

Evening Telegraph

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 1871.

THE MILITIA TAX SWINDLE.

Tax male citizens of Philadelphia have, a number of weeks past, been annoyed by an impudently worded circular informing them that if they do not call within five days at the office of Isaac C. Pearson, collector of delinquent taxes, No. 721 Sanson street, and pay the militia tax for 1870, with costs, their goods will be subject to distraint and they will be made liable to additional costs. This circular has been sent alike to those who have paid the tax and those who have not, and also to those who ought to be upon the collector's books as exempt. The whole object of the persons who sent it out is to gouge the public as much as possible, and the collection of the tax is managed in such a manner as to accomplish the double purpose of annoying the male taxables of the city and of putting an immense sum of money into somebody's pocket. The collector of this tax has never made a public exhibit of his receipts and expenditures, so far as we are aware, and therefore any calculations we may make must necessarily be approximate. It is certainly within bounds, however, to say that there are 50,000 citizens of Philadelphia liable to the militia tax, which, if properly collected, would yield \$50,000 to be divided among our "soldier companies." There are 6016 officers and men in the First division by paper count, which does not represent the actual strength of the Philadelphia home guards by any means, as the force available for active service is much smaller than this. Taking the figures as they stand, however, it would be interesting to know what becomes of all the money collected. The last division of the tax receipts gave each man \$1.25—or at least we will assume that it did for the sake of argument, for in reality several regiments did not get more than 62 cents per man—at which rate the total of the dividends would amount to \$7520. May we be permitted to inquire what has been done with the balance of \$42,480? The collector or the members of the division board may perhaps consider the question impertinent, but as the citizens of Philadelphia are obliged to submit to all the annoyances of the militia tax they have at least the right to know in what manner their money is expended and into whose pockets it goes.

There is another feature of the militia tax swindle with regard to which there is no doubt, and that is the enormous emoluments of the collector and his assistants. The collector's office last year was on Vine street, this year it is on Sanson street, and next year it will probably be somewhere else, so that it will be impossible for any one desirous of paying the tax in time to find it without infinite difficulty. Indeed, the calculations of the collector appear to be based upon the idea that the tax in a majority of instances will not be paid in time, and that he will consequently be able to pocket the costs. The circulars now being issued demand \$2.05, and assuming that one-half of the 50,000 taxables have not paid—and we are certainly much within bounds in this estimate—the collector will pocket the very pretty sum of \$26,250 as his share of the swindle. It is an outrage that such a tax as this should ever be imposed, and it is an aggravation of the outrage that it should be collected in the manner it is. Our militia system is certainly not as efficient as it should be, but this as it may, it is certain that the tax does not support it, and the principal end and aim of the whole affair is to furnish Mr. Isaac C. Pearson, or whoever is fortunate enough to hold the collectorship, with an opportunity to make a large fortune in a short time with very little labor. We have considered the militia tax swindle in only one of its aspects to-day, but as the subject is one that well deserves ventilation, we will return to it hereafter.

THE EIGHTEENTH STREET SWINDLE.

From all accounts the present session of the Legislature has been "dull and unprofitable" to those incorruptible patriots who misrepresent the people at Harrisburg, and whose votes are as purchasable a commodity as ham or hominy in our markets. The large corporations, fortunately for their finances, have needed but little legislation the past winter, and all attempts to "set up a big job" have thus far failed, although the "Roosters" in the House and lobby have labored earnestly and with determined energy to make a "divvy." The "commission schemes" promised for a while a rich return; but the unexpected, widespread, and determined indignation of the people made them unwillingly relinquish for the present their iniquitous measures for their enslavement. Baffled in this division of spoils (which promised to be large), these paid highwaymen again turn their greedy eyes towards our city in search of plunder. Although nearly all our public highways have been sold by their predecessors to plant corporations, still two or three remain unpurchased of the Legislature, and these they propose to cut up and divide among the "Ring" and the willing tools who loan their names as corporators.

The people of Philadelphia had foolishly but fondly hoped that the Twelfth and Sixteenth Streets Railroad job would be the last of the kind imposed upon them for many years to come, but from all appearances the attempt will be seriously made to grant railroad privileges upon Eighteenth and Twentieth streets. These disinterested patriots are not particular about building the road. As in the case of the Twelfth and Sixteenth, they may be able to sell the franchise to some company which occupies adjacent streets, and which will purchase the right to save its interests from ruin. In any event it is a barefaced and wicked swindle. So far as the wants of

the people on these streets for passenger railroad facilities are concerned, they are fully met by the Seventeenth and Nineteenth Streets line, which runs cars every three or four minutes. In a great city like Philadelphia there should be a few streets running east and west, north and south, upon which carriages and wagons may pass without the inconvenience, interruption, and danger attendant upon a street where passenger cars are thundering along as if every right and privilege of the community, so far as travel is concerned, was vested in them. Eighteenth street is the favorite drive north to the Park. Hundreds of carriages pass over it every afternoon and evening.

The wretched condition of the streets occupied by passenger railroads makes it unsafe for those who drive light carriages. Such a street as Eighteenth is not only a convenience and a comfort, but almost a necessity to our city.

But two or three streets running north are unoccupied by railroad tracks, and yet it is proposed to destroy the best and most beautiful of those remaining. The members of the Legislature from this city and the would-be corporators of this iniquity are perfectly aware of these facts, and are further aware that ninety-nine out of every hundred persons living on or near these streets are opposed to the proposed road. With them it is not the will of the people or the welfare of the city that is consulted. The only question is, How much plunder is there in the scheme?

The question that presents itself to their vision is not how much inconvenience to the people and how much injury to the city will result from this proposed legislation, but each one calculates closely how much will be his individual share of the ill-gotten proceeds. There is no interest of the citizen or city so sacred that they would not trample under foot.

How long, oh patient citizens, will you endure this burden of shame and injustice that annually robs you of your most cherished rights and privileges under the name of law? Will you arise in your just indignation and strike down these unworthy representatives, and hold up to public contempt the would-be corporators in this scheme, who would sell the dearest rights of the people and sacrifice the highest interests of the city for personal greed?

THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

The following editorial from the Press of this morning covers the whole ground of the public buildings controversy, and we lay it before our readers as an admirable statement of the exact situation. The only journals which have opposed the Penn Square site and the plans of the commissioners are those which have pecuniary interests in the neighborhood of Washington and Independence Squares, and this fact deprives all their arguments of any value they might have had under other circumstances. The Press previous to the October election advocated the Washington Square site, but its conductor is too shrewd to oppose his private interests to the public wishes in such a matter, and the Press accordingly gracefully accepted the situation when the result of the election was known. It would have been more creditable to one or two of our contemporaries if they had imitated this example. The editorial of the Press is as follows:—

The dead-lock being over, the attention of the Legislature during the remaining days of its session will be devoted, no doubt, to matters of deep concern to the people of the State. Philadelphia is especially interested in the settlement of the vexed question as to the municipal buildings, and it is to be hoped such action will be had at Harrisburg as will enable the commissioners to proceed at once in the performance of their duties. Our readers are, perhaps, tired of hearing speeches and reading articles upon the subject, when they need work; and it is therefore with much reluctance we venture to recapitulate a few of the reasons why the present board should be permitted to proceed:— First, The act creating it was acquiesced in by all parties (both interested and otherwise), and no objection to its creation was suggested until after the election in October. Second, The opposition to the Building Commission is in a great measure limited to those persons who are interested in real estate in the neighborhood of Independence Square. Third, It was well understood and agreed that the decision by the ballot should forever determine the question of the location of the buildings; and that question was decided by 18,000 majority, which must necessarily have included votes from both political parties, because the highest majority of votes polled for any one candidate was 8042. Fourth, If the present commission is abolished, the old board, by the same act, is revived, and will, of course, proceed to build upon Independence Square, against the expressed will of the people by ballot. Fifth, Unless the work is proceeded with at once there will be little prospect of having it completed by 1876, and Independence Square and its wretched court-rooms and public offices will remain to illustrate the non-enterprise of the manufacturing centre of the United States. Sixth, The press of Philadelphia almost unanimously favors the will of the people expressed in October last, being obeyed. Seventh, Any act of the Legislature tending to retard this great and necessary work will be an encouragement to future factious antagonism to public improvements, while an honest adherence to and compliance with the well-ascertained views of the people of Philadelphia upon this subject will do much to check such embarrassing opposition in the future.

FOOT-PATHS IN FAIRMOUNT PARK.

FAIRMOUNT PARK is the glory of Philadelphia. At this season of the year, especially, the many thousands of citizens who throng to its delightful avenues bear testimony to the utility and to the universal appreciation of its many charms and its health-reviving qualities. The Park Commissioners deserve credit for their general good management and for the care with which they have avoided tawdry ornaments and patchwork display. But it is intimated that, in one respect at least, even their management is not above criticism. It is said that while the work of completing broad carriage-ways goes bravely on, comparatively little attention is being paid to the construction of foot-paths for the use of pedestrians. There should be no room left for cavil or criticism on a point like this. The Park is intended quite as much—as, even far more—for the million than for the millionaire. It should be adapted in every respect to the use and enjoyment of those who have not the means to drive through its spacious grounds in their private coaches or in hired carriages. In the Central Park equal care was simultaneously manifested throughout in the opening of foot-paths and carriage roads, and a similar policy should prevail here.

NEW RAILWAY COMBINATIONS.

The late flurry in the stock market in the prices of the shares of the Camden and Amboy Railroad is supposed to be indicative of the speedy ratification of the long-talked-of lease of the New Jersey Railroads by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. There is apparently little doubt that this consolidation will soon be made. A series of railway connections of almost inconceivable magnitude will then be placed under one management. The combinations of the New York railway rings, gigantic as they are, will be completely overshadowed by those perfected and projected here; and in one important sense Philadelphia will, to a much greater extent than any other point in this country, be the centre of its railway system. This city should manifestly derive great advantages from such a condition of affairs, but the question whether she will reap them depends largely upon the degree of activity and enterprise manifested by her merchants and manufacturers. If they properly improve the facilities for cheap and speedy intercommunication with all points in the West, South, Southwest, Northwest, East, and Northeast which are daily increasing, they can undoubtedly render Philadelphia the leading mart of internal commerce; and this is, after all, the great point to be aimed at by the cities which are striving for commercial supremacy. The foreign trade of the United States is of small importance when compared with its varied and wonderfully extensive domestic interchanges; and the American railway system opens up fields for traffic which far exceed in extent and productiveness those opened by water transportation. In this field Philadelphia should and can, by proper efforts, become supreme; and every step towards the perfection of her railway system should incite her business men to renewed exertions.

Quite a number of the collieries in various coal districts are about resuming operations. Industrious miners and coal operators are equally weary of protracted inactivity, and while complete harmony is restored at some points, at others the only obstacle to resumption is the fear of violence. If the laws of the Commonwealth are not worthless paper, and if the Executive and Judicial authorities are not woefully incompetent to discharge their duties, that fear should speedily be dispelled. If there is any one offense for which men deserve to be severely punished, it is the crime of arresting the natural course of industry, and preventing laborers who wish to work from peacefully pursuing their chosen avocations; and by the stringent enforcement of the correct doctrine on this one vital point, nine-tenths of the troubles of the coal strikes will be avoided henceforth and forever.

THE SUNDAY DISPATCH.—With its last issue the Sunday Dispatch completed its twenty-fourth year and its twenty-fourth volume, amid the good wishes of a host of friends, who have found much to admire in its able management and in the sturdy independence with which it has discussed many of the important public questions that have arisen from week to week during its career. The Dispatch was the first successful Sunday newspaper ever established in Philadelphia, and it has not only conquered many of the prejudices which existed a quarter of a century ago against such a publication, but it has won a high place for itself among the journals of Philadelphia as an able and eloquent exponent of public opinion. The Sunday Dispatch has been essentially a local paper, and it has advocated the local interests of Philadelphia in a manner that has obtained for it the regard of public-spirited citizens of all parties. Many important reforms have been brought about mainly through the influence of the Dispatch, and its conductors are entitled to the congratulations of their fellow-journalists as well as the public at large upon the near approach of their silver anniversary, when they will celebrate a quarter of a century of personal prosperity and intelligent efforts to promote the interests of the public.

NOTICES.

SPRING SUITS. SPRING STYLES. SPRING OVERCOATS. SPRING BUSINESS SUITS. SPRING JACKETS AND PANTS FOR BOYS. SPRING CHESTERFIELDS AND SUITS FOR YOUTH. SPRING FANCY SUITS FOR CHILDREN. SPRING STOCK OF FINE READY-MADE CLOTHING. The largest, the best, and the cheapest we have ever made up. Our assortment comprises all the very newest designs in Children's, Boys', Youths', and Men's suits, and the greatest care has been taken to produce the very best class of clothing ever made by any establishment in this country. We guarantee perfect satisfaction in every respect. Our prices have never before been so low as now. Call and examine our

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AUCTION SALES. [For additional Auctions see the Seventh Page.] HENRY W. & B. SCOTT, JR., AUCTIONEERS, No. 1129 CHESTNUT STREET, Girard Row.

Thursday, May 11. MR. T. J. FENIMORE'S sale of all his finished pictures, to which will be added a very important picture by THOS. HILL, "The Goose Falls," Canada; "THE IRONSIDES, BARTFORD, and SASSACUS," by Xanthus Smith, and works by Miss Ida Waugh, Sonntag, N. H. Trotter, E. Moran, T. Moran, and others. All on exhibition for one week, with catalogues, previous to sale. 4 25 8 1/2

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DRY GOODS. 1871. "THORNLEY'S" Special Opening of Suitings.

BUFF LINENS, CHOCOLATE LINENS, FLAX-COLORED LINENS, GREY AND BLAY LINENS, PONGES AND JAPANESE GOODS, MOHAIRS, ALPACAS, ETC. ETC. The above goods range from 20 cents per yard up, and are beautiful. BLACK SILKS, STRIPED AND CHECKED SILKS, FASHIONABLE SHAWLS, SUN SHADES, PARASOLS, KID GLOVES, ETC. JOSEPH H. THORNLEY, NORTHEAST CORNER OF EIGHTH and SPRING GARDEN Sts., 2 3 1/2 1/4 1/4 PHILADELPHIA.

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