

The Columbian.

VOL. 35.

BLOOMSBURG, PA. THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 1900.

NO. 33

NO EXONERATIONS

All Industrial Establishments to be Taxed.

Council's Action Causes Some Comment.

It has been the custom of this town to exonerate new industrial plants from local taxes for a period of years, for some time past. It has been done as an inducement to manufacturers to locate here. It is no secret that, strictly speaking, it was unlawful, and the recent discovery of the Town Council that they had no right to do it, is nothing new. It has been done for a dozen years or more, and by common consent no question has been raised heretofore concerning it.

The coming of the Silk Mill was shortly followed by the erection of nearly twenty dwelling houses by Mr. Ratti, the construction of which gave employment to our mechanics and made business for material men, and upon which taxes have been paid ever since. And the same may be said of the Carpet Mill. More than this, the industrial plants in our community give employment to labor, and by their large payrolls every month put in circulation thousands of dollars, the benefits of which are felt by the whole town.

It would not be fair, nor just, even if lawful, to continue this system to any plant indefinitely, its object being only to foster and encourage them until they are firmly established. But the action of the Council, just at this time, when a Board of Trade has been organized for the purpose of bringing new industries to our town, seems to be inopportune and ill-timed. They have rescinded all such exonerations, and this is public notice to the world that no more plants will be exonerated from taxes, now that they have discovered the well-known fact that such exonerations are unlawful. So is it unlawful to do a great many other things that are done. Selling cigars, soda water, keeping open barber shops, running milk wagons, ice wagons, and the like on Sunday, are unlawful, and yet they are permitted, by common consent, because they add to the comfort and convenience of the public, and an effort to stop them, a few years ago, proved very unpopular. So is it unlawful to use profane and indecent language on the streets, or in the hearing of ladies, and yet that sort of thing goes on with impunity, in the very hearing of councilmen, and under the noses of the police, some of whom are themselves the loudest-mouthed blasphemers in town.

If this is a reform movement, the Council has begun at the wrong end. The Board of Trade includes all the leading business and professional men and manufacturers of the town, and represents the heaviest taxpayers. The Town Council should join hands with them in the effort to enlarge our business interests and generally benefit the town. Instead of this they seem to have selected a time for action in this matter of taxes which will hamper the Board of Trade in their efforts, and their action is generally regretted by the representative men of Bloomsburg.

RIFFO-REDEKER.

A very pretty nuptial event was celebrated at the home of Dr. and Mrs. F. W. Redeker, on East street Tuesday morning, at ten o'clock, when their daughter Lillian A. was married to Marion B. Rifo. The ceremony took place in the parlor, and was performed by Rev. M. E. McLinn of the Lutheran church. Elmer M. Milheim was best man. Miss Carrie Redeker, sister of the bride, was maid of honor, and Miss Laura Redeker, also a sister of the bride, bride's maid. Wagner's wedding march was beautifully rendered by Miss Anna Redeker, the bride's cousin. An elaborate breakfast followed, after which the happy couple departed for a trip up the Hudson River. The groom is a graduate of the Bloomsburg Normal School. He is at present employed in Philadelphia where they will reside.

The employees of the Paul E. Wirt pen factory and the families will picnic along Fishingcreek Saturday.

OUT ON BAIL.

By Furnishing Surety in the Sum of \$2500 Riter Goss is Given His Freedom.

Robert Evans and Charles VanHorn Testify.

The habeas corpus hearing in the case of Riter Goss, of Fairmount township, Luzerne county, charged with having run down with a team and caused the death of John Cole, about two miles above Benton, on the night of July 21st last, was heard before His Honor Robert R. Little, and Associates Fox and Kurtz, at two o'clock Monday afternoon.

The Commonwealth was represented by District Attorney John G. Harman, assisted by S. B. Karns, Esq., of Benton. Fred Ikeler, Esq., was counsel for the defendant.

The first witness called was Robert Evans, of Benton. This is the man who was injured at the Everett & Ikeler saw mill explosion, and whose inability to be present caused the postponement of the hearing before. He gave a very lucid account of the tragedy, was cool and collected, and measured every word carefully. He met Goss, for the first time, in Benton, at half-past nine, or about an hour and a half previous to the accident. Together they went about town, visiting different places—stores, hotels, etc., until a few minutes before eleven o'clock, when they, in company with Charles VanHorn and his brother (whose first name we failed to learn), started in a heavy farm wagon for home. Goss and Evans were on the seat of the wagon, while the VanHorn boys were sitting in the back end. At or near the Edson bridge, John Cole, on a bicycle, caught up to the wagon, and asked permission to get ahead. Goss answered by saying, "No, sir, you can't pass." The journey homeward was continued for the distance of about a half a mile, when Cole sprinted to one side of the wagon and succeeded in getting ahead. Goss at once applied the whip to the horses, and Cole was run down. The witness was not positive whether it was the tongue of the wagon or the wheel which struck the victim, but he thought it was the former. He was aware of what had happened, and wanted to get out, but Goss would not stop, until he had reached Edwards' lane, a mile above. Here Evans left the wagon. As he was walking away Goss cautioned him to keep his mouth shut, and said, "If you meet anybody and they ask you if you passed a big wagon, say no."

The next witness called was Chas. VanHorn. His story corroborated that of Evans. Here the Commonwealth rested its case. Judge Little expressed himself briefly. The case, in his opinion, was not a capital one, and that the defendant could, if he would furnish surety, be given his freedom. Bail, in the sum of \$2500, was asked for. Goss was unable to furnish that amount and was given into the custody of Sheriff Black. The case will come up for trial at September term of Court.

Bail was furnished on Wednesday and Goss was released. At the conclusion of the above the following other business was disposed of: Estate of Franklin McBride. Petition of widow and heirs of deceased for payment of fund for use of widow and heirs. Petition granted. Catawissa Fibre Co. vs. Catawissa Water Co. Petition presented for appointment of viewers to assess damages. September 10, 1900, fixed for hearing. Wm. H. Cooke's use vs. Sadie Jones et al. Petition for rule, and rule granted, returnable at next term. H. B. Creasy and M. B. Creasy vs. the N. & W. B. Railroad Company. The following viewers were appointed to assess damages: Russel Karns, Silas J. Conner, H. T. Young, Frank Kitchen, J. K. Sharpless, George Fisher and Philip Harris. Estate of William A. Kile. Citation on Elmer R. Harvey. Confirmation stricken off and re-sale ordered.

Samuel Gigger has purchased from the heirs of Mrs. George W. Supplee a house and lot in Scott town.

COUNCIL MEETING

Despite the Warm Weather An Unusual Amount of Business Was Transacted.

Legal Opinion on the Industrial Exonerations.

The regular monthly meeting of Town Council was called at 7:30 o'clock Thursday evening. Members present were Messrs. Hartman, Cox, Dieffenbach, Smith, John and Cronin. In the absence of Frank Ikeler, president, F. B. Hartman, vice-president, presided.

The minutes of the last regular meeting and special meetings read and approved.

The matter of the exoneration of the mill property of H. V. White & Co. exonerating their mill property from town taxes for five years was reconsidered and the exoneration was not allowed.

The opinion of the solicitor regarding the exempting of properties from taxes by the town reads as follows:

"To the President and Members of the Town Council of the Town of Bloomsburg.

GENTLEMEN:—There has been submitted to me the question of the right of your body to impose the regular rate of taxation upon certain manufacturing plants heretofore exempted from taxation.

At the time these properties were exempted by the Council they were either in active operation or about to be started. The action of the Council was in line with the generous practice of former Councils in aiding and encouraging new industries which might locate in our midst, and was based entirely upon the benefits which our Town was about to derive from these properties.

However, since that time, these plants have either been practically destroyed for manufacturing purposes, or have so long been idle as to furnish very little hope of their re-opening, at least within a reasonable time.

In the first place we are clearly of the opinion that the original exemption of these properties was unlawful. The Act of Assembly distinctly sets forth the various kinds of real estate which can be exempted from the common burden. A manufacturing plant, operated for corporate profit, is certainly not one of them. Churches, burial grounds not used for profit, hospitals, universities, colleges, seminaries, academies, institutions of learning, benevolence or charity, founded or maintained by public or private charity, county, borough or township school houses, court houses and jails are the only varieties of real estate exempt by our Act of Assembly.

However, these exemptions of corporate property have never been questioned, simply because they have been considered inducements to manufacturing companies to locate with us, thereby benefitting our community. But strictly speaking, the Town Authorities have no more right to favor a manufacturing business than a mercantile establishment or other enterprise.

Unquestionably, therefore, these plants can be made to pay their share of taxation. They cannot plead that they have been exempted, because in all strictness of law that exemption is itself illegal. But even had it been legal in the first instance, the reason for its exemption no longer exists, and that fact in itself makes it subject to taxation.

Our Supreme Court decided in the case of the Jewish Hospital of Philadelphia, which was no longer used for its original purpose, that "a building once used as a hospital, but which use has been discontinued, is liable to taxation until such is resumed."

And in the case of Moore vs. Taylor, 147 Pa. St., 481, the same Court said that where a property exempted because used for charitable purposes, ceased to be used for such purposes, it ceased to be exempt, and at once became liable, even for the proportion of the year in which its uses changed. Therefore there is no legal difficulty in placing upon the properties mentioned their full rate of taxation.

FRED IKELER, Solicitor.

In the matter of erecting gates at Catherine, Iron and Market streets the secretary was instructed to ask the D. L. & W. R. R. Co., to erect

[Continued on Page 8—2d Col.]

FIRE SWEEP.

The Village of Turbotville the Scene of an Awful Conflagration.

Spontaneous Combustion the Probable Cause.

The village of Turbotville, five miles east of Watsonstown, was almost wiped out by fire Saturday afternoon. Forty-seven buildings were destroyed and about 150 people made homeless.

Of the forty-seven buildings burned twenty-one are dwellings, three stores, and the balance barns and stables.

The fire started about 12:30 in a large barn occupied jointly by John Moser and Peter Menges. It is thought to have originated from spontaneous combustion, as a large quantity of new hay was stored in the building.

The flames soon gained great headway. The entire population of the town turned out, and a bucket brigade was formed, but was unable to cope with the fire, which was soon beyond control. The flames jumped from one building to another, and the frame structures burned like paper.

As the flames spread to the dwelling houses women and girls joined the firefighters and did valiant work, but it was not until five o'clock that the flames were gotten under control.

Messages had been sent to Milton and Watsonstown for assistance, but before the apparatus started for the scene orders were sent them not to come, owing to scarcity of water. Every cistern and well in the town was pumped dry.

The further spread of the flames were stopped by a row of brick buildings.

The heaviest losers are Peter Menges, Louis Rubenaltz and R. Hayman, who conducted the three stores. The total loss is estimated at \$65,000.

Hundreds of people from the surrounding country visited the scene on Sunday. The section of Main and adjoining streets, over which the fire swept, presents a weird and desolate appearance. Here and there the blackened skeleton of a house is left standing, but in most instances nothing but ashes remain to mark the place where a building stood when the fire fiend began its destructive work. Occasionally one could see the charred bones of a horse or some other animal that perished in the flames.

The people who were rendered homeless by the fire have all been quartered in the homes of their more fortunate neighbors, and those who are in a position to rebuild will begin work immediately to replace their burned structures. Many, however, have lost everything they had and will be unable to rebuild.

As an illustration of the rapid spread of the flames one man stated that when he saw the fire nearing his home he picked up a pocketbook containing \$200 and started to leave. At that instant he thought of his horse [Continued on Page 8—3d Col.]

J. G. WELLS,

Successor to S. F. Peacock & Co., Market Square.

Hay Rope, Scythes, Forks, &c.,

Canning Boilers.

Come and see my bargain table, on which I am closing out a lot of goods at cost and less.

J. G. WELLS, GENERAL HARDWARE.

BEN. GIDDING.

"Youman's"
New
Fall Hat
Out Aug. 10,
\$5.00.

Come in and ask to see this Hat. It will pay you to buy one.

Ben. Gidding,
Bloomsburg, Penn'a.

Come in and see us—we'll treat you right.

CARPETS!

Rather warming during this kind of weather to talk of carpets. But the fall is coming on apace and you will want something to brighten up your rooms. It is almost useless for us to tell you what you so well know, that we are headquarters for carpets of all kinds. None can show you the selection we do, nor the variety in quality and prices. We can give you carpets from 16c. up to \$2.00 per yard, and all between. Our carpet room is so well lighted that we can show you just how your carpet will look when on the floor.

NEW PATTERNS are in and more will arrive in the next few weeks. Give us the early call.

By a good contract with the mill we are still able to offer you

Wool Velvet Carpet, Made Laid and Lined, 90c.

FURNITURE.

Rather late, but we offer you a new lot of porch rockers for \$1.80, worth \$2.00. Plenty of new rockers in stock. We have a special bargain in a 6-foot extension table, \$6.00.

DRY GOODS.

New lines of all the seasonable goods, at reasonable prices, fresh from the N. Y. markets. We picked carefully—very carefully. We don't want a big lot of goods to grow stale on our hands. We want to give you only what is fresh and new.

SHIRT WAISTS.

To close out. Your own prices.

GROCERIES.

Same old story. Same old pleasant proof that we're IT. Business constantly growing. But we want more of your trade. If you don't buy from us now, give us a trial.

THE LEADER STORE COMPANY, Ltd.,
4TH AND MARKET STS., BLOOMSBURG.