

—Philadelphia is showing signs of repentance and Aimee McPherson Semple hasn't even been there yet. They actually convicted a crooked election board within the week.

—And it is beginning to look as though Vice President Dawes has made up his mind that "hell'n Maria" is one Vice President who intends to be heard from after his term has expired.

—Commander Richard E. Byrd, who was the first airman to fly over the North pole, has announced his intention of trying a South pole flight in 1928. If there is anything in a name a Byrd ought to do it.

—Rumor has it that another nice plum from the Harrisburg tree is to fall into the lap of a certain Centre county gentleman. If it should become a reality it will certainly be very pleasing to us, especially since we know it is deserved.

—A New York student committed suicide on Monday and left a note to his father saying that "the world is not fit to live in." There have been an alarming number of such deaths lately and thinkers are groping for a cause. We are wondering just what this boy did to make the world a better place to live in.

—Prof. Lugad Albert, a Swedish historian, has gotten so far up the family trees of Queen Victoria of England and Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany that he thinks he can see Mt. Ararat. He says both are direct descendants of Noah. Possibly the Kaiser is, but he evidently didn't inherit much of the seamanship of the ark's pilot. Noah ran his boat to a safe port and Wilhelm steered the German ship of state right onto the rocks.

—My golly, we saw A. Mitchell Palmer's name in print on Wednesday night. It was a two inch paragraph telling of his arrest at St. Petersburg, Fla., for driving a car with a 1926 license tag on it. We're not gloating over the misfortune of the gentleman who helped read us out of the party away back in 1910, we are only pleased to learn that he is still alive. Time was when he was front page stuff almost every day in the year.

—When the American Legion goes to France next September it is to be met with a "hard luck" story. The object is to so impress the Legionnaires with the economic poverty of France that they will all return as rooters for a more favorable debt settlement. Maybe they will and maybe they won't. Most of them know, however, that American tourists spend annually in France more than twice as much as any of her annual payments on the debt are.

—This new idea of making stockings triplets instead of pairs, as has been the custom ever since the world stopped doing what Jerry Simpson always did—going stockingless—is all very good so far as providing Milady with a spare against the unexpected "runner," but what's to become of Santa Claus? He has trouble enough now getting two filled on Christmas eve and should be confronted with sets of three hanging by the fire places next Christmas the jolly old fellow might quit the job entirely.

—Ida Clyde Clark says there are three women fit to rule the United States and names them in the persons of Anne Morgan, Alice Roosevelt Longworth and Ruth Hanna McCormick. We have nothing more than a newspaper acquaintance with any of the ladies and may be ill informed as to their superiority, but we believe there are hundreds of others who are just as competent to preside in the White House as are the Clark triumvirate. With women it is just the same as with men. The wheel of fortune turns some up and leaves many, just as capable, to go on their contented, obscure way.

—The Association of Medical Colleges has discovered that the country doctor is on the wane. We don't quite get that announcement, because we don't understand just what is meant by "the country doctor." To our mind "the country doctor" passed out of the picture forty or more years ago. Today the practitioner in the smallest village had just the same course in medical college and passed just the same examinations as the one whose sign hangs on the door of the swellest building on the swellest street in any large city. Doctors are all made according to the same specifications and, just like any other professional men, some of them attain eminence in their profession because of inherent aptitude for it while the great majority remain in the class of just good doctors. Lots of the so-called eminence in the medical profession is bluff. The practitioner in the isolated territory is necessarily more resourceful than the one in the urban districts for he has no specialists in this that and the other malady to send his emergency patient to. He must act for himself and the experience thus gained makes him the man in whose judgment on the treatment of common diseases we will always have the most confidence. What, with the medical journals, the clinics, the radio, the local hospitals and the private sanitariums that are within daily reach of the most isolated practitioner today, can suggest to the Association of Medical Colleges that there is such an "anymule" as a "country doctor." Nothing.

Democratic Watchman

STATE RIGHTS AND FEDERAL UNION.

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Cunningham in Contempt.

Thomas W. Cunningham, Republican boss of the Tenth ward of Philadelphia has again refused to reveal to the Senate Slush Fund committee where he obtained the \$50,000 he contributed to the Vare campaign fund for the primary election. The significance of the question lies in the suspicion, amounting to almost a belief, that the money was contributed in part by bootleggers and other illicit dealers in liquors and part by assessors levied on the municipal office holders of Philadelphia. Political contributions from either of these sources would be so palpably repugnant to public morals and so plainly offensive to decency, that an admission of it would be fatal to the candidate in whose interest it was made.

As an afterthought Mr. Cunningham informed the Senate committee on Monday that the contribution of undisclosed origin was not contributed to the Vare slush fund but to that of his associate on the ticket, E. E. Beidleman. Mr. Beidleman was a candidate for Governor and the Senate has no right of review of votes for Governor. By this shift Mr. Cunningham hopes to evade the penalty of contempt which is imprisonment of a year in whatever custody the Washington District court commits the culprit. If the Senate has no authority to review the votes of a candidate for Governor there is no contempt in refusing to answer questions in relation to the campaign expenses of such a candidate.

Of course this statement of Cunningham under oath sounds fishy. He had been before the Committee three times before and never uttered a suggestion that his interest in the primary election was in behalf of Beidleman instead of Vare. Being a "hard-boiled" politician, without conscience, he probably has no genuine interest in any man except as exigencies arise and his personal prosperity is affected. At present, however, he is in for punishment and it is hoped the full extent of the penalty will be imposed. He is a fit subject to make an example of and the opportunity should not be lost. Tom Cunningham behind the bars will be an admonition that will be lasting.

—This is "National pay your bills promptly" week. Though there has been nothing about this office to indicate that it is being generally observed the idea strikes us as a good one. There is nothing we love better than to pay bills promptly, but we are restrained from indulging that obsession because our debtors don't seem to have the same passion.

Arms Conference Practically Off.

The French government has declined President Coolidge's invitation for another disarmament conference. The invitation was extended to Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan and purported to be a movement to curtail building operations in the lesser types of war ships. The League of Nations has been considering the subject and the United States had already named delegates to represent this country in what was called a preparatory arms conference. President Coolidge, for some unexplained reason, imagined that the Geneva processes were too slow and that anyway dozens of small nations, members of the League, had no navies and consequently no interest in the subject.

In declining to participate in the movement the French government rather broadly intimated that the movement has a sinister purpose and is in fact a "sniping" operation intended to impair the influence of the League of Nations. It is true that many of the nations embodied in the League of Nations are without navies, but it is not true that any of them is without interest in naval armaments, for in the event of war in which a naval power is concerned war ships would be employed wherever they could be brought into action. Neither can it be shown that the processes of reaching an agreement in the direction of disarmament would be unduly tardy. The League is a large body and though slow is effective.

Every rational man and woman in this country favors peace and the sentiment in favor of decreasing armaments alike on land and sea is equally unanimous. But it may be doubted if anything of real value could have been gained by the Coolidge proposition to hold a five-power conference upon a question already under consideration of the League of Nations. There may be more than suspicion that the purpose was to impair the influence of the League. It was scarcely denied that the Washington conference of 1921 was called with the view of discouraging the organization of the League, and the "fight against Wilson" is quite as active and venomous now as it was then.

Philadelphia Election Officers Convicted.

The trial of election frauds in the Fortieth division of the Twenty-fourth ward of Philadelphia ended on Friday with the conviction of the five persons, one a woman, who composed the election board. The irregularities charged were perpetrated at the primary election last May. In the course of the trial it was shown that 101 out of 383 votes cast were illegal and that two dead persons and fifty-three unregistered persons had voted. There were 383 votes returned as cast while there were only 379 names on the list of registered voters. The woman inspector was acquitted on the charge of "falsely entering names on the voters' list," but convicted of all the other charges.

The Twenty-fourth ward of Philadelphia is known as a comparatively decent section of the city, politically measured. The record established in this trial proves, therefore, that the entire city is honey-combed with fraud, and that the primary election of last May was in no respect an indicator of the choice of the people of that city for the office of Senator in Congress. The ratio of fraudulent votes cast in that single division or precinct carried throughout even that section of the city controlled by Vare would reverse the totals for the two highest candidates. Of course these facts will all be brought out in the investigation to be conducted by the Slush Fund committee.

In view of this disclosure, moreover, the belief is justified that William B. Wilson, the Democratic candidate for Senator, now contesting the seat, will be entitled to the certificate of election. Vare had a very large majority as returned by the election officers. But if nearly a third of the votes cast for him were fraudulent ballots there would not be enough legitimate votes cast to overcome the upward of fifty thousand majority polled against him outside the city of Philadelphia. It is not likely that the record made in this particular division of the Twenty-fourth ward, a comparatively decent neighborhood, is exceptional. Other divisions of other wards will be found worse.

—The Standard Oil Company doesn't mind how many new oil fields are discovered. The Standard feels able to hold its own in any competition.

Preparing to Loot the Farmers.

A short time before the expiration of his term of office Governor Pinchot refused applications for charters of electrical corporations on the ground that the schedule of charges for service was too high. Any charge in excess of nine cents per kilowatt hour, Governor Pinchot declared to be unjust. Since the induction of Governor Fisher into office a number of these corporations have renewed their applications and the new Governor has publicly declared that he will approve them. "The Public Service Commission," he states, "will perform its functions under the law without interference on the part of the executive." In other words the Public Service Commission will have free hand in the looting.

An electric company must make application to the Public Service Commission for approval of intended incorporation. Those approved by the Commission must next be passed on by the State Bureau of Corporations and lastly pass through the hands of the Governor. In the case of those denied by Governor Pinchot all were sanctioned by the Commission and the Bureau. The schedule of charges for service ranged above the nine cents a kilowatt hour, one, the Pennsylvania Power company, having fixed a rate of 11.46 cents per kilowatt hour. All these charges were declared by the Governor excessive and he felt that injustice would be done to the consumers who were entitled to fair treatment at the hands of corporations created by the State.

All of these corporations asked for charters to serve rural communities but were tied up with "parent" concerns. These "parent" companies had not only fixed the rates of service but Governor Pinchot alleged had tried to violate the purpose of the rural general electrification order, No. 27. Notwithstanding these facts the Public Service Commission had given approval to their applications and it is now semi-officially announced that their re-application will be approved by the Governor, regardless of the schedule of charges, if the Public Service Commission repeats its former action. In view of these facts the rural electrification from which much was hoped may be used to rob the farmers.

—State Chairman Mellon is also in favor of ballot reform legislation along certain lines, but not too far.

Silly Legislation Pending.

Most thinking men and women of Pennsylvania will cordially agree with Republican State Chairman W. L. Mellon that the proposed referendum on the Eighteenth amendment and the Volstead law is "silly stuff." A bill providing for such action has been introduced in the House of Representatives and is pending in the Committee of Law and Order. Mr. Mellon is of the opinion that it ought to die there without committing himself on the measure, that Mr. Mellon is a very intelligent man, which is variously interpreted. It might mean complete agreement on the merits of the proposed legislation and it could mean absolute obedience to the wishes of a party boss.

The proposed referendum would cost the people of Pennsylvania a lot of money and would be entirely worthless. If the voters of Pennsylvania should unanimously declare opposition to the Eighteenth amendment by ballot it wouldn't have the slightest effect on the amendment. There are only two ways to eliminate the Eighteenth amendment from the organic law of the country. One is to amend the constitution by adopting a repealer in the same manner that the Eighteenth amendment was placed there. The other is to call a constitutional convention representing all the States in the Union and adopt an entirely new constitution with the Eighteenth amendment left out.

A vote against the Volstead law by the people of Pennsylvania would be equally impotent of achievement for the purpose the author of the bill has in mind. The Eighteenth amendment to the constitution declares it unlawful to manufacture, sell, keep or handle, import or export intoxicating liquors "for beverage purposes," and if there were no Volstead law or other law on the subject the prohibition contained in the constitution would put the traffic in intoxicating liquors under the ban of the law. For these reasons the proposed legislation is silly as well as futile. The measure will probably die in committee as it deserves to and will be revived again at the next session.

—Miss Helen Grimes, Member of the Legislature, has succeeded in getting her "Beauty Shop" bill through the House. It is designed to license and regulate Beauty Shops. Inasmuch as we've never been in one of these beautification factories we are not prepared to say whether they need regulation or not, but since about everything else we know of is regulated in some way or other it's all right to gather them under the control of the official snooper.

—Under House bill No. 73 which has passed second reading in Harrisburg it would be unlawful to hold any professional athletic competition, race, game or sport before one o'clock p. m. on Memorial day. Any such event for which admission is charged or a collection taken would be prohibited and any kind of a parade in the morning advertising such an event for the afternoon also comes under the ban this law would put.

—Representative Sarig, of Berks county, is disgusted with his party associates in the General Assembly, who take orders from the bosses of the Republican machine. About ninety-nine per cent of the Democratic voters are in full agreement with Mr. Sarig.

—Now that the Governor and Republican State Chairman Mellon are taking a hand in the ballot reform legislation it is safe to predict that there will be loopholes of escape for some of the criminals.

—Lloyd George, no longer an important figure in affairs of Gt. Britain, seems to imagine that the affairs of the rest of the world are on his shoulders.

—The times are out of joint. The destructive floods in California are almost as bad as the devastating storms on the Atlantic coast.

—Strike fomenters in Shanghai will be beheaded which calls to mind that a good many strike fomenters in this country lost their heads.

—Possibly in favoring a permanent tax commission Governor Fisher had in mind that it would create some fine political patronage.

—A California Justice of the Peace sends the automobile to jail rather than the driver for violating traffic ordinances.

—The snow storm cut the weekend automobile fatalities in half but the improvement was too costly to encourage.

Pennsylvania Ignored.

From the Altoona Tribune. Pennsylvania has been given the "cold shoulder" at the white house and an Oklahoman has been nominated by President Coolidge for a position on the Interstate Commerce Commission—a place that originally was intended for a man from the Keystone State. The appointment was made to fill a vacancy caused by the expiration of Frederick I. Cox's term.

Cyrus E. Woods, of Greensburg, first named to the commission by the President through the influence of Senator David A. Reed, of this State, was rejected by the upper house of Congress. At that time it was understood that another Pennsylvanian was to be named for the position. At least it was conceded that a State of such industrial proportions as Pennsylvania and one so closely connected with interstate commerce is entitled to representation on that rate fixing body.

Mr. Woods was opposed religiously by Senators from southern States where preferential rates are in existence at the expense of coal operators and miners of the central and western Pennsylvania districts. Unmerciful character assaults were made upon him under the cover of justice and the cry of "unfitness." Now that the smoke of battle has cleared away, these men who opposed Woods are found in the position that brings more evil to them than could have possibly been the case had Mr. Woods, as incompetent as they pictured him, been chosen for the commission. They are like the boy who started out with a prize Jersey cow and through a series of trades they have been tricked and have only a proverbial whistle.

What can a politician from Oklahoma know about freight rates that effect this territory or any other industrial sector? True enough, he may be versed in oil freight tariffs or farm products, but granting him skill in these two things, it stands to reason he could not be a competent judge of the fairness of charges on interstate movements of steel, coal, silk or the many products of the busy marts of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio or the New England States.

On the other hand, Cyrus Woods, in spite of his holdings of rail and mine stocks and bonds, would be more competent to pass upon these cases than a man who has not had his training. Incompetence? Was that the objection of Senators from the southern States? If it was, now is the time for them to take the whistle they obtained through their unwise trading and to arouse the whole upper house against another "unfit" man.

Ending a Delusion.

From the Pittsburgh Post. The indicated failure of the United States to secure membership in the Permanent Court of International Justice with the Senate reservations attached brings out once more that the opponents of the tribunal have no substitute to offer. Even the old device of proposing "a" court for "the" court is recognized as having outlived its usefulness. The truth at last has become plain that if we are not to join "the" League or "the" court neither will we become a member of "a" league or "a" court; for there are no such organizations nor are there likely ever to be. By this time that delusion should be wholly dissipated.

Of course the opponents of both the League and the Court are highly elated with the apparent effectiveness with which they have kept the country out of these organizations. Still the hosts of friends of international cooperation who followed them on the assurance that there would be "a" league and "a" court to take the places of the existing bodies objected to may have something to say on their having been led into a blind alley. Are they willing to have their country remain on the outside of the only international organizations there are to be to serve the cause of war prevention?

When the movement for such membership starts again it should find a most important advantage to be free of the old delusion that opponents of the League and the Court are to provide substitutes for them.

Japan's Answer.

From the Philadelphia Record. The Japanese Government's reply to the American note suggesting that the delegates of the five Powers signatory to the Washington naval limitations agreement shall be empowered to negotiate, when they meet in Geneva as members of the Preparatory Commission of the Disarmament Conference, an extension of the Washington agreement, is eminently satisfactory.

Japan makes it clear that she does not subscribe in advance to the rigid application of the 5-5-3 ratio to ships not covered by the terms of the Washington Conference, and asks that the discussion be postponed until June 1 in order to allow time for the selection and instruction of her special delegates and for their travels. That is a reasonable request; and the reservation she makes in entering into the proposed negotiations was anticipated. The object of President Coolidge, as we understand it, was to make sure that the nations which he addressed should not only be willing to discuss his proposal, but should empower their representatives to act upon it. That object, in the case of Japan at least, has been attained.

SPAWLS FROM THE KEYSTONE.

—Shot at by a man whose attentions she had repulsed, Mrs. Olga Hall, of Philadelphia, fell dead from heart failure caused by fright. Believing his bullet had killed the woman, William Faust ended his own life with a shot through his head.

—When her husband was jailed for disorderly conduct in Centralia last week, Mrs. Joseph Moscow went to the bastille with a crowbar and liberated him. The next day she paid \$50 fine, and Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Rollings, who were supposed to have been with the woman, also were fined \$50 each.

—The second triennial farm census in Pennsylvania will be started this year. The first census was taken in 1924 in cooperation with township and borough assessors and County Commissioners. The 1923 Legislature passed an act requiring the census and plans are going forward in the Department of Agriculture for the work this year.

—Fire of unknown origin destroyed the Samuel Beshore hardware store and adjacent dwelling owned by Mrs. R. Heta Stimmel, at Port Royal, at midnight Saturday with \$30,000 loss. The flames broke out in the rear of the store. The heavy sleet storm and snow thrown on the adjacent buildings saved other property until the firemen arrived.

—Harrisburg is to have an increase in population March 1st. In accordance with an order announced at Altoona, one hundred clerks of the Pennsylvania Railroad are to be transferred to Harrisburg from Altoona at the close of February. The majority are married and have families. Friends in Harrisburg are now looking about for homes for them.

—Ninety school children were marched to safety on Monday when fire was discovered in a portable three room frame school building in Swissvale, near Pittsburgh. The fire, which was believed to have originated in a furnace in the basement, destroyed the building with an estimated loss of \$4,500. The building was to have been abandoned on Tuesday.

—The plant of the Dixon Motor Truck company, in Altoona, was damaged to the extent of \$15,000 by the explosion of an air tank last Friday. The entire roof was torn off and the interior of the plant badly damaged. One end of the tank landed on the railroad tracks a block away and the other end wrecked the roof of a nearby house. Sixteen employes escaped injury.

—Wandering in his sleep from the Franklin county home at Chambersburg, George Fortman, 78, perished from exposure during Saturday night's snow storm. The man was clad only in his night clothes. The body was found about a mile from the home, lying face down in the snow and partly covered. The coroner said death was due to exposure in the snow and cold.

—Vernon McCoy, 30, of Leidy township, Clinton county, was seriously injured near his home on Saturday when a tree he was cutting fell on him as he slipped on the icy mountain. He sustained fractures of the left shoulder, the left collarbone and of two ribs, one of which punctured his lung. To reach Leidy a doctor had to travel thirteen miles through the deep snow.

—A professional rat catcher—he calls himself a sanitary engineer—has been employed to rid Latrobe of these rodents. Traps were set which were capable of holding 200 rats at a time and were baited with either castor oil or live pigeons. Latrobe recently abandoned an old garbage dump and the rat catcher was employed last inhabitants of the dump turn to the cellars of Latrobe's citizens in search of food.

—Thomas Graham, aged about 80 years, a life-long resident of Clearfield and vicinity, dropped dead in front of the home of A. H. Dinnap, in Clearfield, on Saturday morning while shoveling snow from the walk along the Dunlap property. He had cleaned off the walk at the J. E. Gearhart residence across the street from the Dunlap home, and had just finished the lower half of the Dunlap walk when he was stricken.

—The Workmen's Compensation Board has been reorganized and territory apportioned to each referee. The reorganization was effected at a meeting in Harrisburg a few days ago. Under the apportionment, the State is divided into ten districts. Bedford, Blair, Centre, Clearfield, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata and Mifflin counties comprise the Sixth district. Jacob Snyder, of Altoona, has been renamed referee of this district.

—Although warned that an explosion was impending at the South Penn Colliery company's operation near Pottsville, Anthony Robbin, aged 37, walked directly into the path of danger and was killed. He is survived by a widow and three small children at Port Carbon. Charles Spulis, of Minersville, set off the blast and warned Robbins of the danger. The latter signaled that he understood, but apparently was thinking of something else and failed to heed it.

—Congressman Edward M. Beers has recommended and the President sent to the United States Senate a few days ago the nomination of Fred Etnier as postmaster of Huntingdon. Mr. Etnier has been in the United States postal service for the past twenty-six years and is a resident of Huntingdon. He grew to manhood in Mount Union and was a school mate of Congressman Beers. The outgoing postmaster is A. J. Starr, who conducted an efficient administration.

—Poison, chloroform, a belt and shoe laces failed to help Cloyd R. Folk, 30, Altoona, in an attempt to commit suicide, police said. He drank poison and fell into the hands of police. When searched he had a bottle of chloroform. In a cell, Folk tried to hang himself, using his belt for a noose, but he was cut down unconscious. Later a second attempt, with shoe laces used as a noose, failed, according to police. A guard was stationed near the prisoner to forestall further attempts.

—Again under the knife for removal of more shrapnel, which he received in his side and hip in the early days of the Argentine campaign in France, in September 1918, Walter Walcott, of Franklin, is in the U. S. Naval hospital at Philadelphia, where the most recent operation resulted in taking mors of the bits of steel from the hip-bone, and surgeons believe this may be the last operation necessary. This is either Walcott's seventh or eighth operation since he was caught by German shell-fire. He served with the 112th Infantry, 28th division.