

Ink Slings.

The Philadelphia Ledger, the strongest newspaper in that city, has come out for PATTISON.

The battleship Maine appears to be a flyer, so far as speed is concerned. Let us hope that she will never fly like the old Maine did in Havana harbor.

Money can't buy the voters of Pennsylvania this fall. They are going to purge the State of the corrupt gang that has been ruling and ruining.

According to statistics the Klondike is falling off fast in its gold production. It is on the toboggan, and it will, and there is ice enough on hand to make the chute very slippery.

If you have not been registered see to it that your name is put on the list. You have more to vote for this fall than ever before and you will be neglecting the duty of good citizenship if you do not put yourself in a position to record your vote against the corruption that is reigning in Pennsylvania.

"Cousin SAMUEL" says he ought to be elected Governor because the price of oats is a way up. Indeed! What did "Cousin SAMUEL" have to do with causing the scarcity last season that brought the high price this? He'll think it scarcer than ever about November 4th, if he judges the general crop by what he feels.

It is a little early to open the local political campaign but the candidates are all hustling already. Let it be a clean one. Past experience proves the folly of spreading malicious, unfounded stories. The merits of the men, and the principles they represent, should govern in rallying to their support.

It is evident that the British were not as anxious to have peace as their hilarity over the termination of the Boer war would indicate. They are already planning to gobble up Swaziland, on the western border of the Transvaal, where they are rushing troops now under the pretext of keeping the natives from hurting themselves.

Judging from the number and filthy character of the cases at court this week it might be well to commit candidates for the Legislature to stand for a law that would give Centre county an official in the line of BURDINE BUTLER'S business. It is certain if the cause were removed so much nasty effect would not have to be ventilated at every session of our courts.

D. E. HIBNER, the Democratic nominee for Congress, is not a wealthy man, but all the money that his opponent can put into the campaign will not keep him from carrying Clearfield county by a large majority. He is popular at home, and a man who can command the support of his neighbors, as Mr. HIBNER will do, is the right kind of a man to send to Congress.

Never in the history of Centre county has there been a term of court so polluted with foul, bestial cases as have been dragged into this week's session for settlement. It is to be deplored that there are sections in this county where chloride of lime would have to be spread and sulphur burned before the atmosphere could be purified enough for even missionaries to enter.

The dismissal of school teachers in the anthracite coal regions because their relatives are non-union miners is carrying the influence of labor organization too far. No one questions the right of labor to organize for its own protection, but when its own protection means the destruction of others it has assumed the very position of domineering oppression that it cries out against in the operators.

A word to the wise is sufficient. You sixteen or more applicants in Centre county who would like to be deputy revenue collector might as well be told now that if the appointment comes to Centre county WILBUR F. MALIN, of Bellefonte, is to have it. The announcement is not to be made officially, however, until after you have torn your shirts and spent your money working for the Republican ticket at the polls in November.

The action of the Union party in Bedford county in placing a full ticket in the field and naming delegates to the state convention who are to support PATTISON, GUTHRIE and CORAY is likely to send a cold shiver up "Cousin" PENNYPACKER'S spinal column. The Union movement in other counties in the State is not being abandoned like it is in Centre county, simply because QUAY passed the patronage over to the Union leaders to dispense. It seems that the Bedford Unionists are fighting for principle and not for possession of the pap and as there are many others like them in the State we are hopeful that PATTISON will be elected.

There is n't that sweet harmony existing between the Philadelphia Inquirer and "Cousin SAMUEL" PENNYPACKER in the matter of the issues of the campaign that we expected to find. They seem to be sadly out of tune. The Stalwart daily says "on the character and ability of our candidates rests our hopes this fall." But judging from "Cousin SAMUEL'S" remarks up at Fogelsville, a few nights ago, that rare specimen of ancestral bric-a-brac is of the opinion that the price of corn and oats last season and the price of milk this has more to do with the campaign than the "character and ability" of any one. We would advise the Inquirer and "Cousin SAMUEL" to get together and discuss the matter over a couple of nice "cow-flips."

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Judge Pennypacker's Speech.

Cousin SAM opened the campaign of the QUAY machine at Fogelsville, Lehigh county, on Saturday but the most careful examination of the published text of his speech fails to reveal a single reference to anything which can by any system of torture be construed into a reference to any issue of the campaign. "Last year the price of corn went up twenty cents a bushel," he said, and "this year the price of oats had a like increase. Horses and cattle are bringing more money in the market," he added, and as a climax of the burning questions he declared that he "has been supervising the conduct of a farm since 1883 and during the last year the revenues from the sale of milk have been larger than ever before."

The people of Pennsylvania have been suffering during the last decade from the effects of all sorts of political iniquities. During the last half dozen years venality has been especially frequent and bold. Ballot frauds have grown so rapidly that no election expresses the views of the people on any question.

Appropriations for charities have been divided with the machine managers to pay the expenses of their costly vices.

City governments have been ripped up in order to make assets of the vacancies for political bosses to trade in.

Franchises to the value of hundreds of millions of dollars have been stolen from the people and disposed of as gifts to favorite politicians. But PENNYPACKER made no reference to such things. The only reason he could give to the Lehigh county farmers why they should prefer him to another for the office of Governor is that corn was twenty cents a bushel higher last year, oats showed the same increase this year and the revenues of his farm from the sale of milk are greater now than ever before.

Even if that is true and we shall not take the trouble to dispute it—for what have these matters to do with the question of who shall be Governor of Pennsylvania for the next four years—Judge PENNYPACKER would hardly say to an audience of intelligent farmers of Centre or Lehigh counties that he is responsible for the improvement.

Then if he isn't what has the question to do with the campaign? Did QUAY'S policy of bribing voters, robbing charities and schools, stuffing ballot boxes and stealing franchises increase the quantity or advance the value of the milk of his cows? He would hardly set up such a claim and unless he does that his speech at Fogelsville was an insult to the intelligence of every one who heard him, as well as to the people of the entire State.

Chairman Donnelly's Good Advice.

At a meeting of the Philadelphia Democratic city committee the other evening ex-magistrate CHARLES P. DONNELLY, chairman of the committee, called the attention of the members of that body to the importance of electing Democratic Members of the Legislature at the approaching election. He couldn't have done a wiser thing. Instead of one Democratic Member from that city there ought to be a dozen or more and the fact that there was only one in the last Legislature is attributable to carelessness, first in making the nominations and secondly in neglect to bring the voters to the polls. This is shown in the fact that the only Democratic Representative for Philadelphia in the last Legislature was elected in one of the strongest Republican districts.

As far back as 1880 there were 90,000 Democratic voters in Philadelphia. According to the ratio of increase in population there ought to be 125,000 Democratic voters there now. Even with candidates no better than those of the Republican party, and it would be impossible to get worse without going to the prisons, that number of voters ought to get more than one Member. But if the candidates were far superior, as they might be in most of the districts, there is no reason why half the delegation might not be Democrats. The Hon. MICKLE C. PAUL was triumphantly elected in the Twenty-fourth district two years ago, for no other reason than that he was so conspicuously fit and so manifestly superior to his Republican opponent that civic pride and a sense of decency compelled men to vote for him.

Under ordinary conditions the Third, Fourth, Eleventh, Twelfth and Seventeenth wards of the city ought to elect Democratic Representatives to the Legislature. By nominating conspicuously fit candidates, as was done in the Twenty-fourth ward two years ago, the number of Democrats could easily be increased to a dozen or fifteen. If that many had been elected two years ago, or even if only the Democratic districts had chosen Democratic Representatives then QUAY wouldn't have been elected to the United States Senate by the last Legislature and none of the iniquitous legislation which disgraced the State would have been enacted. In view of these facts chairman DONNELLY was right in urging the committeemen to pay attention to the election of Democrats to the Legislature.

Roosevelt's Disappointing Speeches.

President ROOSEVELT'S tour of New England which has now been in progress for a week is a disappointment to the public. It is not so for the reason of absence of public interest in the movements of the President. On the contrary everybody watches him attentively and the meetings which have been held have been largely attended. In one city of considerable size all business was suspended during the period of his stay and everywhere he has been greeted with generous enthusiasm. The disappointment has been in the tone and character of his speeches, however. We have been accustomed to getting something of value from the lips of our Presidents when they take to the road for campaign purposes or pleasure.

We are giving expression to no prejudice in saying that President ROOSEVELT'S speeches have been grievously disappointing. From him the people had every right to expect positive declarations on every subject of public interest to which he adverted. He won all his distinction by such treatment of relevant subjects. His first conspicuous service was as a civil service commissioner. In that position he denounced in unqualified terms every violation of the law relating to the classified service and held emphatically that merit should be the only standard in making either appointments or promotions. But as President he has completely reversed himself and since the beginning of his tour he appears to have adopted the immoral doctrine of monarchy that "what-ever is, is right."

For example, in one of his speeches he referred to the Cuban reciprocity question. In his annual message to Congress in December last he declared that it was a moral duty of Congress to give such help to the infant Republic as would enable the people to move forward to the completion and perfection of their government. Congress disregarded his advice but instead of denouncing the sacrifice of honor involved he apologized for its delinquency. He denounced trusts, but makes no suggestion of a means of restraining their evil tendencies and so on through all the questions of kindred character his speeches are "sounds signifying nothing."

Ex-Postmaster Hicks for Pattison.

The severest blow which the campaign managers of the QUAY machine have received thus far was contained in an interview of ex-postmaster HICK'S of Philadelphia on Monday morning. Postmaster HICK'S is a life long Republican and he has long been a conspicuous figure in the politics of Philadelphia. He was appointed postmaster by President MCKINLEY. Soon after his appointment he offended the bosses by refusing to obey them in the distribution of the patronage and they invoked every possible influence to get him removed. President MCKINLEY stood by him, however, as long as he lived. Some time after the induction of ROOSEVELT into the office he was removed to make place for a machine man to oblige QUAY.

It was not because of his removal, however, that he refuses to support PENNYPACKER. In fact the incident left no resentments in his mind and up until the publication of the recent interview with Judge PENNYPACKER Mr. HICKS was supporting Cousin SAM with much earnestness. When that gentleman reiterated his absurd estimate of QUAY and repeated his statement that QUAY is a greater statesman than WEBSTER or CLAY, there was nothing left for the ex-postmaster as a self-respecting man but to desert the organization and come out in support of the strongest candidate in opposition. A blameless life is no protection against the danger which is inseparable from the election to the office of Governor of a man so infatuated with QUAY as to make all his political immoralities and official malfeasances appear like virtues.

That is precisely what ex-postmaster HICKS did. He declared that to his mind Judge PENNYPACKER no longer represents the blameless jurist whose sense of honor and obligations to conscience was a guarantee of fidelity to duty but he represents QUAYISM and the embodiment of all that is dangerous and criminal in that monstrous thing. Mr. HICKS couldn't support QUAYISM and therefore he couldn't support PENNYPACKER and proving his faith by works he declared openly his intention to do all he can for the election of PATTISON and asked all his friends to follow his example. As his influence is widely felt this action of Mr. HICKS is of the greatest significance and has spread consternation among the machine managers who are looking about now for a means to counteract it. Mr. HICKS has preserved his own integrity by his action.

You want to vote this year. Of course you do. Be sure that you can by seeing that your name is put on the registry.

Subscribe for the WATCHMAN.

Depew's New Idea.

Senator DEPEW, of New York, is home from Europe with a new notion of the MONROE doctrine. That is to say he learned during his last visit abroad that the people of Great Britain interpret the MONROE doctrine to mean that the United States assumes, in the event it is necessary, a sort of protectorate over the entire Western hemisphere. They hold, the Senator alleges, that in the event of the formation of a triple alliance composed of France, Russia and Germany which should make war on Great Britain, it would be the duty of the United States to protect the British colonies on the American continent. Senator DEPEW coincides with this view, it may be observed. In this matter it is only fair to give Senator DEPEW another guess. He is widely wrong in his first conjecture but there is such freedom of opinion in this country that any man may claim as many guesses as he likes on any subject. But the fact is that the United States are no more under obligation under the provisions of the MONROE doctrine to protect Great Britain's sovereignty in Canada and other British possessions than they are to protect the Sultan of Turkey in his sovereignty in Constantinople. If the triple Alliance or any other European combination should undertake to set up governments of their own in Canada, after having acquired title by conquest the government of the United States would properly intervene under the authority of the MONROE doctrine and say hands off.

When the government of Great Britain relinquishes sovereignty over the British possessions in the American continent the people of those possessions will have the right to choose whether to become an Independent Republic or a part of the United States, and being contiguous territory, some of those colonies would be desirable acquisitions to the United States. But Great Britain must take care of her own colonies in the event of war with the triple Alliance and defend them or failing in that relinquish all claim to them. If that were done there would be an end of monarchical control and European systems in that section of the Western world.

Centre county jurors have less patience with libel suits than those of Clearfield. In the WATCHMAN had had State Treasurer HARRIS to deal with here, instead of Clearfield, the ruffled plumage of that polluted politician would have been pulled clear out.

The County Committee Meeting.

Pursuant to a call issued by county chairman BOWEN the county committee of Centre met in the arbitration room in the court house on Monday at 11 o'clock. The purpose of the meeting was to nominate a candidate for Coroner; that office having been left without an aspirant by the recent county convention because of an uncertainty as to the expiration of the Coroner's term.

There was a fair representation at the meeting. Chairman BOWEN presided and secretary GETTIG kept the record. Immediately after the roll call the chairman made the announcement that after the call for the meeting had been issued it was discovered that the county committee did not have warrant, under the party rules, to name candidates for office under such circumstances and as irregularity of any sort was to be avoided, and there is still plenty of time to reconvene the county convention, it was his opinion that it should be done. The matter was generally discussed, after which it was voted to reconvene the convention on a suitable day during fair week, preferably the day on which candidate PATTISON is to be here.

This being all the business there was to transact brief talks were made by Col. J. L. SPANGLER, GEORGE GOODHART, F. P. MUSSEY, G. H. LEYMAN, Capt. HUGH S. TAYLOR, REGISTER ARCHY, W. A. CARLIN and Geo. R. MEEK. The great interest manifested by all present augurs well for an enthusiastic campaign in the fall.

On or about September 1st H. C. Quigley Esq. will remove his law office from his present quarters with Col. W. F. Reeder, to the first floor of Temple Court, where he will occupy the rooms formerly used by the Democratic county committee as headquarters. The partnership existing between Col. Reeder and Mr. Quigley was dissolved several months ago, but they have been occupying the old offices up to this time. In Mr. Quigley's setting out for himself we wish him the greatest success and he has already had enough of it to predict that he will secure a very good practice.

An old friend over in Huntingdon writes that his "subscription to the good old WATCHMAN expires some time in September and please find enclosed one of those much coveted No. 1 green things" as his share for another year. Those are the kind of letters that make the editor's heart glad. They not only encourage him in his work, but furnish the substantial means of keeping it going.

To Notify Candidates

Committee of Democrats to Perform this Office at Reading.

ALLENTOWN, August 25.—Hon. Robert E. Wright, of this city, who presided at the democratic state convention, at Erie, June 25th, this afternoon, appointed the committee to officially notify candidates Pattison, Guthrie and Nolan of their nomination. The notification will take place at the M. Penn house, Reading, September 4th, at 8 p. m. A banquet will follow at the Neversink Mountain house. The committee consists of one member from each senatorial district as follows: John H. Keenan, Thomas J. Ryan, Matthew Dittman, William F. Harriott, Thomas DeLahunty, James Gay Gordon, A. H. Ladner, Charles F. Donnelly, all of Philadelphia; O. B. Dickinson, Chester; Herman Yerkes, Doylestown; James N. Ermentrout, Reading; Charles E. Ingersoll, Penly; William U. Hensel, Lancaster; W. Hayes Grier, Columbia; Vance McCormick, Harrisburg; Edward Harvey, Allentown; S. P. Light, Lebanon; Howard McClellan, Easton; H. Frank Balfour, Chester Springs; Frank J. Fitzmaurice, Scranton, John M. Garman, Nanticoke; L. H. Barber, Mauch Chunk; Asa Keeler, Tunkhannock; J. Henry Cochran, Williamsport; T. W. Costello, Bradford; George S. Purdy, Honesdale; H. E. Davis, Sunbury; John W. Bittenger, York; James W. Ryan, Pottsville; William A. Marr, Ashland; Robert S. McKee, Millstown; William Penn Lloyd, Mechanicsburg; W. R. Gillen, Chambersburg; William D. Bigler, Clearfield; Warren Worth Bailey, Johnstown; A. H. Coffroth, Somerset; Samuel States, Brookville; J. K. P. Hall, Ridgway; Richard Coulter, jr., Greensburg; Robert Crawford, Waynesburg; Calvin Reyburn, Kitanning; David T. Watson, W. P. Jans, Pitsburgh; William E. Dunlap, West Bridgewater; John G. McConaghy, New Castle; William Harson, Oil City; George A. Allen, Erie; and John Fortig, Titusville.

Thropp Nominated by Bedford Unionists.

BEDFORD, August 26.—To-day the Union party of Bedford county, met at Bedford and nominated a full Union party ticket. Most of the districts of the county were represented by prominent, professional business men and farmers. Joseph E. Thropp was nominated for congress. Captain Eli Eichelberger, of Saxton, and E. S. Doty, of Bedford, for legislature.

The convention adopted resolutions condemning the corrupt practices of the present administration and the methods of the Quay machine politics, and instructed the delegates to the state convention for Pattison, Guthrie and Coray.

Golden Star of the Klondike Is Now on the Wane.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 26.—The golden star of the Klondike is on the wane, according to the official report of George H. Hees, who recently was sent to Dawson by the Canadian Manufacturers' association to make a thorough examination into the business prospects of the Yukon territory.

Mr. Hees refers to the fact that the total yield of the Klondike last year was \$24,000,000 and that the production of the coming year will not, according to government estimate, exceed \$14,000,000. At Dawson, Mr. Hees reports ten applicants for every job, yet boat loads of men continue to arrive.

Series of Earthquakes in the Moro Section in Mindanao.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 27.—A cablegram at the War Department from General Chaffee reports a series of earthquakes in the Lake Lanao country, in the Moro section of Mindanao, near Camp Vickers, the present headquarters of the American forces. The rivers and mountains were considerably disturbed and fifty or sixty natives killed, but no Americans perished.

We'll Get More This Fall.

From the Pittsburg Post. The Philadelphia "Press" of yesterday says in an appeal to the Quay machine. "In the last presidential election the number of Democrats chosen to Congress was four. That is the most they should get this year, and it is all they will get if the Republican duty is performed." The "Press" is eloquent on the subject of germanymen in the South, but here it defends the abominated racial policy that gives the Democrats one Congressman for 106,080 Democratic votes, and the Republicans a Congressman for every 27,000 Republican votes. In some things the "Press" can always be relied on to agree with Quay. One is in sounding the depths of political injustice and raciality. A fellow feeling makes them wondrous kind.

The Perfect Tariff.

From the Dover, Del., Index. The Philadelphia Press says, "Secretary Shaw's second speech on the tariff question is better than the first. His second speech is just right." From this statement, it is easily inferred that the Secretary's first speech was somewhat off—not just right. "No tariff is perfect," says the Press in its comment on the "Just right" speech. Indeed, this is no revelation. It is a fact that has been long and well known. When the tariff is cleaned of its imperfections, there will be nothing left but a "Tariff for revenue only." This can never be accomplished but by a Democratic administration.

When the Trusts Will be Defeated.

From the St. Louis Republic. Republican protectionists are now marching to their Waterloo as swiftly as the hours can hurry past that brings election day round again. The American people now know exactly what to do with "the best tariff the country has ever known." They have learned their lesson at last. The tariff which created the trusts and which now holds the trusts invincible against the people is doomed. A tariff for revenue only will take its place. Exactly the moment this is done the trusts encounter defeat at the hands of the people.

Spawns from the Keystone.

—Benben Althous died last Friday at his home in New Derry, Westmoreland county. He is survived by his wife and eighteen children. He was 84 years old.

—George B. Breen, of Williamsport, has purchased a 6,000 acre tract of timber land in Cambria and Somerset counties for \$100,000. The timber will be cleared, after which coal mines will be opened.

—The annual institute of the teachers of Williamsport's public schools is now in session. The authorities there evidently believe that the time to instruct teachers is before the school term opens.

—Daniel Saunders, a resident of Slate Run, Lycoming county, was instantly killed in Black Forest Saturday last by a tree which he was felling, falling upon him. He was 68 years old and leaves a family.

—John McDowell, of Graham township, Clearfield county, died on Friday evening, of Bright's disease, age 65 years. Deceased was born at the place where he died. He was one of the most prominent citizens of the township.

—Dwight Genung, of Newfield, who is 71, and Mrs. Peet, of Carristee, Potter County, were married last week at the bride's home, by the Rev. J. E. Lovejoy. The bride and groom had known each other since childhood.

—J. Carl Grafius, who was wounded during the Boer war, has been granted a pension of \$10. per month by the war department in London. His voucher is payable in Philadelphia. Mr. Grafius, who is now at Cranbrook, E. C., is expected home at Martinsburg soon.

—Edward Cox, a woodman, aged 55 years was found on Friday drowned in Sandy Lick creek, Clearfield county, in water only eighteen inches deep. Cox deliberately took his own life. His body lay face downward in the middle of the stream, which is about twenty-five feet wide. His coat and vest, hat, collar, tie and shoes lay on the bank of the creek.

—Attorney Andrew F. Martin, of Jersey Shore, has been lodged in jail in Williamsport on the charge of having attempted to kill his wife, who is the daughter of John T. McKinney. The attorney went home after midnight Friday and soon thereafter Mrs. Martin was heard screaming, the attorney having thrown, so it is charged, a wash bowl at her head, inflicting a serious injury. He is also charged with having made threats that he would poison his wife. Efforts will be made by Martin to have an early hearing before Judge Hart on habeas corpus proceedings.

—Frank M. Wilson, age 70 years, was found dead in a building in the rear of his residence in Bairdstown, Indiana county, last Saturday. Death was due to paralysis. He was an employee of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. He commenced work as a blacksmith at Altoona shops in June 1859, and worked there until 1867, when he was transferred to the Blairsville shops as foreman in the black smith department, in which position he remained until April of this year when he was pensioned on account of his having reached the extreme age limit. Altogether he worked forty-three years for the company, serving continuously without a break.

—Saturday morning last Mrs. Mary Cannon, of Altoona, was given a hearing before Alderman Raymond on the charge of blasphemy and disturbing the peace. Mrs. Abraham Jacobs' husband being the prosecutor. The alderman imposed the fine and costs, amounting to \$16.99. Enraged at Mrs. Jacobs, Mrs. Cannon is alleged to have waylaid her on Saturday night and beat her in such a manner that the attending physician, Dr. Ross, despaired of saving her life. Friday Abraham Jacobs made information against Mrs. Cannon, charging her with assault and battery, and she was arrested and is being held, pending the result of Mrs. Jacobs' injuries.

—A Jersey Shore special says Geo. Strobert of Sugar Valley, related to a reporter recently a snake story that is out of the ordinary in that line. The special says during berry season Mr. Strobert devoted his time to the gathering and selling of berries. This year both berries and snakes were particularly plenty. Strobert says he has kept an account of the number of snakes he has killed this summer, and up-to-date shows the following: One hundred and twenty-five rattlers, six of them having thirty-two rattlers; twenty-five blacksnakes, seven of them six feet long; two copperheads. He also killed a score of groundhogs and saw five deer. Strobert offers to make affidavit to the truthfulness of his story.

—Miss Ada Trail, of Chaneyville, Bedford county, had a thrilling encounter with an eagle the other day, says a dispatch from Bedford but succeeded in dispatching the bird with a rifle ball. The eagle had been foraging on her father's farm for some days and had almost decimated a flock of chickens. Miss Trail saw the eagle circling about the barn Wednesday evening and, hastening to the house, secured the rifle. In his spiral evolution the eagle at one time almost dived in Miss Trail's face and as he soared aloft she took aim and fired, bringing the bird down dead instantly. The eagle is a fine specimen measuring seven feet from tip to tip. The girl would make a good acquisition to the rifle team of some enterprising military organization.

—Since the speed of railroad trains has been increased to such an alarming extent a number of interesting questions have been brought out by persons interested in this development, says Tuesday's Pittsburg Post. One of particular interest is whether or not a continual long service of an engineer on a fast train will impair his efficiency as a safe man. Performing such perilous duties it is claimed by some, has a tendency to harden the engineers and make of them mere automatic things instead of men of flesh and bone. This applies only to the time of their runs. In view of these theories it is said that certain large systems, particularly the Pennsylvania, may retire the fast train engineers to slow ones after a continuous duty to say perhaps two years. Instances have been cited, it is said, where the engineers of fast trains would run by signals, thinking that the signal showed a clear track. While some of the engineers laugh at the idea, nevertheless the matter is a serious question among the officials.