

HOUSE . . . . . No. 717.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, BOSTON, April 12, 1894.

HON. GEORGE VON L. MEYER, *Speaker, House of Representatives.*

SIR:—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the following order:—

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, April 10, 1894.

*Ordered,* That the Secretary of the Commonwealth be instructed to inform the House the reasons of the delay in furnishing to the General Court the printed copies of the report of the Board of Gas and Electric Light Commissioners, said report having been transmitted to the State printers on the twenty-eighth day of February in the present year.

EDWARD A. McLAUGHLIN, *Clerk.*

In response to this order I beg to present the following facts:—

The report of the gas commissioners was received in manuscript at this office Feb. 27, 1894, and transmitted on the same day to the House of Representatives. The manuscript was sent to the State printers on the following day, February 28. This copy was found to consist only of the commissioners' report proper, making about one hundred and sixty pages in type. It did not include the appendices, containing abstracts of the returns of the gas companies, which the law

provides shall be transmitted with the commissioners' annual report to the Secretary of the Commonwealth "on or before the first Wednesday in January of each year," to be laid before the General Court.

It was found, also, that the copy furnished was incomplete, excepting the first sixty-four pages. The State printers received it February 28th. Proofs of the first sixty-four complete pages were sent to the commissioners, by signature, between March 6 and 9, and returned for the press and printed between March 10 and 19. The remaining copy was held for several days awaiting completion, but finally it was put in type, incomplete, by direction of the board, and proofs were sent to the commissioners from time to time between March 19 and 30. None of this proof has been returned to the printer, excepting pages 81 to 96 inclusive, which were returned for correction on Wednesday, the 11th instant. This accounts for all copy in the printers' hands. No part of the appendices of the report, containing the abstracts of the gas companies' returns, has yet been received.

Upon communicating the order of the House to the gas commissioners I was called upon by Messrs. Wheelwright (chairman) and Schaff of the board, who explained that the missing parts of the report now in type were to be supplied from the returns of the gas companies; that those returns had not yet been fully verified and corrected by the board; and that such verification and correction have been delayed by a large increase in the general work of the board, arising from the recent lively public interest in matters under their jurisdiction, and also to certain special investigations, absorbing time of the board which would have otherwise been devoted to the completion of the report. They refer particularly, in this regard, to the interruption caused by the order of the General Court, adopted February 26th, requesting the commissioners to investigate the methods of the gas companies operating in and around Boston, and determine whether in their judgment the gas consumers are being fairly and honestly dealt with, and whether the gas meters register accurately, and report their findings to the Legislature within four weeks.

The commissioners are of the opinion that if there shall be no further interruption, their report will be in the hands of the printer, complete, within two weeks.

Very respectfully,

WM. M. OLIN,  
*Secretary.*

