

The Dispatch.

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PITTSBURGH, WEDNESDAY, DEC. 9, 1901.

THE BOND ELECTION.

Popular interest in the bond question was not great enough to bring out more than a light vote yesterday. But the bond proposition was ratified by a considerable majority. It is to be regretted that the interest in a matter affecting taxation was not active enough to secure a full vote. A manifestation that the people are closely watching the conduct of municipal finances is the best possible guarantee that their management will be careful and honest. But while voters were so scarce that sundry election boards are reported to have walked away the leaden-footed honors with games of chance and seven-up, the decision arrived at was the wisest one.

The Dispatch has repeatedly held that, if the majority of the people preferred to have a street car in a single year raised by the tax levy for that year, that is the right policy to adopt. But it was too evident that such a policy would impose a heavy burden of taxation on the mass of taxpayers; and the other policy is shown to be preferred by the vote.

The approval of the bond issue makes the course of the city clear. It can meet the payments to contractors as they become due, and in the meantime proceed to test the constitutionality of the new law. If there is any danger of issuing bonds not needed for paying for contracts where work is not properly done, as has been alleged, the courts are open to any citizen to stop such betrayal of public trust.

A RUMORED STREET EXCHANGE.

Report has it that the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, in its policy of increasing its terminal facilities here, will propose to the city to exchange its tracks for the present location of Second avenue, making the street run along the base of the hill, and permitting it to use the thoroughfare, with the property acquired by it between the Tenth street bridge and Look No. 1, for tracks and freight yards.

But this transfer would be possible only if the railroad has acquired all the property between the street and the river, over the section named. Any private owner could, if he mistook not, interpose a valid objection to having his street privileges taken away. If, as is reported, the railroad has acquired by purchase all private property to be affected by the change, the sole question remaining is whether good municipal policy will acquiesce in the exchange.

It is for the interest of Pittsburgh to encourage, by reasonable measures, the improvement of the facilities for this corporation in competing for our vast transportation. But it is necessary only to change so manifestly for the pecuniary benefit of the company it is a clear proposition that the trade should leave the city in as good position as at first. This, in the exchange of the two rights of way, may be difficult though not impossible. The fact that the street in its new position would be subject to landslides would require that the railroad make the necessary provision against such danger. The change would require a considerable amount of new grading and paving, which it is no more than justice that the corporation should do. In short, the proper decision of the question will depend on what the railroad will do in the way of furnishing a good avenue in the place of the one it wishes to occupy.

If the proposition guarantees as safe and good a street as the city now has there, the exchange seems feasible. If it falls short either in the requisites of safety or desirability it must be refused.

LUNATIC OR CONSPIRATOR.

While any indications of a possible conspiracy in the New York dynamite attempt are to be thoroughly investigated, the characteristics of the catastrophe are those of lunacy. The demand for blackmail was made in a manner which doomed the crank to death. The sum named was an amount which not even the wealthiest man could produce on a moment's notice or even draw by check without previous arrangement with the banks. As the Philadelphia Ledger says: "There was no method in this man's madness. There was an semblance of the maddest demand for a million and a quarter of money under the circumstances."

Of course, upon the hypothesis of lunacy the suggestion of the net to his crazed brain must be charged to the talk and example of the hardly less crazy Anarchists. In this connection, the impression is to look at the disposition of lunatics and cranks who resort to explosives as a revenge upon society as a novel development of our modern civilization. It is a decidedly uncomfortable importation of old-world ideas; but, as regards the progress of the world, it is nothing new. England annually celebrates the discovery of a plot nearly three centuries ago to blow up King and Parliament in one grand explosion, and the outbreak of similar plots occurs all through history. A bomb of that sort was used in the attempt to destroy the first Napoleon, and Orsini's bomb completed what parallel there was between the first and third of that name. While dynamite is a more deadly explosive than powder, both are sufficiently fatal for the uses of conspirators.

But one other fact profitable to note in connection with these attempts either to destroy tyrants or overturn society is that they have always failed. The vast majority of cases of the conspirators have either died from their own petards or suffered punishment. Even in the solitary

case where the attempt at assassination has succeeded the only result was to replace the mild and humane Alexander II. of Russia, with the bigoted and fanatic Alexander III.

Revolutions prosecuted by the agencies of civilized warfare, with a bold readiness to accept the responsibility of reform by constitutional and reasonable agitation, have a chance of success. But the attempt to reform society or destroy obnoxious civilization by secret murder, anarchy, and terrorism, is a policy of lunatics, and does them from Guy Fawkes to the yet unknown lunatic of last Friday's explosion.

WILL THEY THINK FOR THEMSELVES?

Now that some of the active spirits of the local Democracy are making a new start with a lot of fresh ideas and professed determination as to the expression of the will of the party, would not the occasion be eminently auspicious for inquiry upon their part as to why there is any difference between Pennsylvania Democrats and Pennsylvania Democrats on the question of a protective tariff?

It is only a few years that the Pennsylvania Democracy has been put by its leaders in silly antagonism to the policy which fosters Pennsylvania industries. During Samuel J. Randall's time the party in Pennsylvania was conservatively protective in its attitude. When the arrangements of Federal office came to the leaders, with Cleveland's administration, there was a facile accommodation of views to suit the tariff reform vagary in the White House. Since then the chance of capturing leaves and fishes anew in case of Cleveland's return to power, has always been the ruling consideration. Thus it was that the party at its last State convention was reduced to the pitiable plight of being afraid to face the people with its record on the very question which of all questions was and is most vital to Pennsylvania. It had to beg off in the most humiliating way; and the people at the polls thrust it aside contemptuously.

The election of Crisp, notwithstanding his profession as a strict Democrat, has in Congress are sick of the radical free trade ideas of Mills; and it will surprise no one if he prove the first step toward "hedging" on the disastrous anti-tariff policy which has deservedly brought the party to defeat whenever tried. Why should not the Democratic reformers of Allegheny county take the hint and make a meritorious bid for local support by divorcing the humbug anti-protection doctrine of all shades, with which they cannot, if they consider their own interests, have any real sympathy.

If the movers of the new Democracy want to cast over the local leaders with whom they profess to be identified, and act for themselves they should begin by thinking for themselves.

A PROPHECY WOMAN OF KANSAS CITY.

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LIVE WASHINGTON WAIFS.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8.—The President had a very busy time of it today. Callers were coming and going all the morning, and the President did not leave the White House until 11 o'clock. The Cabinet met at 11:30 o'clock as usual, but the session was at its close. The State, War and Treasury Departments were not represented. Secretaries of the State, War and Treasury Departments were detained at the State Department by conference with the British Minister on West Indies reciprocity. Secretary Foster is ill, and there is no Secretary of War.

MR. SHEPARD'S HOPE OF MASSACHUSETTS, when asked why he did not vote for Speaker on the roll call, to-day said: "Last fall, in an interview which I had during our campaign in Massachusetts, I stated that in the coming contest for the speakership I would vote for no candidate who would not promise to use his influence, if elected Speaker, against the consideration of bad financial legislation, and the extension of silver coinage. When Mr. Crisp became a candidate of the party, I sent him and asked to give me this promise, and he refused to do so. I therefore did not vote for him, but I could not vote for him and keep my word. In my judgment, the only man who would promise to do so, and who would use his influence as Speaker against the consideration of bad financial legislation, and the extension of silver, is Mr. Crisp. I feel fairly sure that such will be his action, but as I could not get his promise, he could not get my vote."

It is understood, according to advices from Philadelphia, that the only Edwin H. Filer is to be a delegate-at-large to the Republican national convention. Whether Mr. Filer will support Blaine or Harrison is not stated; but there should be decided in the convention that he shall not further prosecute the once famous Filer boom.

It is a singular feature of our foreign trade that though the balance is largely in favor of the country the imports are not so continuous comparatively light. The condition is by no means unusual. As a rule the imports of gold to rectify the balance of trade some time after the balance has been made, and the condition of the exchange and money market may delay it a long time. But the balance must be settled sooner or later, either in gold or in securities. If it is settled in securities so much the better for this country.

The illustration of imperial policy presented by sentencing a Berlin artist to eight months' imprisonment for a jest about the nine-year-old Crown Prince's fondness for wearing a sword, presents an interesting question whether German liberty or German absolutism will be first wiped out.

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It is a singular feature of our foreign trade that though the balance is largely in favor of the country the imports are not so continuous comparatively light. The condition is by no means unusual. As a rule the imports of gold to rectify the balance of trade some time after the balance has been made, and the condition of the exchange and money market may delay it a long time. But the balance must be settled sooner or later, either in gold or in securities. If it is settled in securities so much the better for this country.

The illustration of imperial policy presented by sentencing a Berlin artist to eight months' imprisonment for a jest about the nine-year-old Crown Prince's fondness for wearing a sword, presents an interesting question whether German liberty or German absolutism will be first wiped out.

THE loss to the New York electric light companies by the blowing down of their overhead wires in last week's gale was \$120,000, and now they are in a muddle with the city authorities about getting the wires up again. There was an impression, a year or so ago, that the New York wires were being put underground. When the electric light companies consider how much of that \$120,000 would have been saved if the wires had been underground, they may wish that they had thought of the underground measure so desperately.

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NAUTICAL WAR MATERIAL.

Light on the Subject From Prof. Carl Myers—Europe Ahead. In your issue of November 29 I note an indication from the Chicago Tribune reporting an interview with me in which I represent European powers as being equipped with superior aeronautical apparatus for offense and defense, while we are in respect to their money, or long and short flashes; the electrical energy light; for revealing the presence of an enemy while unseen; and the best developments of air current navigation with free balloons and dirigible airships loaded with dynamite. The circumstances that this is not "generally known" is no argument against it, and I can readily afford confirmation of it if desired. It is a fact that England, France, Germany, Spain, Austria, Holland, Belgium, Italy, China, are well supplied with valuable aeronautical apparatus, and many of these nations possess well-organized construction and school departments combining every recent feature in the art aeronautic.

These include the captive balloon for observation or reconnaissance; balloon signaling with flash light and cypher with the Morse code of dots and dashes, or long and short flashes; the electrical energy light; for revealing the presence of an enemy while unseen; and the best developments of air current navigation with free balloons and dirigible airships loaded with dynamite. The circumstances that this is not "generally known" is no argument against it, and I can readily afford confirmation of it if desired. It is a fact that England, France, Germany, Spain, Austria, Holland, Belgium, Italy, China, are well supplied with valuable aeronautical apparatus, and many of these nations possess well-organized construction and school departments combining every recent feature in the art aeronautic.

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