

Mr. Payne.

GAS-SUPPLY AMENDMENT.

ANALYSIS.

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A BILL INTITULED

AN ACT to amend the Gas-supply Act, 1908.

BE IT ENACTED by the General Assembly of New Zealand in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. This Act may be cited as the Gas-supply Amendment Act, 1915.

2. The Gas-supply Act, 1908, is hereby amended by omitting the proviso from subsection two of section three.

3. The following words and expressions in this Act shall have the meanings hereby assigned to them, unless there be something in the subject or context repugnant to such construction, that is to say:—

Words importing the singular number only shall include the plural number, and words importing the plural number only shall include the singular number:

The term "gas undertakings" shall include all gasworks, whether owned by a company or owned by a public body:

The word "undertakers" shall include the members of gas companies severally and collectively, and shall include the Council of any municipality or borough, the members of which Council severally or collectively control gasworks owned and controlled by a public body:

The word "person" shall include corporation, whether aggregate or sole;

The expression "gas rate" shall include any rent, reward, or payment to be made to the undertakers for a supply of gas:

Title.

Short Title.

Clause 38 of principal Act amended

Interpretation.

The word "month" shall mean a calendar month :

The term "premises" shall include house and building :

The term "gasworks" shall include the gasworks, and the works connected therewith, which have been authorized to be constructed.

Limitation of profits.

4. With respect to the amount of profit to be received by the undertakers when the gasworks are carried on for their benefit the profits in any one year shall not exceed eight per centum per annum—that is, that the profits shall not exceed eight pounds in the hundred by the year on the paid-up capital of the undertaking.

Profits assessed by Commissioner of Taxes.

5. The amount chargeable as profits for the purposes of the provisions of section *four* hereof shall be the amount of profits assessed by the Commissioner of Taxes, for income-tax purposes, in each year ending the thirty-first day of March ; and the Commissioner of Taxes shall supply to any person on the payment of *one* shilling a copy of the income-tax assessment of any gas undertaking.

Surplus profits to be distributed to consumers.

6. When the profits of any gas undertaking are of such an amount as to leave a surplus after dividends to the amount hereinbefore limited have been allocated the undertakers shall distribute the amount of the surplus referred to herein by way of a bonus to each consumer *pro rata* to his or her gas consumption during the twelve months in which the profits and surplus profits have been made, and the amount of the bonus in each case shall be forwarded to the consumer simultaneously with the payment of dividends to the shareholders of the undertaking ; and the undertakers shall supply to each consumer a printed statement in detail of the amount of surplus profits distributed, the amount of profits distributed to the shareholders, with a full copy of the profit and loss account, together with any statement which the undertakers may care to make concerning a probable reduction of gas rates or any other matter deemed by the undertakers for the general good of the undertakers and the consumers. For the purposes of this section the person using a meter at the thirty-first day of March in each year to be the person entitled to the bonus for the year.

Slot meters.

7. In the case of slot meters, the person who has a slot meter in use on the thirty-first day of March in each year shall be the consumer to whom the bonus is to be paid for the purposes of section *six* hereof.

Gas supplied through slot meters.

8. The undertakers shall supply to users of slot meters a quantity of gas which shall be strictly proportionate to the value of the coin placed in the meter and the gas rate charged consumers using any other form or design of meter.

Quality of gas.

9. The quality of the gas supplied by the undertakers shall, with respect to its illuminating-power, be such as to produce at the testing-place provided in conformity with this Act a light equal in intensity to that produced by the prescribed number of sperm candles of six in the pound, and such gas shall as to its purity not exhibit any trace of sulphuretted hydrogen when tested in accordance with the rules in that behalf in the Schedule annexed hereto.

Testing-office.

10. (1.) The undertakers shall cause to be provided at their gasworks within six months of the date of the passing of this Act a testing-office, with apparatus therein for the purposes following, that is to say :—

- (a.) For testing the illuminating-power of the gas supplied :
 (b.) For testing the presence of sulphuretted hydrogen in the gas supplied.

(2.) The said apparatus shall be in accordance with the regulations prescribed in the Schedule hereto, or according to such rules as may from time to time be substituted in lieu thereof by any special Act, and shall be so situated and arranged as to be used for the purpose of testing the illuminating-power and purity of the gas supplied by the undertakers ; and the undertakers shall at all times thereafter keep and maintain such testing place and apparatus in good repair and working-order.

11. The local authority of any district wherein there is a gas undertaking, and where the gas is not supplied by such local authority, shall, after the passing of this Act, from time to time appoint, or shall appoint and keep appointed, a competent and impartial person to be gas-examiner to test the gas at the testing-place provided in conformity with the provisions of this Act ; and such gas-examiner shall test the purity and illuminating-power of the gas supplied by the undertakers on any and every day, at such hours as the gas-examiner may think fit ; and the gas-examiner shall, at least twice in each month, furnish a written report of the results of his tests ; and the local authority shall cause such report to be posted in a conspicuous place in the public offices of the said local authority, and the local authority shall cause a copy of such report to be posted up in the offices of the undertakers in such a manner as will enable all consumers to view such report.

Gas-examiner to be appointed.

12. The gas-examiner shall, on the day immediately following that on which the testing of the illuminating-power or purity of the gas has been conducted, make his report to the local authority, and the local authority shall forward the copy of the report to the undertakers without delay, and such report shall be receivable in evidence in any action arising out of a prosecution of any undertakers for a breach of the provisions of this Act, under the penalties section hereof.

Gas-examiner's powers and duties defined.

13. On the application of a gas-consumer the gas-examiner shall inspect any slot meter with a view to ascertaining if the consumer is being provided with the full value in gas for the coin operating such slot meter at the gas rate current at the date of the application, and the gas-examiner shall from time to time test a meter or meters in the various parts of the district served by the undertakers with gas with a view to ascertaining if the meters in use efficiently and accurately measure the gas supplied to the consumer ; and the gas-examiner shall furnish to the local authority a report of every meter so examined by him, and a copy of such report shall be exhibited in a position in the office of the undertakers where it may be readily seen and read by gas-consumers. When the gas-examiner finds that a meter is faulty he shall immediately require the undertakers to replace the faulty meter by a meter in good order and condition. If the undertakers fail to replace the faulty meter within six days of notice being served upon them by the gas-examiner that such meter is faulty, the undertakers shall be liable to such penalty as is provided in the penalties section of this Act.

Gas-examiner to inspect slot meters, &c.

Prosecutions in cases of breaches of Act.

14. If at any time the gas-examiner is of the opinion that a breach of the provisions of this Act has been made by the undertakers, or if a consumer directs the gas-examiner's attention to the fact that a breach of the provisions of this Act has been made, he shall forthwith commence an action in the Magistrate's Court in the district where the undertakers supply the gas, for the purpose of having enforced the penalties section of this Act; and, on inquiring into the facts, the Magistrate may either deal with the case at once and impose such penalty as he deems fit, or he may refer the case to the Supreme Court. 5 10

Gas-examiner's remuneration.

15. The annual remuneration of the gas-examiner to be appointed under the provisions of section *eleven* hereof shall be paid and payable by the undertakers, provided that such remuneration shall in no case exceed three hundred pounds per annum.

Gas-examiner to have access to testing-place.

16. The undertakers shall give to the gas-examiner and to his assistant or assistants (if any) access to the testing-place, and shall afford all facilities for the proper execution of this Act. 15

Penalties.

17. (1.) Whenever the undertakers neglect or refuse to give a supply of gas to any owner or occupier of premises within the limits of the provisions of the Gas-supply Act, 1908, as amended herein, entitled to the same, under such pressure as is prescribed by the Gas-supply Act, 1908, they shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding *two* pounds for each day during which such default continues. 20

(2.) If it shall be proved to the satisfaction of a Stipendiary Magistrate or of a Judge of the Supreme Court, in an action brought by the gas-examiner against the undertakers, that on any day the gas supplied by the undertakers is under less pressure, of less illuminating-power, or of less purity than it ought to be under the provisions of this Act, the undertakers shall in such case be liable to a penalty not exceeding *one hundred* pounds, and the undertakers shall pay the cost of the action. 25 30

(3.) If the undertakers shall make default in complying with the provisions of this Act relating to the testing of the gas supplied by such undertakers, they shall for every such default be liable to a penalty not exceeding *twenty* pounds. 35

(4.) If it shall be proved to the satisfaction of a Stipendiary Magistrate or Judge of the Supreme Court that the undertakers have not supplied users of slot meters with a quantity of gas fully proportionate to the value of the coin operating the slot meter, computed at the usual gas rate charged by the undertakers, they shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding *twenty* pounds in each case. 40

(5.) If the undertakers make default in complying with any of the provisions of this Act not specially provided for in this penalties section of the Act, they shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding *twenty* pounds. 45

Schedule.

SCHEDULE.

REGULATIONS IN RESPECT OF TESTING-APPARATUS.

1. THE apparatus for testing the illuminating-power of the gas shall consist of the improved form of Bunsen's photometer, known as Lethby's open 60 in. photometer, or Evan's enclosed 100 in. photometer, together with a proper meter, minute clock, governor, pressure gauge, and balance.

The burner to be used for testing the gas shall be such as is required by the gas-examiner.

The candles used for testing the gas shall be sperm candles of six to the pound, and two candles shall be used together.

2. The apparatus for testing the presence in the gas of sulphuretted hydrogen : A glass vessel containing a strip of bibulous paper moistened with a solution of acetate of lead, containing 60 grains of crystallized acetate of lead dissolved in 1 fluid ounce of water.

RULES AS TO MODE OF TESTING GAS.

1. *Mode of testing for Illuminating-power.*—The gas in the photometer to be lighted at least fifteen minutes before the testings begin, and is to be kept continuously burning from the beginning to the end of the tests.

Each testing shall include ten observations of the photometer made at intervals of a minute.

The consumption of gas to be carefully adjusted to five cubic feet per hour.

The candles to be lighted at least ten minutes before beginning each testing, so as to arrive at their normal state of burning, which is shown when the wick is slightly bent and the tip glowing.

The standard rate of consumption for the candles shall be 120 grains each per hour. Before and after making each set of ten observations of the photometer the gas-examiner shall weigh the candles, and if the consumption shall have been more or less per candle than 120 grains per hour he shall make and record the calculations requisite to neutralize the effects of this difference.

The average of each set of ten observations is to be taken as representing the illuminating-power of that testing.

Mode of testing for Sulphuretted Hydrogen.—The gas shall be passed through the glass vessel containing the strip of bibulous paper moistened with the solution of acetate of lead for a period of three minutes, or such longer period as may be required by the gas-examiner, and if any discolouration of the test-paper is found to have taken place, this is to be held conclusive as to the presence of sulphuretted hydrogen in the gas.