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THURSDAY DECEMBER 17, 1908.

JOHN G. McHENRY.

May Head the Next Gubernatorial Race.

Philadelphia Record Says He Cannot Withdraw Himself From Favorable Consideration.

The Philadelphia Record says editorially: "Mindful of the way Representative John G. McHenry swept the Sixteenth Congress district at the late election in despite of the Republican tidal wave, his ends are pushing his name to the front as the right man for governor of the state. Mr. McHenry discourages this movement." The Bloomsburg Mail, speaking for him says: "Mr. McHenry is not unmindful of the honor which the mere mention of his name in that connection implies. He doesn't underestimate the compliment that is bestowed upon him. But he feels that his present obligations to the public require him to give his undivided attention to his Congressional duties, and that encouraging a movement which might divert some of his energies into another channel would be something in the nature of recreancy. He has found Legislative work agreeable and adapted himself to it, and feels that he owes his constituents his best efforts." Discussion of the next Democratic candidacy may be premature. But Mr. McHenry can not withdraw himself from favorable consideration. Anyway, the office should seek the man and not the man the office. Mr. McHenry has built himself a reputation as a wide-awake citizen, as a deserving and conscientious representative, and as a pushing and popular candidate before the people that will keep him in front view."

Will Get Better Clothes.

The tariff committee has announced a further continuance of its hearings. There is no telling just what kind of a tariff bill will be presented, much less what kind of a bill will be passed after it has been debated and amended, but there is strong hope among tariff reformers that there will be large additions to the free list in the way of raw material, such as wool, hides, lumber and coal. It is well known that we cannot have the best woolen fabrics made in this country because the finest fleeces of Australia and South America go to the looms of England and Germany and France, while American manufacturers, on account of high tariff, are obliged to eke out their scanty supply of wool with cotton and shoddy.—Johnston Democrat.

The citizens of Montgomery, Lycoming county, want a new bridge across the West Branch of the Susquehanna and they are making themselves heard in advocating its erection by the county. A jury of viewers have recommended the erection of the bridge at a cost of \$120,000 and a score of the principal citizens of the town have been at Williamsport this week trying to convince the Grand Jury that the bridge ought to be built.

WASHINGTON

From our Regular Correspondent.

Washington, D. C., Dec. 14, 1908

While Washington is crowded with important conventions including an organization called "Congress" and while both the President and the President-elect are in the city making speeches and while the air is surcharged with the discussion of policies of great import to the future of the nation, the greatest difficulty is not to find something to write about, but to know what to select.

Both the President and Mr. Taft were at the meeting of the Conservation Congress at the Belasco Theatre, where only those who held tickets of invitations were admitted. Mr. Taft presided and was introduced as the President-elect. He denied that he was President-elect or had any official position. Being a strict constructionist and a lawyer, he knows that the formality of a vote by the Republican electors is necessary before he can be called the President-elect. President Roosevelt, disclaiming prophecy, said that he would venture to say who would be President-elect and referred to himself as the setting sun.

The President's message to Congress is looked upon in the light of a valedictory, though it would be a rash man who would say that this is the last appearance of President Roosevelt in the way of a message. It is quite probable that he will send Congress two or three more valedictories before the fourth of March. Members of Congress, it is said, are much stirred up over this valedictory in which the President was not eulogistic, or as they think, even respectful to the legislative branch. The message is the most remarkable of the many that the President has sent to Congress and the paragraph which I will venture to quote, is sure to be very widely discussed and will probably be the basis of important legislation during the months or years that the President is in the Antipodes and the executive office is in the hands of the man chosen to carry out, as far as a President may, the Rooseveltian program.

"The danger to American democracy lies not in the least in the concentration of administrative power in responsible and accountable hands. It lies in having the power insufficiently concentrated, so that no one can be held responsible to the people for its use. Concentrated power is palpable, visible, responsible, easily reached, quickly held to account. Power scattered through many administrators, many legislators, many men who work behind and through legislators and administrators, is impalpable, is unseen, is irresponsible, cannot be reached, cannot be held to account. Democracy is in peril wherever the administration of political power is scattered among a variety of men who work in secret, whose very names are unknown to the common people. It is not in peril from any man who derives authority from the people, who exercises it in sight of the people, and who is from time to time compelled to give an account of its exercise to the people."

There has been much serious talk over the alleged irreconcilable difference between Speaker Cannon, the sardonic ruler of the House of Representatives, and Judge Taft, the President to be, on the subject of the tariff which, although it will not come up formally until the special session is called, is nevertheless a subject of very serious consideration. And well it may be, for the revenues of the nation are falling off at the rate of eleven millions of dollars a month and at the end of the fiscal year is expected to show a deficiency of at least a hundred million of dollars. Internal Revenue, which has been largely derived from taxes on spirituous liquors, has notably and even astonishingly decreased in the last year, owing to the temperance wave which is sweeping the country. 'Tis true 'tis glorious; and glorious 'tis, 'tis true! And the country might well afford to lose a hundred millions of dollars a month, in such a cause. A small tax on bank checks, matches, high-heeled shoes and merry widow hats, will easily recoup the Government for any tax

it may lose through a smaller consumption of whiskey. But to return to the tariff difference between Speaker Cannon and Mr. Taft. One reason for the falling off of the revenues is the unsettled condition of the tariff. Importers are hesitating to bring goods into this country until the tariff on importations is settled and the Government is losing a great deal from decreased customs. There is a report this morning that Speaker Cannon and Mr. Taft have had an interview that lasted nearly two hours, at the residence of Miss Macel Boardman, where the Tafts are guests during their stay in Washington. The tariff was the subject discussed and it is said that a mutually satisfactory understanding was established between them. Miss Boardman, it will be remembered, is the lady who accompanied the Tafts two years ago on their trip to the Philippines and to China, at the same time that the President's daughter (now Mrs. Longworth) made the tour of the world.

Corrupt Practice Act Under Fire.

The constitutionality of the Corrupt Practices Act of 1906 has been brought squarely before the Superior Court in the arguments of ex-Attorney General W. U. Hensel, counsel for Judge Harry O. Bechtel of Schuylkill County, and of Cyrus G. Derr, who represented citizens of that county who are endeavoring to have Judge Bechtel's election set aside on the ground that funds provided by him were used to corrupt the voters. The argument was an appeal from the Schuylkill County Court, which held that the election of Judge Bechtel was entirely regular and dismissed the petitioners, placing the costs on them.

In endeavoring to have the appeal quashed, ex-Attorney General Hensel argued that the Corrupt Practices Act, passed by the Legislature on March 5, 1906, was without constitutional warrant, as in the call for the special session of the Legislature, issued by Governor Pennypacker, there was no provision for the regulation of election expenses as set forth in this act. Although, in addition to Mr. Hensel, Judge Bechtel was represented by a strong array of counsel from Schuylkill county, including his father, ex-Judge Oliver P. Bechtel, County Solicitor A. W. Schalk, ex-Congressman James B. Reilly, of Pottsville, and James J. Bell and Martin M. Burke, of Shendoan, the appellee rested his entire case on the constitutionality of the act.

CONTENTION OF THE CITIZENS.

Cyrus G. Derr, of Reading, who made the chief argument for the appellants, took broader grounds. He said it would be preposterous to set aside the act of 1906 on the technically raised by Judge Bechtel's counsel, and that to do so would be virtually to say that it was constitutional for a candidate seeking the high office of Judge to purchase his election by the corruption and bribery of voters. He held that the evidence established the fact that large sums of money had been advanced to liquor dealers in Schuylkill county by Judge Bechtel before the election, regarding which no proper account had been filed according to the terms of the act, and the question whether a candidate could turn over money for election purposes to persons not required under the act to file an account, and thereby escape responsibility for this agent's manner of disbursing the money.

Should the Superior Court decide to uphold the constitutionality of the act of March 5, 1906, it has the power to order a re-hearing of the Bechtel case on its merits.

LAW ATTACKED IN OTHER APPEAL.

Similar questions involving the Corrupt Practices act of 1906 were raised before the Superior Court in the appeal from the Monroe County Court in the matter of the nomination expense account of Eugene Kinney, State Representative-elect. His account was referred to the auditor, who found it correct and was sustained by the Court below. In appealing to the Superior Court, the Petitioners asked for a ruling on the question: Are expenditures by candidates during a campaign for treating voters to cigars, beer and whisky illegal? The Court held both the Bechtel and Kinney cases under advisement.

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