

HARRISBURG LETTER.

Some of the Measures That Await Legislative Action.

GOBIN'S SENATORIAL SUCCESSOR.

The Election in Lebanon County Has Awakened the Liveliest Interest Among the Lawmakers, Some of Whom Are Stumping the County.

(Special Correspondence.)

Harrisburg, Jan. 31.—While the senatorial deadlock has proved a bar to progress in the work of the legislature, it has not prevented the introduction of a large number of bills, many of which will never get beyond the committees to which they have been referred. A bill introduced in the senate by Mr. Wentz, of Montgomery, proposes to facilitate the construction of trolley lines through townships and country districts. Under the present laws and the rulings of the supreme court a single property holder on a public highway can block the construction of miles of trolleys. This bill proposes that viewers shall be appointed and damages assessed in cases where a trolley line infringes on private property. All the rural trolley lines are to be built so as to leave wagon roads free. Senator Wentz said that he was president of a trolley line which ran from Norristown to Ambler, and that its construction had been balked by one property owner, though every other property owner had consented to the line of the road.

The bill rearranging the salaries of county officers in Philadelphia was finally reported, as was the greater Pittsburgh bill, creating a bureau of building inspection in cities of the first class, paying constables \$1,200 a year salary and abolishing the fee system.

Trolley Lines to Carry Freight.

Another measure of importance is that introduced in the house by Mr. Rosenbery, of Montgomery. This is a bill authorizing street railway companies and traction motor companies, or lessees of any street railway company to carry freight, express and mail matter, and charge and collect compensation for it. The bill provides that any traction motor company lessee of the whole or any part of the lines of any street railway company is authorized to carry freight, express matter and mail matter and any limitation in the charter of such company which restricts them to the carriage of passengers only is repealed. It is provided that the provisions of the company shall be subject to borough and city regulations as far as the property of such railway or traction company may be located within their limits.

Representative Hoy, of Clarion, introduced the Flinn anti-trust bill of last session. The act declares unlawful and void all arrangements, contracts, agreements, trusts or combinations made with a view to lessen or would tend to lessen free competition in the importation or sale of articles imported into this state, in the manufacture or sale of articles of domestic growth of domestic raw material. It provides for the forfeiture of the charter and franchise of any corporation organized under the law of the state and violates the provision of this act, prohibits it from doing business in this state and requires the attorney general to institute legal proceedings against such corporations. It also prescribes penalties and authorizes persons or corporations who may be damaged by any such trust or combination to sue and recover damages. Agricultural products or live stock while in the possession of the producer or raiser are exempted. The penalty for destruction of full and free competition or conspiracy against trade, against person or persons, renders the principal, manager or director of a trust liable to a fine of not less than \$100 or more than \$500, or by imprisonment in the penitentiary for not less than one year or more than ten years.

Regarding Suits For Damages.

In the senate two highly important bills were offered by Senator Magee. They affect corporations, railroads, trolley lines and street traction companies generally. The first act provides that in all actions brought for injuries arising from neglect and not resulting in death a notice must be filed with the defendant corporation within 30 days from the date of the accident of an intention to bring action and specifying the place and character of the accident. The second section provides that all such actions shall be brought within six months from the date of injury and not afterwards; that all actions, the cause of which arises prior to the passing of this act, that are not barred by limitation, shall be brought within six months after the date of the passage of this act and not thereafter.

The second bill provides that all actions for damages for injury to the person arising from neglect and not resulting in death shall be brought within one year from the time of infliction of such injury. The same proviso regarding injuries received prior to the passage of the act is also contained in this bill.

Among the bills reported by the judiciary general committee was Senator Weller's measure, entitled an act relating to negotiable instruments. It is a bill for the purpose of making uniform negotiable papers. This law has been adopted in New York, Connecticut, Florida, Colorado, Maryland, Virginia and Massachusetts. It is the bill proposed by the commissioners of 30 states, who meet annually to consider measures of uniformity on commercial law, and is a careful adaptation of the English bills of exchange of 1852, which is now the law of every English speaking country in the world except our own.

To Fence All Railroad Tracks. Another interesting measure before this legislature provides for the fencing

of all railroad tracks by the corporations running the roads. While in several counties of the state there are special laws providing for this it is by no means general. A number of states in the Union require the railroads to fence in all their tracks. The farmers are particularly interested in this bill for the protection it would afford their live stock. This measure is framed to give the state a uniform law providing for the fencing in of all railroad tracks.

The subject of a revision of the tax laws of the commonwealth has been reopened. The Grangers have been contending that the corporations have not been paying their proper share of the expenses of the state government. This sentiment is expressed in a resolution offered by Representative Brown, which provides for the appointment of a commission to make careful inquiry into the matter and have a report prepared for submission to the legislature not later than March 1 next, so that the members may have data upon which they may frame a new law if found desirable. The raising of the tax on corporations may be necessary to finish the new capitol building.

Members of the district school boards will be interested in a bill which provides for the appointment of a commission, of which the state superintendent of public instruction shall be a member, to prepare a series of text books to be used in the public schools and the soldiers' orphans' schools. They are to advertise for bids for the printing of these books, giving the contract to the lowest bidder, and the commissioners are to let the district school boards have these books at cost price. It will be unlawful to use any other than these books in the public schools if this bill becomes a law.

The Fight For Gobin's Seat.

The election of a state senator in Lebanon county, to occupy the seat left vacant by the election of J. P. S. Gobin as lieutenant governor, is attracting much attention among the lawmakers. The fight for the Republican nomination has developed into a battle royal between the friends and opponents of Senator Quay. The Lebanon county Republican committee has decided to hold the primaries on Saturday next. Dr. Samuel Weiss, the anti-Quay candidate, is very popular, a well known physician, widely known in business circles as the executor of the great Lick estate, and once before a candidate for the senatorial nomination against General Gobin, when the former was beaten by a few hundred votes. Dr. D. P. Gerberich, the Quay candidate, is the leading homeopathic physician of the county, popular personally and politically, and lately a delegate to the state convention.

The county is being stumped from end to end, the Quay and anti-Quay legislators cheerfully volunteering their services. Literature is being distributed, ward and township workers have been brought into requisition, and the hottest kind of campaign will be waged till the polls close. Last Friday evening a rally was had at Johnstown, where ex-Senator Charles C. Kauffman and several local orators held forth, and there was another at Annville, where General Koontz and Senator Bayard Henry, of Philadelphia, spoke. On Saturday evening Senator Kauffman and local speakers were at Newmantown. Hon. John Dalzell opened the fight in Lebanon county at the court house last evening.

General Gobin was on Saturday honorably discharged from the volunteer army. The retirement of General Gobin from the army is thought to be due to the fact that he is also lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania. There has been much talk among his political foes of investigating his right to hold the two offices simultaneously. General Gobin but recently issued a statement defending his right to hold the two offices in question, but he has apparently reconsidered the matter.

Senate Employees Appointed.

The slate committee of the senate announced the minor offices of the senate, and the chief clerk announced his appointments. There is a janitor of the elevator in the senate, a fireman in the cellar of the senate and a fireman on the floor of the senate. These men are supernumeraries. There is nothing for them to do except draw their salaries. Senator Washburn, of Crawford, stirred up a buzz of excitement by offering a resolution dispensing with the fireman in the cellar and on the floor of the senate. In offering his resolution Senator Washburn said that there were no duties for these men to perform, inasmuch as the building was heated entirely by steam. It was not honest, he urged, upon the part of the senate to appoint men to offices who have nothing to do. General Gobin refused to receive the resolution. He stated that the officers were provided for by law, and that it was necessary to fill them. Under the circumstances Senator Washburn's resolution was out of order. Senator Washburn stated, nevertheless, he desired his protest and resolution to go on record. This ended the matter.

The retirement from the United States district bench of Judge William Butler, of West Chester, recalls to mind the prominence in political affairs for many years of the family bearing his name. It is doubtful if any other county in Pennsylvania can produce one family that has had a longer lease on public life than the one of which Judge Butler is the head. Beginning with 1856, when the judge made his debut in public life as district attorney of Chester county, the Butlers have had an uninterrupted share of political patronage. The record of the family is as follows: William Butler, Sr.—District attorney from 1856 to 1859; Judge Chester county courts from 1861 to 1879; United States district judge from 1879 to 1899. Samuel Butler (brother)—State treasurer 1881-83. Thomas S. Butler (son of latter)—Additional law judge by appointment of Governor Beaver in 1889; member of congress at the present time. William Butler, Jr. (son of the retiring United States judge)—Additional law judge of Chester county. By the time the last named, who is less than 30 years old, is ready to lay aside the robe and enter the arena of a century upward of three-quarters of a century, the younger Butler family will have developed such qualities as a judge that he will undoubtedly follow in the footsteps of his distinguished father in length of service.

WILKINS.

IS DANCING A SIN?

A JERSEY CITY MINISTER HAS INAUGURATED A CLASS.

His Acts Have Stirred His Brother Clergymen to Severe Criticism, From Which He Logically Defends Himself and His Motives.

There is a great flutter of excitement in church circles in Jersey City. There is an elaborate controversy going on, which has spread all over the United States. The question in dispute is—Is it or is it not immoral for a church, not only to countenance a dancing school, but to practically father such an institution? And the answers have come from all parts of the country, from Maine to California. Both parties to the arguments have warm adherents in every city, town, village and hamlet whose inhabitants are interested in church work.

The inception of the whole uprising was the establishment of a dancing class last January by Rev. E. E. Stoddard, D. D., rector of St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church, in Jersey City Heights. This experiment proved so successful that the school had been continued this fall, and one on the same lines was opened by Rev. John L. Scudder, pastor of the First Congregational Church.

Dr. Swaffield, in his sermon, said: "I look upon the modern church dancing school as one of the devil's missions of amusement, and the gilded saloon as another."

"In the worst days of Rome it was a disgrace for any man to dance. A Roman philosopher said that a man who danced was either drunk or a fool. The Mohammedans denounced dancing, and the Koran expressly prohibits this. This custom of dancing borrowed from a bad age, and is not improved by being snuffed upon by the Christian Church. The modern dance tends to drag young people down to perdition. Its tendency is not to purify, but to disgrace, and it interferes with the usefulness of the true child of God.

To this rather sarcastic criticism, Dr. Scudder replied by an open letter in the Outlook, in which he said:—

"Regular instructions in dancing and occasional receptions where dancing is allowed are and have been features of our People's Palace work in lower Jersey City for years. This movement is nothing new. It is conducted by either of our churches. Our church on Jersey City Heights is a family church and needs nothing of this kind, but the Tabernacle is located far down town in the tenement house district, and is surrounded by saloons, gambling halls and brothels. It is pre-eminently an institutional church and is adjusting itself to its environment with conscientious common sense.

"In conjunction with the Tabernacle, and yet in no sense a part of it, we have erected our People's Palace, which is a secular institution, operated, however, under religious auspices. It does not stand on consecrated ground. It has a separate treasury and board of managers. The object of our People's Palace is to lift the people living about into a higher life by methods that are eminently practical.

"It operates a day nursery. This summer it gave over 14,000 free baths in its swimming tank. It gives industrial training, and it provides a real refuge from temptation by supplying innocent amusement. It has gymnasiums, bowling alleys, billiard tables, a shuffleboard, a theatrical stage and other diversional facilities.

"Among other things, we give lessons in dancing, showing young people 'how,' 'when,' and 'with whom' to dance. Dancing is allowed on public occasions, and the best people in the church are present to see that everything is done decently and with order. We are extremely particular and painstaking in guarding this pastime. There have never been any improprieties or scandals. Everything is kept sweet and clean.

"Our position is this:—As God has placed us in this district to save the people from the hurriedness of temptation about them, as the people will go to saloons to play billiards, to the variety theatre to enjoy dramatic entertainments and to public halls in order to dance, the only way we can warn them from these resorts is to compete directly with these questionable institutions and give innocent amusement to the people under conditions that are healthful and uplifting. If the people of God do not supply these amusements the children of the devil will.

"Young people will dance, and there is no stopping them. The poor cannot dance in their own homes. They have no pianos, and the flats are many of them only eight feet in width. They flock to cheap dances in halls where there are all sorts and conditions of men and women. There many of them dance to perdition. Now, if they must dance we think they should dance the other way. We are wrestling amusements from Satan and using them in the service of God. And if we fail to do this the Almighty will hold us responsible.

"Since the erection of our People's Palace six magnificent ecclesiastical club houses have been built in Jersey City by the Catholics, and they are keeping so many young men from the saloons that the grog shops are having a hard time in this city and are complaining bitterly of decrease in profits.

"Now, should not Protestants be as wise as Catholics? What the Protestant churches should do is to sit in sackcloth and ashes and beseech the Almighty to forgive them for their narrow policy and failure to use good generalship in their warfare with sin."

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The Bloomsburg Land Improvement Company now offers for sale the most desirable lots for residences and business purposes to be had in this town, at moderate prices and upon easy terms.

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THE MARKETS.

Table listing market prices for various goods including Butter, Eggs, Lard, Ham, Pork, Beef, Wheat, Oats, Rye, Wheat flour, Hay, Potatoes, Turnips, Onions, Sweet potatoes, Tallow, Shoulder, Side meat, Vinegar, Dried apples, Dried cherries, Raspberries, Cow Hides, Sheep pelts, Shelled corn, Corn meal, Bran, Chop, Middlings, Chickens, Turkeys, Geese, Ducks, and Coal.

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