

HARRISBURG LETTER.

Important Measures Pending Before the Legislature.

OUR EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS.

The Compulsory Education Bill Nearing a Second Reading—The Insane Asylums Investigation—Wilkesbarre Citizens Oppose the County of Quay.

(Special Correspondence.)

HARRISBURG, Feb. 25.—This will be an eventful week at the state capital. The legislature reconvened this evening after a ten days' recess and will remain in session until Friday noon. The house will begin tomorrow to hold two sessions a day. Governor Hastings is expected to send to the senate during the week a number of important nominations. At the close of the session of the senate on Wednesday a testimonial in the shape of a magnificent solid silver service, valued at \$1,000, will be presented to ex-Lieutenant Governor Waters, of Scranton, by his colleagues during the four years he served as its presiding officer. The presentation speech will be made by Senator McCarroll, of this city. Beginning tomorrow the house committee on ways and means will give hearings on the new revenue bill formulated by the state tax conference.

The bill providing for the publication of 25,000 copies of the famous "Bird Book" will be signed tomorrow by the presiding officers of the house and senate and then messaged to the governor for his action. A similar bill was vetoed two years ago by Governor Pattison on the ground that the book was unnecessary and should not be printed at the expense of the state. The committee to investigate the state institutions under the Focht resolution to ascertain how many of their inmates are aliens will also be announced during the week. The gossip at the capital is that a resolution will be offered in the senate tomorrow by Senator Kennedy, of Allegheny, or some other friend of Senator Quay for a committee to investigate the municipal affairs of Philadelphia.

Governor Hastings' Three Vetoes.

Governor Hastings set a wholesome example for the legislature during the recess by vetoing three bills, two of which created additional law judges, one in Washington and the other in Westmoreland county. The third bill to fall under the governor's veto ax relates to certain decrees of the registers of wills and of courts on appeal from the decrees of registers. The effect of this bill, if permitted to become a law, would be to make the decree of the register refusing to admit a will to probate final and conclusive upon all parties claiming under the will if unappealed from, and if appeal is taken from such decree, then the decree of the orphans' court is made final and conclusive. As to the other bills the governor says to allow them to become laws would in effect be permitting special legislation and a derogation of the mandate of the constitution regarding appointment. He is satisfied, though, that the legislature will fairly consider and approve the special needs of all the judicial districts.

The final reception of the season will be given tomorrow evening at the executive mansion by Governor and Mrs. Hastings. It will be the most brilliant ever seen at the state capital, and will be attended by many of the most distinguished personages in Pennsylvania.

A bill introduced in the house by Mr. Crothers, of Philadelphia, exempts leased sewing machines from levy and sale for arrears of rent. Another introduced by Mr. Harvey, of Luzerne, reduces the profits of pawnbrokers fully one-half. It limits the charge for interest on money advanced to 6 per cent. per annum, and for the storage of goods to 2 per cent. per month, which would make a net maximum charge of 2 1/2 per cent. per month, instead of 5 and 6 per cent. as is now charged. Another bill pending in the house makes it unlawful for anybody to exhibit in public any human being afflicted with physical or mental deformity.

There are many important bills on the senate and house calendars relating to the educational interests of the Commonwealth that will be considered during the week. Some are well advanced and are likely to reach the governor before the close of the month. Other bills of this character are under consideration by committee and will be disposed of during the week. In the senate a bill has passed finally requiring school directors and controllers to purchase out of the state appropriation American flags to be displayed on the school houses in their respective districts. The senate killed the bill increasing the minimum school term from six to seven months. The Farr compulsory education bill is on the calendar in the house for second reading and will be considered tomorrow unless the chairman of the education committee allows it to go over.

The Douthett School Book Bill.

The Douthett bill, providing for the purchase of books at publishers' prices, was read the first time in the house this evening. The school authorities of the state are earnestly opposed to the bill, and declare that if it becomes a law it will increase instead of diminish the price of books. They contend this is the case in Ohio, where such a law is in operation, and that books were never cheaper in Pennsylvania than under the present system. Six bills prescribing various methods of distributing the school appropriation are slumbering in the house committee on education.

The soldiers' orphans school commission is overwhelmed with applications for admission to the schools at Harford, Chester Springs and Uniontown. The schools are already overcrowded and the commission has on file over 300 applications, all of which have been investigated and found deserving. There will be no further admissions, unless the applicants are absolutely destitute, before the opening of the industrial school of Scotland.

During the recess the special committee appointed to investigate the management of the state hospitals for the insane at Norristown and Wernersville have been at work in Norristown. Thus far the committee has only examined the general account books of the institution, the payroll sheets and the time books of the various foremen. The committee will be at Norristown again on March 4 and resume the investigation with unabated vigor. Senator Gobin was very emphatic in denouncing the method of keeping the books.

Trustee Stinson, Boss Carpenter George Hall and Foreman of Laborers Charles H. West were examined. Chairman Gobin fired volleys of questions at the witnesses, but at times the assembled committeemen and trustees replied before those interro-

gated could get a chance to reply. Chairman Gobin held his witnesses down to the details of the system of bookkeeping and marking time. Several minor faults were disclosed.

The expenditure of special moneys was explained favorably to the management. One deal, the story of which does not appear on the books of the hospital, was the purchase of a farm of Susan W. Yerkes, which is now embraced within the hospital enclosures. The trustees in 1887 obtained an option to purchase the farm within five years. It was purchased in 1891. The consideration in the agreement was \$3,500, and in the title \$3,000 was given as the consideration money. Judge Stinson explained the difference by stating that \$400 was expended for rental of the farm, which during the continuance of the agreement was in the trustee's care, and the incidental fee in recording. For convenience the entire cost of acquiring the farm was set down as consideration money.

"Account Books Not Comprehensive."

All of the trustees were present except Dr. Thomas, of Quakertown. Treasurer of the Board of Trustees Bradley was represented by his private secretary, W. T. Wilson. The treasurer's account book showed the receipt of \$484.50 of the unexpended appropriations for 1891, remitted to Treasurer Bradley by Trustee Stinson and the subsequent return of the money to the state treasury. In the language of Senator Gobin "the account books at the hospital were not comprehensive enough for the subject."

The examination of Boss Carpenter Hall and Foreman of Laborers West was confined to selecting names at random from the payrolls and having the witnesses read from their time books the hours of employment made by these selections. In two or three cases it was found that some men were credited with more than there are working days in the month. One man was credited with thirty-four and one-half days and another with thirty-six days in the month of December, 1891. In defense it was stated that the workmen probably were employed overtime. Senator Meredith tallied the times as given by the witnesses for comparison with the tally sheets.

Today the committee went to the Wernersville state hospital to look further into the charge of alleged cruelty to the several persons returned to Norristown. Its labors there will be concluded in one day.

Senator Penrose spent Saturday at Washington in consultation with United States Senator Quay. In political circles it is believed that upon the result of the visit hangs the fate of the proposed legislative investigation into the workings of the Bullitt bill so far as Philadelphia is concerned.

The admittedly strained relations between Colonel Quay and his erstwhile faithful lieutenant, David Martin, have not been forgotten amid the jubilation incident to the announcement of 60,000 majority for Warwick, in Philadelphia, and all the politicians are anxiously waiting to see what will be the next move on the part of the Quay forces. The fact that the ardent followers of Senator Penrose turned in manfully for the Republican ticket does not mean that they have forgiven the men who so ruthlessly nipped Penrose's mayoralty aspirations. They are waiting to hear from Magistrate Durham, their acknowledged leader, and they admit that they are ready and willing to engage in a battle for supremacy in the party organization, but at the same time say that the battle must be fought within the party lines.

Opposing the County of Quay.

The members of the board of trade of Wilkesbarre held a meeting Saturday to complete plans for fighting the proposed division of Luzerne county to form the county of Quay, and it was decided to send a large delegation of citizens to this city next Wednesday to appear before the house committee on new counties.

There was a general discussion on the arguments on the county division. One of the chief facts of the 7,000 taxables in Luzerne county, only about 700 are owners of property, and in Foster only about 450 out of 2,400. The lands in both townships are held principally for mining purposes, and are otherwise valueless. The assessment of all the lands in Hazle is considerably short of \$1,000,000, and \$875,000 of this is returned against the owners of the minerals. The other ownerships are simply workmen's homes, some 600 odd in number, covering all told only about 175 acres of the 30,000 in the township, and their aggregate taxable valuation barely reaches \$80,000, an average of about \$115 to each stockholder.

In Foster the situation is similar. The mineral interests own the great bulk of the lands, with scattered holdings about collieries for the unpretentious dwellings of the miners and laborers. The exact figures for 1894 are: Taxables, 2,340; real estate owners, 463; occupations, only 1,877; exonerations, 1,133. The resident property holders in these two townships only number about one-tenth of the whole number of taxables, the other nine-tenths being assessed on occupations only. This shifts the burden of maintaining the new county almost exclusively upon property holders.

The voters in these two townships, Hazle and Foster, outnumber the combined voting strength in all the agricultural townships within the new county district, both east and west of the Susquehanna, counting all the way round from the farther end of Buck to the remotest corners of Fairmount and Lake. And under the bill as passed the senate they are empowered to reach out and take into Hazle any or all of these townships.

Protesting Property Owners.

The residents and property owners there are practically remediless if the bill becomes a law. This is the ground of opposition by the protesting property owners, who seek help from Wilkesbarre and the rest of the country generally in saving them from the disasters which the new county prospect entails.

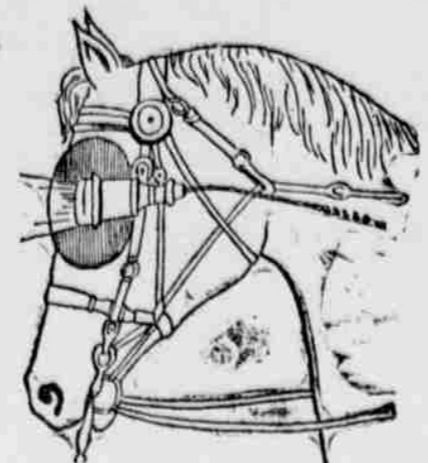
As a business operation the retention of this section is a matter of prudence and economy. The townships east of the Susquehanna, which the new countyties allude to in the county treasury about \$35,000 in taxes. They draw out about \$25,000 in costs of assessments, elections, jury and court expenses, etc., so that their staying in Luzerne county gives \$10,000 a year to the good on the financial side. And their retention will be a great saving to them over the cost of a separate county management.

There are eight counties in the state of about the same population as the new county will be. Their county expenses run from \$50,000 to \$124,000, and the average of the whole eight is over \$70,000 a year, and for no better service, conveniences and management than this new county district now gets for about \$38,000. These are the main arguments that will succeed in beating Kline and his Quay county supporters. A delegation of over 200 is expected here tomorrow.

NEW IDEAS FOR HORSEMEN.

Night Lights on Headstalls—A Rubber Ankle Boot.

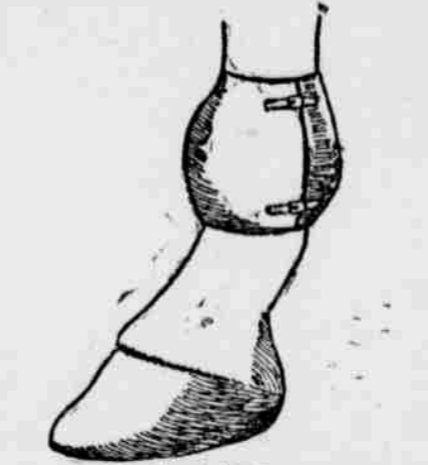
Electricity has achieved many triumphs, and one of its latest adaptations is in the form of a glow lamp to be attached to a horse's headstall, for lighting roads at night. In Berlin the use of these glow lamps on horses is so common as to no longer attract at-



Light for the Horse.

tention, and they are being introduced in this country. A common adaptation of the idea is shown in the cut presented herewith. The lamp is inclosed in a silvered reflector, and is fed from a small battery of accumulators carried in the vehicle. No doubt in time an electric battery will be carried by every vehicle that travels county roads at night.

A rubber ankle boot, as shown below, is being introduced as a novelty by a Cleveland rubber firm. It is made in the form of a cushion around the ankle, so that the horse when striking will not bruise the joints. This boot,



Rubber Ankle Boot.

It is said, prevents cutting, chapping and scalding, and is lighter than the leather boots, and will outwear the same. It can be worn on either ankle; is always in place and shape, and is not affected by dust, mud or snow.

THE POULTRY YARD.

One of the most highly-relished foods for poultry is the sweepings from the hay loft. The hens will not only utilize the seeds but will consume the dry leaves of clover also.

A damp roosting place is an abomination, and yet towels prefer a wet roost free from lice to a dry one covered with vermin which sap their blood and strength. This will explain why some people's chickens prefer to roost on trees.

Hens kept in comparatively small numbers can be made to pay, and do pay, says George Q. Dow, in the Country Gentleman, as a rule, a fairly good profit, but not enough to excite any one. Neither is it as large as one can obtain from many other occupations, such as berry growing or keeping sheep. If it were so profitable as these hen-cranks would have us believe, would it not stand to reason that farmers all over the country, with their usual perspicuity, would have long since discovered the fact, and one and all have become largely engaged in the business? To sum it all up in a few words—hens pay a fair profit when kept in limited numbers. In large numbers they do not pay, and are frequently a source of loss.

If the poultrymen would charge less for their poultry and eggs, they would in the end make more money and sell more stock. A setting of eggs will cost a farmer from \$3 to \$6, and a pair of chickens \$5 to \$10, after express is paid. Many farmers want to make a change get new blood into their flocks or start out entirely with new stock, but do not feel able to pay such prices. They know that the flock is liable to roup and cholera; then if they come to sell their chickens to hucksters for five to six cents per pound, what do they come to? The only way a farmer can come out ahead, is to sell eggs, and lots of them, at a good price.—Edwin Wing.

With a lot of hens consisting of from twenty-five to possibly 200, and the proper buildings and facilities for caring for them in an economical way, and a close attention paid them if as many as 200 are kept, one is able to secure a fair profit; but when he attempts to keep 1,000 or more, he will find it a very different story, and with the latter number is almost sure to lose money. Small lots pay the best—the farmers have long since found this out, and that is why we find on most farms flocks of from a dozen to fifty hens. These farmers know better than all these flashy writers can tell them, that their small flocks pay, and that to go beyond that and increase their number to any great extent is hazardous.—George Q. Dow.

Water for Milk Cows.

Cows in milk will consume nearly 50 per cent. more water than the same cows when not giving milk. The New York Experiment Station, at Geneva, found as an average of several breeds that each cow drank 1,039 pounds of water and consumed 547 pounds more in food per month. During lactation the average per month was 1,680 pounds drank and 774.3 pounds consumed in food. The pounds of water consumed were as follows: Ayreshires, 4.28; Guernseys, 5.07; Holsteins, 4.43; Jerseys, 5.24; Shorthorns, 6; Holderness, 8.95; Devons, 4.82, making an average of 4.63 pounds. The need of an abundance of water is evident.

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