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HARRISBURG LETTER.

Special Correspondence.

Harrisburg, Pa., Aug. 5, 1907.

It would be hard work to whitewash the capitol graft scandal even if there were an inclination in that direction, which is conjectural. The evidence is too positive and direct to admit of misconception. The collusion between Architect Huston and the favored contractors has been clearly established and the fact that Payne & Company, made out fraudulent bills on the stationery of sub contractors can't be explained. No reasoning person can be made believe that an ordinary push-cart is a royal Roman chariot and the claim that those frauds were clerical errors or accidents would be quite as absurd.

That a whitewashing report was contemplated by some members of the commission hardly admits of doubt. Immediately after the municipal elections in Philadelphia there occurred a perceptible change in the trend of the inquisition. There set in an abatement in zeal and a modification of energy. The fruitless and absurd attempt to conciliate the chief inquisitor, Mr. Scarlet, by inferential promises of promotion, and the too considerate manner in which some of the witnesses were treated plainly indicated the change. But futility of such a course is now apparent to even the most cursory observers.

Huston, Sanderson, Cassell, Mathews, Payne & Company, and Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds Shumaker are clearly incriminated both in fraud and conspiracy and Governor Pennypacker was criminally negligent, to say the least. According to his own statement he learned of the frauds in December following the election of Mr. Berry. The Auditor General called his attention to the overcharges and excessive payments. Did he stop them as any honest man and faithful public official would? I should say not, though in his statement to the commission he declared that he had ordered the discontinuance of any work not in process.

WHAT THE RECORDS REVEAL.

What do the records show? In December, 1905, Pennypacker was informed of the frauds. But between that time and May, 1906, the Board of Public Grounds and Buildings, with his assent, approved padded bills to an aggregate of over \$3,000,000, some of which covered articles not delivered for nearly a year afterward. Probably he didn't get any part of the loot. Maybe he didn't want any of the tainted money. But he got promises of a seat on the Supreme bench of the State, the thing which above all others his sordid soul coveted. Cash in hand is not the only form of recompense in this practical world.

Why should there be any thought, in view of these facts, of allowing Pennypacker to escape "unwhipped of justice," in connection with these grave crimes? But for his complacency the frauds would have been impossible. But for his acquiescence the conspiracy would have fallen in the beginning. Yet there is talk of allowing him to escape even indictment. "Members of the commission are anxious to exculpate Governor Pennypacker," one of the newspaper correspondents writes. "Of those involved," declares another of the ubiquitous historians, "the only who will escape suit, it is understood, is ex-Governor Pennypacker."

If the principles of justice exact anything at the hands of the probers it is plainly that Samuel W. Pennypacker be put to the same tests as the others. The greatest danger to the public life of the

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country comes from officials who mask their iniquities under the cloak of virtue. Pennypacker pretended the most scrupulous probity but he was constantly promoting corruption by aiding and abetting the venality of his subordinates. They wanted money and he had a thirst for honors. All contributed the same result, the looting of the public. But he supplemented all their vices with that of hypocrisy.

THE INculpATING TESTIMONY.

The report of the Expert Accountants, part of which has been withheld from the public, established the conspiracy between Huston, Sanderson, Payne & Co. and Shumaker. That of Charles D. Montague, an employe of the Art Metal Construction company, of Rochester, N. Y., has revealed the extortion of Congressman Cassell, of Lancaster county, who furnished the metallic filing cases and metal furniture. Cassell got from the State \$2,072,000 for goods which at the trade price with the customary discount ought to have been furnished for \$412,500. In other words his graft amounted to \$1,659,500.

These facts have been brought out since the Commission resumed its sessions last week. It has also developed that Architect Huston drew \$80,000 for "specially designing" these cases and furniture, though Mr. Montague declares that they were not specially designed by Huston or anybody else; that they are of a stock design already antiquated and "not of the most approved patterns." Therefore the aggregate of the steal on metal furniture and filing cases reached a total of \$1,739,500. The hope is expressed that \$1,000,000 of this sum will be recovered by civil processes and possibly that expectation may be fulfilled.

Pennypacker with great exultation declared in his statement before the Commission that by prevailing on Huston to accept four per cent. of his fee, instead of five, the usual fee, \$80,000 had been saved to the State. As a matter of fact nothing was saved for in this single grab Huston got the \$80,000 and as a matter of fact he drew \$80,000 more for "specially designing" the chandeliers, which he didn't design. He was an expensive luxury as well as a corrupting agent and he and Pennypacker ought to be held alike responsible and punished similarly. Any other course will defeat justice.

AUSPICIOUS CAMPAIGN IMPENDING

The Democratic campaign for the election of John G. Harman to the office of State Treasurer and incidentally to complete the reforms and improvements in public life which Mr. Berry has begun will open most auspiciously in a short time. The plans have not been outlined as yet, but the fact that the new and capable Chairman will be assisted in his arduous work by Hon. P. Gray Meek, who has again consented to act as Secretary of the State Committee is reassuring. No man in the State knows the work as thoroughly as Mr. Meek, and no one could bring to it a greater measure of zeal, intelligence and experience.

The selection of Senator Dimeling to the Chairmanship of the Committee has had a most heartening influence on the party, moreover. He is widely known as a sagacious, industrious and earnest political manager and will enter upon the work with characteristic energy. He is the third State Chairman Clearfield county has furnished the Democratic party. The late William A. Wallace acquired National distinction as a political manager and ex-Congressman Jas. Kerr, was little if any less successful as a State Chairman. He conducted the campaign of 1900 which resulted in the second election of Robert E. Pattison as Governor.

These facts work encouraging results in political contention. A confident party is inevitably a successful party. "The race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong." Many a candidate has been defeated because neither himself nor his friends have had the absolute faith in his election that is necessary to get the voters to the polls. I apprehend no such

delinquency this year. The candidate, Hon. John G. Harman, the Chairman, Hon. George M. Dimeling, and the conditions are alike favorable. The candidate and Chairman will fulfill the best expectations and the voters will do the rest.

THE ISSUES IN OUR FAVOR.

Besides no party has ever gone into political conflict with issues so clearly defined and absolutely in its favor. There can be no misunderstanding the questions involved. The Democrats stand for honest administration. Minority representation on the governing boards in the State will guarantee not only integrity in the future but the exposure and punishment of the iniquities of the past. The election of Harman continues minority representation on those boards and the success of the Republican candidate defeats it. There is no evasion of these truths. They are self-evident.

With the fittest candidate that could be chosen and the most capable and efficient Chairman which the abundant material of the party affords, there is nothing to be desired to inspire hope and confidence. The campaign will open with both present in abundance and substantial and enduring victory for good government is assured. It won't be a political victory exactly. But it will be a triumph of the people over corruption and will make the future government of Pennsylvania a beneficence instead of a fountain of fraud.

G. D. H.

The following letters are held at the Bloomsburg post office: Miss Alice Kostenbauder. Cards: Miss Anna Cox, Mr. Kenneth Grange, Miss Elizabeth K. Fister, Miss Vera Haley, Miss Mabel Smith.

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