

The Centre Democrat.



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FRANK E. BIBLE, Editor

DEMOCRATIC COUNTY TICKET.

FOR JURY COMMISSIONER,
JOHN RHONE.
FOR CORONER,
DR. H. K. HOY.

TO THE EDITOR:—The signers of the document annexed respectfully request its insertion in your paper, as a favor to a good cause.

The above modest request, is the heading to a little circular recommending certain text-books on Temperance Hygiene, and is signed by a number of Reverends, M. D's, Lecturers etc. We would cheerfully do anything in our power to aid the temperance cause, and our columns are open to anything that will have a tendency to make our people temperate in all things. But under the guise of temperance we don't propose to do a lot of free advertising for a certain publishing house which is trying to introduce its books into the schools of State, "As a favor to a good cause" we respectfully decline to advertise the three "books most fully approved to this end."

Not in many years have the people of Centre county been so much aroused, so heartily in earnest or so unanimous in sentiment as they are to-day on the question of the sale, consolidation or merger of the Beech Creek, Clearfield and Southwestern railroad with the Pennsylvania system of roads. They are not up in arms against a great corporation, but because it seeks to destroy or break up competing systems to the detriment of the people of Pennsylvania. All that the people of Centre county ask of any corporation is that it shall be subject to the fundamental law of the State: as much so as the humblest citizen; that the course of trade and commerce shall not be checked or trammelled by the absorption of rival and competing lines of railroad; that the chartered rights of individuals shall be respected by corporations. They do not want their business to be at the mercy of any one railroad or system of railroads. These demands are modest, they are rights and privileges which are guaranteed by the laws of the State.

THE present management of the Railroads between this place and Lewisburg is gathering laurels, by the manner in which the people of Penns Valley are accommodated in the running of trains. A train leaves Rising Springs (Spring Mills) about 4:30 A. M. and arrives in Bellefonte to connect with the train West on the B. E. V. Road. Returning on the arrival of the train East on B. E. V. to Lemont, at Lemont it connects with a train from Lewisburg, and returns to Bellefonte. Leaving Bellefonte on the arrival of the night train it goes as far as Spring Mills. Thus nobody along the line is accommodated. Freight can be shipped cheaper from Oak Hall via Montandon, P. & E., & B. E. V., to Bellefonte, than direct to Bellefonte via B. N. & L. R. R. Penns Valley merchants can get freight from Philadelphia the next day after it is shipped. Bellefonte merchants have to wait three or four days. Express charges are about fifty per cent. higher at Bellefonte than Spring Mills. These are some of the complaints made against the management by our citizens. It takes two days to go to Millheim and back by rail. Coburn, which would be the most important station on the road, as four wealthy and populous townships are tributary to it, is merely a way station. We don't know on which end of the double headed management the blame rests, but an application of common sense to the business management of the road would help matters.

Great Railroad Mass Meeting.

Pursuant to a call, the people of Bellefonte, Nittany, and Bald Eagle Valleys assembled to enter their solemn protest against the destruction of competing railroad lines, and to declare that the constitutional provision known as the XVII Section shall be applied to Railroad corporations in its letter and spirit. The immediate cause of action was the deal by which the Beech Creek road passes into the hands of the Pennsylvania Company. Gen. Jas. A. Beaver was elected President, and the following named gentlemen were chosen Vice Presidents—E. H. Carr, Milesburg; Jno. M. Wagner, Boggs twp; Hon. Jno. A. Woodward, Howard; D. J. Meyer, Potter twp; Moses Tompson, Colledge; Robt Volentine, Bellefonte, N. W.; Adolph Loeb, Bellefonte, S. W.; W. V. Emery, Bellefonte, W. W.; A. Walters, Millheim; A. S. Valentine, Spring twp; Hon. B. F. Hunter, Benner twp; L. W. Kimport, Harris twp; Joe W. Furey of the Watchman, Geo. P. Bible of the Democrat, and N. S. Bailey of the News, were elected Secretaries. Hon. Jno. H. Orvis, E. C. Humes, and J. L. Spangler, Esq., were appointed a committee on Resolutions. While the Committee was absent Gen. Beaver addressed the meeting as follows:

The transportation of person and property from one point to another has become so essential to personal comfort and success in business, that whatever touches the freedom of such transportation, touches popular rights and awakens popular protest. We are met this evening in answer to a modest little hand-bill circulated throughout our town and its vicinity calling upon all citizens who deem it important to the business interests of the community, that the Beech Creek, Clearfield, & Southwestern Railroad retain its present connection with the Reading system, to meet in public meeting in this place at this time.

It is well known that the railroad referred to in the circular which invites us to meet here, is now operated under a traffic contract with what is known as the Reading System of Railroads in Pennsylvania, which is one of the few competitors for public trade and traffic of our great and growing system of railroads known as the Pennsylvania system. It is also well known to our people that an effort has been made and is now being made to form a connection with the Beech Creek, Clearfield & Southwestern Railroad by a line of road running from Pine Grove on our southern border to Beech Creek in Clinton County just opposite our north-eastern border, which road with its branches would be about 50 miles long, and would traverse for, at least, half that distance a region which has no railroad facilities of any kind, and whose mineral and agricultural resources would be largely developed by its construction. If the Beech Creek Clearfield & Southwestern Railroad should pass out of the control of its present management and into the control of the Pennsylvania system as public rumor asserts it is likely to do, there would be little use in the construction of this new line of railroad through our county, and the probabilities are that it would not be built; at least not in such a way as to give us a competitor for our railroad traffic.

We come together to-night I trust, as business men, looking at our business interests in a business way, ready and willing to express our sentiments upon a great public question in a calm and dispassionate and at the same time, in a firm and decided way. It is not necessary to heap abuse upon any corporation or the men who manage it; it is not necessary to inveigh against corporate power and corporate greed. No good can be accomplished by this mode of discussion. We stand face to face with a great absorbing public problem, one which must be considered and finally acted upon by the people in some one of their several aggregate capacities; which reaches far beyond the immediate subject before us to-night, and involves not only public welfare and our individual interests, but the maintenance of rights already granted, and the consideration of privileges to corporations by

the people in the future. In the discussion of such a subject in which we are interested in some measure on both sides, we need to guard against prejudice and the extremes of feeling, and by calm discussion and temperate action determine the proper course to be pursued, and then follow it without swerving, to a final conclusion. The object for which this meeting has been called as I understand it, embraces but a single phase of this great subject and relates to a single transaction. Two questions present themselves to my mind as involved in the proposed transfer of this new system of railroads to the older and better established system which seeks to absorb it. One is, would such a transfer be legal, and the other is, if technically legal, would it not be an invasion of popular rights, such as should be resisted by every legitimate means within the power of the people?

In 1873, by a popular majority of 144, 150, the people of this Commonwealth declared that "No railroad or canal corporations shall consolidate the stock, property or franchises, or in any way control any other railroad or canal corporation owning or having under its control a parallel or competing line; nor shall any of the officers of any such railroad or canal corporation act as an officer of any railroad or canal corporation owning or having control of a parallel or competing line; and the question whether railroads or canals are parallel or competing lines, shall, when demanded by a party complainant, be decided by a jury as in other civil issues."

This Section of Article 17, of our Revised Constitution, was adopted in its final passage by the Constitutional Convention chosen by the people to reform our Constitution, by a vote of 76 yeas to 11 nays. And it is safe to say that if that section of the Constitution had been submitted singly to the people of this Commonwealth for adoption or rejection, nine-tenths of all the voters of the Commonwealth would have voted in favor of its adoption. There has been no popular delirium upon this subject since the vote upon the adoption of our new constitution, and it is safe, therefore, to assume that our people are in favor now of what they declared themselves to be in favor of when they voted upon that question in the fall of 1873. Many questions have arisen since the organization of our present railroad system which were not anticipated or foreseen at the time of the inception of the system. This question of competing lines is one of them; the importance of it not having been appreciated by the former generation, because they had no knowledge of the possibility of a monopoly of the carrying trade in the hands of private corporations. When our turnpikes were built, they were free to all who chose to travel upon them and pay their tolls. When our canals were built they were free to the boats of every individual who chose to transport the goods of his neighbors for a consideration in case they paid the legal rate of toll. Our railroads introduced a new system of transportation and made the general system which had been in vogue prior to their construction impracticable. It is manifestly impossible for two competing common carriers to use the same line of railroad. The only means by which the people can secure competition in railroad transportation, therefore, is by parallel or practically parallel lines of road controlled by different and competing interests. This was demonstrated within the first twenty years after the building of our first line of railroad through Pennsylvania. Upon the first opportunity the people of the State declared in favor of the maintenance when established of such competing lines and against their consolidation or merger directly or indirectly. For the first time in the history of our community we have come within sight of an opportunity to be served by such competitors for public traffic and public favor. The questions for us to determine to-night are, first, do we stand by the provision which was incorporated in our Constitution of 1873, above recited, and secondly, will we insist by voice, vote and influence in compelling our public servants, legislature and executive to carry out the said provision in its true intent and spirit? If we are so determined, and if our fellow-citizens throughout Pennsylvania show a like determination with us, there can be no doubt that the Beech Creek, Clearfield & Southwestern Railroad will remain as it

is, an independent line competing for trade and traffic with our other transportation companies. I have not the time to-night to discuss as they should be discussed the two questions, which, as I have stated, underlie this proposition. I believe that the contemplated transfer and merger of the Beech Creek road would be both illegal and subversive of the rights of the people. Whatever may be said as to the superiority of any corporation to our present Constitution, it is certain that the transfer of any road incorporated since the adoption of our present Constitution to any other company by which its independence and competing power would be destroyed ought to and would forfeit its franchises, so that the people would have the right to confer them upon a corporation which would carry out the provisions of the Constitution in their true intent and meaning. It is in my judgment undoubtedly the duty of the Executive to interfere in such an emergency by all the legal power at his command to prevent such a transfer; and in case it were consummated, to have it declared null and void. In case this were declared impossible or impracticable, then it becomes the duty of the people in their sovereign capacity to take hold of the question, and by the election of legislators and executive who will obey their will, pass and execute such laws as will compel obedience to the plain mandate of the Constitution. All citizens are alike interested in this question. Our railroad companies are also interested in it. They can not afford to disregard popular protest and trample upon popular rights. So far as our immediate surroundings are concerned, if I were a stockholder of the Bald Eagle Valley Railroad, I would prefer as a matter of business that the contemplated road from Pine Grove to Beech Creek should be built. It would undoubtedly send two tons of freight over the Bald Eagle Railroad for every ton which would be diverted from it. The great iron region which it develops would send its raw materials and its manufactured product in very large measure over the Bald Eagle and Pennsylvania systems, and trade instead of being restrained would be largely increased to the mutual advantage of both railroads. While this may not be true to the same extent of the Beech Creek road, it is nevertheless true that the region through which it passes will develop a vast amount of traffic sufficient to make the road a paying investment without touching an acre of coal land previously reached by the Pennsylvania system. Be this as it may, however, in the present arrangement what we have the right to demand is parallel and competing lines. We now have practically parallel and competing lines. No jury could be empaneled in Pennsylvania who would fail to find this as a substantive fact. If this be true, we have a right to have them continue so. And as I understand the object of this meeting, we are met to demand that this right be respected. There is but one sentiment upon this subject so far as I know in our community, and it is meet that this sentiment should have formal expression. What is your pleasure in regard to the further conduct of the meeting?

At the conclusion of the General's speech, which was received with rounds of applause, the committee on resolutions reported, J. L. Spangler, the Secretary, read them in a clear tone of voice.

WHEREAS, Within the last three years a railroad company has been incorporated under the laws of this Commonwealth called "The Beech Creek Clearfield and Southwestern Railroad Company," which company is constructing and now operating a railroad from Jersey Shore in the county of Lycoming to Gazzan in the county of Clearfield, which road passes through the counties of Clinton and Centre, and forms a parallel and competing line of railroad with railroads previously constructed, owned or operated by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, by reason of which this and adjoining counties are receiving the benefits and advantages of competition in freight and passenger transportation; and

WHEREAS, we are informed by well authenticated rumor that the Pennsylvania Railroad Company is negotiating to acquire a majority of the stock of the said Beech Creek, Clearfield and Southwestern Railroad Company in order to control its management and operation, thereby practically consolidating it with the Pennsylvania Railroad system, and hereby destroying any competition which now exists between the said Beech Creek, Clearfield and Southwestern Railroad and the railroads owned or leased and operated by the

Pennsylvania Railroad Company; and WHEREAS, Section 4 of Article 17 of the Constitution of Pennsylvania prohibits any railroad company from purchasing, leasing or in any manner acquiring control of any other railroad company owning or having under its control a parallel or competing line; and

WHEREAS, The Constitution of Pennsylvania is the supreme law of this Commonwealth and all the public officers, whether belonging to the legislative, executive or judicial departments of our State government, are required to take an oath to "support, obey and defend" the Constitution, including all its provisions; therefore,

Resolved, First, That we, the citizens of Centre county, in mass-meeting assembled, protest against the proposed acquisition of the Beech Creek, Clearfield and Southwestern Railroad as being in violation of the provisions of the Constitution and subversive of public rights and interests.

Second, That we call upon the chief executive of the Commonwealth and all the public officers to use all the power vested in them by the constitution and laws of this state to prevent the consolidation of the Beech Creek, Clearfield and Southwestern Railroad with the Pennsylvania Railroad system and thereby prevent an open and flagrant violation of the Constitution and irreparable injury to the business interests of this section of the State.

Third, That we hereby pledge our influence and votes in favor of those who will honestly and in good faith attempt to carry into effect the provisions of the Constitution of this state relating to and controlling railroad companies and other carrying corporations.

Hon. John A. Woodward moved the adoption of the resolutions, which were seconded by T. P. Rynder, of Milesburg. The resolutions were unanimously adopted, and the following petition signed by hundreds of citizens:

BELLEFONTE, August 20, 1885.
To Hon. Robert E. Pattison, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

The undersigned citizens of Centre county having assembled in mass meeting and passed resolutions expressive of our views in regard to the proposed transfer or merger of the Beech Creek, Clearfield and Southwestern Railroad and with the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, beg leave to transmit herewith the resolutions adopted at our meeting and to petition your Excellency to use all the powers with which the Constitution and the laws of Pennsylvania invest you to prevent said transfer, or if consummated to have it declared null and void.

We have the honor to be with high regard

Your obedient servants—

Judge Orvis then spoke on the Resolutions. His speech was pronounced one of the most masterly statements of the legal phases of the question, and of the mutual rights of corporations and individuals and of their respective duties under the constitution ever heard in Bellefonte. There seemed to be no doubt in the Judge's mind as to a Jury declaring the Beech Creek line to be a competing line with the Pennsylvania system, and that any transfer, merger or sale of that road to the Penn. Co., would be in violation of the constitution and be null and void. Judge Orvis' speech was listened to with intense interest by those present, and it was so plain and to the point that all could understand. J. L. Spangler, T. P. Rynder, Aaron Williams, Hon. C. T. Alexander, D. S. Keller, and D. F. Fortney, followed.

The speeches of these gentlemen were a clear statement of the grievances of which the people of the state complain. They were able, eloquent and temperate, but expressed a determination to submit to no violation of the chartered rights of the people without a fight. The one feature about the speeches of the evening was the entire absence of any thing like agitation or appeals to the prejudices of the populace. Every speech was listened to to its conclusion. For nearly three hours men stood and listened without a murmur. A table was placed on the Court House porch and the petition was signed as fast as men could write their names. Many were compelled to leave on account of the lateness of the hour, who have since signed.

LOUISVILLE, Ky., August 22.—Advices from all the counties in the State give Tate (Dem), for Treasurer, a majority of 67,597 over Fox (Pro), who is supported by the Republicans. This is the tenth time Tate has been elected Treasurer.

—Wedding cards and all kinds of printing at the CENTRE DEMOCRAT office.

Gen. Beavers Address.

We give in the proceedings of the Railroad meeting of last week, Gen. Beavers speech in full. In view of the fact that the Republicans of the state look to the general as their standard bearer in the coming gubernatorial struggle, and that his party leaders, refused to pass an anti-discrimination bill last winter, or to incorporate a plank of that nature in their platform, his position is away in advance of the fellows who run the machine. We have heard the question asked by the General's party friends in town as to "how will it effect him in the state?" Looking at it from a political stand point, and from the stand point of a political opponent, we say that it can do him no harm, but much good. He has voiced the sentiments of our people and has made no enemies by it. But it is not the political consequences or result that we should look to nor is it fair to our fellow townsman to consider at, this time its political significance if it had any which it had not. Gen. Beavers views on public questions are those of a private citizen, deeply interested in the welfare of his county and state. For years he has been agitating the establishment of manufacturing industries in our midst, and increased railroad facilities. The railroads is one result of his efforts and the road from Pine Grove to Beech Creek if ever completed will in a very great measure be due to his energy and perseverance. His bold, manly, but conservative address is just what his fellow townsmen would expect from him. His interests are identical with those of every man in the county, and when called on to preside over their deliberations, not a man present considered his politics or what effect his speech might have a year hence. It was an expression of confidence on the part of our people without respect to party, which was doubtless very gratifying to him. The cause which called together the great mass meeting of our people is above and beyond politics, it is a vital, living growing, question which interests alike the laboring man, mechanic, farmer and capitalist. We hope to see the people of the entire state united on this question, every public man will have to face the issue and define his position, there can be no dodging it, it will be personal to every man asking for the suffrages of the voters of Pennsylvania. The last resolution adopted at the meeting settled that question so far as the voters of Centre county were concerned.

We regard Gen. Beaver's speech not as an "opening gun" of a political campaign, but as a public expression of views in accordance with his well-known character as a public spirited citizen, who has at heart the business and industrial interests of our town. Again we say it was a bold and manly deliverance and will do no harm, on a question of the inviolability of the constitution and the rights of the people, nobody can take issue with general Beaver. Every speaker of the evening, and they were among the ablest members of our bar took the same ground.

Ex-Judge Agnew's Opinion.

Ex-Judge Daniel Agnew publishes a long letter in the Press in which he clearly proves that the South Pennsylvania road cannot be legally abandoned, except by public sale to the highest bidder. He says:

"The subject of the purchase of the South Pennsylvania Railroad company is one of intense interest to a large part of this state. I am a pretty large stockholder in the Pennsylvania Railroad company and have not a cent of interest in the South Pennsylvania, and, notwithstanding, I am decidedly of the opinion the so-called purchase (be its form what it may) is a high handed wrong upon the people. Further, I think unless our courts of justice be extremely weak, any arrangement by which the South Pennsylvania railroad is purchased or destroyed will be pronounced illegal and ultra vires.