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Office of the Mayor,
City of Seattle, Wash.
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To the Hon. Mayor and Common Council
of the City of Seattle
Gentlemen

Your Committee on Fire
and Water, which was instructed
by your Hon. body to investigate
the causes of the collision which
occurred on Commercial Street, on
June 7th, between the Chemical Fire
engine and the wagon of E. L. Sherwin
beg to report as follows:

That after the examination of
a large number of witnesses,
your Committee find that, in
their opinion, the facts are these:
1st That Mr. Sherwin could
not possibly have avoided the
collision by getting out of the
way of the engine, and is entitled
to payment from the City for
the damage sustained by his
wagon. Your Committee, with

992673

Office of the Mayor,
City of Seattle, Wash.

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the assistance of competent mechanics
to assess this damage at \$40, which sum
~~think that~~ will repair his
wagon and recommend that a
warrant for that amount be
drawn on the Fire Fund in his
favor. Mr. Sherwin has agreed
to accept this amount as payment
in full.

2nd Your Committee find that
Walsworth whose team was
standing in front of Schwabacher's
Store receiving freight had one
of his horses injured by the
Chemical engine, and recommend
that Councilman Phillips be
appointed to assess the damage, if
any, and report to the Council.

3rd, That George Berryheim, the
driver of the Chemical engine
was endeavoring to stop his team
at the time of the collision, but
that he was to blame for coming

992673

Office of the Mayor,
City of Seattle, Wash.
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round the corner from Yesler
Avenue into Commercial Street
at too great a rate of speed, thus
making it impossible ^{for him} to control
his engine in the narrow and
crowded street. Your committee
would not like to do anything
that would dampen the zeal of
the fire department, or discourage
the boys in their anxiety to get
to the scene of a fire as quick as
possible, but would suggest to
the department that, in the present
condition of our streets, crowded
as they are with vehicles, a large
amount of caution is necessary,
and that it is better for the ap-
paratus to reach the fire a second
or two later, than to get there quick
with a dismantled outfit. The
fire department must also never
forget that the citizens have a

992673

Office of the Mayor,
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right to the streets of the city, subject to the duty of getting out of the way of the fire apparatus when it is possible to do so, but that circumstances may and do frequently make it impossible for ^{the driver of} a team to avoid an accident, in which event ~~is~~ the preservation of life and property is dependent on the sound judgment and caution of the driver of the apparatus of the department.

Your Committee do not think that under all the circumstances, it would be right to discharge Geo. Berryheim from the service, and recommend that he be restored to duty in his company.

D. E. Durie
D. E. Jones
F. A. Tuichell

Citation: Report of the Fire and Water Committee on collision involving fire engine, June 1889. File 992673. General Files, 1802-04. Seattle Municipal Archives.

Transcription:

To the Hon. Mayor and Common Council of the City of Seattle

Gentlemen: Your Committee on Fire and Water, which was instructed by your Hon. body to investigate the causes of the collision which occurred on Commercial Street, on June 7th, between the Chemical Fire engine and the wagon of E. C. Sherwin beg to report as follows:

That after the examination of a large number of witnesses, your Committee find that, in their opinion, the facts are these: 1st that Mr. Sherwin could not possibly have avoided the collision by getting out of the way of the engine, and is entitled to payment from the City for the damage sustained by his wagon. Your Committee, with the assistance of competent machanics have assessed this damage at \$40, which sum will repair his wagon and recommend that a warrant for that amount be drawn on the Fire Fund in his favor. Mr. Sherwin has agreed to accept this amount as payment in full.

2nd Your Committee find that Walsworth whose team was standing in front of Schwabachers Store receiving freight had one of his horses injured by the Chemical Engine, and recommend that Councilman Phillips be appointed to assess the damage, if any, and report to the Council.

3rd That George Berryheim, the driver of the Chemical engine was endeavoring to stop his team at the time of the collision, but that he was to blame for coming round the corner from Yesler Avenue into Commercial Street at too great a rate of speed, thus making it impossible for him to control his engine in the narrow and crowded street. Your committee would not like to do anything that would dampen the zeal of the fire department, or discourage the boys in their anxiety to get to the scene of a fire as quick as possible, but would suggest to the department that, in the present condition of our streets, crowded as they are with vehicles, a large amount of caution is necessary, and that it is better for the apparatus to reach the fire a second or two later than to get there quick with a dismantled outfit. The fire department must also never forget that the citizens have a right to the streets of the city, subject to the duty of getting out of the way of the fire apparatus when it is possible to do so, but that circumstances may and do frequently make it impossible for the dirver of a team to avoid an accident in which event the preservation of life and property is dependent on the sound judgment and caution of the driver of the apparatus of the department.

Your Committee do not think that under all the circumstances it would be right to discharge Geo. Berryheim from the service, and recommend that he be restored to duty in his company.

Signed, D.E. Durie, T.E. Jones, F.A. Twichell