

THE MERIT IN THE BILL.

SECRET HISTORY OF THE PASSAGE OF THE HIGH LICENSE LAW.

Boodle Under a Billiard Table

The passage of the Brooks high license bill, the operation of which is just now causing dismay to thousands of liquor dealers, was a surprise even to the temperance men who advocated the measure, and just how the bill was passed in face of the tremendous influences, social, financial and political, which were brought against it is a mystery yet to the great body of the people.

The inside history of that important legislation was yesterday unfolded to a reporter for the Times by a member of the General Assembly, who has been in the swim of legislative proceedings for many years. He said:

You must understand in the first place that the whiskey men and the beer men of the liquor trade have never agreed. The vast and ever increasing consumption of lager beer to the detriment of the whiskey dealers created a jealousy on the part of the latter which ultimately resulted in the passage of the high license bill. I may say that it has not turned out as was expected and from present appearances the distiller and wholesale liquor dealer will be hit much harder by the operations of the bill than will the brewers. Of course they will all be hurt, but it looks to me as if the whiskey crowd have had legislation passed which must of necessity drive lots of them out of business or else bring them down to a materially reduced trade and immense loss of business. But we will speak of the results a little later on.

THE 'MERIT' OF THE BILL.

It is necessary for you to know, if you do not know it already, that the last Legislature gave greater chances for the turning of an honest penny by the members than any that has preceded it for years. There were a number of legislators—no name, if you please—who were ready at all times to be convinced that "merit" was in any bill if it was properly placed before them. In fact, there was hardly any piece of legislation of any importance brought up which did not bring out an eager search for the "merit" that might be in it. The boys were for the "merit" every time and they generally found it.

It was the "merit" which the whiskey men produced at the proper time that passed the Brooks' high license bill and it was the bungling manner in which the "merit" of the brewers was handled that prevented its defeat. The whiskey men wanted the bill and the brewers did not, and the former won. Why? Simply because the liquor end thought that if the license fee was fixed at \$500 the smaller beer saloons could not live, and with their closing there would be a large increase in whiskey drinking.

THE BIG WHISKEY POOL.

Of course there were many legislators who were conscientiously in favor of high license, and it did not take a very great number to either pass or defeat the bill. It was the few that found the "merit" and they were confined to the Senate. Smith & Friday of Pittsburgh, who are the biggest wholesale whiskey firms west of the mountains, were credited with being the representatives of the whiskey pool in that action, and Carstairs & McCull, of Philadelphia, worked up the interest in the east. That is to say, those two firms collected such funds as were deemed necessary to convince members of the Legislature of the "merit" in the bill.

All the liquor dealers wholesale I mean, or nearly all, are supposed to have contributed to the pool, but it is believed the inspiration came from Pittsburgh. You see, there had been a special bill previously passed for Allegheny county which placed the retail license at \$300, of which \$200 went to the county. It was found not to be large enough to wipe out the beer saloons, and the whiskey wholesalers of that city wanted it raised higher. To accomplish that end they had to pass a general bill for the whole state, and it became necessary to combine the liquor interests of all sections, which really meant, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

THE BREWER'S BLUNDER.

You will remember that Brooks had introduced his bill it hung for a long time in committee, where it had been

sent by the House. The boys were waiting to see what "merit" there was in it, and it was not until the bill had been recommitted that the brewers got it through their heads how necessary it was to discuss the "merit" of the bill with the boys. They learned, through friends at Harrisburg, that the measure was going through the House, and it was then, and only then, that they began to besite themselves.

Right at the beginning the brewers made their first and fatal blunder. If they had hunted the State over they could not have found a worse agent than the one they did select. They sent Harry P. Crowell up to the capital to see what could be done. Now Crowell had been a member of Common Council from the Twentieth ward and everybody had his measure. Full of talk and blow and conceit Crowell had impressed the brewers, for whom he was secretary, with his importance and shrewdness and they had every confidence in him in fact, they would trust nobody else.

ARRIVAL OF THE TWO AGENTS.

Well, when the boys found that they could only discuss the "merit" of the bill with Crowell they accepted the situation, although it was not to their liking, and they named their agent to do business with Crowell. This agent was instructed that \$75,000 would enlighten enough members of the House as to the lack of "merit" in the bill and insure its defeat. Crowell was told of the status of affairs, and hurried back to Philadelphia. Upon his return he was in company with William A. Miller of 929 Arch street and who, by the way, did not get a license.

The pair were very judicious in language and manner. They talked too much and acted like a couple of chumps. They had \$60,000 with them, and Miller has since boasted that he threw it under a billiard table while he was playing a game. Even before the agent of the boys could get to them it had leaked out that they were in Harrisburg to do business for the brewers. There was so much blow and so much talk that the boys were afraid to be seen in company with Crowell and Miller, for fear that they would be suspected. In spite of all this, the agent of the boys met Crowell and was ready to do business on whatever "merit" there might be in the high license bill.

MEETING OF THE AGENTS.

When they came together Crowell said that he had been unable to get the promised \$75,000 and that \$60,000 was all he could collect. That was a damper at the outset and the boys did not like the idea of having \$15,000 cut off at one clip, and some of them went so far as to declare that they believed that the \$75,000 had been gotten together and that they were to be squeezed out of \$15,000 of it. Nevertheless they instructed the agent to go ahead and make the dicker, and he started into talk business with Crowell who was very uppish and contrary the whole way through.

The Legislative agent first wanted the bag. He had been trusted in such matters before and supposed it would be all right. Crowell almost knocked him silly when he refused to turn over the money unless he was given a written receipt. He told Crowell that it was not customary to give receipts in transactions of that character, and that the best receipt he could possibly have would be the defeat of measure. But Crowell was obstinate and stubborn and would listen to nothing unless he had it all his own way. The agent got angry and was just about to leave Crowell when it occurred to him to try another tack.

THE AGENTS AND THE KEYS.

He told Crowell that a fair way to do would be to deposit the \$60,000 in a certain financial institution, which he named, with instructions to turn it over to him (the boys' agent) upon the defeat of the bill. Crowell was informed that the institution, which he named was perfectly safe and that to make it the more binding the money should only be drawn upon his own order. Crowell would not even agree to that and began again to bluster about getting a receipt and having the bill defeated before he put the money out of his hands.

Just about the time that the deal was about to be declared off, Crowell said that he would hire a small safe in a vault of a trust company and deposit the \$60,000 in it, but he wanted to keep a key to the safe himself, although he was willing that the agent

should also have one. The latter positively refused to enter into any such arrangement, and told Crowell flatly that he would not trust him, and after quite a wrangle everything was declared off, and Crowell was told that high license would go through the house without any trouble. Nobody after that would have anything to do with Crowell or his partner, although they hung around for several days.

NARROW ESCAPE FOR THE BOODLE.

You can bet the boys were mad. There were plenty of men who did favor high license, but thought that there should be some merit in its defeat. Crowell was stopping at the Russ House where he had the money with him. It was in all kinds of bills big and little, and made a large pile. Some of the boys were so mad that they put up a job to chloroform Crowell and rob him the last night, he was in Harrisburg, but he never went to bed and sat up with the bag by his side. If they had got away with it Crowell could not have squealed, but what a row there would have been.

The bill did go through the House and, after some little delay, it reached the Senate. It seemed sure of a passage in the upper chamber, but by that time the brewers had become thoroughly alarmed and Crowell came back to Harrisburg in the fastest train he could get. He had the same old bag with him and how he did want to get rid of it. He offered to trust anybody and everybody, or do anything, so long as the bill should be defeated. He pleaded and he begged and he raved and he swore, but it was no use. Crowell had let his opportunity slip by and nobody would have anything to do with him. The whiskey men had got in their work in good shape and the bill passed the Senate and high license is now the law of the land. How much did it cost to get the bill through the Senate? I don't know that, but it is safe to say that it was more than Crowell's \$60,000.

THE TEN-GALLON DEALERS.

Well, as I was going to say, the whiskey men got high license, but the way the Judges are going on they will be hurt quite as much, if not more, than the brewers. If I am not very much mistaken it will drive some of them out of business, and will particularly hurt men like Boyle & McGinn, Chris Gallagher and others who sell by the five and twenty gallons. It is just the small places which cannot afford to pay \$500 license that buy whiskey in small quantities, and there are about 2,000 of them that did not even apply for a license. Just look at the enormous amount of trade that will be lost in that way. Why its enough to paralyze the houses that break packages and sell by the gallon.

Then anybody can see that the Judges are not going to give licenses in any great number, at least to the barrel-shops, and that is just where the five-cent rats are sold. There are the taverns that do sell whiskey and very little beer or other malt liquors. By the time you count out the little taverns that did not apply for a license and the barrel-shops that will be knocked out there will not be many customers for the ten-gallon wholesale dealers who have been backing them are going on their United States bonds. I am told that the Judges have a full list of every wholesale whiskey man that has been doing that, and it is just as likely as not they will have trouble in getting their own licenses when their turn comes. It looks to me as if the whiskey men, in trying to down the brewers, have killed their own trade.

How Alligators Eat

It is a Southern writer who compares an alligator throat to an animated sewer. Everything, says this correspondent, which lodges in the mouth goes down. He is a lazy dog, and instead of hunting for something to eat he let his victuals hunt for him. He is, apparently dead, great mouth open. Soon, a beetle crawls in, then a fly, then several gnats, and a colony of mosquitoes. The alligator doesn't close his mouth yet. He is waiting for a whole lot of things. He does his eating by wholesale. A little later a lizard will cool under the shade of the upper jaw. Then a few frogs will hang up to catch the mosquitoes and gnats will light on the frogs. Finally a snake will lay

insects and reptiles settle down for an afternoon picnic. Then all at once there is an earthquake. The jaw falls; the alligator blinks one eye, gulps down the entire menagerie, and opens his great front again for more visitors.

The Anglers Delight.

The angler's heart leaps with joy and he handles his rod and reel with loving fingers for the trout fishing season has opened. The speckled beauties have had their holiday, but from now on for several months they take their chances. They have enjoyed immunity except from a reckless few who have no reverence for the law in their hearts, but now the statute modestly retires and allows the angler free scope. What sport on this mundane sphere can compare with that which was sanctified by the gentle Isaac Walton? A gentleman who probably knows what he is talking about, says: The man who stands by the side of a trout brook, his debts all paid, his business reasonably good, his wife and family in good health, and a deep pool in sight, in which a dozen speckled gamesters are ready for a tussle, has in sight ninety percents of all the happiness which any one gets this side of Heaven.

The Weekly Evening Post.

The New York Evening Post will begin on the third of May, to issue a weekly edition, having for its principal aim the promotion of Revenue Reform, which has become the paramount issue in national politics. The existence of an actual surplus in the Treasury estimated to reach \$140,000,000 on the 30th of June 1888, and the further increase thereof under present laws, are a menace to all business interests, and a direct incentive to wastefulness and corruption in the appropriations of public money. The attention of the people having been strongly drawn to this subject by the President in his last annual message, the need of information and popular enlightenment on questions of revenue and taxation has been increasingly felt in all parts of the country.

It is the intention of the management to make a first-class weekly newspaper of 12 pages. Subscription price \$1 per year. A free copy of the first number will be mailed anywhere on request. Send address on a postal card to the Evening Post, New York.

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ADMINISTRATORS NOTICE. Letters of Administration having been granted to the undersigned on the estate of Samuel H. Goodhart, late of Walker township deceased. All persons knowing themselves to be indebted to said estate are requested to make immediate payment, and those having claims against the same, to present them duly authenticated for settlement. JNO. H. BECK, Administrator.

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE.—Letters of administration de bonis non, having been granted to the undersigned, in the estate of Rudolph Mulholland, all persons knowing themselves to be indebted to said estate, are requested to make immediate payment, and those having claims against the same, to present them duly authenticated for settlement. C. M. BOWER, Adm. de bonis non.

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