

**STUART A DODGER  
IN PUBLIC SERVICE**

**Cyclone Cellar During Last Year's  
Revolution Not New to Him.**

**HAD BEEN IN IT FREQUENTLY**

**Journal of Select Council, in Which  
He Was a Member, Shows Amazing  
Record of Presence Without  
Voting on Big Questions.**

**HIS DREAD OF CORPORATIONS**

**Everything Likely to Make Bosses  
Fear He Would Be Hard to Handle  
as Mayor Was Carefully Avoided by  
Their Present Nominees.**

Edwin S. Stuart, Republican nominee for governor, has been, ever since he first entered public life, a dodger upon matters generally that were of vital importance to the people whom he was supposed to represent. Throughout his career of five years as a select councilman from the 26th ward of Philadelphia, from April, 1886, to April, 1891, his invariable custom was to dodge the votes on many of the most important questions. To observers aware of this fact it should not have been surprising, at the outbreak of the municipal and state revolution, in May of 1905, to learn that he refused on two different occasions, when duly requested by representative citizens, to either allow the use of his name, or even to be present at a town meeting of the citizens in the Academy of Music to protest against the proposed virtual robbery of the gas works, which forced Mayor Weaver to open war against the public plunderers.

It is a pity that a man with a private life so blameless as Mr. Stuart's should have proved himself so weak and timid, not only in the days of the last year and a half that "tried men's souls," but also throughout the previous years when he was in public office, and had great opportunities, all of which he missed, to make himself of inestimable service to the people of his native city. The period which he spent in the cyclone cellar, from the start of the present Pennsylvania revolution to the date of his slating by Penrose, McNichol and Martin for the governorship, was not a novel experience for the machine gubernatorial candidate. He was familiar with every nook and corner of that refuge from storm, for he had run into it and pulled the doors down numberless times while he was a member of the upper branch of the municipal legislature.

**Backbone of India Rubber.**

The disrespectful cartoonists who pictured Mr. Stuart as an ancient maiden in hysterics at sight of a mouse were not far wrong in their evident estimate of him as a public servant. Despite the esteem which Mr. Stuart's personal and domestic virtues have won for him, those who know him best would find cause to pray "God save the Commonwealth!" if the state government and the duty of keeping the legislature in check were committed to his hands. If life should be spared, too, and power be permitted to remain in the hands of the Philadelphia gang who made him mayor because of his record as select councilman, and who forced him upon the so-called Republican party as its candidate for governor over other leading citizens, when not a delegate had been elected or instructed for him, the people of Pennsylvania will all need to pray, "God save the Commonwealth."

As a select councilman, Stuart had a peculiar dread of going upon record whenever bills affecting corporations, particularly the street railway companies, steam railroads and electric light and power concerns, were up for consideration. On 22 different very important occasions, when questions of permitting the laying of underground conduits were before the chamber, Mr. Stuart was either absent or present as a non-voter and dodger. Every charge made in this article is substantiated by the journals of select council, which have been carefully examined for the purpose of letting the commonwealth know what sort of public servant the McNichol-Penrose-Martin nominee has been. Those ordinarily dry-as-dust records, when scanned with no name in mind but Stuart's, become, in countless places, as amusing as a Mark Twain narrative in the continuous exposure of Stuart's dodging.

**Knew the Kind of Mayor Wanted.**

He is officially recorded as absent from 24 meetings of the chamber—a very large number, when it is considered that, at the busiest times, se-

lect council did not meet oftener than twice a month. But his dodging when present is more interesting than all that. In every case the records make it easy to explain his absence, for whenever he was away there was something very big before the chamber. At each of 28 meetings that he attended he dodged votes on steam railroad questions. There were 21 meetings at which the street railways were heavily interested in bills then acted upon, but in not one of which sessions did Stuart vote upon an issue of that kind, although he was present. His dread of going upon record when bills involving projecting shop signs, sidewalk disputes or other matters that might imperil his candidacy for the mayoralty were under consideration, was illustrated on dozens of occasions when he dodged such measures.

It won't do for the Stuart campaign managers to defer answering these charges until the eleventh hour of the campaign, when it might be too late to specify dates, pages of the journals and other particulars which really make the charges unanswerable. Now is the time for them to begin, but they will not do it. They dare not. What is known in Harrisburg as a "call of the house," made for the purpose of ascertaining if a quorum is present, is a rare thing in the municipal legislature, and, therefore, it would be hard to prove that in every instance referred to Mr. Stuart had not merely stepped out of the chamber for a moment just before his name was called. But if that was the case, why did he not subsequently have his name recorded? In every one of the instances of the dodging charged against him—that is of being present but not voting—he is recorded as answering to his name at the opening of the session.

**Dreaded Any Antagonism.**

But at least one instance of his being officially caught at his dodging by a call of the house was on November 22, 1888, when he was present, but did not vote upon an ordinance relating to projecting street signs, show cases, etc. There being no quorum voting, the roll was called to find out who were present, and Stuart answered to his name. Some well-known "ringsters" who had been dodgers with Stuart also answered, and showed not only the presence of a quorum, but that one of the men present and preventing the chamber from doing business was Stuart. Any reader who may consider this a comparatively small matter should accompany the searcher through the journals and strive to study the motives which Stuart had for dodging votes in 21 different sessions on bills for erection of frame buildings, and in as many more meetings on important street improvement measures, not to speak of other dozens of sessions in which he was present, but failed to vote upon those peculiar sorts of bills that are likely to stir up local antagonisms.

These records prove that Stuart, as a rule, was afraid to vote on measures that were likely to involve him in controversy, or perhaps to make enemies for himself. It has been said of him that he has few, if any, enemies. The journals of select council give the explanation. Any public nonentity can gain such a reputation by simply being a man of putty and never doing anything. But the fact that such a man leads an exemplary private life is no reason why the people should want to have him in the chief executive position of the commonwealth, where, particularly in these days of bringing the corporations to terms and wiping out the remnant of the looting power that has robbed and disgraced the state, the chief requisites are not personal amiability and private integrity, but virile vigor and militant aggressiveness that can and will restore and maintain the right of the people.

**How He Kept Out of Hot Water.**

Take a few specifications of Stuart's dodging. All the details would fill every page of this paper, and then would not be half told.

September 27, 1886, absent from the session that fixed the tax rate at \$1.50, when there was a fight to make it \$2.

December 2, present, but not voting on bill to let the Western Union Telegraph lay underground conduits in certain streets.

February 17, 1887, present, but not voting on bill repealing the popular checking rider of appropriation to the commission erecting the new city hall. He voted on the very next bill, an innocuous measure, however, and just here it may be said that in nearly every one of the hundreds of cases of serious dodging by Stuart the journals show that on the bill immediately following, if it was one not likely to get him into hot water, he invariably voted.

March 31, 1887, present, but not recorded as voting on appropriation for continuing the underground electric system under Broad street. The very next bill, as usual, got his vote. May 19, voted just ahead of and immediately after, but not upon the significant resolution requesting the governor to approve house bill supplementing the act of 1868, for the formation and regulation of railroad corporations. That bill was the "Rapid Transit" measure for the enactment of which people were clamoring. May 19, underground conduit dodged by Stuart. June 6, a special meeting, for which Stuart had signed the call, and which he attended, although he dodged votes on a sidewalk vault bill and a bill for confirmation of police appointments. The "elevated" railroad bill came up then,

but on that, as well as on many subsequent occasions of the same kind in relation to the rapid transit question, Stuart was on the "postponing" or "hesitating or non-committal" side.

**For Death of Rapid Transit.**

Later on there were several "elevated" bills, upon all of which Stuart was true to his record of an india-rubber backbone man. When, on June 24, a motion was made to postpone further consideration of the rapid transit question until September, Stuart seemed very glad to vote "aye." It was such a relief, you know. Three days later John Wanamaker, interested in the "Consolidated Elevated," seeing the futility of overcoming the obstructionists, diplomatically suggested, in a letter, that the bill be postponed for a little while, and that in the meantime a commission be appointed to devise, if it could, a better scheme than the one which Mr. Wanamaker and other eminent citizens had guaranteed to be offered in good faith. "We believe," Mr. Wanamaker wrote, "the city can never have a better opportunity to secure rapid transit under fair and just conditions." Yet the chief representative of the Pennsylvania railroad in select council, who has since died, moved for indefinite postponement of not only the bill, but also of the Wanamaker proposition for a commission, so as to kill the whole thing, and Stuart voted for that death of rapid transit.

The great wonder is that Stuart took a positive stand on that all-important question, in view of the fact that, from beginning to end of his service in councils, his record, with few exceptions, is one prolonged series of "present but not voting" on about two-score different important subjects of which he was evidently very much afraid. He dreaded, for instance, to take a hand in Chestnut street widenings, or upon any important bill affecting the down-town section in which he lives. There are innumerable cases of his being present but not voting upon measures relating to the down-town wards. Bills in which churches of different denominations were interested were particularly shunned by him. Confirmation of mayoralty or departmental appointments were to him as a plague of cholera. Any vote that he might cast might make somebody mad, you know.

**As Wax in Hands of Bosses.**

November 17, 1887, absent when underground conduit and electric light matters, as well as Bell Telephone company interests were before the chamber. The Third regiment armory being near Stuart's house, he did not vote, although present, upon the question of putting up a Siemens gas lamp in front of the armory. That little thing might have involved Stuart in a dispute as to the merits of a patent, and he was willing, in the vote, February 16, 1888, to let the lamp go or stay, as long as he was not recorded on it. March 20, 1888, present but not voting on the creation of a bureau of city property, a question to be eschewed by a candidate for the mayoralty in the days when such nominees were not selected for ability, courage or public spiritedness, but for their known willingness to be as wax in the hands of the plundering power that is now on its last legs.

June 21, when the appointments of Mayor Fidler, Director Stokley and the new administration generally were up for confirmation, Stuart absent. At the next meeting, when a lot more of such appointments came up, Stuart was present but not voting, although he voted on the next bill. Presently the "Northeastern Elevated" came along, and there was a renewal by Stuart of the peculiar non-committal policy with which he had treated similar former measures. Gratuitous vaccination had a horror for him, or, at least, on November 22, he sat silent when the bill passed finally without opposition. While other members had the courage of their convictions on all such measures, Stuart maintained the show of timidity which has characterized him ever since.

**"Peach" of an Investigation.**

A certain selectman, who has since died, and who would be about the last man in Philadelphia whom the people would expect to conduct a satisfactory investigation into legislative bribery, moved, on December 6, 1888, for the appointment of a special committee to investigate the charge of bribery in connection with the elevated railroad proceedings. On the little reform side there was a motion to excuse the mover of the resolution from the duty of acting as chairman. That was about as polite a way as it could be said that nobody would have any confidence in the probing under the management of the redoubtable ringster in question, who, however, won the chairmanship by a vote of 14 to 9, Stuart being among those voting to insist upon his taking that power, which, of course, the machine expert did. The subsequent "investigation," in the vernacular of the Betz building or the Boas mansion, was "a peach."

But this instance is inconsistent with the general run of the Stuart record in the journals, as it is one of the very few cases of his actually doing something, although, unfortunately, not very much to his credit. December 13, 1888, the ordinance up was something momentous, to permit construction of the East Side railroad along the Schuylkill river. Great fight in councils that day, but Stuart not there. Other measures before the chamber that day, including street railway track extension, Keystone light and power privileges and big appropriations, were additional reasons for the discreet absence of the man then expecting the mayoralty, and now the governorship. By the way, Mr. Stuart is a remarkably healthy man, and nobody would think of suggesting sickness as an ex-

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case for either his absence or his countless cases of dodging.

**Rarely Did He Commit Himself.**

December 27, present but not voting on bill to let a certain brewer lay railroad sidings. Stuart voted just ahead of and just after this ticklish measure, February 21, 1889 (getting close to the

time for setting up the pins for the mayoralty canvass), street railway extension before the chamber, together with frame building erection, but no vote from Stuart on these matters, although he was present. March 21, John M. Mack's Vulcanite Paving company's bill under consideration, with Stuart present but not voting. One of the things that used to raise trouble in Philadelphia was the voting of city land at reasonable prices to the University of Pennsylvania, but when such propositions came before select council, Stuart sat mum during the voting as well as the talking.

But this record must be cut off here for the present. It was an exceptional day when Stuart was caught committing himself on any issue that might prevent him from having an entirely colorless public record. Suffice it to say, until time for the next installment, that Stuart became more and more cautious, if that were possible, as the mayoralty primaries of the February campaign of 1891 approached. His dodging during the year 1890 was the

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most interesting of all, but there is a great deal yet to be said of the years which have been only hastily skimmed over in this sketching of the people's experience with Stuart from which they are to judge of what they might expect from him in the chair of the chief executive at Harrisburg.

**8-Year-Old Boy Convicted of Murder.** Albia, Iowa, Sept. 24.—Oscar Napier, aged 8 years, was found guilty of the murder of a playmate. The Iowa juvenile laws does not cover murder cases, and the boy will be sentenced just the same as if he were of more mature age. The murder occurred several months ago, when Napier in a fit of passion took a shotgun and deliberately shot a boy with whom he was playing.

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