

THE COLUMBIAN. BLOOMSBURG, PA.

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 1907

HARRISBURG LETTER.

Special Correspondence.

Harrisburg, Pa., May 6, 1907.

There are more than forty of the fifty-seven counties in this State which will elect members of the Democratic County committee at the Uniform Primaries. There was no legal requirement for this because the rules of the party were paramount in the matter. But the fact that those counties have determined on that course puts it up to the Democratic voters to make fit selections. The hope of the party lies in the organization. The County Committeesmen select the Chairmen of the county committees and they are in turn the members of the State Committee which is the Supreme court of the party. If active, earnest and faithful Democrats are chosen for membership of the County Committees they are reasonably certain to choose fit men for membership of the State Committee, and that accomplished there isn't much doubt of the rest.

The Democratic party of Pennsylvania is in better shape now than it has been for years. The exposure of graft and other iniquities of the Republican party have practically put that party out of the running for the office of State Treasurer next fall. One of the leading Republican Senators said to me the other day that the Republican candidate for State Treasurer in this State will have no better chance for election next fall than the Republican candidate in Georgia or Texas. But even at that the party can't afford to make sacrifices. In other words an intelligent, faithful and efficient organization is as essential to success this year as any other year and though things are going our way we can't afford to have either a lethargic or a recreant organization.

Of late years the Democrats have been altogether too careless about such things. There have been, within a decade, Chairmen of County Committees who didn't take enough interest in the party affairs to answer the letters of inquiry of the State Chairman. However able and earnest the State Chairman may be, under such circumstances he is unable to achieve results. It is a prerequisite to success that the organization be active as well as honest. Our misfortune in recent years is that these essentials have not been fulfilled. The committeemen may have been honest enough but they have lacked energy and interest. At least they have failed to prove their faith by works and the hopes of more than one State Chairman have been disappointed because of the delinquency of his staff, for the County Committeemen hold that relationship to him.

BAD BLUNDER OF THE MACHINE.

The political incident in the Legislature last week was the defeat of the resolution of Representative Flynn, of Elk County, conveying an expression of popular appreciation of State Treasurer Berry's exposure of the capitol graft and pledging him moral support in his resistance of predatory raids upon the treasury. It wasn't expected that the machine representatives in the Legislature would enjoy bestowing compliments on Mr. Berry who of all men they hate most intensely. But nobody dreamed that they would "come out in the open" in sheltering corruption. It was believed that they would assume a virtue, as Hamlet suggested to his mother, and when with practical unanimity the whole lotumbled headlong into the trap, even those who hoped for such a result were amazed. A veteran politician who was present, one who enjoyed the confidence of Quay to the full measure, remarked, on hearing of the incident that it used to be comparatively safe to depend on the Democrats to make a fatal blunder at the opportune time, but during all the era of Democratic stupidity that party never sounded the depths of sottishness as the Republicans of the Legislature are doing this year.

But for the exposure of graft made by Mr. Berry the people never would have known that the resources of the State had been shamefully squandered by a band of political pirates on plunder bent. But for that the machine would still be in undisputed control of the affairs of the State and the grafting operations now in progress. But for his courage and fidelity to duty Architect Huston would have secured another \$100,000 payment and Contractor Sanderson more than that amount in addition to the millions he had already stolen. Of course the honest people of the commonwealth appreciate that splendid service rendered by Mr. Berry and would have been glad to have their representatives in the Legislature convey to him an expression of the fact. But the disappointed and now imperiled machine managers couldn't afford to thus cress the hand that smote them and every member of the body of that party faith except eight, Messrs. Martin, McJunkin, McKeate, Mickey, Oster, Samuel B. Scott, Townsend and Yenger, voted against the resolution. It is worthy of notice

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GUARANTEED under the Food and Drugs Act, June 30, 1906. No. 324.

that Hitchcock, of Tioga, the sham reformer, is not in this roll of honor. He obeyed the machine mandate as promptly as any of the servile slaves who make no false professions of honesty.

BUSY WEEK IN THE LEGISLATURE.

Last week was a period of achievement in the matter of legislation. The House held three sessions a day as usual and most of them were drawn out to something more than the usual length. The body is doing good work, moreover, which is gratifying, if not surprising. That is to say it has passed some very excellent legislation which will, of course, be buried in the Senatorial sarcophagus later on. It fails in important emergencies, some times, however, as in the defeat of the resolution to put the Oster bill providing for the sale of unused or misused railroad franchises on the calendar. That bill was aimed at the South Penn railroad which was chartered back in the early eighties for the purpose of creating competitive railroad facilities between the Eastern and Western borders of the State. After several millions had been expended on the enterprises the property was absorbed by the Pennsylvania railroad and abandoned. Of course that action deprives the people of the Southern tier of counties of needed railroad facilities and those of all sections of competitive service.

The argument against the Oster bill was that the present owners, having expended vast sums of money to acquire the property, the seizure and sale of it would be something in the nature of a confiscation. That is literally absurd. In the beginning the purchase was made in violation of the fundamental law of the State and consequently invalid. Therefore the purchasers have no claim to consideration. The only just claim in connection with the transaction is that the people who were outraged by the juggling of the franchises. The only purpose of a railroad charter is to provide the people with needed facilities to operate their business and enjoy the pursuit of happiness. Some of the corporation pirates imagine that charters are for the purpose of giving them, for nothing, valuable property, which they immediately christen "vested rights." That is utterly and criminally absurd and in the case in question a full measure of justice would not only confiscate the property but would put those concerned in the original crime in the penitentiary.

There is a hopeful sign in the fact that Cressy's "trust busting" bill got through the House finally and is likely to get through the committee of the Senate, even if it gets no further. This achievement of the Democrats of the House is the fruit of vigilance, energy, assiduity and courage. Early in the session there were signs of differences in purpose among the Democrats which were ominous. But lately that admirable little group of earnest men have been pulling together splendidly and efficiently. It would take too much space to name all of them and where all are efficient it is invidious to make distinctions. But I may be permitted to refer especially to Minehart, Sipes, Blakeslee, Dersham, McIntyre, Price, Noll, Troxell and Enright, who have supported the honest leadership of Mr. Cressy with courage and consistency. It makes one proud of his party to witness such fidelity in an era of recreancy.

WHERE THE LOOT WAS USED.

From the first announcement of graft in the construction of the capitol there have been suspicions that part of the loot went toward making up deficits in the State Treasury. Immediately upon the announcement of the election of Mr. Berry to the office, the machine managers got busy at the task of getting affairs in order. They worked day and night during the six months which intervened before the transfer of the office and at that time exultingly declared that everything was in good order. Wonders had been achieved, beyond question and on the face of things, there was no cause of complaint. Some of them actually "poked fun" at Mr. Berry because the campaign predictions hadn't been fulfilled. Mr. Berry was a good deal surprised himself, it may be added, to find conditions so satisfactory. He knew that the Enterprise bank defalcation had been repaired though he didn't know where the money came from. It was suggested that possibly the graft mill had been grinding grist for that purpose, but being a just man Mr. Berry said that would be impossible without the connivance of certain bankers.

It has since developed, however, that a very considerable portion of the graft was used in that way and that not only the Enterprise bank deficit but shortages of other banks were made up through the collusion of certain bankers. Of course this puts the bankers concerned in the crimes on the same level with other embezzlers and forgers and will probably result in their "doing time" in the penitentiary. But they are entitled to precisely the same treatment which would be meted out to less prosperous criminals and I hope the courts will not be too much inclined to leniency. Lincoln Steffens ascribes most of the corruption in public life to the willingness of what are termed the "Captains of Industry" to encourage misfeasances and share in the spoils. He never wrote a truer thing and to my mind punishment ought to be graduated according to the wealth of the criminal. A millionaire forger or robber should get ten times as long a sentence as one in poverty. In nine cases out of ten he is influenced to the crimes by baser motives. Avarice is among the basest of all evil passions.

The sessions of the Investigating Commission will be held in private, hereafter, and for sufficient reason. The public hearings revealed too frequently the plans of the distinguished lawyers conducting the investigation. For example the value of the testimony of S. M. Williams who is said to have got \$10,000 of hush money from Congressman Cassell who mulcted the State out of a million and a half on the contract for steel filing cases was greatly impaired because somebody prevailed on Williams to forget certain salient facts. The commission will get all the information on the subject it requires, however, and the attempt to miscarry justice in that instance will fail. In fact enough evidence has already been obtained to send several of the conspirators to the penitentiary and force others to make restitution and both of these ends will be fulfilled. G. D. F.

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A \$2.50 gold fountain pen and a year's subscription to The Philadelphia Daily Press, both worth \$5.50, for \$3.50. Send check to The Philadelphia Press for \$3.50 and get The Daily Press a year and a guaranteed fountain pen. This offer may be withdrawn at any time.

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COURT PROCEEDINGS. Continued from 1st page.

Mummy on the ground of absence of material witness. Case continued.

In the estate of John Kelchner, late of Center township, report of auditor was confirmed nisi.

In the estate of Mahetable Albertson, deceased, the auditor's report making distribution was confirmed nisi.

In the estate of Wm. Fetterman, deceased, the report of W. H. Rhawn, Esq., auditor, was confirmed nisi.

Report of viewers in favor of a county bridge over Musser's run in Cleveland township near Elias Mowery's, confirmed nisi.

Report of viewers in favor of a county bridge over Scotch run in Beaver township, near Millin X Roads, confirmed nisi.

Report of reviewers against a public road in Cleveland township, near John Brofee's confirmed nisi.

Petition of Harold C. Ervin, minor child of Isaac Ervin, deceased, for the appointment of a guardian. Court appointed Peter B. Ervin guardian.

C. W. Sweppenheiser, Center township; W. P. Zehner, Main; J. V. McHenry, Stillwater; M. E. Bloom, Conyngham; H. H. Billig, Locust; L. M. Sleppy, Bloomsburg; James Quick, Montour; F. P. Davis, Mt. Pleasant; Benj. Penny-packer, Mifflin, who had been elected tax collectors at the recent election, presented their bonds with securities, which were approved by the Court.

In the estate of George Smith, deceased, the report of sale was confirmed nisi.

Com. vs. Golen Alterius, alias Frank Reade, et al. Saturday, May 11, at 10 o'clock, is fixed as the time for the reading of the sheriff's return of sale of the real estate of the above defendant.

Upon petition presented by John G. Harman, Esq., Court appointed D. W. Robbins constable of Pine township in place of T. B. Gordon who moved out of the township.

Com. vs. Frank German and Pierce Burke, charge breaking and entering three cottages, S. C. Cressy, prosecutor. The bail, John German and H. C. Burke surrendered the defendants into the custody of the sheriff.

The grand jury returned the following true bills:

Com. vs. George Edgar and John Nevil, larceny; a true bill. Wm. H. Snyder, prosecutor.

Com. vs. George Edgar and John Nevil, larceny and receiving; a true bill. A. M. Wintersteen prosecutor.

Com. vs. Geo. Golsone, larceny and receiving, etc.; a true bill. D. T. Rusk, prosecutor.

Com. vs. Elizabeth Earhart, keeping a bawdy house; a true bill. Miles Betz, prosecutor.

The application of Michael McDonald for a bail piece in the case of Com. vs. James Hayden was argued by Edward Flynn, Esq., for the bail piece, and by John G. Harman, Esq., who opposed its being issued. This was a case in which the defendant was convicted of an assault and battery at the December sessions and sentenced to pay the costs, etc., a fine of \$50, McDonald becoming his surety for the payment of the same. He desired to surrender the defendant to the custody of the Court so as to escape the responsibility of his bond and hence applied for the bail piece. After hearing argument of counsel the Court refused the petition.

W. H. Roberts filed his bond as tax collector for Catawissa township.

Joe Koris was sworn as interpreter to examine witnesses before the Grand Jury.

Upon petition presented by Robert Howell, Esq., a citation was ordered in the estate of Huston Robinson, deceased, directing C. L. Pohe, administrator of Wm. Robinson, deceased, who was the administrator of Huston Robinson, to file an account in said estate and also a rule was allowed to show cause why the sale of real estate made by Wm. Robinson should not be set aside. Returnable the first Monday in June.

In re road in Main and Roaring Creek townships, order to viewers continued to report at next term.

In the estate of Edward Thorpe, deceased, on motion of counsel the report of auditor continued until next term.

Henry C. Thomas, tax collector for the Borough of Catawissa, presented his bond which was approved by the Court.

Com. vs. Clyde Shuman; not a true bill.

Com. vs. Wm. Daves, false pretense; not a true bill.

Com. vs. James Brate, assault and battery, with intent to kill; a true bill.

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