

## INK SLINGS.

—A fire a month at the Y goes to prove that they do have hot times up at that popular recreational center.

—If Pinchot pursues his present policies throughout his administration he will make Mussolini "look like a piker."

—Extra session or no extra session the Congressional calendar should be cleared before Congressmen go home.

—The founders of the government were much more afraid of executive usurpation than of legislative inefficiency.

—We had been looking for "the January thaw" to open up the ground and pour copious quantities of melting snows into it, but we can't have that unless we get something to thaw.

—The Auditors are at work on the County's books. They haven't delved far enough into the affairs yet to give any hint of what may be expected. However, we venture the prediction that the cost sheet will show that there was no depression in government in 1930.

—Political gossip is to the effect that former County Treasurer Jim Heverly is on the preferred list and will land a nice job under the Pinchot regime. Well, Jim certainly was for Pinchot. We got it in no uncertain tones from his own lips one night when we had the temerity to ask him where he stood in the primary fight.

—On official ballots for 1931 elections in Pennsylvania there might be four regular parties this year. The Prohibitionists had lost their right to a place on the ticket but have probably gotten it back and as the Liberals cast 2 per cent of the vote given to the candidate having the largest plurality in last fall's election they will be entitled to a place if they want it.

—We are not a believer in government ownership, but we hate to think what would happen to Bellefonte if her water supply were not in the hands of her taxpayers. Occasionally we fritter money away, as we did on that pitometer project, but on the whole the Bellefonte Water Department has been managed so that consumers have gotten more water at less cost than they would have had had the system been owned by any individual or corporation.

—The crew of an American vessel mutinied in a Russian port on Monday. It had been given shore leave and went Communist. Here's hoping that our immigration authorities will have deaf ears to the appeals of that crew when they try to get back to the good old U. S. A. When they waken up to discover what they've got to do to make good in Stalin's "Four Year Plan" they'll realize that a "bread line" in this country looks like Utopia by comparison with the lot they drew.

—Listen, if you want to get sent up for life there is no need of going out and murdering some one. Just desert your wife. Then the Court will order you to pay her a dollar a day for support. Fall down on that and be brought into court for contempt. Then you stand a chance to be sent to a work-house where you can earn sixty-five cents a day with which to pay the wife the dollar. You'll be sure of a meal ticket for life on such a job, because its exactly like taking one step up an icy hill and slipping back two.

—To the inquisitive person who dropped us a card on which was written merely this interrogation: "Why, haven't you told us how long it is, yet?" we reply that ninety-five days must elapse before we can get back to business. That is, if the opening of the trout fishing season is what he had in mind. We might get "balled" up about the close of the game season and the date of ground hog day, as we did last year, but when it comes to the king of out-door sports we're like the bears and the snakes, we know when to crawl out of our hole.

—Isn't the Hon. Holmes just besmeared with luck. On Thursday afternoon, September 18th, Mr. Pinchot, standing on the court house steps in Bellefonte, said: "I have just had a very satisfactory talk with Senator Scott and Representative Holmes and I want you to support them." Then Senator Scott and the Hon. Holmes told us they were one hundred per cent for Mr. Pinchot's program. Part of Mr. Pinchot's program was to have William D. Mansfield made president pro tempore of the Senate and C. G. Goodnough speaker of the House. The Martin-Mellon-Vare faction didn't care anything about who is speaker of the House and didn't set up any opposition to Goodnough but they were desperately interested in the organization of the Senate and brought out Daix in opposition to Mansfield. The result was that when the Legislature organized last Monday Holmes didn't have to stand up and be counted on making good his promise of September 18, whereas our luckless Senator looked right into the mouth of the cannon when he forgot his promise of September 18, and voted for Daix.

## The Election of Mr. Daix.

Contrary to wide-spread expectation Governor-elect Pinchot has been defeated in his attempt to control the deliberations of the State Senate through selection of a hand-picked president pro tempore. The importance of this office lies in its prerogative to appoint the standing committees. Mr. Pinchot assumed that any other than a man of his own choice would exercise this power to defeat his legislative programme during the present session of the General Assembly. It was a preposterous proposition but in direct line with the attitude he maintained during the campaign to the effect that the election of Mr. Hemp-hill would be a sacrifice to monopoly. It would have caused no such calamity.

The office was created by the constitution of 1874 and from that time it has been an unbroken custom to select the president pro tem at the close of each session and re-elect him at the opening of the succeeding session. At the close of the last session the favor was bestowed by unanimous vote on Senator Augustus F. Daix Jr., of Philadelphia. No complaint was made in the interval against his capability or character. The only objection to his re-election was that he had shown independence enough to vote against the nominee of his party for reasons which seemed to his conscience satisfactory. This is not a crime in the estimation of the average citizen. President Hoover appraises it as a virtue.

Taking one consideration with another the disappointment of Mr. Pinchot is a victory for the constitution which guarantees the complete independence of each of the three departments of the government, a vindication of a fair tradition of the General Assembly and a just reward for faithful and long continued service in the Senate. The margin was narrow, twenty-four to twenty-two, but a "miss is as good as a mile" in such things and we positively refuse to believe that the interests of the public have been betrayed because a rather selfish official, a glutton for power, has been frustrated in a somewhat sinister aspiration. The government at Harrisburg will still live. "We may be happy yet, you bet."

—It is said that President Hoover will adopt the "mailed-fist" method of administering the government in future. Even that might be an improvement on his equivocal practices of the past.

## An Inexplicable Problem.

It is not easy to figure out why the administration at Washington is so set in its opposition to an extra session of Congress soon after the expiration of the present session. After the election of 1918 returned a majority adverse to the Woodrow Wilson administration the Republican leaders, with singular unanimity went about to force an extra session of the then incoming Congress in order to embarrass the President during the last half of the term. There was no uncompleted legislation of vital importance on the calendar but there were abundant opportunities for investigations and other devices for making campaign capital. This time "the shoe is on the other foot," and there is a vast difference in other respects. There are on the calendar a great many measures of legislation which are certain to fail of passage during the present session. Among these are bills that have been under consideration, in one branch or the other, for a long time and in which the people of the country are vitally concerned. It is practically certain that the new Congress will enact some, if not all, of them at the earliest opportunity. But unless there is an extra session the opportunity will be delayed for nearly a year and within that time much harm may be done.

There is, or at least there ought to be, no foundation for the impression that Congress in session is a menace to business prosperity. The present Congress has done all the harm to the industrial life of the country that can be done. The Grundy tariff legislation of the last session has cut commerce to the bone, practically closed the markets of the world to our products and vastly increased the cost of living. Nothing more can be done in that direction, and it can hardly be claimed that putting proper restraints on monopolies will be an irreparable evil. That is about all an extra session would do.

—Maybe there is just reason for the popular impression that Congress in session is a menace to public interests. Look who controls Congress!

## Norris Will Not be Expelled.

The Republican leaders of the Senate have wisely determined to refuse to support the movement of Mr. Lucas, general director of the National committee, to expel Senator Norris from the party. It would be a hazardous undertaking, they reason, and might do much more harm than good. It is agreed among them that Norris is a disturbing element in the organization but he has just been re-elected Senator as the nominee of the Republican party of Nebraska and has six years to serve. Besides his expulsion at this time would leave the party in the minority at the organization of the next Congress and demote a lot of Senators who now hold important committee chairmanships.

Mr. Lucas was appointed to his present office at the personal solicitation of President Hoover, and it is generally understood that his views on the subject of punishing Norris are the views of the President and that failure to endorse them implies a rebuke to the ostensible head of the party. But they reason that Mr. Hoover has made so many blunders in directing the policies of the party that it is wiser to rebuke than to reprove him. First, he selected Dr. Work for chairman and he proved a failure. Then he selected Claudius Huston, whose financial operations made him impossible. Finally he selected Senator Fess and Lucas who were both inefficient and treacherous.

Expelling Norris from the party would be approving the methods by which Lucas treacherously fought a nominee of the party whom he was under moral obligations to support. That would be a menace to every ambitious man in the party and a direct threat to every Senator and Representative in service. It would be enthroning an individual of questionable methods as supreme master of the organization. That is too wide a latitude to bestow on any man whose chief characteristic is sycophancy, and the Republican leaders of the Senate have decided against it, even though it implies a rebuke of the President. As a matter of fact the Senate leaders have little concern for the welfare of the President.

—The fund placed in a Washington bank at the discretion of Bob Lucas, executive director of the Republican National committee, may not have been christened a slush fund but it served that purpose all right.

## The Railroad Grouping Plan.

The plan of grouping the railroads of the east, recently agreed upon by the four major transportation corporations concerned, may be all that could be desired. It is certainly in conformity with the provisions of the act of Congress adopted several years ago and widely discussed by railroad executives, the Interstate Commerce Commission and the public press since. But Senator Couzens, of Michigan, is fully justified in his protest that the speedy endorsement of the action by the President in advance of its consideration by the Interstate Commerce Commission was both unethical and may be infinitely harmful. The law requires the approval of the Commission as essential to the agreement.

The Interstate Commerce Commission is a creature of the President. All the members of the Commission are appointed by him and may be removed at his discretion. After a lengthy consideration of the subject the Commission devised a plan for the operation of the law. It, in a measure at least, preserved the policy of competition by creating five major systems instead of four as expressed in the new arrangement. Unrestrained the Commission might have insisted upon its own plan, which had been rejected by the corporations, or a compromise which would have served the public quite as well and conveyed to the corporations notice that they are creatures instead of masters of government.

While Mr. Coolidge was President a precisely similar condition was presented to the Tariff Commission, likewise a creature of the executive. When the Commission made a decision unsatisfactory to the President one member was induced to resign by the offer of a more desirable job, another was removed and a new body created which expressed the President's views on the subject. The premature approval of the plan adopted by the railroad executives in this case might easily be construed by the members of the Interstate Commerce Commission as an admonition to "watch their step." Good jobs are scarce at present and it will be a sad moment for the country when Presidential bulldozing becomes the rule.

## Sam Lewis Selected for Highway Commissioner.

The selection of Sam Lewis for the important office of Highway Commissioner reveals the mastery of Joe Grundy in the incoming Pinchot administration. Republican party leaders have been variously affiliated from time to time but in all the changes Lewis has been the faithful adherent of Grundy. In the mixup of the primary campaign, last spring, Lewis was Grundy's choice for Governor. When the Mellons, of Pittsburgh, refused to accept Lewis, Grundy broke up the conference and he and Lewis turned in for Pinchot, not because they liked Pinchot, for they didn't, but in order to oppose the Mellons.

Sam Lewis has been an active element in the political life of Pennsylvania for many years and has never done anything in his life except hold office. His first office was postmaster at York. From that post he became corporation clerk in the office of the Auditor General, under Charlie Snyder. Then he succeeded Snyder as Auditor General and at the expiration of his term was elected State Treasurer. After that the office of special deputy Auditor General was created for him and he is still in that job. He supported Pinchot for the nomination for Governor in 1920 and quarreled with him during his term of office.

In announcing the appointment of Lewis Mr. Pinchot says "we discussed at length the highway policy to be adopted during the next four years and found ourselves in complete agreement." It may be assumed, therefore, that Mr. Lewis will pursue whatever policy Mr. Pinchot suggests. This he can be depended upon to do as long as Mr. Grundy and Mr. Pinchot are in "complete agreement" on everything. It may also be confidently expected that the service will be efficient and that the personnel will be responsive to any call for political work during the term, or so long as the complete agreement continues.

—If Senator Norris succeeds in solving the Muscle Shoals problem and abolishes the lame duck session of Congress he will have glory enough without tampering with the form of electing Presidents.

—Luzerne county appears to be afflicted with all the political sins in the calendar. With a considerable number of officials already in jail a blanket net has been spread for others.

—The days are gradually growing longer. However they will never get long enough for us to get our work done without resort to artificial light.

—Senator Borah is against a third party movement. Corruption may run rampant in the organization but Borah's "heart is true to Moll."

—Al Smith is now "one of us." He began service as a columnist last Sunday and his first contribution gives promise of an interesting series.

—The Republican row in Harrisburg is interesting but only an incident compared with the greater ruction in Washington.

—It's all right to avert a special session of Congress if possible. Special session by sacrificing necessary legislation is too costly a process.

—If Mr. Hoover's idea of Congress is well founded it might be a good idea to abolish that branch of the government entirely.

—Mr. Pinchot has little cause to worry. When he begins dividing the spoils all the party leaders will come at his beckon.

—With the death of Kin Hubbard the Abe Martin source of clean humor and wise philosophy is closed forever.

—Penologists recommend "rooms" instead of "cells" in prisons and maybe, after all, there's something in a name.

—Revenue statistics recently published show that "the rich are growing richer" whatever happens to the poor.

—A good, sharp rebuke of the new Power Commission by Congress would meet with cordial popular approval.

—Germany still protests that the reparation requirements are too heavy but she continues to pay.

## Assessments Once More.

The assessment evil has turned up in the newspapers again. This time in Fayette county, where County Commissioner George W. Hibbs, sitting as a member of the board of appeals considering the triennial assessment, has severely condemned the whole system.

"The inequality of the tax burden is an outrage on the property owners of the country," he asserted. "Fayette county proper is assessed anywhere from 10 to 150 per cent of its market value. A similar condition exists elsewhere. In Westmoreland county the assessments range from 10 to 152 per cent. Investigation has proved that this is true," the commissioner asserted.

He emphasized "market value" as the basis of assessment and then added that there were not ten persons in Fayette county qualified to do the work. "And when I say ten, I'm very conservative," he added. "We need a new system of assessing property," Mr. Hibbs continued. "Just imagine, we are using laws enacted 150 years ago. The commissioners are allowed thirty days in which to go over the county to hear appeals and try to clear up complaints. In reality it would take a board of competent men two years to do the work in the right way."

If Mr. Hibbs had his way, the commissioners would be permitted to select ten men to assess the entire county and discard the present system, under which there are nearly sixty assessors. Property would then be assessed at its market value and an equitable assessment made.

State Treasurer Edward Martin recently voiced similar sentiments. An organization has been formed with headquarters in Pittsburgh to get the matter before the Legislature. It is to be hoped nothing will happen to involve the assessment reform with collections, an unfortunate union of two worthy bills that did much to kill both when they were before the lawmakers some years ago. Assessment is one thing; tax collections are quite another. There is no question that we are paying too much for our collections, but the loss on that item is small as compared with the tremendous benefits taken from one class of property owners and handed over to another by inequalities of assessment.

## Preserving Private Zeal for Public Good

From the Philadelphia Record. Railway chess.

Maneuvers of the four-trunk rail merger.

The public does not understand the moves, but senses the importance of this mammoth game.

What is the purpose of the struggle?

Why this 10-year effort to establish a balance of power between the railroad giants?

Why should the Government not have forced the five-trunk plan in the first place, or kept out of the controversy entirely and let the railroads merge as they saw fit?

Since the Interstate Commerce Commission regulates rates and services what difference to the public which railroad merges with which?

The 10-year delay was necessary to preserve the delicate balance between private initiative and Government regulation.

If the Government had forced the five-trunk consolidation, which the I. C. C. proposed 10 years ago, it would have destroyed private initiative.

The driving power in our great railroads is private initiative—the personal pride that dominates the entire personnel of a railroad's organization from trackwalker to president.

Unregulated zeal for "our road" leads to seizure of power, disregard for public convenience, cut-throat competition.

Loss of zeal and initiative tends inevitably to Government ownership and operation, such as has retarded development of European utilities.

American railroads have been developed into the world's greatest system through private ownership.

When the Transportation act was passed in 1920 the country still feared the monopoly bogey. Today we realize that we fare better with regulated monopoly than with unregulated competition.

The difficulty is to retain sufficient private or individual energy and initiative, with adequate regulation by the Government.

If this balance has been maintained by the proposed four-trunk merger, the 10-year delay and the long drawn out moves of the great railway chess game were justified.

—Having failed to secure needed funds by borrowing, Soviet Russia has determined to coin a billion rubles. That is an easy process of meeting deficiencies if the materials are available.

—The health record for the year just ended is the best ever, according to statistics, but the record on morality is not mentioned.

## SPAULS FROM THE KEYSTONE.

—Edward J. Hugar, 57, shot and killed himself at his home in Lock Haven, on Tuesday. He had been in ill health for some time.

—Bertram B. Shimp, aged 69 years, the last blacksmith in Lewistown, was found dead in the office of his shop by his daughter, Mrs. Anna Simpson, on Tuesday morning.

—Under a resolution adopted at its ninety-sixth annual meeting in Mechanicsburg, the \$8000 in the treasury of the Allen and East Pennsboro Society for the recovery of stolen horses and mules and the detection of thieves will be distributed among the 500 members. The society will disband.

—Harvey Waite and Carl Rupert, of Beech Creek, were arrested by the Lock Haven detail of State Police and detective David L. Probst, of Lock Haven, last week, charged with the theft of eighteen chickens from Walter Glock, a Beech Creek farmer on the night of December 16. They entered pleas of guilty before alderman Allen Sterner and were held for court in the sum of \$500.

—Unemployed and disgusted, George Disgusted, according to Pittsburgh police, sought to drown his disgust in liquor. Disgusted's disgusting conduct aroused the disgust of officials at a welfare agency and they called police. The disgusted Disgusted was even more disgusted when they haled him into Court Tuesday morning. The Magistrate became disgusted with Disgusted and, in his disgust, fined Disgusted \$10 or 30 days in the workhouse. Disgusted went to jail even more disgusted.

—After four months of blindness, Jane Hill, a senior in the high school at Berwick, again has her sight. Moreover, her perfect attendance is unbroken. She had been having trouble with her eyes but thought little of it until she awoke blind one morning. She continued in school, led to classes by a friend and a younger brother, and kept up with the classwork through hearing recitations. Examination finally disclosed diseased wisdom teeth and, when these were removed, her sight was gradually restored.

—Mrs. Fannie Walburn, 75, was burned to death in the destruction of her farm house, near Montgomery early Monday morning. Clay Detrick, a relative who resided with the aged woman, was awakened by her calls from downstairs, but was unable to go to her aid because of the dense smoke. He climbed over a porch roof and jumped to the ground, spraining his ankle. He limped over a half a mile for aid, but when neighbors reached the house it was a mass of flames. The body was discovered later in the morning, badly charred.

—In order to curtail running expenses of the Brookville hospital, members of the staff of the institution have taken a voluntary cut of fifteen per cent in their wages for the coming year. The financial report submitted at a recent meeting of the board of directors indicated that the expenses of the institution exceeded the revenue on an average of ten dollars a day. When the situation was presented to members of the staff, it was at once decided to take the wage cut to carry the institution through its present difficulties. The wage reduction will effect a saving of approximately twenty-six hundred dollars during the year.

—Four members of the Bucknell University football team and coach Carl G. Snively, on Tuesday, volunteered to submit to a blood transfusion operation in an effort to save the life of Professor James P. Whyte, professor of old English and member of the athletic council at the university. Professor Whyte is in a serious condition in the Geisinger Memorial hospital, Danville, and his doctors desire to build him up for a major operation this week. The four athletes who volunteered their blood are Clark Hinkle, fullback; Louis Mutzel, guard and captain of last year's boxing team; Harry Fry, halfback, and Edward L. Nied, tackle.

—The identity of the armed bandit who held up and robbed H. S. Schenck, manager of the Shaffer Stores company in Huntingdon, Wednesday night of last week, still remains a mystery. A check of the loss revealed that the thug obtained more than \$200 in currency in the robbery. The robbery occurred about 11:30 p. m. while the manager was engaged in closing his accounts for the day. He told police officers that a man entered his store in the guise of a customer and requested a roll of clothes line. When Schenck stooped over to get the clothes line from a bin, he felt the muzzle of a revolver against his side. The robber forced him to a warehouse and after gagging and binding him, stole the money.

—Contracts have been awarded by the Safe Harbor Water Power corporation for six generators for the new hydroelectric development at Safe Harbor, Lancaster county. Four of the generators will be built by the General Electric company and two by the Westinghouse company. Contracts for the six hydraulic turbines have already been awarded. The six units which will constitute the initial installation at Safe Harbor will have a capacity of 255,000 horsepower. Provision is being made in the power house now under construction for six additional units, bringing the ultimate capacity to half a million horsepower. Over 2000 men are now at work on the dam across the Susquehanna at Safe Harbor. The initial development at Safe Harbor will involve the investment of \$40,000,000.

—The largest vault in the world, which is to be installed in the Bank of Japan at Tokyo and built by the York Safe & Lock Company, was shipped in part on Tuesday. Half of the huge vault, which weighs 3000 tons, was shipped to Baltimore on a special train of 38 freight cars over the Pennsylvania railroad. The train required two locomotives. The steamship Tokai Maru, of the Japanese Steamship Lines, is enroute to Baltimore and will arrive January 13. She will sail for Japan January 15, carrying no other cargo than the vault. The other half of the vault will be shipped early in April. Oscar Schandt, Jr., of York, an erector for the company, will go to Tokyo to supervise the installation operation. He will be in Tokyo for approximately one year, according to an announcement by S. Porry Laucks, president of the company. The vault is about 10 feet high, inside measurement, 187 feet long and 83 feet wide. Seventeen doors and vestibule furnish entrance.