

THE COLUMBIAN.

BLOOMSBURG, PA.

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HARRISBURG LETTER.

Special Correspondence.

Harrisburg, Pa., Mar. 25, 1907. Fraud in every form has been revealed by the capitol probers engaged in the investigation of the charges of graft in the construction of the capitol. Overcharges, the substitution of inferior for superior materials, false measurements, in fact every conceivable device for looting the treasury appears to have been resorted to, and but for the accident of William H. Berry's election to the State Treasurer this vast crime would have escaped detection and the criminals would still be in control of the public life of the commonwealth.

The election of Mr. Berry was all accident, of course. Outraged by an unusually bold attack upon their property the people of Philadelphia voted against the machine candidate and he was defeated. But it wasn't an enduring reform or a sincere conversion. Within a year the former conditions were resumed and in the face of the exposure of a criminal operation greater than that contemplated in Philadelphia, the candidates were supported with the same enthusiasm that previously prevailed. The city is "corrupt and contented."

When the exposures were first made the participants in the crime denied the accusations. Samuel W. Pennypacker, at the time Governor of the State, over his own signature, and after careful consideration, protested that the work was honestly performed and the service was a just one. Beaver county glass was used where the specifications required imported ware, cheap wood was substituted for expensive wood, and dipping in gold was made to serve for plating. But former Governor Pennypacker reveals no contrition.

PENNYPACKER LARGELY RESPONSIBLE.

The figures representing the profits of the favored contractor are amazing. For the furnishings in the main retiring room the State paid Sanderson \$21,215.20 and they cost Sanderson only \$2,018.00. The fixtures in fourteen rooms cost the State \$156,369.60 though Sanderson only paid \$29,170.00 for them. Even if there had been no actual fraud, therefore, the overcharging would have been criminal. But nearly every piece of material is bogus. The hand carving was made by machinery and glued on and though it is probably good enough it nevertheless represents fraud.

And Samuel W. Pennypacker knew of the frauds beyond question. He himself offered the resolution which not only made the frauds possible but also made them inevitable. The resolution in question made the condition for bidding that each competitor should bid on every item. Subsequently Pennypacker personally assured bidders that it was not necessary to bid on every item and when the bids were opened all those which failed to cover everything were thrown out. That left Sanderson the only bidder, necessarily gave him the awards and incidentally invited him to plunder the State.

Neither are the machine managers showing signs of contrition. Last week there was a largely attended banquet in Harrisburg at which Mr. Pennypacker was one of the principal speakers. He didn't refer to the graft charges or defend the criminals, and neither did any of the other speakers. But the very day of the banquet the facts of Pennypacker's responsibility for the frauds were brought out in the evidence and all the speakers, including the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Lieutenant Governor of the State and the Adjutant General, fulsomely eulogized Pennypacker. The obvious purpose was to fortify him against the effect of the exposures.

STUART AND THE MACHINE.

This is a most significant incident. It was noticed that Governor Stuart did not join in this chorus of praise. He referred to the presence of his predecessor in office, as he was practically compelled to do, but he let it go at that. He manifestly intends to make a thorough job of the investigation, in so far as it is possible for him to do so. During the campaign he pledged himself to that and he looks like a fellow who will make good his pledges. But those who made no pledges have set out to take care of the crooks and this is one of the methods of accomplishing that result. Lieutenant Governor Murphy ridiculed the charges during the campaign and he wants to ignore the facts now.

He will not be able to do that,

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however. Speaker McClain and President pro tem of the Senate Woods intended to proceed on those lines when they appointed the investigators, it may also be assumed. But Governor Stuart defeated that purpose when he appointed James A. Stranahan and James Scarlet counsel for the State. They are able and incorruptible and their reputations are guarantees of thoroughness. For that reason the machine men understand that there will be a complete exposure. But they hope to defeat the effect of it by fulsomely praising the criminals. They foolishly imagine that an expression of their confidence in a man will secure him in public confidence. No greater mistake was ever made.

The only thing that could be said against Stuart during the campaign was that he was associated with the gang and if Emery had been a trifle more prudent with his tongue, that affiliation would have defeated Stuart. In view of the fact it is folly for machine managers to praise Pennypacker. He has been caught in the act. The treasury was looted beyond question and Pennypacker aided in the operation. The people understood this and honied words from Murphy, McClain and Adjutant General Stuart will not divert just popular indignation or obscure the palpable facts. Restitution is probably out of the question and criminal prosecutions may be expedient. But public condemnation can run and should run as long as the conspirators live.

HARD FIGHT FOR TROLLEY FREIGHT

The event of last week's legislative proceedings was the fight made by Mr. Creasy, supported by nearly all his Democratic colleagues, for effective legislation authorizing trolley railroads to carry freight. It occupied nearly all of last Thursday and was decidedly the most spirited incident of the session, and probably the most significant. It has been discovered that there is a possibility of defeating the legislation in question by collusion between the steam and trolley roads. That is to say the steam roads could acquire control in trolley lines to refuse freight by paying a bonus. To avert this danger Mr. Creasy proposed to make the carrying of freight compulsory upon the part of the trolley lines. This was resisted by the greatest vehemence and some profanity by the agents of the steam railroads on the floor. The Speaker came down from his handsome rostrum and engaged in the debate and finally Creasy was defeated.

It was expected, of course, that the members from Philadelphia and Pittsburg would vote in the interest of the steam roads. So far as the Philadelphians are concerned they are practically appointed in the Broad Street station offices and the Pittsburgers are not much better. But when the Republicans from York, Cumberland, Crawford, Armstrong, Fayette, Erie, Warren, Jefferson, Blair and Dunmore of Tioga voted against the interests of the people the complete dominance of the machine is revealed. Dunsmore has completely surrendered to the machine. He is as much the instrument of that sinister or-

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ganization as Sam Ripp. Two years ago he made some professions of reform. But the chances are that all he wanted was to be taken into the gang. This appears to have been done and Dunsmore is as meek as a lamb and as certain as any of the faithful.

GETTING READY TO ADJOURN.

No bills will be introduced after this week except by unanimous consent and it is usually hard to get that. This indicates that the bosses are getting anxious to adjourn. Probably they hope to avert the report of the investigation of the capitol graft before the next congressional and legislative elections. If the legislature adjourns before the investigation is completed the examination can continue, just the same, but no report can be made until the next session. That would be after the important elections of this year and next and would exclude the facts obtained from the campaigns. Of course we could publish the unofficial testimony and make the most out of it as a political asset. But the machine would deny the truth as most of the Republican Speakers did last fall. There are thousands of honest people credulous enough to be fooled. But an official report can't be denied and to my mind the anxiety to adjourn is based on the hope of thus preventing the official report of the frauds in the construction of the capitol.

An attempt will be made, naturally, to ascribe another reason for the early adjournment. Already it is being whispered about the corridors that the country members are anxious to get away. The pay for a session is the same whether it is long or short but the expenses are not so regulated. It is reasonable, therefore, that prudent men would welcome the end of the session if the business were completed. But the average country member, that is to say the country members who are guided by conscience, will not consent to an adjournment simply to save expenses. As I heard one of them say the other day that they will not consent to an adjournment until the end of the year if the work is not completed and they will not slight their work either, in order to expedite completion. The machine fellows may force an adjournment and I wouldn't be surprised to see a resolution fixing the date of final adjournment early in May introduced this week. But I can say confidently that it won't get Democratic support unless counsel conducting the graft investigation previously give assurance that its work will be completed and its report submitted.

A DECADENT BODY.

The Senate still moves along in its quiet way passing bills as they appear on the calendar. Twenty years ago the Senate of Pennsylvania was as able a deliberative body as ever honored any State or country. Any day of its session then afforded enjoyment and information to the spectators who attended in considerable numbers. Eloquent oratory was the order of the day and though there was great activity the highest standard of dignity prevailed. Now there are no speeches, no arguments, no activity. I don't believe there are five men in the body who could make a speech that would be considered half creditable in a country debating society of half grown boys. G. D. H.

WHY WE LAUGH.

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EASTER-TIME IN ROME.

Easter in Rome does not end with Sunday. During the days that followed there were numerous services, and for us an especially interesting function, the celebration of the thirteenth centenary of Gregory the Great, held in St. Peter's eight days after Easter.

We were so fortunate as to have seats in the tribunes, and as the mass was to be celebrated at the high altar and we were to be in the fourth row from the front, we were sure of a good view of the Pope. All around us were the Swiss Guards, in the picturesque costume of red, yellow, and black designed by Michelangelo, and the Pope's Guardia Nobile. The accoutrement of the Gendarme Pontificio is somewhat like that of the old Philadelphia City Troop, a handsome uniform of black and white, with an immense shako adorned with a red plume. Most gorgeous of all were the chamberlains, in black Spanish costume of the period of Philip II, with a velvet cape thrown over one shoulder, superb lace cuffs and collar, and an immense ruff around the neck, and gold cords and chains without end.

After a long wait there was a rustle and stir of expectancy over the vast assemblage, then breathless stillness, when all eyes strained toward the eastern door, through which entered the gorgeous procession. The Palatine Guard lined the way down the central aisle, some of the Swiss Guard being stationed at different points. First came the Guardia Nobile, then the mitred abbots, the bishops and archbishops in copes and mitres of white and gold, the patriarchs and cardinals, these latter with long capes of cloth of gold worn over their scarlet robes. Then came the canons and monsignori in lace and fur tippets, after them the prince in attendance on the papal throne, Don Flippo Orsini, followed by the secret chamberlains bearing the precious tiaras and mitres covered with gold and jewels. The triple crown, borne upon a cushion, was a blaze of the most brilliant jewels, diamonds, emeralds, and rubies, too heavy in its richness to be borne long by any mortal head. Finally, announced by a blast from a silver trumpet, the Pope appeared, seated in the sedia gestatoria, borne above the heads of the multitude by members of the household in a livery of scarlet cloth, the huge white feather fans or flabella being carried on each side.

The Pope was pale, and first appeared to be somewhat agitated. It is said that he very much dislikes to be carried into the church, and it must, indeed, be a trying position. The chair is lifted high above the heads of the people, that every one may see the Holy Father; it is borne slowly, pausing altogether at intervals. There was a stop near our seats of a minute or more, which gave us an opportunity to see the noble, benevolent face of the one man stands for so much to millions of the faithful. Less handsome and distinguished in appearance than some of his pictures, Pius X has that in his face which is worth infinitely more than manly beauty or aristocratic bearing; one cannot look into it without being impressed by his earnestness and sincerity.

When the Holy Father had been carried to the apse, he descended from the sedia gestatoria and knelt in prayer before St. Peter's Chair. At this moment a bright ray of sunshine fell upon the group of prelates in their rich and varied vestments; jewels flashed back their many-hued lights, making a gorgeous mass of color, in the midst of which are the white-robed, triple-crowned figure of the kneeling Pope.—ANNE HOLLINGSWORTH WHARTON in April Lippincott's.

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