

INK SLINGS.

—Spring is only fifteen days off. —Congress has adjourned and gone home. Nobody is sorry and the country needs the rest it will have until December.

—Do you think Wayne B. Wheeler will ever become the American St. Patrick? Will he finally get the snakes chased out of the country?

—The groundhog slipped a little during the fore part of the week, but he had done so well up to that time that he was entitled to a day or so off.

—It's cold, but it's far better so. Better have what's left of winter now than in April and May. Better that the buds be kept back until there is not so much danger of their being nipped by frosts.

—Earthquakes may be all right when they are rocking houses hundreds of miles distant but when they come right in to Pennsylvania they are getting a little too close to home for our peace of mind.

—The State Senate, on Monday, passed the United dry bill by a vote of twenty-seven to seventeen and it was immediately sent to the House for action. Our Senator, William S. Betts, voted for the bill. We note that Senator Richard S. Quigley, of the Clinton district, voted against it.

—The "Afaletics" have been in training only two weeks at Ft. Meyers, Fla., and have the American league pennant won already. The "Macks" are very nice that way. They always get their glory out of the flag early so as not to interfere with those who want it for keeps later.

—President Coolidge is in office now on his own credentials. No longer need he feel obligated to carry out policies inherited through the tragedy that made him an accidental President. Success or failure of his administration will depend almost entirely on whether he will be able to show leadership strong and versatile enough to dominate the new Congress. It was elected to support him. Whether it will do so will be the test of Coolidge as a President.

—Public ownership is a great snit for them that get jobs, but it costs money, because there are usually two employees to do what one finds easy under private operation of industry. In Germany, recently, a worker on the public railways was seen with a great satchel full of marks. He had never been known to work and when asked where he got it, replied: "I'm employed on the railroad. I go along with the man who taps the car wheels to hear if they are sound. I'm his listener."

—Report has it that this Will Wood, of California, whom Governor Pinchot is about to make successor to Dr. Becht, state superintendent of public instruction, is a Hi Johnson brand of educator. Since Mr. Wood is under fire in his own State at the present time it looks more like politics than education that urges the Governor to offer him asylum in Pennsylvania. The Governor and the school system have both suffered in consequence of the resignation of Dr. Finegan and it is to be hoped that he is not about to make another so disastrous a blunder.

—The Governor's offer to add another million to his estimate of what the hospitals should be given if the Legislature will pass his budget bill, as presented, has a curious look. The public will quite naturally want to know where the Governor has so large a slice of State revenue hidden away and why, if he has it, it has been concealed for use in buying the Legislature. The transaction certainly doesn't inure to public confidence in the Governor's good faith in his earlier announcements of the amounts that could safely be counted on for the hospitals.

—Ordinarily we pay no attention to anonymous contributions. One that reached our desk under postmark of Bellefonte, on Monday morning, so perfectly emphasizes a point on the defeated child labor amendment we attempted to make in this column two weeks ago that we violate the rule far enough to thank the unknown sender. Of course, it was intended as a challenge of our contention that tinkering with the federal constitution is fraught with many dangers and, unless curbed, is destined to rob the States of the few sovereign rights still remaining to them. Our correspondent enclosed a clipping of a communication by Florence Evans, which appeared in the Sunday edition of a Philadelphia paper. The lady says "that some persons reveal their utter ignorance in the arguments they give against the amendment." We don't know or we don't care whether we are to understand that we have revealed ours. What we do want to show is that she confirms the very point we made when we asked what right the people of Arizona or Maine have to tell Pennsylvanians how they must raise their children, as they would have had, had the amendment been passed. After admitting that Pennsylvania has very good child labor regulations on her own statute books Miss Evans insists that the amendment should have been passed as "it was aimed at more backward States." In other words she wants a law that will give her power to help regulate children whom she has never seen, whose environment and condition she probably has no knowledge of and whose parents certainly know what is best for them without the aid of her advice.

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Another Bill Ripe for Slaughter.

The Legislative bulletin calls attention to another piece of legislation pending in the House of Representatives which calls loudly for popular condemnation. It was introduced by Representative Hess, of Lancaster, and authorizes county commissioners to enter into contracts, without advertising, "to repair or build any county bridges that cost less than \$1000.00." This measure might be called a medium of legalizing graft in progressive form. In 1913 such procedure was legalized to the amount of \$250,000. By an act of the session of 1919 the limit was raised to \$500,000 and there is a record of letting a bridge contract in sections so that a structure that cost several thousand dollars was contracted for without publicity.

The Hess bill, known as House Bill No. 730, increases the amount of expenditures on construction or repairs of bridges to \$1,000,000, and by adopting the piecemeal system would make it possible for county commissioners to contract for expensive viaducts without taking the public into their confidence through the medium of advertising. It would afford great opportunities for elastic consciences to favor political or personal friends in the distribution of official patronage, and unhappily there are a good many consciences of that kind in control of the public business of the Commonwealth. Bills of the same import introduced by Mr. Metzger and Mr. Holtzman indicate that the advantage is appreciated.

It may be believed that much vicious legislation of this kind is supported by Senators and Representatives in the General Assembly unconsciously. That is, the evil effects are overlooked in the casual examination of the texts as they appear on the calendars. The sponsors of the measures understand them thoroughly but others with only a languid interest in them take for granted that they mean well and vote for their passage. The log-rolling method which prevails in every Legislative body helps along, for anxiety to pass local bills induces trades that work infinite harm. The Legislative bulletin was a much needed enterprise and we sincerely hope it will be read carefully and followed faithfully.

—It is announced that the purpose of electing Nick Longworth to the Speakership is to restore the old system of Bossism in Congress. But Nick's record hardly justifies the choice. As floor leader he was always compromising.

Bad Legislation at Harrisburg.

The Pennsylvania Newspaper Publishers' association recently issued from the office of its Legislative committee a bulletin containing much information of value, not only to newspaper publishers, but to the public. The first number of the Bulletin with which the "Watchman" has been favored calls attention to several vicious measures now pending, conspicuous among which is an act concerning counties and county officers. It covers 532 pages and repeals 435 existing laws. If it were limited in operation to the repealing provisions there would be little reason for opposition, for a good many of the laws it proposes to repeal are bad and ought to be stricken out of the statute books.

But the proposed legislation sponsored by Representative Clarence A. Whitehouse, of Schuylkill county, seems to discriminate in favor of the bad and against the good measures marked for repeal, and contains provisions more mischievous than were ever dreamed of previous to the last session, when Mr. Whitehouse originally sprung the idea. It contains provisions for the organization and maintenance at public expense of a lot of organizations which might, and probably would, do infinite harm to the interests of the people. It would create a State organization of county commissioners, of county controllers, of sheriffs, of district attorneys and of probation officers, all of which to be at public expense.

The possibilities of harm in such legislation is shown in the activities of an organization already in operation composed of tax collectors. There is on the calendar of the House a bill providing for important reforms in the laws for the collection of taxes. It would vastly decrease the expense of this necessary service. It is charged, and apparently upon substantial grounds, that the organization of tax collectors has a large sum of money and organized a lobby to defeat this measure by corrupt methods. The other proposed organizations may not have similar purposes in mind but the danger that they would adopt them in an emergency admonishes us that the Whitehouse bill is bad.

—It is charitable to assume that Osborne Wood's late successes on Wall street turned his head.

Vare's Senatorial Hopes Still Active.

Those who imagine that the rebuke administered to Congressman Bill Vare, as expressed in the vote of the Pennsylvania delegation in the contest for Speaker of the House of Representatives, the other evening, will divert him from his purpose to "kidnap" the Senatorial nomination next year, are reckoning without their host. Possession of the Senatorial toga has been a long cherished ambition of Brother Bill. Former Governor Sproul's refusal to appoint him to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Senator Penrose created an enmity that will never be removed. The entire Vare family swore vengeance against Mr. Sproul and organized a vendetta against his political aspirations. That opposition is still active.

The rebuke administered to Mr. Vare was certain and severe. He believed that because of his long service in Congress and his considerable wealth he could influence all, or nearly all, his colleagues in the House to promote his most cherished ambition and pledged the support of the delegation to Mr. Madden for Speaker. As a matter of fact Madden was the fitter man for the office, and his elevation would be of vast advantage to Vare and incidentally help Vare's friends in the delegation. But his unauthorized commitment proved offensive to many and in resentment twenty-three of the thirty-six voted for Longworth after Vare had made a personal quarrel over the matter with Senator Reed.

But the result will not deter Mr. Vare from making a fight for the Senatorial nomination next year. Nor does it make his defeat in such a contest certain. The selection is by popular vote and Vare feels that he can "chalk up" as many votes in Philadelphia as there are men and women of voting age and tombstones in the various cemeteries. With this force secure he has only to maintain his present alliance with Grundy and Max Leslie to organize a formidable contingent, and Grundy and Leslie are not sticklers for pedigree in public office. Of course, Vare's chances are somewhat impaired by the result of the Speakership fight but they are not entirely lost. "Politics make strange bedfellows."

—Washington dispatches say that the Sixty-eighth Congress made a record by the quietude by which it died. Nothing but blah from start to finish naturally it was too weak in its death throes to keep it up, but in the end the Sixty-eighth did make a record.

Surprising Statement of the Governor

In a statement issued by Governor Pinchot, at Harrisburg on Tuesday afternoon, we find this surprising statement: "I have been asked by a committee of the Legislative League if, in case the budget is passed substantially as submitted, I will take the responsibility of finding additional funds for charities. My answer is that if the budget is passed substantially as submitted I will take that responsibility to the extent of \$1,000,000." He gave no intimation as to where the money is to come from or how it will be obtained. Probably he knows where there is a tree that grows gold or greenbacks and that it is accessible only to him. In any event he makes the promise without reservation.

There is entirely too much mystery concerning the finances of Pennsylvania and more juggling of figures than is helpful. The Auditor General and State Treasurer, the fiscal officers, estimate the revenues at \$124,000,000 in round figures for the biennium, and the Governor and budget master declare the amount will reach \$132,000,000, a difference of \$8,000,000. Both authorities vehemently claim their figures are accurate and the Governor appeals to the Legislature for appropriations to the limit of his estimate. The Auditor General protests that such appropriations will cause a deficit. The chairmen of the Appropriations committees favor a compromise which will "split the difference."

Now the Governor proposes to open a trading post with the Legislature and offers a bonus of a million dollars if his budget is passed "substantially as submitted." This is an enticing proposition to those seeking appropriations for local institutions. Each interested individual may hope that it will help him. But if they are wise they will insist on a guarantee, or at least some substantial evidence that the million is available. If it is to be acquired by cutting other appropriations of the pleasure of the Governor some worthy institutions may suffer. If the source of supply is in the "shaking of some plum tree" invisible and unidentified, it becomes a dangerous expedient.

—While not officially informed it is a safe guess that Mr. Vare was not at either the Governor's or the Senator's reception in Washington on Wednesday.

Governor Getting His Own Way.

It seems that after all Governor Pinchot did have his own way in the matter of official representation at the inauguration. In the absence of a record it is impossible to say how many of his invited guests participated in the parade and enjoyed the hospitality of his Washington mansion. As the legislation is not completed it cannot be officially stated how much of the expense of his party will be paid out of the State Treasury. But it can with perfect safety be predicted that the exact amount of money asked for in the budget for the purpose of entertaining his personal friends in Washington will be appropriated.

On the first announcement of the Governor's purpose to give a more or less elaborate inauguration party at a cost of \$10,000, to a few friends of his own selection, there were signs of an unpleasant not to say humiliating reaction. The Senate indicated its resentment by unanimously adopting a resolution to take the whole General Assembly to Washington at public expense and the House of Representatives expressed its indignation by passing a resolution cutting the expense appropriation of the Governor's party to \$5000, palpably an inadequate sum. But upon reflection that the Governor has a good deal of influence in fixing the amount of other appropriations both resolutions were buried.

The fact is that the Governor is slowly but surely getting the Legislature "under his thumb," and before the session is ended he will have the Senators and Representatives reduced to the measures of servility that marked the proceedings of the last session. Mr. Pinchot is too wise a political tactician for the legislative leaders to compete with. They gave him a rude shock at the organization, probably because he wasn't looking for anything of the kind. But he speedily gathered himself together and since that time has been drawing rings and curley cues all around those who imagined he was "down and out."

—In resigning his pastorate of a fashionable church at Patterson, N. J., the Rev. David Hughes Edwards made, what to some sounded like a very startling statement. He said "Patterson is cursed with too many churches." We know nothing of conditions in Patterson, but we have long believed that most communities are over-churches. Several years ago we presented figures proving that Bellefonte, for example, has church capacity for five times the town's entire population. Eleven denominations with an annual outlay of probably one hundred thousand dollars, are doing no more than five might do were it not for mere doctrinal differences as to how it should be done. Under such conditions it is only natural that there should be over-lapping in church work and much energy and material substance wasted in denominational competition.

—An esteemed contemporary says "Pennsylvania political chiefs have demonstrated ability to make new alignments and espouse various causes with speed." So they have, and new alignments are liable to be made any moment now that Vare appears to be in "the discard."

—The United dry bill is moving forward, and though several amendments have been made it will be satisfactory to His Excellency when finished.

—President Coolidge is annoyed over the discussion of the French debt. It may be added that a good many others are tired of the subject.

—The unanimous vote of the State Senate on the "omnibus road bill" is a hint to the Governor that his veto two years ago was not approved.

—Careful reading of the evidence taken thus far leads to the suspicion that Judge Berkey was injudicious, to say the least.

—The cold weather of the latter part of last week and beginning of this was a very decided reminder that winter is still with us.

—Now that the bond enabling act has been passed unanimously let us hope the detour evil will be abated, in part, at least.

—Those Centre county farmers who started plowing last week are now hugging the stove, trying to keep warm.

—The county auditors are nearing the end of their work in auditing the county accounts.

—We have again had to go outside the State for a head of the schools.

Germany's First President.

Germany has produced many greater statesmen than President Friedrich Ebert, who has just passed away, but yet it must be said that he filled a most difficult role with success, and that he has merited the deep gratitude of the new republic. When chaos threatened after the ignominious abdication of Kaiser William, in November, 1918, and the militant Socialist element, grasping the reins of power, turned to Ebert, one of its members in the Reichstag, it made an unexpectedly wise choice in making him President. Few nations have had to contend with greater obstacles than Germany in the last six years, and it is largely due to Ebert's wisdom and firmness that it has passed safely through monarchist plots, proletarian revolts, French interference, Bavarian threats of secession and many other trials that would try the abilities of the most gifted statesman. Through all these troubles President Ebert kept his head, and it is probably largely due to his practical sagacity and his unselfish devotion to the public welfare that the young republic has been able to survive all these perils.

His success has been all the more remarkable when it is remembered that he was of lowly origin, and that he had to contend against all the class and aristocratic prejudices fostered by many generations of the Hohenzollern regime. The adherents of the older order would naturally be against a man who was by trade a harness-maker, and their conspiracies and opposition have been among the causes retarding national recuperation. The success with which Ebert has overcome all these obstacles and has upheld the Republican Constitution becomes all the more remarkable when it is contrasted with Austria's long agony, the Bolshevik rule of Bela Kun in Hungary, Poland's vicissitudes and the other difficulties of the newly-formed republics.

All honor to Friedrich Ebert, who remained steadfast in the faith. Germany will be fortunate if all its future Presidents will show themselves equally devoted to the common weal and without selfish ambitions.

A Good Place for Calvin's Ax.

There was a decent and there was an indecent way in which Congress could have put in motion legislation to increase the salary of its members. The scathing criticism by a member of the Senate as to the methods adopted leaves no room for doubt as to how the public will regard the action just taken.

Senator Willis, of Ohio, asserted that the thing was done surreptitiously, a few Senators taking advantage of the absence of the main body to "put over a matter important enough to warrant free and open discussion. Of course, that is true.

Representative Crisp, of Georgia, in the House rightly said that Members were voting to put money in their own pockets when they had run for office without intimating such a design. The public has reason to be indignant in the circumstances. It is always hostile to suggestions that members of Legislative bodies shall benefit by increases in pay which they vote themselves. If the House wished to show even pretense of regard for public opinion, it should have advanced the period when higher pay goes into effect until the Congress of 1925. That would have absolved it, at least, of voting to raid the treasury and immediately carrying the scheme into execution.

The matter presents opportunity to the President to rebuke a high-handed proceeding. His repeated demands for economy, up and down the line, justify his action. The way the grab has been jammed through, which is little short of a scandal, gives further excuse, if one were needed, for placing the seal of disapproval on it.

A veto would be a wholesome lesson and thoroughly appreciated by the taxpayer.

Watch Nursery Stock.

The time of year is here when farmers, gardeners and orchardists are purchasing stock. Therefore the time is here also for a timely warning against unscrupulous nursery stock salesmen. The State Department of Agriculture declares "this is the time of year when fake representatives of nurserymen play their trade by going from door to door especially in suburban and country districts selling nursery trees, shrubs and plants."

The department called attention to the card certificate which is issued all "reputable agents" and advised that unless an agent can display this card no order should be placed with him. It called attention to the fact that the certificates are void after October 1, 1925, and suggested care in making sure the agent has a valid card.

Muscle Shoals.

Why not have the government operate Muscle Shoals while Congress is debating the question of its ultimate destination? If the government made a bad fist of operation, the Ford advocates would have a fine argument right at hand. If the government succeeded, no one would be the loser.

—If you can't find it in the "Watchman" it isn't true.

SPAWLS FROM THE KEYSSTONE.

—Efforts to save a team of horses on Tuesday, while working at his father's sawmill near Somerset, resulted in Parker A. Saylor, aged 43, losing his life when a tree fell upon him.

—Specifying that her husband "poked fun at my cooking and flirted with my friends when they visited me," Mrs. Edna May Miller, of Bryn Mawr, has been granted a divorce in the Delaware county court on the grounds of "cruel and barbarous treatment."

—If Wellsboro business men can be made to see the proposition in the right light, a \$25,000 canning factory, to employ forty hands, will materialize. It will specialize at the start on tomatoes, spinach and beets, for which there is said to be sharp demand, and later other products will be added.

—As she was putting the finishing touches to a birthday cake she baked for her son, John, Mrs. Ella Sweeney, of Philadelphia, received news of his death on Monday. The youth, a brakeman on the Pennsylvania railroad, was killed as the freight train of which he was one of the crew, drew into the local yards.

—Police officials are looking for Walter Berger, of Erie, in connection with the disappearance of \$648 from the clothes of B. F. Rice, also of that city. Rice was knocked unconscious in an automobile accident at Girard one day last week, and when he became conscious in a Connetquot hospital the money was gone and also Berger.

—Upon their arrival home from Florida last Wednesday afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. S. Edwin Trout and daughter, Miss Evelyn, of Pottstown, reported the loss of \$2000 in cash and jewels, which were stolen from Mrs. Trout's handbag. A thief snatched the handbag as the train stopped at Oscala, Florida. She struggled with the man, but was unable to save the bag. Police in the south were notified.

—Three armed men entered the Brad-dock office of the Green Top Trust company, at Braddock, on Sunday night, and robbed William Weiss, owner, and Benjamin Rossman, manager, of jewelry valued at \$2,100, according to report made to police. The robbers were frightened off by the approach of a pedestrian before they could obtain the contents of the office safe declared to contain \$2,000 in cash.

—Officials of the Pottsville board of health are anxiously looking for Harold W. Hyde, who escaped from quarantine in that city last Wednesday, and is now at large in the State with a pronounced case of scarlet fever. All the resources of the State board of health are being used to capture Hyde, who is accompanied by his wife. "When you read this we will be 200 miles away and still going," is the message Hyde left to the health officers.

—East Pike township, Washington county, is made the defendant in a damage suit for \$30,000 in an action instituted on Friday by Mrs. Cora R. Leadbetter, of East Pike Run township. She asks the large sum as the result of the death of her husband, Robert L. Leadbetter, who was killed last August when his automobile went over an embankment on the Coal Center-Belle Vernon road. The township is held negligent for not having a guard rail along the precipice.

—Mrs. Elsie Sheffer, of York, Pa., has brought suit against the Pennsylvania Railroad company in the courts of New York to recover \$100,000 damages for the death of her husband, Charles Franklin Sheffer, who died in the York hospital on August 1, 1924, as the result of an accident on July 22 last year. The suit is brought under the federal employees liability act, it being claimed that Sheffer, a railroad man at the time, was engaged in interstate commerce.

—The old stone bridge in Mann's Narrows on the Pikes Peak highway between Reedsville and Yeagertown about four miles west of Lewisport, collapsed on Monday as a loaded moving van was going across. Motorists between Harrisburg and Pittsburg, west, and Bellefonte and Williamsport north, now face a fifty mile detour by way of McVeytown and the William Penn highway. The bridge was more than 100 years old. While the van was moving across it crumpled up like a jack-knife.

—Life had been one continuous dance since his marriage in 1915, Oscar D. Minor, of Pittsburgh, declared in a petition for divorce filed in court in which he asks separation from his wife, Mary Minor, whom he charges with desertion. Minor, in his petition, declared his wife attended a dance practically every night and insisted upon his accompanying her. One evening in 1921 he refused, the petition said, and the wife left home. Attorney M. Barney Cohen, in a master's report, recommended that a divorce be granted.

—Mrs. Mary C. Porter, of Gladden, Allegheny county, was widowed on Monday, just six days after her marriage to Francis X. Porter, a stock broker. The widow, who was Miss Mary C. McGrath, was married to Porter on a sick bed last week. All arrangements had been made for the marriage ceremony when Porter was put to bed suffering from a severe cold. Neither wanted to postpone the wedding and a priest was called in. A few hours after the ceremony Porter's illness developed into pneumonia, causing his death.

—Efforts are now under way to establish a postoffice at Juniata Terrace, the modern village of the Viscose company at Lewisport Junction, where there are 3000 people to be served. Mrs. Elsie M. Davis has applied to the Postoffice Department at Washington, D. C., for the appointment of postmistress and has asked that the office be located in her store and restaurant, which is adjacent to the Pennsylvania Railroad station and convenient to the proposed patrons. Present facilities require the walk of two miles circular, 16 cents trolley fare or await the passage of the rural route at 2:30 p. m. each day.

—When he tripped and fell while skating on Ridley creek, near Media, Pa., on Sunday, Herman Rohrer, 25 years old, of Paradise, Pa., broke through the thin ice covering the creek and was drowned before help could arrive. The body was taken from twelve feet of water twenty minutes later by members of the Media Fire company, who were summoned by Hensel Wright, Jr., who had been skating with Rohrer. The two had been skating at Palmer's dam, and when they started home they struck out across Ridley creek for a short cut. When Rohrer tripped and fell through the ice, Wright attempted to help him, but was unable to get close to him because of the thinness of the ice. Rohrer had been employed on the farm of Edward B. Crighton, on the Creek road.