

Lancaster Intelligencer.

MONDAY EVENING, JAN. 30, 1882.

Contracts for State Supplies.

When butter gets too dear to be used as a means with which to choke dogs, some other instrument, cheaper but no less effective, can usually be found to answer the purpose. And so when public officials are disposed to steal they can generally circumvent laws which may be passed to prevent them. The new constitution, in directing that public supplies should be bought by proposal and contract, intended to stop the abuse of officials purchasing these things for the public from themselves or from their friends at unduly high prices. Very soon those in charge of the administration of our state affairs contrived to make the new system onerous and as expensive in the end as the old. They printed in many newspapers elaborate and expensive advertisements, setting forth line upon line the most trivial articles, for which proposals were invited, so that much of this advertisement cost far more than a fair price for the articles asked for, and the aggregate was a vast expenditure of the public money for the benefit of favorites of the state ring, a political corruption fund distributed among servile newspaper organs. Time and again the INTELLIGENCER pointed out this iniquity and showed how nearly all the money thus wasted could be saved if proposals were asked for in a general way and schedules of the articles to be furnished were supplied to persons desiring to bid. This suggestion was enacted into the law of 1879, which prohibited the useless and expensive advertisement of the schedules. This law directed that the contracts before being awarded be approved by the governor, auditor general and state treasurer; the enforcement of the contracts for furnishing and repairing the legislative halls and committee rooms, and for the fuel, to be under the control and supervision of the board of commissioners of public grounds and buildings; the stationery and supplies to be in charge of the librarian of the Senate—who happens to be John C. Delaney—and the preparation of the schedules on which bids and contracts are based to be entrusted to the secretary of the commonwealth, who happens to be M. S. Quay.

If the schedules were properly prepared, the contracts honestly made and enforced, the new law would be effective probably to stop the stealing which has for many years been going on at Harrisburg in this branch of the state government. But if the schedules are made to include articles not to be bought and furnished by the state; if bids for these supplies are accepted at prices far above the retail value for such articles; and if the contractor does not furnish or the state does not use the articles furnished, it is manifest that there can be the same leakage and peculation under the new system as before the law of 1879 was in operation. The character and reputation of the men on whose integrity an honest administration of the law depends are not such as to afford the state a guarantee that it will not be cheated in the transaction, even if some ingenuity has to be exercised to accomplish it. We propose to let some light in upon the way in which the thing has been done, so that the public may judge whether or not they have been cheated, and whether there can be any protection for them against fraud in this respect, except in the election and appointment of honest and intelligent men to state offices.

A single example taken from the contract made in June, 1880, for "brooms, buckets, &c." for the Legislature and departments, will show how the contractors and those who are supposed to supervise them, can cheat the state.

It is only fair to say that in the past year some change has been made in the form of preparing the schedules and letting the contracts, which we will refer to hereafter in detail.

But from June 1880 to June 1881, Wm. M. Gray was the contractor to supply the "buckets, brooms, &c." He is a brother-in-law of the notorious Sam Adams and, as we have shown before, from December 1, 1880, to the end of his time of contract—about seven months in all—he drew \$781.89 for "supplies" and \$4,886.74 for "buckets, brooms, &c."

Table with 2 columns: Item description and Maximum price. Includes items like Babbit's best soap, Patent three-string corn brooms, Selected bristles, etc.

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and 7-inch dusters at 95 per cent. off; sal soda and chloride of lime at 65 per cent. off; "hair brushes No. 1, Clinton" at 80 per cent. discount; and so on, varying to the end. The advantage of such a contract to the state or the profit to the contractor, it is plain, will depend entirely on how much or how little of the different supplies are furnished. In the first place, as very little "sal soda" and less "chloride of lime" are used, it is a shrewd game to put these articles in at very heavy discounts. It makes very little difference in the amount of money received, but it very largely reduces the average discount of the bid. Proper manipulation here, and a heavy percentage of discount put in on the articles little called for, secures the bid for the experienced contractor. Then Delaney and the clerks who have supervision of the supplies can readily see to it that contractors shall furnish large quantities of the supplies in which they make small discounts, and small quantities of supplies on which the state gets large discounts. For example, of soap and brooms, on which a small reduction from the maximum is bid, a plentiful supply is ordered; the "feather dusters" are certain to be ordered of the quality on which 50 per cent discount is contracted for, and not of those on which 95 per cent. discount is made; while of "hair brushes" that quality is taken which the contractor furnishes at the maximum and not those which he bids to supply at 80 per cent. off. By such jugglery a contract which looks like the most advantageous and fair on its face may be operated as a wholesale raid on the treasury.

This year the schedule was somewhat changed, the maximum price raised and the contract was awarded at an average percentage reduction all through. How it operates, what the state now pays for its supplies, and what it buys which it ought not to pay for, will be a fruitful theme for future comment.

Blaine's Dissembler. In an interview in the Washington Post Mr. Blaine, late secretary of state, has found a medium to relieve himself with regard to the position in which he has been placed by the publication of the official correspondence of our government in relation to South American affairs. This publication made it appear that while Mr. Blaine had instructed the commissioner of our country to protest against the spoliation of conquered Peru by victorious Chili, his successor in the department of state had revoked such instructions and had impressed upon our representative the propriety of a policy of non-interference. From this it has been widely inferred that Mr. Frelinghuysen was carrying out a policy approved by the president, and that Mr. Blaine had either deceived his superior officer or suppressed from him the instructions which he had sent to the South. It exhibited Mr. Blaine in a bad light, unless the president had changed his policy with his advisers. Now Mr. Blaine says very positively that "no dispatch in the negotiations, least of all their important instructions, was issued until it had been read by the president, and all the steps taken were approved by President Garfield while living, and since then by President Arthur—until he changed his mind." "The instructions were not only talked over fully at length with the president, but when written were twice read over to him for criticism and change. I have the original draft in my possession, with the modifications desired by the president clearly noted." Mr. Blaine concedes that the president has a right to change his mind, but insists that he did change his mind. This seems to relieve Mr. Blaine, but it imposes on the president the charge of inconsistency. He will probably be as resolute under it as Mr. Blaine was indisposed to stand for scapegoat service.

LANCASTER seems to have a chance to get an important industrial establishment, and we have missed so many good chances of this kind that this one should be gravely considered before it is allowed to go by.

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THE way for Squire McMullen's defeat for select council in Philadelphia has been opened by the withdrawal of the Republican candidate in favor of a decenter Democrat than "Mully."

Mrs. HOPKINS, the widow of Mark Hopkins, recently gave a reception in San Francisco to Lord Beaumont. The occasion is described as one of splendor. The guests numbered four hundred. The reception cost Mrs. Hopkins several thousand dollars.

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Scott Lord & Sons, composing the law

firm of Lord & Lord, have brought suit against C. J. VANDEBILT for a balance of \$30,000, alleged to be due for legal services. Mr. Vanderbilt, in his answer, says he has paid the plaintiffs \$42,000 for legal services, besides \$65,000 to Scott Lord as counsel fees, which, he says, is \$37,000 more than the services were worth, and he asserts that the services performed by Mr. Lord were unskillfully and ignorantly done, greatly to his damage. He instances the proceedings he was advised to bring for the removal of William H. Vanderbilt as trustee of a fund given by the latter, in reference to which the general term of the supreme court said: "It seems almost incredible that counsel could be found capable of advising such application, having neither law nor facts to justify it."

NO MORE FREE PASSES. Copy of a Bill Before the Iowa Legislature. SECTION 1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Iowa: That, hereafter, it shall be unlawful for any railroad corporation operating a railroad within this state to issue, pass, tickets or other permission, either oral, in writing or in printing, for the free transportation of persons or property to any of the following persons: To any one holding any office, federal or state, either legislative, executive or judicial. To any person holding any county or township office. To any person holding any municipal office in any city or town. To any person summoned as a juror or serving as such in any court held in this state. To any person acting as bailiff or other officer of any court within this state. To any person when such pass, ticket, or permission is used attending any political convention for the nomination of officers to be voted for by the people. SEC. 2. It shall be unlawful for any of the persons or officers named in the preceding section to accept or use any such passes or permission for free transportation of persons or property, nor shall any person be allowed to ask or solicit such passes or transportation of persons or property for himself or any other person. SEC. 3. It shall be unlawful for any conductor or any other person in charge of a railroad train to permit any of the persons named in section 2 hereof to travel upon his trains, upon any pass, ticket, or permission for free transportation without the payment to him of lawful fare. SEC. 4. Any person violating the provisions of this act shall be liable to a fine of not less than \$30 nor more than \$100, to be recovered by the nomination presented as provided by law before a justice of the peace; or one-half such fine shall be paid to the person filing such information. SEC. 5. Proceedings to recover the fines provided for by this act may be commenced in the county wherein the passes, tickets, or permission were issued, or where they are received, or wherein they are used. SEC. 6. On and after the taking effect of this act the rates of passenger fares on all railroads in this state shall be reduced one cent per mile below the rate as now fixed by law.

THE tobacco journals report the general approbation by the trade of a material reduction or total abolition of the tax on cigars. Chicago manufacturers ask for five and New York manufacturers for four dollars tax per thousand. Leaf dealers recommend a total abolition of the tax. Work will be done to unite all interests and secure the repeal of the taxes now burdening the tobacco industry. The United States Tobacco Journal says: "That the time is propitious for action there is no doubt. The country stands upon a prosperous footing, there is a revenue greatly in excess of the country's needs, a large number of the people's representatives in Congress are in favor of abolishing the internal revenue system, and nearly all the manufacturers in the United States are ready to take a hand in any action which, after mature consideration, it is deemed wise to take."

WHEN General Jackson became a candidate for the presidency of the United States he was the owner of a half interest in the land which is now the site of the city of Memphis. Judge Overton, his intimate friend and law partner, was the joint owner with him of this property, then rapidly rising in value. General Jackson, on becoming a presidential candidate, could not reconcile this speculative investment and ownership with his notions of the proprieties which should be observed by a man in such a public position. He accordingly made a deed of gift of his half-interest in this land, giving as his reason his conviction that a candidate for the high office of president of the United States ought not even to seem to be engaged in land speculation. Rather than assume this appearance of what he regarded as a public impropriety, General Jackson chose to give away an exceedingly valuable property.

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ODD ACCIDENTS.

MANY WAYS TO COME TO DEATH. The Numerous Perils of the Season. A water-bug range in a Brooklyn house exploded and scalded a two-year-old boy so that he died.

A Maryland boy, lost his ball in a barrel of water, and was drowned in trying to recover it. A negro barber at Lexington, Ky., had his thumb bitten off by another negro in a quarrel and died in consequence.

A twelve-year-old boy of Jackson, Mich., fell down a coal shaft, twenty-five feet head first, striking upon a boiler from floor, but escaped without any material damage.

A drunken Martinburg (N. Y.) man lost his way home and finally got to driving on the railroad track. A train came along and killed the horse, but the drunken driver escaped unharmed.

A Hungarian couple were married at Stevator, Ind., and the jovial bridegroom on his way home fired his revolver three times, the last shot entering the back of a friend and lodging in the right lung.

Two Palmyra boys went out hunting, and took to amusing themselves by tossing up their hats and landing at them in the air. Finally as one of them raised his gun to fire at the other's mark, the wad went off, putting its load in his playmate's face and killing him on the spot.

A Wurzburg (N. Y.) man was cutting trees in the woods and felled one which struck upon a sapling, bending it to the ground. He cut a piece from the tree, and was about to cut another, but struck the sapling with his axe, up instantly, striking him in the neck and cutting up ward through the forehead, inflicting injuries which caused his death three days later.

STATS ITEMS. Treasury Rep., Rep. Until a better man is suggested we are for H. C. The Cumberland county Democratic committee met at Carlisle on Saturday and elected H. K. Peffer senatorial and John Graham and M. Gussler representative delegate to the state convention. A resolution instructing them to support James H. Hooten for governor was unanimously adopted.

The Wilkesbarre Record, Governor Hoyt's home organ, pronounces in favor of George Shiras, of Pittsburgh, for judge of the supreme court, on the ticket with Butler for governor. It is only a coincidence that Mr. Shiras recently admitted Governor Hoyt as a partner in a qualified partnership in his extensive practice.

A Woman Shot in Her Own House. In Washington, Mrs. John L. Connors, wife of a well-known contractor, living at 480 New York street, shot dead through the window of her house by some person as yet unknown. A drunken driver, named Miles, who was in front of the house about the time of the shooting, has been arrested on suspicion.

A Boy's Confession. In Lawrence, Mass., Maurice O'Brien, aged thirteen, has confessed that he set fire to the industrial school building, of which he was an inmate, and which was burned on the 31st instant.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE.

"THE MCGIBNEY HORROR." Our Medical Family to be Inhabited. The following editorial from to-day's New York Herald relates to the McGibney family, so well-known here: "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is again upon the war path. It seems that a certain prolific Mr. McGibney proposed to appear at Steiway hall, surrounded by his exceedingly numerous family (the figures are variously reported, but a late census, which seems to be reliable, puts the offspring at about one dozen) and there and then proposed to compel these children to produce by means of certain undescribed, but probably only and instruments various kinds of alleged harmonious and pleasing character. Some inhuman persons have wickedly suggested that many of these children are well able to take care of themselves, being of an age which it would be ungalant to have Mr. McGibney mention about a whole lot of them, nothing daunted by these outrageous falsehoods, after a magnificently planned and brilliantly conducted campaign, has wrested, or is about to wrest, from the clutches of its unnatural parents a McGibney (the figure is a small electric machine, and made or allowed to operate it. When the child struck it with what appeared to be a stick it gave forth a noise which was noticed that at the same time the child assumed a pained and happy expression, undoubtedly caused by some cruelly contrived electric apparatus concealed in the coat tail pocket of the fenestrated parent, and connected by hidden wires down his trousers' legs across the stage and up the spine of the really unhappy infant. At least Mr. Gerry must have intended this way, else he should be in trouble. This awful state of affairs is not to be allowed to exist any longer. The McGibneys have been swooped down upon by Mr. Gerry and his gallant men, his honor the mayor is to hear the case to-day. Mr. Gerry is to produce the infant and the drum. He has not yet secured the concealed instruments of torture, but undoubtedly will find them in time, for it would be an awful and a wolf defeat of justice were they missing and the case to-day. Mr. Gerry is to produce the question whether it is a cruelty to other than the audience to allow a boy to beat a drum in a place of public amusement."

A Device to Remove a Physician. As Dr. A. J. Erwin, of Mansfield, Ohio, returned home about midnight, he was shot in the right breast with a double-barreled shotgun which some one had set so that the opening of the gate to his residence would discharge both barrels about the case to-day. Mr. Gerry is to produce the gun was not over six feet from his breast, but owing to his heavy clothing the charge did not make a mortal wound. Nearly two hundred shot were found in his clothing and adjacent to the skin. There is no clue to the perpetrator of the crime.

A Burglar's Fatal Jump. In New York, John Horan was awakened early by a burglar breaking into his room, situated on the second floor of a tenement house in Greenwich street. He got out of bed, when the burglar took flight and jumped out of the window on to the fire-escape, but missing his footing he fell to the ground and was killed. He was recognized as Thomas Hutten, aged 28, known to the police as a professional thief and worthless character.

LANCASTER STEEL WORKS.

Twenty Acres of Ground and \$125,000 Wanted to Establish a "Continuous Roll" in this City. Following is a copy of a letter received by the mayor which explains itself. It is worthy the serious consideration of Lancaster capitalists:

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 28, 1882. Hon. John T. MacGonigle, Mayor of City of Lancaster, Pa. DEAR SIR—My object in addressing you this letter is to call the attention of yourself and other prominent citizens of your city to an improved train of rolls for which I hold letters patent from the U. S. government. It is the intention of myself and others with whom I have become associated to build a rolling mill at some convenient point, for the manufacture of steel rails from blooms, which can be supplied here or from foreign countries.

The many advantages gained by my patents will enable us to make and put upon the market, in addition to rails, all heavy iron and steel shapes, such as girders, channels and I-beams, and iron and steel used in the construction of bridges, buildings of every description, at much better profits than can be done by any manufacturer under the present system. You will readily see therefore how much a city like yours would be benefited by locating such a work within your corporate limits. The amount of business it would create and the large sums of money it would cause to flow into your city ought to be a sufficient inducement to solicit from your capitalists and business men such aid as would insure its permanent success. To do so, it will require a piece of ground of sufficient size to build the mill and to enable us to lay tracks necessary to carry material to and from the works. This ought not to be less than twenty (20) acres. I do not expect the capitalists of your city to subscribe one-half of the capital stock to build the works and furnish stock to commence operations. This would require not less one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, (\$125,000). If this amount, with the lands, is furnished by the citizens of Lancaster, the capitalists will raise an equal amount, and thus secure to your city one of the most important manufacturing establishments in the state.

We have no delusion in laying before you this proposition, from the fact that in addition to the vast amount of money it would bring into Lancaster, and the attending benefits which would accrue to the business men of your city, it would doubtless prove the best paying investment your capitalists ever made.

Should you and other gentlemen of your city, think favorably of our proposition, you shall be glad to furnish any information you may desire, and confer with you further in reference to its success at such times and place as may suit your convenience. An early answer will confer a favor on yours respectfully, CHRISTOPHER LEWIS, 3108 Park Avenue, Philadelphia.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT. North Queen Street Brilliantly Illuminated. Following closely the example of Mr. S. S. Spencer, who introduced the electric light into a part of No. 2, last week ago, Shultz Bros., the hat and milliners, in the corner of North Queen and Market streets, have introduced a similar apparatus—the Fuller patent—on Saturday evening. The steam engine and apparatus by which the electricity is generated is placed in a building at the rear of the store, and the pipes, which carry the electric wires connect with three lamps, one of which is placed near the centre of Shultz's store, another in Mr. Rosenstein's store, and a third is hung outside over the sidewalk, between the two stores. The apparatus worked to a charm; both stores were illuminated with a pure white light as brilliant as sunlight, but easy to look upon, as the flame was shaded with white transparent globes. The outside lamp illuminated the street with a wonderful countenance with the sickly yellow gas, and the electric wires connect with three lamps, one of which is placed near the centre of Shultz's store, another in Mr. Rosenstein's store, and a third is hung outside over the sidewalk, between the two stores. The apparatus worked to a charm; both stores were illuminated with a pure white light as brilliant as sunlight, but easy to look upon, as the flame was shaded with white transparent globes. The outside lamp illuminated the street with a wonderful countenance with the sickly yellow gas, and the electric wires connect with three lamps, one of which is placed near the centre of Shultz's store, another in Mr. Rosenstein's store, and a third is hung outside over the sidewalk, between the two stores. The apparatus worked to a charm; both stores were illuminated with a pure white light as brilliant as sunlight, but easy to look upon, as the flame was shaded with white transparent globes. 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