

# Democratic Watchman

## INK SLINGS.

—January is half over. As the days lengthen the cold strengthens.

—Well, the Pennsylvania Legislature is in extra session and we are going to be greatly disappointed if it does anything of extra importance.

—The anthracite operators and miners having decided to continue their squabble over wages the rest of us must continue to look for substitutes for hard coal. Cheer up, the coldest weather is yet to come, but spring is only sixty-five days off.

—Soft coal is dirtier than hard. There is no argument in that. But you can paper and paint the interior of an average sized house every year on the difference in the cost of hard and soft coal. Figure it out for yourself. We've done it and we know.

—Of course Helen Keller could put her fingers on the Presidents' lips and call him "a dear," but if some of the Theda-Barista ladies should have done such a thing we opine that the first lady of the land would have given Cal the silent treatment for a few days, at least.

—The makin' of a column of scandal were spread out before us on Spring street, Wednesday afternoon, and we were mighty hard up for something to write about, but that kind of stuff isn't what the Watchman purveys. We would like to have seen the irate husband catch the Lothario whom he thinks is browsing in his pasture. His foot work wasn't good enough, though.

—William S. Buckland, Pinchot leader of Montgomery county, has announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination for Governor. The interesting and somewhat anomalous feature of the announcement is that he declares he is going to run on "a wet platform." The idea of a Pinchot man running as a "wet" candidate presages a lot of fun. On the one hand Pinchot can't give him any comfort and, on the other, the "wets" will be suspicious of him because of his devotion to the Governor. So where is Mr. Buckland going, if not to instant political suicide?

—Fifteen days have elapsed and we've heard of nothing unusual from the Mayor's office. Is it possible that we made a bad guess when we suggested his nomination or is it the fact that the town has become so good in the face of it that there's nothing for him to do? It might be the latter, for we know one boy who is afraid to venture out on the street after supper because he thinks "Mr. Harris' curfew might get him"—and by way of taking you all into our confidence, this boy asked us, the other morning, "how long 'Mr. Harris' term is." When we told him "four years" we saw woe written all over the lad's face.

—So Harry Baker is to direct the organization's efforts to curcumvent the Governor's fence building program in the extra session of the General Assembly. Mr. Vare is to be kept in the back ground, because he was caught trying to jump into a dead man's shoes before rigor mortis had set in and it is thought not wise to have Mr. Grundy in the picture until he gets a compass that will accurately seek Pepper as the pole horse in the Senatorial race. Senator Leslie is rather mal-odorous to a party that is staggering under bank scandals in western and election frauds in eastern Pennsylvania, so that Baker's to try the game of catching more flies with sugar than can be enticed with vinegar.

—Talking about gentlemen who have been fortunate enough to possess the left hind foot of a rabbit, killed in a grave yard at mid-night,—in the dark of the moon, by an ebony hued chicken snatcher, we rise to remark that the Hon. Arthur C. Dale is nothing else than one of them. Stepping off the bench in Centre county, all dressed up in judicial ermine and no place to go—except back to a practice scattered to the four-winds, Arthur touched the garuda stone and his patron Saint appeared with a special job of attorney to the State Sanitary Water Board. Golly, aint them that thought he was down and out confounded? And we want to tell you this, that when the new attorney gives his new clients an opinion it will well be worth all the State has to pay for it and then some.

—The anthracite miners refuse any proposal of arbitration as to their wages that does not include arbitration as to the profits of those who employ them. What business is it of theirs how much a coal operator makes? They should take the job he offers or let it alone. That's what we have to do—and millions more like us—and that's the reason the State ought to rescind the law that gives coal miners a monopoly in their vocation. We have no sympathy, whatever, with them. A gang of them appeared in Bellefonte, just after the strike started, and applied for work on a construction job in progress here. Men were needed, but when they heard the wages they laughed and walked off. Centre county men who own homes, keep families well, pay taxes, whose names don't end in inksy and who have no law to keep others from grabbing their jobs were at work there and content with what they were getting.

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STATE RIGHTS AND FEDERAL UNION.

VOL. 71.

BELLEFONTE, PA., JANUARY 15, 1926.

NO. 3.

## Vare Machine Hunting Cover.

The Vare machine will not allow Governor Pinchot to get away with all the glory of the special session. It will undertake to absorb whatever public favor may be gained by collecting tolls on the Delaware river bridge. During the last regular session a law was passed forbidding the collection of tolls on the bridge. It was imagined that a free bridge would vastly increase Jersey trade with Philadelphia retail stores and it became a pet project of the Vare crowd. The country members helped the scheme amazingly. The cost of construction and maintenance of the bridge was saddled onto the State. The Jersey Legislature had no such incentive to sacrifice.

Since the public has had opportunity to appraise the cost of construction and maintenance of the viaduct there has been a great change of sentiment on the subject and the Governor included it among the subjects to be considered during the extra session. From every section of the State reports of public sentiment indicated a strong majority in favor of tolls. This convinced the Vare leaders that if they oppose it they would meet disaster. The Philadelphia retail merchants are willing to accept favors but are never much depressed by disappointment. They will be safe for the party anyway and so Mayor Kendrick called in Congressmen Vare and made up the mind of the delegation to vote for tolls.

That was the wise thing for the machine to do and in a friendly spirit, though not exactly in a sympathetic way, we advise them to adopt the same policy with respect to ballot reform legislation. The ballot frauds in Philadelphia in September and November of last year have so outraged decent public opinion that the passage of ballot reform legislation has become inevitable. If the Vare machine gets in the way of this righteous purpose it will be crushed out of existence. Its only wise and safe plan, therefore, is to accept whatever reform measure the committee of Seventy-six presents and pretend to like it. They may fool themselves in this way and what is more important "save their faces."

—The election of Mr. Charles Edwin Fox to be District Attorney of Philadelphia is of interest only to those Pennsylvanians who see a ray of hope for the State every time a boss of the Vare ilk gets a set back.

## Extra Session in Progress.

In his address to the Senators and Representatives of the General Assembly, at the opening of the extra session on Tuesday, Governor Pinchot wisely and properly emphasized the importance of ballot reform legislation. It is the paramount question. The other subjects upon which he invites legislation are important. In introducing the subject he says "without clean elections the machinery of self-government is a mere smoke-screen for grafting politicians and in another paragraph he says "gang politics depends for its hold upon our people on two things,—fraud and fear."

This summarizes not only the evil but the cause of ballot frauds. The gang politicians acquire their dominating influence upon the voters by promising favors or threatening punishments. The underworld is protected from punishment so long as it serves the purposes of the grafters and continues the sinister service because it is afraid to refuse. On Tuesday, in Philadelphia, it is believed that one of the judges on the bench groveled in the mire of rotten politics because the party boss compelled him to thus demean himself. It was a disgraceful spectacle but it was what might be expected from political conditions.

The Governor announced that he will address the Legislature at intervals on the other subjects upon which he has recommended legislation. He frankly accepts responsibility for the extra session and accurately appraises the value of corrective legislation called for. It fraudulent voting and false returns of elections are prevented in the future even for a few years it will be worth ten times the cost of the session, and if Senators and Representatives identified with the machine defeat such legislation it will mark the beginning of the end of their public service. In any event the session will be justified.

## Simmons Offers a Substitute.

The tax bill prepared by Senator Simmons, which will be offered as a substitute for the Mellon measure adopted by the House before the Christmas recess, provides for a tax reduction of \$500,000,000, which is about \$175,000,000 more than contemplated by the administration. The theory upon which the Simmons bill is based is that inasmuch as the debt settlements with foreign governments provide for payment within sixty years, domestic debtors who are the people, should be given equally liberal terms. By extending the period of payment of our own debts to that extent the difference between the amount fixed in the two bills may be taken from the sinking fund each year.

The Mellon bill contemplates payment of our national debt, estimated at about \$20,000,000,000, within a period of thirty years. There would be both reason and merit in this plan if the war debts of foreign governments were payable within the same period, for the receipts from foreign governments would supply funds to meet the obligations involved. But the administration, for some unexplained reason, proposes to exact from our own people double the burden imposed on foreigners. It may be that rehabilitation of Europe is more important to the money power that dominates the Republican party than the prosperity of American industry. In that event the Mellon plan is most promising.

The substitution of the Simmons bill would make a difference of about \$175,000,000 a year in the tax bill of the country and release that vast sum for employment in industry and commerce. The Republican leaders profess to be greatly concerned about these things. They insist on discrimination in favor of taxation on big incomes in order to entice the very wealthy to invest capital in business rather than in tax exempt securities. But when it comes to a more direct method of conserving capital for industrial and commercial investment they take another course and add to the crushing burden which in the main must be carried by the wage earners of the country.

—The friends of reform legislation will not draw much comfort from the fact that president pro tem Salus, of Philadelphia, will preside in the Senate during most of the time.

## Mellon Tax Plans Attacked.

The tax bill which had "easy sailing" through the House of Representatives is likely to encounter stubborn opposition in the Senate. It was the first measure brought up for consideration in the Finance committee on Monday and Secretary of the Treasury Mellon, the real sponsor of the bill was the only witness heard. The gist of his evidence was against further tax reductions. The bill as it passed the House is estimated to decrease taxes some \$330,000,000, and Mellon declares that is as much as the Treasury can stand. The Democratic members of the committee are of a different opinion. Senator Simmons, of North Carolina, is persuaded that a decrease of \$400,000,000, at least, should be made.

The surplus of the last fiscal year, according to the records of the Treasury Department, amounted to exactly \$330,000,000. The administration professes to have affected considerable economies and Senator Simmons reasons that if these claims are justified by the facts corresponding tax reductions may be made. But the principal fight will be made on the income tax schedules. The Democrats will insist on greater cuts on small incomes and less on big returns and sur-taxes. The House bill provides a maximum rate of twenty per cent, and the contention will be to increase it to twenty-five. That would justify a greater decrease in the levy on necessities of life and excise levies.

The fact is that the Republican scheme is to create a large surplus for the present in order to manufacture ammunition for use in the next Presidential campaign. Rapid decrease of the public debt has an appealing influence on the public mind, and Secretary Mellon figures that with abundant revenue he can make a debt-paying record. Besides, there will be another opportunity to reduce taxes before the next Presidential campaign opens. The Mellon plan for the present followed by a similar decrease during the Seventieth Congress would provide a fine line of argument for Republican wind-jammers in the campaign of 1928. That is the real purpose of the majority in the present Congress.

—The dismissal of Registration Commissioner Quinn seems to have caused eruption of the entire political structure in Philadelphia.

## Clearing the Political Atmosphere.

The extra session of the Legislature is practically certain to clear the political atmosphere sufficiently to reveal the lines which separate the several factions of the Republican party. The Vare crowd is completely demoralized over local disturbances and the Congressman is plunging about like a chicken that has just been separated from its' head. But he clings to his ambition to control the nomination for Governor and in pursuance of that hope is pretending that he may be a candidate for the Senatorial nomination. That threat has lost its potency, however, for the friends of Senator Pepper have taken his measure. Holding his grip on the local machine will tax his resources to the limit.

It is confidently believed that Governor Pinchot will announce his candidacy for the Senate within a fortnight. He has not given an intimation on the subject thus far, and if the organization treats him courteously he may defer his declaration until the close of the session. But an attempt to "manhandle" him or his proposed legislation will be made an excuse for a declaration of war along the whole line and an immediate announcement of his candidacy. The organization leaders understand this and the wiser heads among them are urging a conciliatory policy. Chairman Baker assured him on Tuesday that he would be treated kindly though no promise was made to give him material support.

Thus far nobody has been able to extract by syphon or otherwise any information as to the attitude of Mr. Grundy with respect to either the Senatorial or gubernatorial nomination. The newspapers have made note of two or three conferences between Vare and the Bucks county boss. But there is nothing in common between them. Grundy ascribes the failure of the alliance made at the opening of the 1925 session of the Legislature to Vare's egregious blunders and is not inclined to take chances of another debacle of that sort. But it may safely be predicted that if the Senatorial contest is between Pepper and Pinchot Mr. Grundy will throw his influence to the Governor.

—We will soon find out whether or not the Vare-Grundy combination still endures.

## Not an Irreparable Loss.

The resignation of Mr. Frank M. Riter, chairman of the Registration Commission of Philadelphia, will hardly be interpreted as an irreparable public loss. Mr. Riter is what might be called a professional reformer. For years he has been conspicuous in every reform movement in the political life of Philadelphia and by a curious coincidence he has managed to extract a lucrative and sometimes an important office from each. He has performed a good deal of valuable public service in this way and accomplished much in the interest of clean government. But he is not exactly "the only pebble on the beach." His retirement will not completely paralyze municipal improvement.

Mr. Riter has resigned because the Governor removed one of his colleagues on the Registration Commission without giving reasons for his action. The Supreme court having recently decided that Section 4 of Article VI of the constitution is unconstitutional, a considerable number of people imagine that the executive has no power of removal and Mr. Riter resents what he construes to be a usurpation by resigning. It must be admitted that it is an heroic as well as self-sacrificing method. But it indicates that "spoils of office" are not the dominating influence on his mind now, at any rate. He revealed a willingness to make a substantial if not supreme sacrifice on the altar of friendship.

In accepting the resignation of Mr. Riter the Governor volunteers ample reason for the removal of one of the Registration Commissioners. He says "it is neither" personal nor "political" to demand that the Commission shall do its clear duty under the law to purge the lists of thousands of "phantoms" who were voted at the last election in Philadelphia. The fact that the Commission failed in its obvious duty in that respect is proven by the case with which it was discovered and removed these "phantoms" since the election took place." Most people will think the Governor might have removed the entire board. At least another member might have been disciplined without injustice to the public.

—The indications are that Senator Brookhart, of Iowa, has been tagged to come back in due time as the successor of Senator Cummins.

## The Ninety and Nine.

From the Pittsburgh Post.

Mayor Walker, of New York, in his inaugural address, declared that ninety-nine per cent. of the population of the metropolis are decent, respectable, industrious and home-loving and that the fair name of the city shall not be besmirched by the vicious, evil and insignificant minority. No one should doubt that New York has the usual proportion of right-minded citizens. It is interesting to observe how that proportion holds up in the statistics of the race. In various forms the criminal element is placed at from one to one and a half per cent. of the whole. The trouble over the minority recalls the illustration used by the Master: "How think ye? if a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?"

It is due the race to recognize that it is not exactly hypocritical on this point. Of course very few would think of branding themselves as criminals. Still practically all confess themselves sinners or far from perfection. One of the commonest remarks is that there are not nearly as many in jail as should be. However, the ninety and nine who manage to keep pretty close to the track or within the fold have made an impressive record in carrying on the work of the world and in trying to rescue as many as possible of the so-called vicious minority. Sometimes the law acts with fierceness against malefactors. Ordinarily, however, it is accused of lenience. And in addition to the mercy shown by the law there are the efforts of relatives to save criminals or reduce their penalties. Practically every time there is a prosecution, friends of the accused are on hand to aid them or sorrow with them.

No matter what is said of the coldness of the world, the one that is gone astray finds enough sympathy to create a demand for more vigorous enforcement of the law.

No matter how wicked the world may be called, crime nevertheless is so unusual as to constitute news. The good that is going on in the world may seldom be written about as such, because it is so much the rule, as to make it of no news value. To undertake to write all the time upon the proposition that the churches are good for the race would be about the same as to set up a continuous shout that bread is good for food. Churches are to be measured not by their occasional striking revivals, but by their constant ministrations in various ways that are so much a necessity and so much the expected as not to excite special comment. Nor is church attendance to be measured by the number there on a given day, but the total of a year or decade. No matter what the scoffing in the world, few indeed are those who are laid to their final rest without some religious service.

We may hear comparatively little of the vast majority in a news way, but all the while we know that they are "carrying on" and that it would be the disaster of disasters if they should cease. But the ninety and nine talked of by Mayor Walker and other mayors and rulers of every class as law-abiding and good citizens in other respects might do more in a political way for the cause of good government. They do not need to be less merciful in dealing with offenders, but should see that the latter do not exert a political influence far beyond common sense and their numbers. The one per cent. should not have an influence in any district to prevent reasonable enforcement of the law. They can be dealt with in a way to keep them from giving a city a bad reputation.

The ninety and nine should be merciful, but not foolish.

—Young Mr. Nye has been given a seat in the United States Senate. He is a gubernatorial appointee from North Dakota. The Regular Republicans tried to keep him out because he is a Nonpartisan Leaguer. Enough Democrats joined with the irregulars to seat the gentleman. The question as to his eligibility arose over the right of the Governor of North Dakota to appoint a Senator for the unexpired term of an elected official who died in office. At least, that was the question, so far as the record goes, but as a matter of fact Mr. Nye wasn't wanted by the regulars for the reason that he has shown some indications of having ideas of his own.

—It is just twenty years since the last extra session of the Legislature assembled and if the body now in session accomplishes even half as much good it will justify itself.

—Of course ballot reform legislation will help Pinchot in his ambitions. But it will help every worthy candidate for public office and it will improve the standard of official life.

—The conferences between the mine owners and mine workers may serve the purpose of amusing the conferees but they achieve no other purpose.

## SPAULS FROM THE KEYSTONE.

—During 1925, twenty-three planters set out 95,286 forest trees in Venango county. Crawford county planted a total of 329,450 trees.

—D. C. Williams has cast his fiftieth vote for the election of a fire chief in Danville borough. He has voted each year since 1875.

—Four armed bandits invaded the saloon of John Jakovac, in McKees Rocks, held up the owner and 10 patrons and escaped in an automobile with \$1500.

—After sixty-five years in the banking business, Samuel H. Lamberton has been honored by the Old City traction company. The newest trolley car is named "Samuel H. Lamberton."

—Mrs. Mary Robb Allison, aged 74, of Bulger, Pa., died in the Mercy hospital at Pittsburgh on Sunday night from burns sustained last Friday when her clothing caught fire from an open grate.

—A collection of newspapers, some of them dating back more than 100 years, was among the effects found in possession of Joseph Hauger, 70-year-old jeweler, of Somerset, who died recently. A collection of coins also was found.

—During 1925 the Susquehanna river at Williamsport, now covered with ice, added two more lives to its toll of victims. One man was drowned when his rowboat upset and another lost his life when he fell from the breast of the dam where he was working.

—John Szymczak, laborer, of Erie, Pa., is minus his life savings, \$3,200, through four men who worked the old "money making" game on him. Three have been arrested, and search is being made in Pittsburgh for Pete Wasowski, believed to be the fourth.

—Although raised on a bottle and a strict vegetarian, "Buster" the groundhog pet of Mrs. Jennie Bell, of Catawissa, sits up like a dog to beg for candy. He also likes automobile riding. His chief diet now is bread and milk, but he likes apples, ice cream, bananas and sweet potatoes.

—Jurors at the next term of civil court, in Wilkes-Barre, will be asked to decide an unusual damage suit in the case of George F. Behee, 82, and his wife Susanna Behee, 80, against injuries said to have been sustained. The couple were celebrating their fiftieth anniversary when the mishap occurred.

—Eugene Bride, 20 years old, the fastest youth in Bradford county, died last Thursday after a short illness from pneumonia. He weighed about 400 pounds, and the undertakers had to use a special stand for a triple-size casket with extra strong handles. Despite his great bulk, Eugene had been doing a large part of the work on his mother's farm.

—The State Board of Fish Commissioners placed 428,105 fish valued at \$31,650 in Pennsylvania waters during November of last year, members of the commission announced today. The fish ranged in size from one inch to fourteen inches and consisted of brook and brown trout, sunfish, catfish, black bass, yellow perch, pickerel, minnows and frogs.

—Dignity, honesty and pride are three principal characteristics of the Chinese, Mme. Pearl V. Metzlin, widow of a former German diplomat to China, said in speaking at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh. She declared that the Empress refused to receive diplomatic representatives because they declined to comply with the "kow-tow" demanded by the court.

—Complete unofficial returns of the special election held in the Second Assembly district of Clearfield county last Friday indicate the election of John Patchin, Republican, of Burnside, to succeed the late Assemblyman George A. Lukehart of DuBois. The unofficial tabulation follows: Patchin, 1,282; Fred Shaffer, Democrat, of DuBois, 1,011; Robert Hudson, Labor, DuBois, 953.

—Just an every-day sneeze resulted in two fractured ribs for Raymond Kiefer, of Sellersville, employed by the United gauge works. Kiefer had an armful of gauge parts when he felt a good old-fashioned sneeze coming upon him. He tried to withhold it, so as not to break the articles he was carrying, and due to his muscular contortions to keep it back, he broke two ribs in his left side.

—Finding a street fight too much for his shattered nerves, Nick Russin, aged 34, of near Pittsburgh, started to run from the scene. He slipped on the ice and broke a wrist. He was placed in a passing automobile and was being rushed to a doctor when the car skidded, struck a pole and turned turtle. All the occupants were injured, including Russin, who suffered severe cuts and bruises.

—All women teachers who have been or will be married this school year shall not be reemployed. Hereafter, no new teachers who are married shall be engaged as teachers in Bristol, reads the edict of the Bristol, Pa., school board, in a resolution adopted unanimously. It is said the action was precipitated by numerous marriages among women teachers now on the faculty. No reason was given as to why the board did not want married women teachers.

—Since he began using an automobile in 1914 for carrying mail, J. Lee Kessler, Columbia county rural carrier, believes he has bought enough parts to build a score or more machines. He has had three new machines, but the wear and tear on them has necessitated purchase of parts, as he sometimes spends hours in bucking snowdrifts which clog roads on his route. Kessler began carrying mail in 1901 and for the first 13 years used a horse and buggy. He and Riter Hadden, who works out of the Benton post office, are among the oldest rural carriers in that section in service. Both pride themselves on knowing every person along their routes.

—The Milfin county grand jury has returned a true bill against Charles L. Myrick, charging him with embezzlement, on the oath of E. L. Stanley, who had given Myrick stocks to the value of \$3,000, which it is alleged he sold and made no return of the money. Myrick, who was secretary of the Lewistown Chamber of Commerce and manager of the Lewistown and Huntingdon Credit bureau, absconded December 23, taking with him the funds. He is the stenographer, Miss May Hoidt, 19 years old. No trace has been found of either since the young lady sent a telegram, Dec. 30, from Carlisle, saying they would be away for several days.