 for 100—four times as much; I think they charge me three times the actual weight; they charged double sometimes, and then put on four more. We could always get more than the actual weight would allow us to set in.
Q. What was it on which they charge double?
A. I cannot tell now.
Q. Over what other road do you ship?
A. I ship principally from New York, but it comes by the Reading and East Pennsylvania roads; I don't ship a great deal that way.
Q. Has there been any excess in charging freight within two years?
A. Not that I know of particularly; they allowed me when, on five or six occasions, I refused to pay the charges over charges after I refused to pay. After I refused to pay some extraordinary rate, I went down with two new cars; Mr. Miller had the cars shipped off somewhere when I was ready; he said he was having them weighed, and that I could not have them until some bills was paid, which I refused to submit to. I had the cars and asked some men there his opinion and he said they must give me my cars, but I would have more trouble than it was worth, and I quit it; he had me twice and took away my cars. That is about all I have to complain of. When we went over to Harrisburg, I took these bills along, and did not get hold of them since. I got one bill which was a voucher for the allowance made to me for an overcharge.
Q. Didn't they refund you, at the time the twice double sum was charged you?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. In what proportion were you refunded?
A. I cannot exactly state; I think they refunded two-thirds; the bill was six hundred and some dollars, and they allowed me $419 02.
Q. Would the Reading company have refunded this money if you had not made a fuss about it?
A. No, sir; I think they would not.
Q. Would they have refunded you any of the money they did, unless you had made a fuss?
A. I think not.
Q. What was the highest rate they have ever charged you for truck?
A. $1 50 a hundred; but they have allowed me again for it; I would not pay the bill.
Q. Have they been in the habit of making these excessive charges, so far as you know?
A. They have. The bills are not made out in a shape that the committee would understand them.
(Mr. MYERS, SWORN.
Q. Where do you reside?
A. In Pottsville.
Q. What is your occupation?
A. Merchant
Q. Over what road do you ship?
A. Over the Reading railroad and the canal.
Q. Where do you ship from?
A. Philadelphia and New York.
Q. What complaints have you to make in regard to the Reading railroad?
A. We find that our charges are very high, compared with other roads.
Q. What have you been in the habit of paying for the last year?
A. I am governed principally by their published rates. I find they double and triple. Last October I got 90 sacks of salt from Philadelphia; they charged, I think, $23 and some odd cents. In December I got up the same amount, and the same weight on their bill, for which they presented a bill of $37 90.
Q. What was the weight?
A. Between 17,000 and 18,000 pounds. I complained, and refused to receive the salt unless they made out their rate, and that I should not wait long. They put it down $13 or $19 and some cents.
Q. Was that rate specified in their tariff-sheet?
A. It is called special rates. If I took less than 90 sacks of salt it would cost me 31 cents; by taking 90 sacks, I got special rates, which brought it down to 23 cents. I got a lot of feathers the other day, and was charged $1 05 per hundred, which is about as much as they would charge me from Chicago to Philadelphia.
Q. Is that a special rate?
A. No sir; their public rates. They don't adhere to them unless we call them to their face. In some articles they charge double and triple rates. I believe the majority of my goods are charged at their published rates; we claim the benefit of reasons of their charter.
Q. Do you furnish your own cars?
A. No sir.
Q. In making out bills for your freight are the company uniformly governed by this toll-sheet?
A. With few exceptions. I would remark that I am now a cash customer. If I am necessary for the company to allow merchants who make them no trouble, and who don't question a bill a month; that is, you get up your merchandise, and at the end of the month the bill is presented. I am compelled to pay for my goods as I get them. Owing to my early habit, I demanded my bills made out specifying every article of—They had, in a great measure, lumped them, giving you in a measure a defective account. I had brought a number of suits for excesses; and because I defended this, and afforded them some trouble, they said I must pay for my goods as I got them, while by way of I have no objections to doing it, but it is individual-izing.
One year ago a notice was put over the scales at Philadelphia which said: "No goods received for R. R. Morris unless in specified condition."
Q. Have the company ever refused to receive your goods and ship them?
A. No sir; although Mr. Jackson had sent me a note, a few years ago, that the road would refuse to ship a lot of damaged brooms they would refuse to receive my goods; I didn't take the brooms. I did make a mistake in starting on the road. I was told and considered that by Mr. Bannan. I demanded the goods promptly delivered; if not, I should claim damages. I understand that is made a matter of record. I think the horsehoads must be interlined, which deteriorates them in weight.
Q. Did that notice over the scales specify your name only?
A. I don't know; I didn't see it. I have the letter of Atmore about it; I had stand some of my goods. I wrote about some goods, and he referred to that as evidence against me. It did not concern there a great while.
Q. Do the railroad company ever make any discrimination between shippers; do they charge you more than others for the same kind of goods?
A. I don't know that they do.
Q. Have you made complaints a great many times about leakage?
A. Yes sir.
Q. And brought suit against them for leakage?
A. I didn't refuse to pay; I refused to receive them in that condition. I have had a great many such cases.
Q. Have you frequently refused, before you became a cash customer, to pay bills because they were too high?
A. No, sir; I have always paid them. For damages I have repeatedly brought suit; for instance, three hogsheads of molasses were sent to me in very bad condition; they were leaking at the time; I refused to receive them in that condition. I told Mr. Wheeler I would receive them if he would have them coopered, or allow me to send a cooper, but he refused to do that.

JAMES WEBB, SWORN.

Q. Where do you reside, and what is your occupation?
A. I reside in Pottsville and carry on the machine business.
Q. Over what roads do you ship your goods?
A. We ship over the Reading and Pennsylvania to Port Carbon, Mount Carbon, Mill Creek, and nearly all the lateral roads of the Reading Company.
Q. What complaints have you to make in regard to freight charges?
A. There are a number of articles on which I think there has been extraordinary charges made; not on the Reading road particularly, but on some of the railroads of the State. I had a machine in Jersey city to be shipped on here to my works. I made a calculation of the weight of it myself in Jersey city, and proposed labelling it 90 tons; I thought that would be the outside weight, and had given orders to send two ten car cars to bring it. The Central railroad of New Jersey refused to load it on two cars, but insisted on my three cars and shipped it by the West Pennsylvania and Reading railroads. On its arrival, the Reading company charged for 96,000 pounds of freight in those cars, and the advance freight on the Central and East Pennsylvania, $997; the total amount for the machine was $997 on the arrival at Pottsville. The leading company's charge was $84. I don't know the amount paid to the East Pennsylvania road. I received the bill from the Reading company, and I was unable to get to get the machine; had been down frequently, inquiring about it, and on its arrival, Mr. Wheeler sent me notice that I could have it and pay the charges. I then