

THE INTERNAL TAXES

The change in ideas as to taxation since the early days of the Republic no better exemplified than in regard to the internal taxes, which in those days were called excise. Our forefathers, like their English forbear had an immense hatred to this form of tax, levied, as it was, for the most part on whiskey and malt liquors. In their minds it was associated with all kinds of pretty despotism, with the searching of houses, and the peering into private affairs. It was associated in the minds of the English people with the hearth and window tax, and Blackstone in his Commentaries says: "From its original to the present time its very name has been odious to the people of England."

Dr. Johnson gave expression to his rancor at the same cause by his definition of the word excise in his famous dictionary: "A hateful tax levied upon commodities and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but by writs hived by those to whom excise is paid." This definition was so offensive to the commissioners of excise, or, as we would call them, commissioners of internal revenue, that they threatened Dr. Johnson with a libel suit. But it shows how intense the feeling was long before our revolution on the part of the people against this form of taxation.

After the adoption of the Federal Constitution, by the influence of Alexander Hamilton, an excise tax was laid, which resulted in the famous whiskey insurrection in Western Pennsylvania. Opposition to this tax as one of the grounds upon which Jefferson built up the Republican party, and when he came into power in 1801 one of the first things done was to abolish the whole system of excise and internal revenue taxation.

In 1813, to meet the expense of the war of 1812, excise taxes were again laid, but they were regarded as "war taxes," and totally repealed in 1817. They were not again reported until 1861, when, under the exigencies of the war of the rebellion, an elaborate system of internal taxation was devised, and by the year 1863 the internal taxes came to be recognized as an essential part of the settled revenue policy of the government. No more sweeping taxation was ever devised by the wit of man than was imposed on the American people during the war and the years subsequent to the war. No other nation on earth would have endured a system of excise duties so inquisitorial, so effective and so irksome. The one necessity of the situation was revenue, and the only principle recognized was to tax everything in sight. The exemption of an article or a business from taxation was the exception rather than the rule.

But as time passed and the necessities of the government became less exigent, one by one the taxes were remitted, until now they remain only on whiskey and tobacco.

Such is a brief history of the excise tax in this country, and there can be little question now but that the popular sentiment is in favor of retaining these taxes. Jefferson, before he died, changed his mind on the subject, and while he opposed such a system in 1801, he was thoroughly in favor of it in 1832, and advised that the taxation of whiskey should again be laid.

Bon Butler's Big Stone Building.

Bon Butler has been around the capitol for the past few days. The reason has been his old time eagerness to sell the government the big stone building on the hill just south of the capitol. This is some of the contraband real estate old Spooney acquired during the war and known as the Butler building. The building is now occupied in part by the Coast Survey and by several House committees. The government is paying the patriotic Bon the enormous rental of \$6,000 a year. Exorbitant as rents are in this city, and especially when the government is the tenant, the rental is almost paralyzing; so the Senate thought it best to buy Mr. Butler's property, and an amendment was accordingly inserted in the Sundry Civil bill, appropriating \$27,000 for the purchase of the building. When the amendment came up in the Senate Mr. Edmunds listened very carefully. At last he remarked: "With all due respect for everybody, the price named is just five times more than it's worth." Edmunds' comment produced a mild sensation. Senator Allison, who had offered the amendment, looked hurt, and said to Senator Edmunds, with some feeling, that there must be an extraordinary mistake somewhere if Mr. Edmunds was correct in saying that the Senate was about to pay five times too much for the Butler property. Mr. Edmunds agreed very grudgingly that there must, indeed, be a mistake somewhere. It was simply impossible that that space of ground could be worth any \$27,000. "If it were covered with gold dust," he had almost added. Mr. Allison replied that an arbitration committee had appraised the value of the property at \$277,692, and that General Butler had voluntarily cut off \$692. Mr. Edmunds listened gravely, and then only said in reply: "Well, I think the appraisers had better try it again before we buy that property." He had the satisfaction of seeing the amendment rejected. General Butler

The maddest man in Washington.

Such is the old freebooter's plan to reduce the surplus in the Federal Treasury. The Presidential aspirant Senator Allison should be awarded a leather medal for assisting the Spoon thief in his efforts to rob the public.

The White Cap Outrages.

INDIANAPOLIS, Sept. 7.—Early in August Governor Gray addressed an open letter to Attorney General Michener, requesting him to visit Crawford county and investigate the White Cap outrages, and authorized him to take such steps as he may deem proper to secure a speedy prosecution of the suits instituted against members of the White Cap organization.

Attorney General Michener yesterday submitted his report. He details the result of his investigations in Crawford county, enumerating criminals suits pending against fourteen members of the White Cap organization, none of whom have been convicted. He points out that the local court and officers must have the co-operation and support of the law-loving people of Crawford county before convictions can be secured, and says: "I regret to say that I did not find such a general sentiment as must exist before there can be a successful prosecution of the cases which may be brought in the future, no matter how conclusive the evidence may be. The condition of affairs is not only deplorable but alarming."

After relating the cold-blooded character of the numerous White Cap outrages and the extent of the organization in Crawford and Perry counties, the attorney-general asserts that the local newspapers have but little to say in disapproval of the outrages, and before there can be an indictment and successful prosecution of these offenders there must be a considerable change in public sentiment, and he believes this change can be produced, and unless it is brought about a general insurrection is likely to follow and the governor will be compelled to suppress it with the military power. The attorney-general says that as a result of the reign of terror existing in Crawford county there has been recently organized a body known as "Black Caps," and it is said they place armed men each night on the road in the region most infested by the White Caps, with instructions to fire upon the latter.

Judge Thurman All Right.

NEW YORK, Sept. 7.—Judge Thurman is all right, and his only regret is that he was unable to speak last night. He arose at noon feeling well, except for a little weakness. Much anxiety has been felt throughout the country regarding the Judge's condition, and he is very grateful to the people for their interest in him, and wishes it to be explained to them that there is nothing in his condition to excite alarm. He has simply suffered from an attack such as the strongest are liable to, and is now all right.

Judge Thurman received no visitors during the day. Among his callers were warm friends and admirers of all parties, and many others expressed their regards by sending up cards with good wishes. He spent the afternoon quietly resting in his room and chatting with members of his family and party, and occasionally enjoying a smoke. Chairman Brice and Chairman Barnum called on him this evening to complete arrangements for the Newark meeting tomorrow night. The Judge will leave here at six o'clock, and go on the same car on which he came to New York direct to the meeting, and from there he will go to his home in Columbia, where he wishes to be during the encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic next week.

The Fever Getting Worse.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Sept. 7.—This has been another day of gloom and death, and what is worse, the outlook for an immediate future is gloomier still. Seventy-seven cases were reported today for the last twenty-four hours ending at 6 p.m. There were eight deaths from yellow fever during the same period.

Nominated for Congress.

DETROIT, Mich., Sept. 7.—Congressman Tansley was nominated by the Democrats of the Eighth district yesterday.

CINCINNATI, Sept. 7.—The Democrats of the Twelfth district yesterday nominated Hon. L. T. Kiel, of Chillicothe, for Congress.

ST. LOUIS, Sept. 7.—The Democrats of the Fifth Alabama district yesterday renominated James E. Cobb for Congress.

ST. LOUIS, Sept. 7.—The Republicans of the Thirteenth Missouri district have renominated "Farmer" Wade for Congress. The Republicans of the Second district nominated A. C. Zubanks.

A Texas Murder.

BRENNHAM, Texas, Sept. 7.—J. O. Hoffman, the Democratic nominee for county assessor, was killed. J. H. Holt, the Texas member of the Democratic national committee, was dangerously wounded by unknown parties last night. Hoffman and one other candidate were the only nominees of the Democratic party who had not been endorsed by the Republicans. Holt and Hoffman had received warnings that if they did not keep quiet they would be put out of the way.

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