

THE COLUMBIAN.



J. H. Howell, Editor.

BLOOMSBURG, PA.

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 1885.

Col. Quay is a republican candidate for State Treasurer. Chris. Magee is opposed to his nomination.

The following bills passed finally in the House of Representatives.

Making it a misdemeanor for store keepers to secure patronage by lottery gifts.

The House joint resolution proposing an amendment to the constitution abolishing the poll-tax qualification was defeated—yeas, 24; nays, 46.

To regulate the marriage of minors, imposing a fine of \$200 on any minister or justice of the peace who shall unite in marriage any minor without the consent of his or her parents.

[For making false representations as to his or her age any minor shall be fined \$300, and the clerk of the court issuing a certificate in violation of this act shall be fined \$200.]

Schuylkill County is likely to have a temporary experience of prohibition through the failure of the 250 hotel and saloon keepers to pay for licenses which were granted at the February term of court within the time prescribed by law.

The Law and Order Society has notified the Clerks of the Court not to issue them now, after the time has elapsed, under legal penalty, and there is prospect of their being this number of drinking places less in this vicinity than there would have been had the applicant been more prompt.

The Pension Frauds. The new Commissioner of Pensions has made a good start exposing and putting an end to the gross frauds which have been perpetrated for many years in the executive bureau who presides.

The number of illegals drawn pensions whose suspensions he has just directed is 109, all belonging to a single agency, that of Philadelphia.

In 102 of these cases the only persons entitled to the pensions had been dead for years. Some died as long ago as 1871, yet the periodical allowances have ever since been regularly drawn in their names.

These are the first fruits of an investigation begun by a special agent in a single locality. There is no reason for supposing that Philadelphia is the only place where these practices have been carried on, and we may therefore presume that the same kind of disbursements of this kind of the whole country are to be numbered by thousands.

This, too, is only one form of possible fraud, and a form, perhaps, comparatively easy of detection. It risks not only the disbursing officer's personal acquaintance with the lawful applicant, but the circulation of the news of the death of a pensioner by his friends and neighbors.

Frauds in the original granting of pensions, when once accomplished, are usually safe from detection.

So far as can be judged from the nature of the Philadelphia frauds, they must have resulted from carelessness or corrupt discharge of official duties.

There are now over three hundred thousand pensioners on the roll, and more than a hundred different grades of pensioners. The Government has sometimes paid out fifty or sixty million a year in pensions.

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To go Slower than Ever.

Mr. Randall called upon the President for the purpose of directing his attention to a decision in a recent Pennsylvania report, in which the Court held that a power to appoint carried with it the right of removal, re-appointing the President's Office.

"When I assumed the duties of this office I resolved to go slow in making changes, believing that if any mistakes were made they would naturally result from haste and inconsiderate action.

From certain recent occurrences I am more than ever of the opinion that my original determination was right.

In the future I intend to go even slower than ever." The recent occurrences referred to in the President's vigorous little speech show his estimation of Mr. Bayard's peculiar personal policy.

The Supreme Court. THE LIMIT OF MUNICIPAL TAXATION.

Chief Justice Mercur of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has just filed an opinion in the appeal of the City of Wilkes-Barre from the degree of the Court of common pleas of Luzerne County, sitting as a court of equity.

This case involves an important question as to the right of municipalities to increase their indebtedness under Section 8, of article 9, of the Constitution.

This section provides that the debt of any municipality or incorporated district shall never exceed 7 per cent. of the assessed valuation of the taxable property therein, and also that no municipality or district shall incur any new debt, and increase of its indebtedness to an amount exceeding 2 per cent. upon such assessed valuation, without the assent of the electors at a public election.

The City of Wilkes-Barre proposed an increase in its debt, which was in itself less than the per cent. of the assessed value of its taxable property, but when added to the debt previously existing made and aggregate of more than 2 per cent. The question was raised by certain tax payers whether this could be done without the previous consent of the electors.

The city council and the mayor had taken advantage of the negligence of the saloon keepers and insist on the strict enforcement of the law.

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