

NO PROTECTION FOR GRIPMEN.

Cable Line Men Say Their Men Will Have to Endure the Cold.

Two gripmen on the Kansas City Cable railway were summarily discharged yesterday because they could not endure the cold weather. Both reported to the superintendent's office that they were unable to stand the cold and were told to stay on their cars until they reached the nearest power house when they would be relieved. They did so and when relieved were told that their services would be no longer needed by the company.

Asked if this is the company's rule in all cases Superintendent Frank Peck of the Ninth Street line said to-day: "Certainly. If we didn't make it the rule we wouldn't have a man to run out the cars on very cold days. It wasn't cold yesterday. The thermometer was above zero all day. The men can get warm at the end of their runs while waiting for time but if a man is going to stand the cold he doesn't want to warm up every half hour."

One of the men discharged was an "extra" and the other had been employed by the company for several years, but quit his place last winter, worked for an express company and then was out of employment for months until reinstated by the company. He had worked hard to secure reinstatement and his family is said to be in need, but the officers of the road say he turned baby at the wrong time. The conduct of these men is said to be unusual, as gripmen rarely complain of cold, no matter how severe the weather is.

The question of protecting the gripmen has been discussed by street railway officers every winter and they are discussing it again, but with little prospect that any effort to protect the men this winter will be made. Robert Gillham, who is regarded as the best authority on the subject, says that all the schemes for protecting the men so far have been unsatisfactory. When the Kansas City Cable rail-

way, the first of its kind in Kansas City, was built, Mr. Gilham, then the engineer of the road, designed grip cars with a glass enclosure, which were used for two years, but afterward were abandoned.

Speaking of this President W. J. Smith of the Ninth Street company said to-day: "The cars were very much like the grip cars now in use, but the ends were of glass and the sides were protected. When the cold became severe and the protection was most needed, a thick coating of frost formed on the windows and the gripmen couldn't see the tracks before them. They would throw open the glass ends and the current of cold air that went roaring through the car made it colder than the open grip. We used these cars for two winters and then abandoned them at the request of the gripmen themselves. We have ten of them in the barns now and have made the rest over into the common grip car that you see in use now. A good gripman won't run a car when he can't see in front and at his sides, as he is liable to kill some one if he does. I see no remedy except for the men to wear heavy clothing and accustom themselves to stand the weather."

The Metropolitan company has made no effort to protect their men except to instruct the gripmen to use very heavy caps of a pattern suggested by the superintendent. An officer of the road showed a card which gave an average run by a regular crew. The gripman took his car from the barn at 5:18 yesterday morning and did not leave it until 1:01 yesterday afternoon. He stopped thirty minutes for dinner and returned to his car which he left for the day at 5 o'clock. He didn't complain of the cold though he might have been a little chilly as the thermometer stood two degrees above zero when he took his car and was ten degrees above at noon. Street railway officers agree that the conductor suffers more than the gripman as his work prevents him from wearing heavy clothing. Several conductors froze their ears yesterday.