

The action of the retiring council in rescinding its ordinance that created the position of borough manager for Bellefonte might be regarded as a death-bed confession of its failure to make any advance in having such an official if there were not the suspicion that there is an African concealed in the woodpile.

If you think we were all wrong when we wrote the paragraph below on the outlook for 1928 glance at the advertisement of the First National bank of Bellefonte, that appears on page seven of this issue and note what a very prominent banker has to say about the situation. Yes, we wrote our paragraph before the copy for the advertisement in question came in.

Judge Fleming's induction into office was very impressive indeed. Here's hoping that his desire to be treated fairly will be realized and that his pledge to be a just judge will be kept. It is to be expected that he will make some mistakes; no person is infallible. It is our duty and it will be our pleasure, as well, to withhold criticism of any of his acts, unless they should become too manifestly mistakes of the heart as well as of the head.

It is rumored that the county is to have another public official in the person of former Prothonotary Roy Wilkinson. The street gossip, fairly well supported by facts that have leaked out, is to the effect that the position of county detective that has been unfilled since the late Joe Rittenour retired from it years ago is to be revived and exalted into a three thousand dollar a year job for Roy Gosh, wouldn't news of that make poor old Joe turn in his grave.

By way of reply to the clergyman who wrote us recently expressing the hope that "your bootlegger will furnish you with enough 'pizen' to kick out all other or further references to 'wet' goods during the coming year," we want to say here that the "private bootlegger" we have so frequently boasted of having, is also an eminent minister of the gospel with a sense of humor fine enough to understand the fun we have had in reading his application for the job we advertised for some years ago.

We are far from being a pessimist and have no desire to hang crepe on the views others may take of the New Year. Whatever they may be, however, we are of the opinion that it will not be better, in a business way, than was the one that has just closed. Our country has been riding on the crest of a wave of abnormal prosperity since 1914 and it is but natural that there should be a settling back to a more normal condition. Bellefonte and Centre county will feel it less than many other sections. In fact the readjustment was in process all of last year and we suffered nothing like other communities because agriculture is such an important factor in the business problem here and agriculture is very stable in its contribution to wealth. The best evidence of a slowing up appears to us in the announcement that a certain chain of five and ten cent stores smashed all records for Christmas week business. They grossed over three million dollars more than they had ever done before. This is very significant because it indicates that all over the country people were buying cheaper things for Christmas. Buying them because they didn't have the money to visit the stores where more costly articles are sold.

The fact that we voluntarily selected a seat at Senator Scott's dinner that made it necessary to knock elbows with the Hon. Holmes seems to have caused some of the other guests to stare in wild-eyed astonishment. Why shouldn't we have done just what we did do? We have no personal quarrel with the gentleman. And we would be underestimating him if we were to think he has one with us. Neither one of us had any crow to eat. We did our best to lick him and he knows that our best is not to be sneezed at. He did his best to get elected and we know that it was some best or Andrew Curtin Thompson would be an Honorable also—not to say that he isn't that now, except his starts with a little h, not the big H that we have to spell it with ever after we have sent somebody to the Legislature. But talking about eating crow, the kick we got out of the dinner is a puzzle still unsolved: Why should Senator Scott have arranged it so that the principal meat dish was goose. The goose was cooked, too. Well cooked. Did that mean anything? If it did we are mildly curious to know whose goose was so well cooked. Certainly it wasn't the Senator's for Monday was a day of days for him.

Having side-tracked for a minute or two to let some other thoughts run on we pull back onto the track we started the above paragraph on: Our pleasure in breaking somebody else's bread with the Hon. Holmes. We want to say right here that we never could see any reason why men who are enemies politically should be enemies in their personal relations. There is nothing of sportsmanship in natures that fall into such a state. In fact, the secret of successful politics is the cultivation of personal friendships with one's political enemies. It so insidiously disarms them.

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Limiting Campaign Expenditures.

During the discussion of the Vane case in Congress recently Senator Gillett, Republican, of Massachusetts, admitted that so long as candidates were permitted to expend vast sums of money for nomination and election, "no poor man could be elected to the Senate, however able he might be."

At the recent session of the commission to revise or codify the election laws of Pennsylvania several suggestions were made as to the lines to be laid down to improve the electoral machinery, some of which were both wise and expedient, but not a word was said in favor of limiting the expenditures of the candidates. Former Governor Pinchot, though not a member of the commission, has proposed a limit of ten cents for each voter of the party concerned, cast at the next preceding election. At the election of 1926 Governor Fisher polled approximately two million votes. Pinchot's proposition would enable a candidate of that party for Senator to spend in the neighborhood of \$200,000.

That suggestion, therefore, affords little hope for a poor man, however fit and capable, to win a nomination against one willing "to go the limit" in expenditures. There are rich men with the laudable ambition, amply able to spend that amount of money. But it is doubtful if any man willing to pay that price is fit for the office. Governor Pinchot probably reasons that writing to every voter is a legitimate expenditure and Mr. Vane set up that excuse for his profligacy. But as a matter of fact such an expenditure is not necessary, and Mr. Vane did not spend his money in that way. A large proportion of his campaign fund was used in paying "watchers and workers."

The only way to prevent the excessive use of money in elections is to fix a maximum within reach of any man fit to be a Senator. Some time ago Congress set the figure at \$10,000 for a Senator but the Supreme court, in the Newberry case, declared it did not operate in primary elections. A State law covering both primary and general elections might work the needed reform, and a law forbidding the employment of workers and watchers, which is simply an expedient for legalizing bribery, would help amazingly. Ten dollars paid to a worker or watcher who has four to six votes in his or her family is just like putting votes on the bargain counter of a department store.

Blunder of Democratic Senators.

Those Democratic Senators who voted to practically pigeon-hole Senator Walsh's resolution to investigate the electrical power trust served the sinister purposes of monopoly rather than the interests of their party. The purpose of the resolution was to check the activities of the trust at the psychological moment while in process of formation. The obvious intent of the motion to refer to the committee on Interstate Commerce was to give those concerned in the enterprise time to complete the organization and entrench it in a formidable citadel of capital. Thirteen Democratic Senators joined with the Republicans of the chamber to hand it over to Senator Watson, of Indiana, a master political manipulator.

The surprising reasons given by the thirteen Democrats who voted to thus dispose of the questions was that "any startling evidence uncovered in such an investigation would almost inevitably figure in the coming political campaign, and for that reason conservative Democrats are dubious about the wisdom of the party taking any responsibility for the inquiry." Upon the same line of reasoning the Democratic Senators might refrain from participation in legislation on any important question and give the Republicans free rein in everything. The result of such a policy would be inevitable. The Democrats would be absolutely without an issue in the coming political campaign or even an excuse for existence.

That certain selfish capitalists are forming a colossal power monopoly which, if completed, will lay the whole industrial life of the country under tribute is so plainly discernible that "the wayfarer, though blind, may see." If the Democratic Senators are able to rescue the users of electric power from such a danger, they will create an issue for the coming political campaign which will sweep the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

The Watchman gives all the news while it is news.

Corruption of Several Philadelphia Magistrates.

The recent exposure of fraud and corruption in the minor courts of Philadelphia has startled the people of the State outside of the limits of that city. It has been shown that all, or nearly all, of the magistrates have been systematically levying graft upon defendants who have appeared before them. A few months ago one of them was convicted of withholding funds collected in the form of fines. The later charges are that in collusion with outsiders, frequently political leaders, they have been accepting "straw bail" for persons accused of crime, thus permitting them to escape trial and punishment. A fee was charged for the service which was divided between the magistrate and the bailer.

The magistrates in Philadelphia serve the same purpose in the judicial system as the aldermen in the lesser cities and the justices of the peace in boroughs and townships. They are part of the machinery for administering justice and conserving the rights and property of the people. The least taint on the reputation of the court for integrity creates suspicion and invites distrust of the system. The evidence brought out in the investigations which have been in progress for some time shows that the minor courts of Philadelphia are simply nests of grafters preying upon the misfortunes of their victims. The investigation is unfinished and the result remains to be developed.

It has also been proven that the lamentable condition has been in existence for many years, and the plain inference is that it is a part of the political system maintained by the Vane machine. The delinquent magistrates are guilty of a great crime against the people, but they are not entirely to blame. They are chosen by the big boss with full knowledge of their characters and probably with an implied understanding that part of the graft shall be given to the campaign fund. And the big boss is not solely to blame, either. When the heads of the largest corporations, the Chamber of Commerce and the leading bankers give support to the machine they become parties to the crimes.

It is rumored in Washington that Secretary Mellon favors George Wharton Pepper for President. This refutes the adage that "a burned child dreads fire."

Mellon's Gloomy Day.

State chairman Mellon spent a gloomy day in Harrisburg last week. The weather was wretched, the temperature chilly and forbidding and he was lonesome. Even Colonel Eric Fisher Wood, his only companion, was unable to cheer him up. A brief conference with the Governor in the evening may have yielded some recompense for a day of disappointments, but it was not perceptible. He finally retired to his hotel apartment "in the midst of a vast solitude." It was a rude awakening from a dream of vast power to a realization of absolute impotence. Nobody greeted him with a sign of deference or a show of cordiality. Nobody paid any attention to him at all.

Chairman Mellon had invited the local leaders of his party in the middle and eastern sections of the State to meet him in Harrisburg on the day in question to discuss the impending political conditions. His purpose was, as he stated it, "to get the county leaders thinking what ought to be done during the coming situation. The local tickets," he added, "will be made up in February and there are a good many angles to be worked out prior to that time." Such an appeal, he imagined, would go to the hearts of the faithful and such a conference give him a fine opportunity to impress upon their minds the importance of sending delegates to the National convention who would be obedient to Uncle Andy.

But "the best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft agley." None of the local leaders responded to the invitation to meet and absorb wisdom from the lips of "the main guy" except boss McClure, of Delaware county, and congressional candidate Beers, of Huntingdon. McClure came to tell the Big Boss that the Republicans of his county are able to take care of themselves and need neither advice nor help from outsiders and Mr. Beers probably asked him to head-off Ben Focht who has been pestering him for many years. It was certainly a disappointing enterprise but the political game is disappointing as chairman Mellon will discover "more at length" in the course of time.

The new Mayor of Philadelphia has taken machine politicians as his official advisers. Obviously he is trying to "make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

Opposition to the Voting Machine.

Mr. Vane's objections to the voting machines as expressed by Speaker Bluett, at the recent initial session of the Election Law Commission, has brought out a strong statement on the subject from the officials of the Pennsylvania Elections Association. Mr. Bluett declared that the voting machine would require more time for each voter to mark his ballot than is consumed by the present system. In a letter addressed to Senator Schantz, chairman of the Election Law Commission, the Pennsylvania Elections Association completely refutes this charge and conclusively proves not only greater expedition in registering the vote, but greater accuracy and a considerable saving in expense.

"It is a fact," says the letter to Senator Schantz, "that in New York city, where voting machines were used in the late election, the general average was one vote per minute. When it is remembered that the voters, of New York were not only voting for candidates but also on nine constitutional amendments, it will be appreciated that the charge of delay in the balloting does not lie against voting machines."

The fact is that voters pass through the polling places with such expedition in New York that election districts can be enlarged. The New York election law provides that where voting machines are used districts may be consolidated so as to permit 650 voters to a district, whereas, with paper ballots the limit is 400.

The average cost of conducting an election in cities like New York and Philadelphia is approximately sixty dollars to a district. In New York last year the use of voting machines enabled them to cut out over 200 districts and effect a saving of \$12,000. A similar saving might be made in Philadelphia without impairment of the service. In fact the letter to Senator Schantz goes on to say: "Voting machines provide for ease, speed and accuracy of voting, prevent the congestion which develops in crowded districts and absolutely prevent the padding and falsification of return sheets after the polls close." This is literally true and probably the reason Vane opposes them.

Secretary Mellon imagines that he will be able to whip Congress into support of his tax bill but is likely to be disappointed. The congressional election is coming on and tax reduction is "popular with the people."

Origin of a Famous Phrase

Through the kindness of an old friend of an inquisitive turn of mind and reminiscent inclination the Watchman is able to give what William Randolph Hearst would interpret as an authentic statement of the original "I do not choose to run" phrase. Some seventy-five or a hundred years ago, the book is without date but its pages are yellow with age, there was issued from the press of a New York publisher, a hand-somely bound and copiously illustrated volume entitled "Half Hours with French Authors." It gives brief sketches and almost equally short samples of the literary product of the most famous French writers up "to the end of the Sixteenth century."

Among those quoted is Maximilian de Bethune, Duke of Sully, who won fame as Minister in the government of King Henry IV. His family belonged to a "younger branch of the House of Flanders," according to the narrative, and "he was educated in the doctrines of the Reformed faith." His description of the battle of Ivry, in which he appears to have had a conspicuous part, having been severely wounded several times and had two horses shot from under him is quoted at some length. At a critical stage of the battle he had two prisoners, one of whom was shot while in his custody. He was advised by the Count de Torigny to demand ransom. To this amiable suggestion he responded "I did not choose to do this."

President Coolidge is a rather adroit phrase-maker, himself, and according to current gossip, has developed a funny faculty of culling choice and sometimes unusual expressions from the writings of others. It is freely charged that his favorite sources of supply of thoughts and language are the various cyclopedias available for such purposes, but it is not improbable that he occasionally appeals to other mediums and the handsome volume issued anonymously many years ago might have attracted his attention, and the unique phrase of so distinguished a soldier and statesman as the Duke of Sully challenged his admiration and appealed to his fancy.

Maybe Senator Borah hopes that the Republican convention will reward him for his services in leading the insurgents into camp.

Another Outstanding Achievement of Colonel Lindbergh.

There is no extravagance in that pretentious title, "ambassador of good-will" which official oratory and public sentiment long ago conferred upon Colonel Lindbergh. His dazzling flight across the Atlantic did more to promote understanding between this country and Europe than all the diplomatic maneuvers of several years. Even more striking is the gesture towards restored co-operation where-with Mexico has celebrated his winged embassy to that republic, by moving to abandon a policy which for years has been a subject of bitter controversy.

Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution of 1917 provides for nationalization of resources of the soil. The Carranza Government, choosing to interpret the provision as retroactive, practiced systematic seizure of oil and mining properties held by American interests, even of those acquired prior to 1917 and in full accordance with Mexican laws. Succeeding Governments, although professing greater friendship for the United States, continued this policy despite urgent protests from Washington. The American position, steadily maintained has been as it was formally outlined six years ago; "Mexico is free to adopt any policy which she pleases with respect to her public lands, but she is not free to destroy without compensation valid titles obtained by American citizens under Mexican laws. That would constitute an international wrong of the gravest character, and this Government could not submit to its accomplishment."

Endless negotiations failed to break the deadlock, until a new situation was created a month ago by a decision of the Mexican Supreme Court that two articles in the law regulating oil and land holdings are themselves unconstitutional. With this advantage Ambassador Morrow was able to progress towards an understanding, but settlement was undoubtedly hastened as a result of the extraordinary good feeling inspired by the visit of Colonel Lindbergh. President Calles sent a special message to the Chamber of Deputies urging amendment of the law; that body passed the bill promptly and unambiguously, and early approval by the Senate is forthcoming.

Perhaps the vexatious controversy would have been settled anyway. But there was a Latin gracefulness in the timing of the Mexican action which points unmistakably to the unconscious diplomatic influence of Lindbergh's personality.

Increased Speed

While the Pennsylvania vehicle code, effective January 1, provides for a maximum speed of 35 miles an hour on the highway—an increase of five miles over the previous maximum speed—this does not mean that motorists may operate at the higher rate under any and all conditions.

Operating a vehicle at a speed greater than is reasonable and proper having due regard to the traffic surface and width of the highway, or at a speed that endangers the life, limb or property of any person, is prohibited by the code.

Likewise, the code is violated if the motorist operates a vehicle at a speed greater than 20 miles an hour when within 200 feet of a grade crossing of any steam or electric railway where signs so stating are erected.

Another provision prohibits operating a vehicle at a speed greater than 20 miles an hour when passing any school during recess or while children are going to and from school.

It is also a violation of the code to operate at a speed greater than 20 miles an hour when within 50 feet of and in traversing an intersection of highways in a business or residence district.

The code provides for 20 mile speed limits where formerly the limit was 15 miles. This provision is effective wherever local authorities have erected signs so stating in letters not less than four inches in height.

No motorist need get in trouble over speed if he observes the cardinal rule of safe driving—caution and consideration at all times. Even a speed of 20 miles an hour where 35 is permitted might, under certain conditions, be criminal. It is the duty of each individual driver to so operate his car that he does not endanger himself or other users of the highway.

Has anybody seen the Skellerjellup comet? We thought we glimpsed it on Christmas eve, but since we have seen no trace of it since we are fearful that it might have been "seen" things" that night.

SPAULS FROM THE KEYSTONE.

Fourteen hundred dollars, the lifetime savings of Peter Sandysgate and his family, were burned when their dwelling at Johnstown was destroyed by fire, entailing a total loss of about \$12,000. An overheated furnace is believed to have caused the fire. The family was visiting relatives at the time.

Returning home last Thursday after taking Harry Meeker, aged 20, to the Danville State hospital, Constable Harter, of Bloomsburg, received word that he had beaten an attendant and escaped. Harter was waiting for Meeker when he returned home and took him to the institution a second time.

Statistics completed at the city hall, at Lebanon, last Friday, disclosed that in his four years as Mayor, Dr. John Walter has imposed fines aggregating \$23,294.32 as the result of 2923 arrests. Dr. Walter has been known as the "Fining Mayor," as a consequence of his drive against offending motorists.

The Millin and Centre county branch of the Pennsylvania railroad, one of the oldest lines in the State, was discontinued December 31 when the last train was run over the twelve miles between Lewistown and Milroy. Railroad service in that section of the State will now be given by the Kishacoquillas Valley railroad.

Charles Woodie, 32, lost his right eye last Tuesday morning when a lubricator burst in the engine room of the Vicose plant and a piece of glass struck and lacerated the eye. Woodie was looking at the lubricator glass to ascertain how it was feeling when the explosion came. The injury operated was removed at the Lewistown hospital.

It is reported that the consolidation of Schuylkill College, of Reading, an Evangelical institution, and Albright College, at Myerstown, Lebanon county, will be effected some time in 1928, probably in midsummer. It is also stated that the Albright College buildings at Myerstown will be converted by the Evangelicals into an orphanage.

Charles H. Price, 53, car inspector for the Pennsylvania railroad, at Lewistown, has been awarded a medal for heroic service September 6, 1925, when he threw three children out of the path of an on-rushing express train in front of the Pennsylvania Railroad depot at the risk of his own life. The girls were playing along the tracks when the train rounded a sharp curve a couple of hundred feet away.

Its building and equipment damaged by a shattering blast of dynamite, the Scranton Sun, afternoon newspaper, went about the business of getting out its editions as usual, on Monday, while city and county authorities were searching for the perpetrators of the explosion. The Sun building was shaken and windows of dwellings and other structures in the vicinity were broken by a heavy charge of explosive that went off as the bells of the city were tolling the beginning of the new year.

The home of William Miller, of Roaring Spring, was entered by robbers recently and relieved of 75 jars of fruit. Entrance was made by prying the outside cellar door open. Fresh tracks in the alley at the rear of the lot showed that an automobile had been parked, evidently where the fruit had been loaded. The robbery took place about midnight. Mr. Miller was aroused by a screaming noise, but, thinking it was an automobile going by, paid no attention until the following morning when the discovery was made. No clue to the guilty persons has been obtained.

Preparations are being made for the celebration of the fourth anniversary of the lighting of No. 3 blast furnace of the E. and G. Brooke Iron company, at Birdsboro, on January 17. This is the longest single run of any blast furnace in the Schuylkill valley and the marvel is that the stack is working on as smoothly as when the furnace was lighted, and is producing as big tonnage of iron. So far, 435,000 tons of pig iron has been turned out and the largest output for a 24-hour day run was 423 tons. It is likely that the furnace will be put out of service in the spring, and overhauled and enlarged.

For nine days William Richardson, of Tyrone, a soldier at the Carlisle barracks, lay ill in the barn of the Cumberland county home farm, near Carlisle, without food or water and was finally rescued Friday, when his faint cries reached farmhands. Richardson was removed to the Carlisle post hospital, where it was found that his feet had been frozen and he was greatly weakened from exposure and lack of food. He will recover, however, it is believed. Richardson was discharged from the post hospital December 20. The next day he took a walk, he said, and when he became ill he went into the county home barn to rest, and there he collapsed and remained nine days.

Three large Tyrone firms have arranged for a consolidation of their business interests and give Tyrone one of the largest wholesale and retail businesses in this part of the State. The Bayer-Gillman company, wholesale grocers, have made application to the State for an increase in its capital stock so that it may merge with the Oriole Stores Inc. and take over the Tyrone Home Dressed Meat company. The consolidating firm employs nearly 150 men and women and their business during the past year was close to \$2,000,000. Roy F. Bayer, president of the Bayer-Gillman company, will continue as president of the new company, while Raymond C. Albright, president of the Tyrone Home Dressed Meat company, will become treasurer of the new firm. John W. Bayer will become assistant treasurer of the new company.

Two unmasked men held up a branch of the First National Bank of Altoona, on Wednesday of last week, and escaped in an automobile with \$4,900, which they scooped up from the counter as they fled. They overlooked \$10,000 in bills nearby. Joseph Council, a teller, was alone in the branch, located at Eighth avenue and Twenty-fourth street, when a man entered and presented a \$10 bill, asking for change in pennies. As Council turned to the vault the second robber appeared and forced him into the vault, which then was locked by one of the invaders. Harry Tenny, a gasoline station proprietor, appeared at the bank a few minutes afterward and heard Council's cries from inside the vault. Tenny attempted to work the combination under Council's directions, but when he failed aid was summoned from the main bank to release him.