

SPEECH OF

HON. C. T. ALEXANDER.

The first bill in order was Senate bill No. 49, entitled An act to secure to operatives and laborers engaged in and about coal mines and manufactories of iron and steel, the payment of their wages at regular intervals and in lawful money of the United States.

The PRESIDENT. The question is on the final passage of the bill.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, the two great moving forces that have made this country all that it is are capital and labor. Under our beneficent form of free government these two forces have been working together for the general improvement and development of the wonderful natural resources with which nature has so bountifully endowed this great country.

In the organization of our government our forefathers, recognizing the right of all men to a fair start in the race of life, declared that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The common desire of all men is to live in ease with all the comforts of life at their command. Human nature is never satisfied, and the comforts of life are insufficient to satisfy our longing, craving nature.

All men are engaged in the same struggle of life—each one striving for more, and in the eagerness with which they pursue the phantom wealth they often abuse and gouge and trip up each other.

Is there any real conflict between them? We hear from all sides that capital invested in industrial pursuits does not bring to its owners a sufficient recompense.

ing still; our coal operators complain that they can make no profits; the laboring men who work in these several branches of industry complain that they are insufficiently paid—both sides are telling the truth—neither capital or labor are receiving the returns they did during what we call "flush times."

Others say that labor oppresses capital and demands of it more than it can pay. That both allegations are sometimes true, I have no doubt.

Our toiling farmers, as a general rule, have no money from spring to fall; they employ labor at lower figures than any other branch of industry, and are compelled to pay their hired men with an order on a country store, at least to furnish him with his necessities in this way.

Valentine & Co., engaged in the manufacture of charcoal iron, near Bellefonte, for more than twenty years prior to 1876 had no store, but paid their men in cash at the end of every week.

They were not disposed to run their works at a loss, and there was but one of three things to do: First, to stop their works and leave all their men to shift for themselves; or, second, to reduce their wages and thus bring the cost of the production within the market value.

They found that they were paying out in money to their employes about one hundred thousand dollars per year. That their men spent all this money with the merchants in the purchase of goods, and that these merchants were making a profit of from twenty to fifty per cent upon their money, which, if they could retain, they could afford to run their works.

side of their employes. They also say that some of their employes, who for twenty years under the cash system accumulated nothing, now having growing balances to their credit. I have heard no complaint from any of these men, but I have heard complaints by outside parties—by other merchants who have, of course, lost the custom of these men, and a few laboring men who have received these orders second hand; I have not heard any complaints from any of the employes of any of the other iron manufactories.

Section seven, article three, of the Constitution, provides that the General Assembly shall not pass any local or special law * * * changing the rules of evidence in any judicial proceeding, or inquiry before court, alderman, justices of the peace, * * *

But whether it be unconstitutional or not, is not the policy of such a law bad? All men are equal before the law, and each man should be left free to make his own contracts in his own way, so long as he does not interfere with the rights of others.

The amendment I have proposed does not interfere with the right of capital and labor to contract with each other, and it makes the order that may be issued in payment of labor, buy as much as would that much money.

I call the attention of the Senators to the seventh section of the third article of the Constitution, in which it says, "The General Assembly shall not pass any local or special law," referring to different things, but the point to which I wish to call attention is that it shall not pass any local or special law "regulating labor, trade, mining or manufacturing."

As I understand it, a special law is a law that is not general, that applies to certain portions of a class instead of to all that come within that class; that this law applies to three industrial pursuits instead of being applicable to all branches of industry where labor is employed, and therefore the law is special, not local, in its character, but it is special in its features, and therefore prohibited.

Now, so far as I am concerned myself, I am as anxious as any Senator on this floor to relieve the laboring man of the burdens under which he suffers from day to day, and if there is anything that can be done within the limits of the Constitution with a due regard to the rights of others, capital as well as labor, I will join hand in hand with any Senator upon this floor and go as far as he. But this will not reach the end sought, and if it is passed I verily believe that unless those engaged in the manufacturing of charcoal iron are permitted to make this profit out of their goods instead of allowing the profit to go into the hands of others, who give labor to no man, who

are intermediate men in society, who create no wealth, who only accumulate from the profits of labor, and if that money is allowed to go into other hands and manufacturing industries are compelled to pay cash from week to week, it will not be two months until every one of them will be stopped, and the laboring man will be out of employment, and he will have to go elsewhere, he will have to become a tramp and search for work in some other place, and it seems to me that this bill could be so amended as to render it unobjectionable or nearly so, and if I had been present when this bill was on third reading, I should have made this amendment. I will indicate the amendment, and then I shall ask to reconsider the vote, by which this bill passed third reading, in order to introduce this amendment.

That every corporation, co-partnership, firm or individual doing any business within this Commonwealth in which laborers are employed shall pay their laborers or employes at stated periods in money or merchandise or other commodity, as may be agreed upon between the parties at the time of the contract of hiring, and in accordance with the terms thereof, and it shall be unlawful for any corporation, co-partnership, firm or individual, doing business as aforesaid, to knowingly and willfully charge their employes more or a greater price for any article of merchandise furnished than that at which the same article and quality of merchandise is sold at for cash in the same town or neighborhood by other merchants or others trading in such articles.

The second section of the bill reaches another class in the community, people who are simply merchants, who are not engaged in manufacturing, and upon whom orders are drawn by farmers, lumbermen, machine shop men, planing mill men, and manufacturing enterprises of all kinds. These orders are drawn upon them, and the second section is intended to reach that class of our people, and to prevent them from selling upon orders drawn upon them at a greater price than they would have received for their goods if they had been paid for in cash, and it reaches that class of our community and puts everybody on a par, everybody on the same footing, on the same plane.

Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which this bill passed third reading.

It would be as unjust to gauge the industries of the whole North, and the condition of its laboring population, in the matter of wages and the comforts of life, by the actual facts of the anthracite coal region, as it is to judge the South by the exceptional labor troubles in Northern Louisiana and some counties of Mississippi.

That the South is fairly prosperous, and the relations of capital and labor—of employer and employed—are as amicable as elsewhere in the country, we have pretty conclusive evidence in the great products of that section. The South has done an important part in creating that balance of trade which has brought about specie resumption. The cotton production of ten Southern States growing the staple, in 1878 amounted to nearly five millions of bales and the exportation of cotton to foreign countries, to nearly two hundred millions of dollars, a sum that very nearly covers the balance of foreign trade in our favor.

WHAT is supposed to be the largest tree in the Southern States is a tulip-bearing poplar near Augusta Ga., which is 155 feet high and nine feet in diameter, its lowest branches being fifty-five feet from the ground.

LECTURING AN ITEM.

The following little story teaches caution in the use of pronouns:

Mr. Tucker came into the editorial room of a local paper, and sliding up to the reporter's table, he took a seat and nudged up close and said:

"Just take it down now, and I'll give you a good item. Ready?"

"Yes. Go ahead!"

"Well, this morning, Mrs. Tucker—my wife, you know—and her daughter Bessie were driving out with a bay mare, named Kittie, along the river road, to see her aunt."

"Whose aunt?"

"Mrs. Tucker's aunt. To see her aunt, Bessie was driving the mare, and a little after they had passed Stapleton Place she threw one of her shoes."

"Bessie did!"

"No, Kittie, the mare. And Bessie said to her mother that she thought she was behaving queerly."

"Mrs. Tucker was?"

"The mare; and she felt so worried that she had a notion to turn back."

"Are you speaking of the mare or of Bessie?"

"I mean Bessie, of course. But she kept on limping and going kinder uneven until they were down by the gas works, when she laid back her ears and—"

"You don't mean Bessie's ears?"

"Certainly not."

"Go on, then. Mrs. Tucker laid back her ears?"

"The mare's ears. And just as they got on the bridge over the creek the mare gave a tilt to one side, and as Mrs. Tucker screamed, she let drive with both of her hind-legs, against the carriage."

"Are you referring to Mrs. Tucker or to the—"

"Kittie, the mare—and snapped both shafts off short. The next moment, before Mrs. Tucker or Bessie could save themselves, she went over the side, turning a complete somersault."

"You are now speaking of the mare?"

"Yes, the mare turned a complete somersault into the water. One of the traces remained unbroken, and of course, as Kittie went over she dragged the carriage after her, and Mrs. Tucker and Bessie went floundering into the creek. The mare at once struck out for the shore, and Bessie fortunately had presence of mind enough to grasp her by the tail. She had the blind-stagers, but it had passed off—"

"Not Bessie?"

"No—the mare; and as soon as she was being towed past Mrs. Tucker, she caught hold of her dress—"

"The mare's dress?"

"Bessie's dress; and it seemed for a minute the mare would bring them safely to land. But Mrs. Tucker's hold on the mare's tail loosened somehow, and—"

"You said Bessie had hold of the mare's tail."

"Did I? Well, so it was; and Mrs. Tucker hold of her dress."

"Whose dress?"

"Didn't I say Bessie's dress? Well, then, somehow Mrs. Tucker's hold loosened and—"

"Her hold of what?"

"Her hold of the mare—no, I must be mistaken; Bessie had hold of the mare's tail, while the mare was swimming, and the mare had hold of Mrs. Tucker's dress— That is Mrs. Tucker had hold of— Well, anyhow, she let go—"

"Mrs. Tucker let go?"

"Oh, I dunno; whoever had hold of the mare let go, and she went to the bottom like a stone."

"If I follow your meaning, it was the mare that went to the bottom?"

"My goodness man! Can't you understand? It wasn't the mare. The mare swam ashore."

"What did you say she went to the bottom for, then?"

"I didn't; it was Bessie."

"Bessie never said a word about it."

"You know what I mean. Bessie went to the bottom."

"And Mrs. Tucker swam ashore?"

"No, she didn't."

"Very well, then. Mrs. Tucker went to the bottom too?"

"No, she didn't either."

"Mrs. Tucker flew up in the air, then?"

"You think you're smart, don't you?"

"Well, go on and tell your story; we'll discuss that afterward. What did Bessie say when she got to the bottom?"

"I've a good mind to wallopp you."

"What did she say that for?"

"You mud-headed idiot," said Mr. Tucker, "give me any more of your insolence, and I'll flay you alive. I was going to give you a good item about that mare, and what Mrs. Tucker said about her turning somersaults all the way home, but now I'll see you hanged first."

The reporter got behind the desk, lifted up a chair to ward off a missile, and then he said calmly:

"What was Mrs. Tucker's object in turning somersaults all the way home?"

COMPAINT is made in Leadville that the whiskey is nothing but snow water scented with vitrol. When 800 gallons can be drawn from one barrel it is time for even a dairyman to blush.

At the evening celebration of the 1,800th anniversary of the destruction at Pompeii a bottle of wine taken from the ruins, where it had lain since A. D. 79 is to be opened.

A BURLINGTON blacksmith has just established a "conservatory of horse shoeing."

For Better or Worse.

From the Detroit Free Press.

The old man Bendigo keeps a pretty sharp eye on his daughter Mary, and many a would-be lover has taken a walk after a few minutes conversation with the hard-hearted parent. The old chap is struck this time, however, and cards are out for a wedding. After the lucky young man had been sparking Mary for six months the old gentleman stepped in as usual, requested a private confab, and led off with:

"You seem like a nice young man, and perhaps you are in love with Mary?"

"Yes, I am," was the honest reply.

"Haven't said any thing to her yet, have you?"

"Well, no; but I think she reciprocates my affection."

"Does, eh? Well, let me tell you something. Her mother died a lunatic, and there's no doubt that Mary has inherited her insanity."

"I'm willing to take the chances," replied the lover.

"Yes, but you see Mary has a terrible temper. She has twice drawn a knife on me with intent to commit murder."

"I'm used to that—got a sister just like her," was the answer.

"And you should know that I have sworn a solemn oath not to give Mary a cent of my property," continued the father.

"Well, I'd rather starve in poor and build up. There's more romance in it."

The old man had one more shot in his carbine, and he said:

"Perhaps I ought to tell you that Mary's mother ran away from my home with a butcher, and that all her relatives died in the poor-house. These things might be thrown up in after years, and I now warn you."

"Mr. Bendigo," replied the lover, "I've heard all this before and also that you were on trial for forgery, had to jump Chicago for bigamy, and serve a year in state prison for cattle-stealing. I'm going to marry into your family to give you a decent reputation! There—no thanks—good-by!"

Mr. Bendigo looked after the young man with his mouth wide open, and when he could get his jaws together, he said:

"Some infernal hyena has went and given me away on my dodge."

NEW HAMPSHIRE is having a rather singular experience in regard to taxation. The last Legislature passed a law providing that schedules should be furnished citizens, which they must fill up with inventories of their property and swear to, as the basis on which taxes are to be assessed. The old system left the rating to the assessors, and the new law was at first very unpopular. Pretty much everybody seemed to be down on it, and no doubt was felt that the next Legislature would repeal it. But now that they are beginning to enforce it, people find that the new plan works a great deal better than they expected.

The most striking result is the great increase in taxable property reported, which, in some towns, reaches \$100,000; over four times as much money is returned as being at interest in the towns thus far heard from as last year. Of course, this increase in the amount of property liable to taxation renders it possible correspondingly to reduce the percentage of taxation and the net result promises to be so much more advantageous to the average tax-payer that public sentiment is fast shifting to approval of the new law and there is little probability of its repeal.

A QUEER PIONEER.—A fellow-traveler was a dapper young man, dressed in the latest style, with white tie and lavender kids. Now he would brush his immaculate stove pipe hat and now adjust his eye-glasses to scan some new-comer. His incipient moustache seemed to be a source of constant care but he divided his attention between this and a couple of hounds, his traveling companions. On either side of the aisle hung his two canaries in separate cages and on a brilliant rug slept a Spitz dog. As learned during the forenoon, he had come from Chicago and was going to Leadville, and proposed to rent a few rooms in some first-class hotel and in the afternoon go out and prospect a little. In this way he expected to realize a fortune within six months. Just now he is picking his way daintily across the muddy street, with a cage in each hand and the dogs at his heels.

A VERY remarkable wedding anniversary occurred a few days since in the town of Weston, Fairfield county, Conn., in a house whose great stone chimney and siding of long weather beaten shingles indicate that it was built before the Revolution. In this house Mr. Zalmon Sturges, aged nearly 98, and Ann, his wife, aged 94, celebrated the seventy-fourth anniversary of their marriage. Mr. Sturges is a healthy, well-preserved gentleman, and both he and his wife remember the principal events of the past seventy-five years.

How was the world made? is being discussed in scientific magazines. We weren't there, but we suppose they got all the subscriptions they could raise along the survey and then bonded the rest of the work and pushed it through.

WHEN a rooster gets mad does he become a crow-cus?