

INK SLINGS

Between the early birds and the fisherman there is now very keen competition as to which gets the worm.

And death came to grand old Knute Rockne, not on the white horse of the four of the Apocalypse, but on the wing of an aeroplane.

This is the third of April and if we were sure old man winter wouldn't be coming back trying to crawl into her lap we would be very happy to greet spring.

Governor Murray, of Oklahoma, might be a "nut," but there is a lot of horse sense in his latest pronouncement. He grants paroles to prisoners only on condition that they leave the State and never return. Under such an order if one wants to stay in Oklahoma he just must be good.

Few of our readers knew him, but we drop a tear to the memory of a devoted friend who slipped out on Monday. We shall miss Harmon Kruse as much for his cheery salutation when we met him on the street as for the many little services he voluntarily rendered in evidence of his naturally friendly disposition.

Dr. Compton, Nobel prize winner for physics in 1928, has just come to the profound conclusion that since the world had a beginning it very probably is on its way to an end. If the judges had heard of that one from the Doctor before they made the award in 1928 they probably would have given him two prizes for physics.

From the carrying on about the proposed Lamb street bridge we are constrained to ask who is running Bellefonte: Some department clerk in Harrisburg or the councilmen in whose judgment this borough had so much confidence that it committed its management to them. In other words, is Bellefonte a sovereign entity or is it merely a tail to the kite of whoever happens to be in authority at Harrisburg?

We are glad to hear that good manners are coming into vogue again. Thumbs are said to be down on the loose tongues, loose morals and loose joints of the last few years. This loud-mouthed he-girl business is passe and young women are going to be less hard-boiled. God hasten the day, but what are the bad eggs going to be if they can't be hard-boiled. They'll have a great time kidding the world into thinking they're only scrambled or poached.

The Hon. Tom Beaver found his head on the Pinchot choplin' block recently and he no longer directs the gyrations of a swivel chair in Harrisburg. The announcement was a great surprise to us, for we thought the Hon. Tom would escape decapitation. Through both ancestry and personal service he had a lot to recommend him to the consideration of the new Governor. And we are right here to say that he was one of the very few prominent Republicans in this neck-o-the-woods who was openly supporting him last fall.

When Governor Pinchot left Harrisburg after his first term there was a surplus of seven million dollars in the treasury. When he got back for his second he found slightly over thirty-three million dollars in the State's strong box. These are the figures given out by Senator Baldwin Chairman of the Finance committee of the Senate, and ought to be authentic. So far as we are concerned we prefer to believe them rather than Pinchot's inferential statements to the effect that Fisher spent all the States' money and left him with nothing to do anything with.

When some fanatical dry tells you that it is the foreign born east and north that oppose the 18th Amendment, just tell him or her that in New England, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey there are two million more native born white people than there are in the entire south, with the border States of Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Tennessee and Oklahoma, thrown in. And when they tell you what the southern and western farmers want, tell them that they ought to want to move east and learn how to farm. The products of New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio farms exceed those of any southern State and most of those west of Illinois.

Here it is, only twelve days removed from the event of events and we're as miserable as a pup with distemper. So miserable that the rod, the reel and the book of flies are still where we put them last fall. In our present state of physical lassitude they lure us no more than would a chocolate eclaire the morning after the night before. And we want to say, right here, that we have two misguided friends who haven't contributed anything toward recovery from our low mental state by their recent contributions to our mail. Howard Sergeant, out in Hollywood, keeps deluging us with advertisements of the circus that are now touring California and Harry Rumberger, up in Scranton, mails us pictures of fellows landing trout a darn'd sight bigger than any we might catch, even if we are able to go. Their intentions are good, so we forgive them because they know not what we do.

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A Reprisal or, An Alibi.

It is hard to determine whether Commissioner of Highways Lewis' recent vitriolic attack on ex-Governor Fisher was an expression of resentment of Mr. Fisher's attitude in the primary election last Spring or an alibi for Governor Pinchot's certain failure to fulfill his promised road building programme. In a speech before the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, last week, Mr. Lewis said "the State Highway Department is without sufficient funds because the previous administration spent not only all the money collected during its four years, but the major portion of the receipts for the present calendar year." This is a rather grave asperation upon the wisdom and integrity of the Fisher administration.

Ever since the organization of the Fisher administration there has been an unfriendly feeling between Lewis and Fisher. Lewis had been a helpful element in the campaign and confidently expected a cabinet portfolio. Like other professional politicians and perennial office holders he had no particular place in mind but was certain he would get something worth-while, especially as he had the enthusiastic backing of Grundy. But he was disappointed, and by way of reprisal, publicly criticised some of the Fisher policies and sponsored the opposition to the four-cent gas tax, the Governor's pet measure. In revenge for that Fisher prevented his nomination for Governor last year.

In his Bellevue speech Mr. Lewis not only accuses the ex-Governor of profligacy in expenditures but of malfeasance in office involving "absolute bankruptcy of the motor license fund," the "holding up of contractor's estimates" for a time causing "the financial embarrassment of many contractors and material men." The reason for this condition, Mr. Lewis adds, was the "inability of the department to pay its debts resulted solely from its unbusinesslike refusal to keep expenditures and commitments within the revenue that might reasonably be expected during his four years tenure." If the purpose of Mr. Lewis was to discredit Governor Fisher it must be admitted that he has succeeded.

But it is not that that was the influencing reason for his attack on the ex-Governor. During the recent campaign Governor Pinchot freely indulged in wild promises. He pledged the farmers 20,000 miles of hard-surfaced roads; he promised automobile owners a cut to half of the license plate fees; he promised motor vehicle drivers a cut to half of their fees. If he knew anything he must have known that fulfillment of these promises would cause a loss to the treasury of several millions of dollars. Mr. Lewis, who was at the time a deputy in the office of the Auditor General, certainly knew the impossibility of fulfilling these pledges and the present necessity of an alibi.

Taking these considerations together it may be reasoned that there was no element of revenge in the Bellevue speech but that it was conceived and delivered solely as an alibi. Or possibly Mr. Lewis might have had in mind the thrifty idea of "killing two birds with one stone" by harpooning Fisher and entrenching Pinchot in a single speech.

Everybody in Bellefonte is naturally interested in the site that may be selected for Bellefonte's new federal building, and while a number of places have been suggested as available one has been overlooked, the former location of the old Bellefonte steam heat and gas works. This lot is now the property of the Bellefonte school district, having been purchased by the school board with a view of constructing an athletic ground in connection with the High school building, but as council has refused to permit the closing of Lamb street the lot, in its present condition, is no good to the board. So they might sell it to the government for a good price then take some of that land that Conrad Miller offered to give them and build a real athletic field.

The Republican National committee is hunting a new chairman but the specifications make the job difficult. He must be a 100 per cent Hoover man and "there are only a few of them left."

What seems to Hayward Brown doesn't matter so much since it seems to nearly everybody else that he is degenerating into a common scold.

A light snow fall, on Tuesday night, turned out to be an April fool, as it rained on Wednesday.

Robbing The State for Party.

A new and serious charge of misfeasance has been brought against the Fisher administration. In one of his recent radio speeches Governor Pinchot declared that within a comparatively short time the State had been robbed of \$4,000,000 or more through the laxity of the Revenue Department in the collection of gasoline taxes. This charge is now supported by a statement issued by Benjamin E. Eynon, Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, to the effect that nearly a year ago he had served notice of the delinquency on Charles Johnson, Secretary of Revenue in the Fisher administration, and that the delinquency was the result of party favoritism. In other words, the State was robbed "for the good of the party."

In his letter to Commissioner Johnson, which was dated June 19, 1930, Commissioner Eynon said: "I feel that the reason for this condition is that the men allow politics to have too great an influence on their work. All of the men are political committeemen and reluctant to offend some member of the organization. Under these circumstances collections of accounts are very difficult." The only response to this statement of fact made by Commissioner Johnson was that "every effort had been made to collect the accounts." That is, every effort was made that could be made without offending the committeemen concerned in the work and thus impairing the efficiency of the Republican party machine.

It has been for some years, a matter of common knowledge that the vast campaign slush funds used by the Republican organization in every important election have been obtained by levies upon the State and local job holders. During the Fisher administration this was openly acknowledged and approved. But the exposure of the fact that the treasury has been deliberately robbed of vast sums in order to maintain the efficiency of the sinister force which produces majorities in Pennsylvania has not been realized. Whether the defeat of one faction and the success of another element will work a cure remains to be seen.

President Hoover thinks the purchase of the Virgin Islands was a blunder. Possibly that is true in some measure, but it was a trifling affair compared with the farm board enterprise of which he was author and sponsor.

Another Proof of Insincerity.

The refusal of the administration forces in the House of Representatives in Harrisburg to consider a bill to reduce the license fee for auto drivers from two dollars to one again reveals the insincerity of Mr. Pinchot's campaign pledges. The bill was introduced by Representative Sowers, of Philadelphia. It consists of four lines of print and the excuse for delay in reporting it to the House was lack of time. Curiously enough the friends of the administration were completely organized. There was plenty of time for that.

There are a good many automobile drivers in Pennsylvania and the promise of a cut of a dollar on the license fee was an enticing proposition to some of them, a couple of million at least, who are not blessed with abundance. The rules of the House provide for the discharge of a measure which seems to be unduly delayed. The bill in question was referred to the committee on March 3rd. It would seem that four weeks ought to be long enough to consider, analyze and digest a bill of four lines.

The fact is that the promise was made to catch votes, and having accomplished that purpose it is the present intention to repudiate it under the false pretense that there wasn't sufficient time to consider it. Most of the other pledges will be violated in the same way. There will be an attempt to fulfill the 20,000-mile road promise, but even that is doomed to failure for the reason that it is impossible to fulfill it, and its sponsors were aware of that fact when it was introduced. But blame for all the failures will be shifted to the Legislature.

Good may come out of Nazareth. The investigation of the Public Service Commission will probably result in a law suit that will give service to the people.

Meantime the Democratic National committee is functioning in fine form and "flourishing like a Green Bay Tree."

Dave Reed blames all the ills of the time on the soldier's bonus.

The Investigation of New York.

The Republican Legislature of New York has properly determined to investigate the Democratic administration of New York city. Charges of graft and corruption, involving not only the executive department but the judiciary and the police departments of the city, have been multiplying and pyramiding until it has become as bad as Philadelphia and almost as rotten as Pittsburgh. Under these circumstances it was necessary that something be done about it. Mayor Walker, whose personal integrity has never been questioned, has literally worn himself out trying to correct the faults, but without perceptible improvement, and now the Legislature has undertaken the task.

Of course the investigation will be partisan and malignant. Its purpose is to create a smoke screen to divert attention from the delinquencies of a stupid and stubborn President, rather than in the interest of municipal and judicial reform. Equally of course it was inspired in Washington instead of Albany. By the skillful use of patronage Herbert Hoover has "cinched" the nomination of his party for President next year, scrutiny of his present administration must be averted at any cost or sacrifice, and the investigation of the Democratic administration of New York city was the only available expedient for accomplishing that result. But the investigation was inevitable and it is as well that it be now as later.

The Republican party approaches the impending Presidential campaign in a state of bankruptcy. Eighty per cent of the leaders of the organization hold Herbert Hoover in utter contempt. Yet they realize that it is impossible to prevent his nomination. Their only hope of preventing the election of a Democrat is to arouse fanaticism and inflame a prejudice. Tammany is an inexhaustible fountain for this purpose. The mention of it has precisely the same effect upon the minds of bigots that a red flag has on a mad bull. The proposed investigation of New York city has been undertaken at this time for this reason. It is an appeal to fanaticism in order to suppress reason.

The indication of the failure of the Pinchot legislative program pleases Pinchot above all others. It will be another alibi for his absurd campaign promises.

A Surprising Judicial Decision.

The Carbon county court has handed down a decision affirming the validity of Representative William A. Coyle's certificate of election as Representative in Congress for the Thirtieth district of Pennsylvania. The certificate was issued on a return of approximately 900 majority in the district. Following the issue of the certificate the opposing candidate, Everett Kent, demanded a recount of the votes and complied with the provisions of the law "in such cases made and provided." Several weeks' time and a good deal of money was spent by the contestant, a dozen or more boxes were opened and the votes recounted in good faith and according to law.

The result of the recount not only wiped out the majority claimed by Mr. Coyle but revealed that a substantial majority of the legal votes were for Mr. Kent. In fact nearly every box opened showed frauds of various types in favor of the Republican candidate. In some cases considerable majorities returned for Mr. Coyle were reversed and in every case glaring frauds were revealed. Finally counsel for Mr. Coyle set up the claim that there had been some trifling informality in the process of the recount and the court annulled the whole proceeding, declared the original return should stand and the fraudulently elected Representative should occupy the seat.

This decision increases in importance because it determines the question of the political control of the next Congress. With Coyle in the seat the Republicans will have a majority in the House of Representatives, Longworth will be re-elected Speaker and the close corporation which has served the Power trust during the last dozen years will continue to function. But the worst feature of the affair is that it encourages fraudulent voting in the future, not only in that district but in all sections of the State. That it justifies and increases the popular suspicion of the integrity of the courts is not an entirely unimportant incident.

After all there is not a great deal of difference between the purposes of Pinchot and those of Vane. Each is striving for power and personal aggrandizement.

A Square Deal for Business.

From the Altoona Tribune.

For more than a month, the intensely ballyhooed investigation of the Public Service Commission and the public utilities of Pennsylvania has dominated the news from Harrisburg. All the normal legislation of an assembly session has been sidetracked. As a result, the net accomplishment of the Legislature to date is practically nothing. But the cost of the session to the taxpayers has not been reduced or eliminated.

This situation might be overlooked if the investigation had made any progress, had justified its institution. But no solid, irrefutable evidence of the "gouging" or "extortion" that was supposed to exist has been uncovered.

The Tribune has upheld the investigation because, after the unrest and distrust aroused by the gubernatorial campaign last fall, the public is entitled to the facts of the situation. Those facts have been obtained: The public utilities of Pennsylvania, as a whole, are entitled to a clean bill of health.

Charges have been made of "gouging" by exorbitant rates, of exerting political pressure. No evidence has been submitted, either to the Senate or to the Pinchot-directed House committee, to substantiate such charges.

The hope of sensational disclosure collapsed when the letter cited by former Congressman Farr, of Scranton, was proved to be an entirely innocent document.

Many questions might be asked. For instance, if utility rates in Pennsylvania are exorbitant, why is it that the average rate in this State is lower than that of the United States as a whole?

Perhaps there is sound foundation for the growing belief that the entire investigation was instituted as a political instrument.

If this country has one outstanding need right now, it is public confidence. The utility investigations are working directly contrary to the establishment and maintenance of that confidence. They are striking at industries which have become a bulwark of practically every community.

Public distrust is an inevitable result. And, while such lack of confidence in an integral industry exists, restoration of normalcy is well-nigh impossible.

It is only natural that the public will lose faith when it sees men it has trusted, men it has looked upon as stalwart citizens, haled to Harrisburg, there to be questioned, grilled like criminals. It is only natural that a feeling of suspicion will be awakened when the Governor of the State persists in attacks upon public utilities and the character of the men who lead them.

The effect upon business can easily be envisioned. The caution, the backwardness which has been a potent factor in retarding business recovery, will be redoubled.

In all fairness, in justice to the welfare of this Keystone State and its people, Governor Pinchot should make clear just what he is driving at; he should turn his efforts to the building of public confidence instead of concentrating upon activities that only destroy or weaken that confidence.

Appropriation Bills Now Before the Legislature.

Among the appropriation bills now before the Legislature is one introduced by Representative J. Laird Holmes for \$4,844,781 for support and experimental work at the Pennsylvania State College, which is in addition to one for \$960,000 for new buildings which has already been reported out of committee.

For the western penitentiary at Rockview \$358,200 is asked, \$258,200 for a new cell block of 256 cells capacity, \$90,000 for a new boiler house and boilers and \$10,000 for a piggy.

A bill appropriating \$337,000 to the Huntingdon reformatory has also been introduced, \$135,000 of the amount to be used for a new cell block, \$165,000 for replacement of the central service building, \$25,000 for an addition to the boiler house and \$12,000 for wages for the inmates.

We have on the desk a very interesting communication concerning the Bellefonte public schools. The authors requested that we publish it, but since they failed to sign their names we cannot do so. The Watchman is always ready to give space to those who have constructive criticism to make of anything concerning the welfare of the community, but will not publish anonymous communications.

Our excess of wealth would be a fit subject for boasting except that our excess of poverty is almost equally great.

SPAULS FROM THE KEYSTONE

Clarence Masters, 35 years old, world war veteran of Deep Valley, Green county, despondent over ill health due to military service overseas, tied a stick of dynamite about his body and then discharged it in a field near Washington, Pa., on Friday. His mangled body was found hours later by members of his family. He was not married.

Paul H. Weiser, 32, a farmer of near Boyertown, shot and killed himself with his rifle in his home early last Friday. Coroner W. H. Ammarell said he fired the gun by working the trigger with his toes. Authorities said Weiser faced ruin through condemnation of his eighteen head of cattle by State inspectors after a tuberculin test, following losses caused by the drought.

What some people will do to get divorced found a contrast in the experience of Arthur Homer, 23, of Norristown, as he related the story to police. When apprehended a year after the robbery, Homer told officers that he stole \$500 in order to get enough money to marry. It was only a week after the theft, he said, that he went through with his plans, married the girl and settled down in another town.

In an hour's time, while traveling from Williamsport toward Lock Haven, Wednesday afternoon, G. H. Gustin, of Lock Haven, State game protector, saw 300 wild geese in a flock, sixty-eight black Mallard ducks, twenty-five red head ducks and seven white swans swimming north in the west branch of the Susquehanna river, toward Lock Haven. There were groups of gulls and smaller ducks as well, he said.

Harry Wetzel, prisoner in the Butler county jail, was pretty good at figuring but sheriff Lawrence Thompson went him one better. Wetzel presented the sheriff with a bill for \$14 for scrubbing and other work done about the county jail while he was confined there. Sheriff Thompson countered with a bill for board and lodging which amounted to just \$15. The "guest" was allowed to check out without paying the difference.

A sealed verdict returned in the Northumberland county court awarded Mrs. Mamie E. Laudenslager, of Sunbury, the sum of \$22,607.50 in her damage suit against the Pennsylvania Power and Light company for the loss of her husband, A. L. Laudenslager, who was electrocuted in front of his home on October 22, 1929. A motion for a new trial was made by the power company's attorney, who alleged that the verdict was against the law and evidence.

Awakened by a crash while asleep on the second floor of her home, in Columbia county, Mrs. Theodore H. Clewell went downstairs and found an automobile in a front room. Furniture was smashed, plaster covered the floor and a huge gap had been made in one wall, where the car had crashed through. Mr. and Mrs. John Gipple and Mr. and Mrs. G. P. Hummel, of Bloomsburg, occupants of the car, were severely bruised and cut. They said they had been forced from the road by two other cars attempting to pass, and Gipple, the driver, had lost control of the machine.

The weekly wash of Columbia, Pa., housewives was reposing in its customary place on the clothes lines in perfect safety on Monday. Silk stockings, lingerie, table linens and other articles which grace the lines every Monday have been disappearing strangely during the past few weeks and several complaints caused the police to investigate. What was believed to be a case of petty larceny turned out to be nothing more than a number of hungry goats who were eating their Monday breakfast from the clothes line. The owner of the goats, Joseph Weisser, was instructed to keep his animals penned up in the future.

J. W. Stephenson, of Johnstown, president of the Penosa Coal and Coke company, was held for court trial at Washington, Pa., on Monday, on charges of unlawful conversion of funds. He was unable to supply \$4,000 bond and was placed in the county jail. The charge was preferred by M. J. Hanna, of Pittsburgh, head of a commissary company which had boarded men working in the Penosa mines near Avella, Washington county. Stephenson is alleged to have taken money from the pay of miners for their board and then failed to turn it over to the commissary firm. Claims of 132 workers have been filed with sheriff J. A. Seaman.

J. F. Snook, cashier of the Beaver Springs bank, sat for two hours, Saturday night, looking upon the dangerous end of a bandit's pistol, arguing with the would-be robber that an attempt to take money from the bank's vault would be futile. The bandit entered Snook's house while the cashier was across the street at a store. The house adjoins the bank, and there is a connecting door. When Snook returned he was held up, and ordered to open the bank's vault. He then began the argument, telling the bandit the bank's burglar alarm would ring even if he opened the vault. After two hours the bandit was convinced, took \$4.25 from Snook and left.

A \$1,000,000 check that Reese Edwards found on the streets of Pittsburgh wasn't as good as it looked, but it proved conclusively that Mr. and Mrs. Frank Griffin are very much in love. Edwards, driver for a baking company, sighted a woman's purse lying on the pavement while making his rounds. The check was in the purse. It was made to Mrs. Jean Griffin, and Edwards, being honest, and sensing a big reward, rushed to the Griffin home. There Mrs. Griffin, a bride of six months, blushing explained that the check, written by her husband, only signified how much he would like to give her if he had it. She pointed to the romantic "X's" with which it was signed.

A settlement effected in a civil suit at Lock Haven, a few days ago, by Mrs. J. Boyd Mader and sister in law, Miss Vernetta Mader, against S. W. Rosovsky, of Coalport, for injuries sustained January 24, 1930, when the car in which they were driving was struck by that of Rosovsky, resulted in the awarding of \$3,000 to Mrs. Mader and \$1,750 to Miss Mader. Miss Mader, driver of the car, sustained injury to her leg and shock, and Mrs. Mader suffered a fractured skull and shock. Dr. J. Boyd Mader, Clinton county treasurer, who was another occupant of the car at the time of the accident, was uninjured. Mrs. Mader, who is deputy county treasurer, is seeking election for county treasurer on the Democratic ticket.