

The Centre Democrat.

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COUNTY COMMITTEE FOR 1897.

Table listing names and addresses of County Committee members for 1897, including Hugo S. Taylor, Boyd A. Musser, and William J. Kepler.

JESSIE CLEVER OUT.

At the last election our county ticket contained names for county surveyor. The nominees were J. H. Wetzel, Bellefonte, and Jessie Clever, Unionville.

But it now turns out that Mr. Clever has no right to hold the office. No election should have been held this last year, as Mr. Reifsnyder's term had not expired.

The following may throw some light on this point. Under the act of April 9th, 1890, the qualified voters of each county of this commonwealth shall on the second Tuesday of October next and on the same day every third year thereafter, elect one competent person, being a practical surveyor, to act as county surveyor for the proper county, for the term of three years; who shall do and perform all the duties, and have and receive all the emoluments, now pertaining to the respective deputies of the surveyor general.

Act of April 17th, 1890, says: "The persons now or hereafter holding the office of county surveyor shall continue to hold and exercise all duties pertaining to said office, until their successors are duly qualified according to the provisions of the act to which this is a supplement."

This fact has been called to the attention of a number of our attorneys and county officials, and all were of the opinion that the election of county surveyor, last fall was irregular. For that reason the present incumbent J. H. Reifsnyder, Esq., of Millheim, holds over until the proper time next year, when Mr. Clever can again be a candidate.

COYLE AFTER PULLMAN.

Senator Coyle, of Schuylkill, is after the Pullman car company and similar corporations. He will shortly introduce a bill providing that a license fee of \$100 shall be paid for each buffet and dining car in which liquid refreshments are served to the thirsty traveler. In speaking of the measure Mr. Coyle said:

"These companies owe the state hundreds of thousands of dollars for the privileges they have taken without even saying 'Thank you.' In my county, if a man becomes crippled and can no longer work, sells a drink of cheap whisky, he is promptly fined and imprisoned. He has just as much authority to sell as these corporations, and I propose to exert myself to secure something like equality before the law.

"In New York a tax of \$200 is placed on each car in which wines and liquors are sold. I want to be fair and have placed the amount in my bill a half that figure. Here is a practical plan to increase the revenues of the state and at the same time do something in the line of common sense and justice."

AS GOOD AS IT DESERVES.

The time is at hand for our people to be thinking about the coming spring election. Good men in the local offices are matters of vital importance to all and are of more consequence often than national affairs.

It is encouraging to notice how in some of our cities, good men are chosen for the highest offices. Worcester, Mass. in November, gave a Republican majority of 7,000, while at the recent municipal election a Democratic mayor was chosen because he had already filled that office with great success. His opponent was a well known Republican politician, whose partisanship, instead of being a gain, was a decided disadvantage, the people preferring a trustworthy man to a professional politician.

"Every country," says Carlyle, "gets as good a government as it deserves." The same is true of every city, and if people elect to public officers men who are corrupt, they deserve corrupt city government. Whether we shall have the best government or not depends on the individual voter. The commencement of reform is not with the officials but with the citizens.

With a famine in India followed by a terrible plague, the atrocities and butcheries in Armenia and the cruel war in Cuba, this country truly can be satisfied. The only fear we have is from McKinley and his gang of tariff robbers, who want to place unjust burdens upon the people.

State Editorial Association.

The Pennsylvania State Editorial Association will meet at Harrisburg January 26th and 27th, instead of the 19th and 20th as previously announced. Editor Chas. Emory Smith, of the Philadelphia Press, and Col. A. K. McClure, of the Times, will be present and deliver addresses.

Wonderful Progress of the Times.

A Mt. Carmel justice has purchased a phonograph. He has a cylinder with the marriage services on it and if a couple want to get married when the justice is away from home all they have to do is to deposit the license and fee in a slot and start the machine.—It does every thing but kiss the bride.

—Mr. Louis Wetzel will start a branch store up town in the basement room in Crider's Block, under the law office of H. H. Harsbarger. He will make a specialty of repairing bicycles.

HARRISBURG LETTER.

Need for Rigid Economy in Expending the State's Finances.

PROPOSAL TO LEVY A TAX ON COAL.

An Effort Will be Made to Compel the Payment of Five Cents on a Ton at the Mine.—The Need for Increased Prison Accommodations.

(Special Correspondence.)

HARRISBURG, Jan. 18.—The most important business of the legislature this week is, of course, the formal election of Boies Penrose to succeed J. Donald Cameron in the United States senate. It is scarcely probable that the legislature will accomplish little more than the approval of the committees and the selection of officers in connection with both branches. Much is promised in the way of improved legislation. Many schemes for both public and private benefit will no doubt early appear. Several significant reforms will be proposed and an effort made to enact them into laws.

Among the most important legislation that is needed, in the opinion of some of the members of both branches, will be an act to encourage road improvement throughout the state. The agricultural department has made such strenuous efforts to favor this enterprise that very considerable pressure will be brought to bear from the country districts in this respect.

It is believed that a bill will be offered early in the session providing for an appropriation that will be sufficient to give impetus in the direction of securing a great improvement to the roadways of the state. The bill to be offered will be prepared with great care, and will embody many valuable features in connection with this class of work, and will provide a just and equitable distribution of the state funds for this special purpose.

Shrinkage of Public Revenues. The widespread business depression of the past two years has been greatly felt in the shrinkage of the public revenues, as well as in private business, nor are the conditions likely to improve within the next year, unless something is done. This is one of the questions that our lawmakers will have to specially consider. Unless there can be some way devised by which the revenues can be increased the most rigid economy will be required in authorizing public expenditures for the next two fiscal years, or the state treasury will be bankrupt. A general reduction will have to be made in the appropriations to the institutions dependent entirely on the state for support to keep within the limits of the revenues.

The report of State Treasurer Haywood at the close of December showed a balance in the general fund of \$3,724,829. Against this, the moneys owing the school districts, hospitals, penitentiaries and the salaries of state officials must be paid when they become due. There is still \$3,000,000 of the school appropriation unpaid; while \$1,500,000 must be returned to the counties in personal property tax. These two items aggregate about \$4,500,000, or nearly \$1,000,000 in excess of the balance in the treasury.

The increase in the appropriation for school purposes of from \$2,000,000 in 1893 to \$5,500,000 since, which sum amounts to more than half of the revenues of the state, accounts in a large measure for the drain upon the treasury. The revenues of the next fiscal year, it is claimed, will not be as large as they were during the past year, when they amounted, in round numbers, to \$19,000,000. Of this, however, nearly \$1,000,000 was derived by the collection of taxes due the state by delinquent corporations, which in some instances were in arrears to the state in their taxes for several years; but the state will have this resource to draw upon in 1897.

Proposal to Levy a Tax on Coal. An effort will be made to enact a law this winter that will put a tax on anthracite coal of five cents per ton at the mine, the tax to be paid by the mine owners when the coal is shipped to market. By the provision of this bill the payments would be made to the state monthly, or semi-monthly. This would afford immediate relief to the treasury. Were this tax levied the amount realized by the state would aggregate over \$200,000.

Another source of revenue that will be considered is an effort to increase the tax on the actual value of the capital stock of insurance companies. It is proposed to increase this tax from three mills, now paid by them, to eight mills. This would make the tax uniform. Several other plans are being considered which will be presented to the legislature during the session, by which a greater revenue can be secured. But with the best that can be done under prevailing conditions, the utmost economy will have to be exercised.

One of the most important subjects that will claim the attention of the present legislature is the overcrowded condition of our hospitals for the insane and penitentiaries. This was emphasized by the governor in his last annual message. The condition of affairs demands the special attention of the lawmaking bodies, as some solution will have to be made of this problem or there will be no further room to incarcerate the violators of law. Just what action will be taken it is difficult to foresee.

To build or not to build a new penitentiary, involving an expenditure of about \$5,000,000, and from four to five years time consumed to complete the same, are the questions that are being considered at the present time. It is thought by some of the members not to be economy to build additions to the present buildings, but that it would be much better to select some point in the central part of the state and there erect new buildings.

Attorney General Needham C. Deputy. Attorney General McCormick, who has been a most industrious and valuable official in this capacity, has given out that an additional deputy is required in his department. And he says, furthermore, that the commonwealth would profit largely by the creation of this new office. He says: "In addition to the work involved in this large volume of business, the usual proceedings by mandamus and suits against insolvent insurance companies and building and loan associations, have greatly increased the work of the office."

The collections made during the first half of General McCormick's term foot up \$845,211.16, of which \$31,788.92 were commissions paid by defendants. The governor will approve of the creation of an additional deputy attorney general. This is one of the few new offices that the executive will permit. He has given notice that he will allow no more new offices, except a chief mine inspector and a bureau of geology, with a competent head, to take the place of the geological survey commission, which is passed out of existence. The governor is opposed to any increase in salaries of officials.

It has recently come to the notice of the agricultural department that a firm doing business outside of the state is working a sly game to market their goods contrary to the laws of the state. This firm manufactures a cheap grade of acid vinegar, compounded and colored in such a manner as to pass as pure cider vinegar. Their plan is to send from two to three barrels to merchants in different parts of the state, and they afterwards write to the merchants saying that this shipment was sent in mistake; but since the goods are there, if they will remit them a certain amount, which is a very low price, they can have the goods. In this way they are likely to get a number of business men into trouble, as the state is determined to bring to justice all violators of the law in this respect.

Andrews Doesn't Want the Chairmanship. Senator William H. Andrews will not be a candidate for chairman of the state Republican committee, and Deputy Attorney General Elkin will in all probability accept another term.

Adjutant General Stewart is having trouble of some quarters for the National Guard at Washington during the inauguration of McKinley, but in spite of the discouraging outlook at present he is confident that quarters will eventually be secured. The three hundred patriotic applicants for positions are still carrying on a vigorous effort to get places in the different departments of the legislature, and as there are only sixty places to fill there will be many of them disappointed. It is likely that an agreement will be made early in the week as to who will be entitled to the several positions.

Various opinions are given as to the object of the visit of United States Senator Quay and State Senator Penrose to Canton on Saturday. Some think they went in the interest of Senator Cameron for either a position in McKinley's cabinet or to secure for him the appointment as ambassador to some foreign country, while others are of the opinion that they went to secure a place in the cabinet for Governor Hastings. This visit is believed to be one of much significance.

State Senator Penrose, it is thought, will not resign immediately, but will retain his seat until his services are required at Washington. Senator Coyle, of Schuylkill, will shortly introduce a bill providing that a license fee of \$100 shall be paid for each buffet and dining car in which liquid refreshments are served to travelers. Mr. Coyle, in speaking of the measure, said: "These companies owe the state hundreds of thousands of dollars for the privileges they have taken without even saying 'thank you.' In my county, if a man becomes crippled and can no longer work, sells a drink of cheap whisky he is promptly fined and imprisoned. He should have just as much authority as these corporations." In New York a tax of \$200 is placed on each car in which wines and liquors are sold.

Favors the Personal Tax Law Repeal. State Treasurer Haywood is in favor of the repeal of the personal tax law as it is collected by the counties, for the state and commonwealth has to return three-fourths of it. The amount to be returned this year will be about \$1,800,000. It is his opinion, also, that \$1,000,000 might be cut off of the school appropriations. It was put on to put the text book law into operation. Inasmuch as this act has been working for several years, most of the schools have been supplied with books, and the extra money is not needed. He believes this to be a good plan to reduce the expense of the state.

The contract for state printing will be let on the 26th inst. by the secretary of the commonwealth. The improvements around the capitol are about completed, and are in every way ornamental and creditable. Senator Coyle's bill to create a mining commission will be opposed by the state officials on account of the expense incurred.

A bill will be introduced this session to dispose of the present method of executing criminals by hanging. It provides that an air tight cell shall be arranged and the murderer shall be executed without his knowledge, for some night when he lies down to go to sleep carbonic acid gas will be turned into the apartment, which will accomplish the work speedily and effectually. This bill, it is thought, will have a large support.

The state, in its efforts to collect the sum of \$2,500,000 which it is claimed is due as penalties imposed in the collection of delinquent and mercantile taxes, will likely meet with opposition by the Philadelphia authorities, as they claim the money is due and belongs to the county of Philadelphia, while the commonwealth claims it belongs to the state. A suit will no doubt result between the state and city.

Proposed Anti-Treating Law. Representative William W. McElhenry, of Pittsburg, has prepared a bill against the "treating habit," which he will soon present. The title of this proposed law is: "An act to prohibit any person or persons from paying for or promising to pay for, any spirituous, vinous, malt or brewed liquor, or any admixture thereof that was, or is to be supplied, furnished or delivered to or for the use of any other person or persons," and it applies to barkeepers furnishing such drinks as well as consumers buying. It is further provided that it is unlawful for any person to offer to pay for any food of whatever kind, with which liquor is or may be supplied or given away, for the use of any other person." The punishment provided for violation of this law is a fine of not more than \$100 nor less than \$25, or an imprisonment of not more than six months or less than one month or both. Representative McElhenry has long considered the habit of treating, especially that of indiscriminate treating, as a great evil, and thinks it should be stopped.

A new senate bill will make it obligatory upon a member introducing a bill to file a certified copy of the same with the clerk, which shall at once be available for examination by the press and public, while the original goes at once to the chairman of the proper committee. This will no doubt meet the charges of surreptitious introduction of measures in which the public are specially interested.

Senator McCarrell, speaker of the senate pro tem, is of the opinion that the committee of the senate and house may not be announced before next week, owing to some additional committees which are likely to be appointed for the senate.

Advertisement for Sunlight Soap, offering prizes and cash for each month during 12 months, 1897, totaling \$40,800.00.

Advertisement for Sheriff's Sale, listing various real estate parcels for sale, including land in Centre and Potter townships.

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