

MACHINE'S HALCYON SESSION OF 1905

Boas Mansion Converted Into a "House of Mirth" in Harrisburg.

PARTY BOSSES PLAN INIQUITY

Senators Sisson and Stober, Republican Candidates, Supported All the Vicious Legislation That Made the Session of 1905 Infamous.

The legislature of 1905 was a "halcyon and vociferous" affair. In imitation of the Albany "House of Mirth," the Boas mansion in Harrisburg was generously contributing to the "gayety of nations" during that session.

The legislature of 1905 has gone in to history as the most wanton and venal in the history of the state. Its work was so bad that Governor Pennypacker felt constrained to call it back to repeal most of its measures, and the men responsible for its iniquities obeyed orders to thus stultify themselves with the same servility that they accepted orders to pass the bills at the regular session.

There were a good many other measures which would have conserved the interests of the people if they had been enacted into laws. But they were all killed before that stage, at which a roll call is in order, was reached. Under such conditions the action of a particular senator upon such bills is left to conjecture.

No Uncertainty on Vicious Bills. But there is no uncertainty as to how the Republican candidates for auditor general and state treasurer voted on the vicious legislation projected and promoted by the machine.

One of the principal jobs of the session was the act to amend an act relating to the board of public grounds and buildings. Upon this measure Mr. Sisson and Mr. Stober voted in the affirmative.

A bill to increase the number of courts in Allegheny county was voted for by both Sisson and Stober. This measure was also vetoed by Governor Pennypacker, who said in his message: "The effect of this bill would be to increase the number of judges in Allegheny county from nine to fifteen and to lead to an expenditure in salaries alone of the annual sum of \$51,000."

Bills were passed providing for additional law judges in Cambria county, Senate Journal, 1905, page 888, and in Erie county, Senate Journal, 1905, page 492. Sisson and Stober voting for both of them.

The machine majority in the legislature is always open-handed with the judges, but during the session of 1905 it was liberal with everybody. A bill providing for stenographers and assistant stenographers for courts was passed finally on Feb. 23, Sisson and Stober voting in the affirmative.

Corporations Favored Freely. An act declaring valid and indefeasible as to any right of escheat in this commonwealth was voted for by both Sisson and Stober. Senate Journal, 1905, page 891. This measure also

fell a victim to Governor Pennypacker's veto axe. In his veto message the governor said: "To permit corporations, organized for reasons given above in other states, to hold real estate and do business here, would be, in effect, to nullify, indirectly, our own laws. This bill presents to such corporations an easy means of escape from the disabilities imposed upon them."

The legislature revealed its subservience to the railroad corporations in the passage of the act "in relation to railroads under lease, and saving their charters and franchises from forfeiture or impairment in case of failure of their lessees to maintain and operate any portion of their lines."

Another legislative absurdity was a bill providing for the draining of swampy lands, and both Sisson and Stober voted for it. Senate Journal, 1905, page 1031. In vetoing this preposterous proposition Governor Pennypacker said that owners of swampy lands ought to pay the expenses of their own improvements, and that if the measure should become a law it would clandestinely bestow upon the owners of the land the right of eminent domain.

A Ripper in Disguise. The bill to provide for the employment and support of the poor in Schuylkill county was a sort of "ripper" in disguise. The obvious purpose of it was to legislate out of office the directors of the poor of that county, and it only failed of its purpose because Governor Pennypacker had a lucid interval.

There were a number of water snakes wriggling through the legislature during the session of 1905. The machine managers, rich in spoils, had come to realize the vast value of water powers and were striving to get control of all that were available.

Among the bills introduced with this object in view was one "authorizing railroad companies to acquire, hold, dispose of and guarantee the stocks and securities of water companies." In the event of a water famine this measure would enable the railroad companies to supply their locomotives even if the people of communities furnished.

The bill entitled "an act to preserve the purity of the water of the state" was another serpent. It provided that consent of the board of health should be obtained before any community or company could erect water works.

The gang didn't feel quite secure with the legislation thus far obtained, and Senator McNichol, the Philadelphia contractor-politician, introduced a bill to create a commission to regulate the water supply and control the watersheds of the state.

Pet Iniquities of the Machine. The Philadelphia "rippers" were pet iniquities of the machine. John Weaver, who had been promoted from the office of district attorney to that of mayor as a reward for permitting Sam Salter to be acquitted, was indulging in some insincere reform pretences, and the machine concluded to "clip his wings," so to speak.

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A merry little joker of the session was the bill increasing the salary of the deputy insurance commissioner Mr. Durham was insurance commis-

sioner at the time, but he was so busy managing the politics and "milking" the people of that city that he couldn't get to Harrisburg oftener than once in two or three months. The warrants for his salary had actually to be sent to him by mail. This absenteeism developed a good deal of additional labor on the deputy, and Mr. Durham's servile slaves in the legislature naturally concluded that his recompense ought to be increased in the ratio that his burdens were multiplied.

The Quay statue bill was "the apple of the eye" of the machine at the time and ever since has been the burden of its grief and an abomination. Sisson and Stober both voted for it. Senate Journal, 1905, page 1689.

The act authorizing street railway, electric light and power, hotel and park companies to merge or consolidate, was a sort of tub to the smaller corporation whale. There are a number of men in the cities, tin-horn gamblers, thimble-riggers and other sorts, who go to the legislature or ply their vocations in the winter, and imagined that such a combination of powers would afford them splendid opportunities in the summer.

Snakes in the Legislative Grass. Another snake in the legislative grass was the bill authorizing manufacturing corporations to deal in goods and materials manufactured by others. It was in direct violation of the constitution, the spirit of the common law and the traditions of the country.

The bill to rebate taxes on forest lands, enacted during the session of 1905, was what the old-timers would call "a little thing" for the timber and tannery trusts. It provided for a rebate of 80 per cent of the taxes on scrub timber tracts for a period of thirty-five years.

The bill to increase the salary of the harbor master of Philadelphia was the payment of another installment of the machine obligation for the acquittal of Sam Salter. The then harbor master swore to all kinds of alibis and other things to justify the packed jury in voting to acquit the champion ballot-box stuffer, and the easiest way to reward him for his crimes was to increase his salary.

The number and salaries of employees of the state treasury were increased, Senate Journal, 1905, page 1106, and the number and salaries of the employees of the state library were increased during the session of 1905, Senate Journal, page 777. Sisson dodged the vote on the treasury increase, but voted for the library increase. Stober voted for both.

Pennypacker Provokes Foolish Bill. In his veto messages Pennypacker was in the habit of poking fun at the legislature on account of the wretched grammar and other delinquencies in form and expression of the bills sent to him for approval.

The lawyers of Pennsylvania are bearing testimony, every day, to their high appreciation of the learning, ability and fitness of C. LaRue Munson for a seat on the supreme court bench. Whenever Mr. Munson goes he is most cordially and enthusiastically received by lawyers. Even the partisan lawyer relaxes his prejudices when the question of putting a fit or unfit man on the bench confronts him.

Democrats used to win in Pennsylvania because they used to feel that good government is as important to the average citizen as good crops. In this country the average farmer, with a family of four or five children, pays the price of fifty bushels of corn annually in excessive taxes.

It leaves the cities in a worse condition than the country districts, for by its provisions the country districts may be left in full enjoyment of their ancient privileges, while the cities may be deprived of them, or both city and country may be legislated into the merciless hands of the political party in power, either or both at the will of the majority.

DEFEAT AMENDMENT NO. 7 IS URGENT DUTY

Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce Sounds Alarm to Voters.

POINTS OUT STARTLING DANGER

City Gangsters Could Manipulate Election Results, Through Corrupt Election Officers, if the Seventh Amendment is Adopted.

Defeat of amendment No. 7, of the series of constitutional amendments on which the people of Pennsylvania are to vote this fall, has been called for by the Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce.

It is the fear of the Chamber of Commerce that amendment No. 7 will allow political schemers to gain control of city election boards for crooked purposes. Should this particular amendment be adopted, it would open the way for the naming of such boards in the city by appointment instead of by election.

In a public statement the directors of the Chamber of Commerce say:

The board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce of Pittsburg would respectfully call attention to the following matter of vital importance to the citizens of Pennsylvania, and one worthy of the most careful consideration and action by the electors of the state.

By joint resolution of the senate and house of general assembly of Pennsylvania, passed at the session of 1907, a number of amendments were proposed to the present constitution of this state. Among them are the following:

"Amendment 7—To Article VIII, Section 14.

"Section 8, Amend Section 14 of Article VIII, which reads as follows:

"District election boards shall consist of a judge and two inspectors, who shall be chosen annually by the citizens. Each elector shall have the right to vote for the judge and one inspector, and each inspector shall appoint one clerk. The first election board for any new district shall be selected and vacancies in election boards filled as shall be provided by law. Election officers shall be privileged from arrest upon days of election and while engaged in making up and transmitting returns, except upon warrant of a court of record or judge thereof, for an election fraud, for felony or for wanton breach of the peace. In cities they may claim exemption from jury duty during their terms of service."

"So as to read: "District election boards shall consist of a judge and two inspectors, who shall be chosen biennially by the citizens at the municipal election, but the general assembly may require said boards to be appointed in such manner as it may by law provide. Laws regulating the appointment of said boards may be enacted to apply to cities only, provided that such laws be uniform for cities of the same class. Each elector shall have the right to vote for the judge and one inspector and each inspector shall appoint one clerk. The first election board for any new district shall be selected, and vacancies in election boards filled as shall be provided by law. Election officers shall be privileged from arrest upon days of election and while engaged in making up and transmitting returns, except upon warrant of a court of record, or judge thereof, for an election fraud, for felony or for wanton breach of the peace. In cities they may claim exemption from jury duty, during their terms of service."

This proposed amendment will be submitted to the voters at the election this fall for approval or rejection. If approved, it becomes a part of the state constitution, and must be observed as such, unless eliminated by a future constitutional amendment. Inasmuch as the constitution cannot be amended more than once in five years, this proposed amendment would have considerable time to operate before it could be replaced or superseded by another.

The amendment is surrounded by a multitude of other proposed amendments, which divert the mind from its purpose, and it is only by close reading that its meaning and mischief become clear. Only forty-eight words seek to change the practice respecting selection of election boards for almost a century, and to destroy the first foundation of the people's political freedom. These words are so obscure and the amendment so sandwiched between others of more or less harmless nature, and placed with such cunning in the proposed amendment itself, that only a close reading reveals the true purpose of the change.

The proposed amendment first purports to leave the constitution just as it is respecting the selection of election boards. It begins by repeating almost the exact words of the same section of the present constitution, viz.: "District election boards shall consist of a judge and two inspectors, who shall be chosen biennially (instead of annually) by the citizens at the municipal election."

But the general assembly may require said boards to be appointed in such manner as it may by law provide. Laws regulating the appointment of said boards may be enacted to apply to cities only, provided, etc. It leaves the cities in a worse condition than the country districts, for by its provisions the country districts may be left in full enjoyment of their ancient privileges, while the cities may be deprived of them, or both city and country may be legislated into the merciless hands of the political party in power, either or both at the will of the majority. It is doubtful if such a piece of legislation was ever proposed before to a free and intelligent people.

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