

The Scranton Tribune

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SCRANTON, FEBRUARY 7, 1895.

THE SCRANTON OF TODAY.

Come and inspect our city. Elevation above the tide, 740 feet. Extremely healthy. Estimated population, 1894, 102,000. Registered voters, 25,500. Value of school property, \$750,000. Number of school children, 12,000. Average amount of bank deposits, \$10,000,000. It's the metropolis of northeastern Pennsylvania. Can produce electric power cheaper than Niagara. No better point in the United States at which to establish new industries. See how we grow: Population in 1860, 9,233. Population in 1870, 23,000. Population in 1880, 45,530. Population in 1890, 75,215. Population in 1894 (estimated), 102,000. And the end is not yet.

Salaries dropped with the mercury before the joint estimates committee of councils on Tuesday night.

Cross-Eyed Economists.

It is probable that the joint estimates committee of councils, in asking \$32,000 out of the \$28,000,000 in cuttings by the various municipal departments, has endeavored to fit its appropriations as equitably as possible to the funds available. We do not dispute the necessity of curtailment; in all likelihood the original claims were drawn up with a view to providing against the inevitable shrinkage in income. Such an inflation is hardly the fair thing, as a matter of abstract principle, but it has the sanction of custom and is perhaps the only manner in which a municipal department can get approximately fair treatment from councils as at present constituted in this city.

There are some details of last Tuesday's cutting and slashing, however, which appear to be properly open to censure. One of these, of course, is the refusal to vote sufficient money to the fire department to equip it with a paid regular service. By this means, it is true, an apparent gross saving of \$10,000 has been achieved; but it is a saving which has been achieved at the expense of inflammable property throughout the city; and it means that for another year at least local insurance rates will not be likely to come down, but if any fluctuation occurs will be likely to go yet further up. The 20,000 heads of families in Scranton have been saved an expenditure averaging 75 cents per capita, but they have been at the same time deprived of a lowering of their rates of fire insurance to perhaps an equal amount; and their combustible property has been denied the increased security which would come from an efficient paid regular fire protective service. We think it is fairly open to discussion whether this saving at the spigot is worth the waste which it occasions at the bung-hole.

The fire item is, in amount, the largest single item in the estimates committee's recent catalogue of economies; but there are several smaller items which are large at least in the principle involved in them. The saving of \$400 in the Scranton Public Library appropriation is one of these. This means an average annual saving of four cents to each head of a family in the city; and it means that the usefulness of one of the most valuable educational institutions in the midst of us is to be curtailed in order that an economy of less than one cent per capita per inhabitant per annum may be placed to the credit of our present councils. To be sure, if report be true, these councils have not always been thus watchful of the city's pennies; in some cases that are on record sums amounting to thousands of dollars have been unhesitatingly voted to purposes partly or wholly foolish. If reformation and amendment have come at last, we might think that these could be much more prudently evinced than in hargling stringency toward so beneficent an institution as the public library or toward hard-working subordinates in the various city departments.

The condition of the elements for the past few hours would warrant the belief that the ground hog's shadow must have had a double chin this year.

Pass the Dunphy Bill.

There is now pending in congress a bill known as house bill No. 56, introduced by Representative E. J. Dunphy, of New York city, which aims to correct one of the unjust inequalities now existing in the United States postal service. Under the present arrangement that service letter carriers are placed on a definite scale of salaries and railway postal clerks are paid in accordance with a graded system, which provides for promotions and increased remuneration. But the pay of postoffice clerks is a stationary amount, little enough considering the difficult and confining work required; and there is no provision for increases in this pay except such as may depend upon the individual generosity of postmasters.

The Dunphy bill changes the rating of these clerks by thoroughly classifying the clerkships and providing that the pay in each class shall be equal to a certain percentage of the salary of the postmaster. In first-class post-offices all clerks shall begin at \$600 a year and shall be known as second class clerks. These shall receive annual increases of \$100 until their salaries shall

amount to \$900 each. Appointments to clerkships above this shall be governed by length and fitness of service, and shall in all cases be made from the ranks of the second-class men. In second-class offices the classification proceeds along similar lines, but the compensation for messengers, porters, watchmen and laborers is put at lower ratings. In both grades of postoffices, however, appointments shall be made in accordance with civil service rules, by competitive examination, and advancements or dismissals shall, to be effective, first have the approval of the postmaster general.

It will be seen that this bill is simply a logical extension, to office clerks, of the regulations governing other departments of the postal service. The graded system of payment has proved an admirable one with reference to carriers and railway route men. It has cleansed the service in these departments of partisan hangers-on and afforded some chance for personal merit and experience to gain deserved recognition. It has also maintained a uniform and stable service, little subject to fluctuation at the caprice of party leaders with friends to reward or enemies to punish. If these results can be obtained in the carrier and railway route departments there would seem to be no conceivable reason why equally good results should not follow the application of the same fair and sensible business principles to the interior working forces of postoffice offices.

The passage of the Dunphy bill would be a good step forward.

It is possible that the sudden wave of economy which has shaken the foundations of the municipal building may be productive of beneficial results, but the killing of the paid fire department estimate looks like a step backward.

Reed to the Rescue.

The distinguishing characteristics of the currency plan propounded by Thomas B. Reed for the solution of the present treasury tangle are its simplicity and its directness. The first section provides for the sale, at not less than par, of 3 per cent. bonds redeemable in coin; the proceeds of such a sale are to go to the redemption of outstanding treasury notes. The second section empowers the secretary of the treasury to pay current federal expenses with the proceeds of the sale, at not less than par, of 3 per cent. 2-year interest bearing certificates of indebtedness, likewise redeemable in coin, and to consist of denominations of \$25, \$50 and \$100. By the use of the word coin he protects the gold reserve without demonetizing the silver which is today so largely in use as a medium of exchange; and by the limiting of his certificates of indebtedness to small denominations, bearing short term interest, he recognizes the widespread desire for a popular loan that shall not carry with it excessive expense to the government, and which will not, for a long term of years, tie the hands of who shall soon succeed the present set of incompetent in the administration of the government.

If it falls within the meaning of this bill that treasury notes, when redeemed, shall be reissued upon a bimetallic basis rather than upon the present gold basis—and since nothing is said in the bill hostile to such reissue we may fairly assume such to be its intention—we do not perceive how the most radical silver man, if he be rational, can refuse to tender his cordial support to the measure, or how any but the rabid gold monometallist can object to it. The measure does not, it is true, touch the chief cause of the present embarrassment, and does not pretend to. It is simply a makeshift, and does not masquerade as something more. But while a Democratic administration is in power it will be clearly impossible to effect such a reorganization of the revenues as shall suffice to pay the current expenses of the government without recourse to bond issues, income taxation and national beggaring. All that can be done at this time will be to so adjust the bond issues as to make it easiest for the Republican successors of this congress to undo the mischief of their jangling predecessors and to restore the national credit system to its old-time prestige.

It is interesting to notice that while Mr. Reed does not summarily ignore, with a wave of his hand, the claims of his numerous fellow-citizens who are favorable to the larger use of American silver for currency purposes, and does not limit his public career to a meek performance of the bidding of speculative interests anxious for the extermination of silver as a money metal, he does not, on the other hand, imitate or approve the arrogant course of such men as Senator Teller, who declare, in effect, from positions of high public responsibility, "We would sooner see the public credit go to pieces than to budge one inch from our demand for the unlimited free coinage of the silver of the world at the ratio of 16 to 1." The plan of Mr. Reed is a rebuke to arrogance on either extreme; and also an exceedingly timely reminder that hobbies are alike subordinate, in the judgment of patriotism, to the welfare of the nation and the preservation of its national credit and its national honor.

The probable fate of the Jolly hunters of the Concord, who shot a stray Chinaman for want of more exciting adventure, has caused much anxiety among their friends. The Chinese at present do not seem to be in humor to appreciate jokes of this nature, and explanations made at a distance from an American man-of-war will not have much weight in appeasing the wrath of the pigtail.

Now that the legal weight for a bushel of onions has been properly adjusted at Harrisburg it is hoped that our legislators will not neglect the consideration of matters which the community at large deems at least of equal importance.

With its issue of yesterday the Wayne Independent entered upon the eighteenth year of its existence under flattering appearances of prosperity. In establishing the Independent Editor Ben. Haines entered upon a line of journalism almost unknown in Honesdale and has displayed an amount of energy in presenting to his readers the latest and brightest local and general news that is seldom equalled in inland

Journalism. The success of the Independent is evidence that the citizens of Wayne appreciate enterprise in newspaper work.

Please Don't Dodge.

Our esteemed contemporary, the Truth, dodges our question. We asked it if it would favor a law to compel all children under 15 years of age to be idle. The law now compels to be idle all children under 12 years of age, and some children under 13 years. This latter law—or rather two of them, one governing factories and the other governing mines—had the Truth's earnest support. Will it now support the movement to raise the age limit in both cases to 15 years?

The reason why we ask this question is obvious. If children under 13 years or under 15 years dare not work for a living, why are they not working for us? We want to know what the Truth proposes to do with them. Shall they be idle on our streets, or shall they go to school? Which policy is best for them, best for the state, best for society at large?

We should regret to see a compulsory education law in this state made drastic, because we do not think it would be wise to go at the subject in a hammer and tongs fashion until milder measures had first shown themselves unsatisfactory and ineffective. But even so, if children under 13 or 15 years dare not work for a living, why should they not be sent to school, where text books are now free and where they will be in a better atmosphere than they would be if compelled by parental indifference to roam the streets and grow up in ignorance?

Will the esteemed Truth again dodge this question?

The fact that seven Chicago clairvoyants located the hull of the lost vessel Chicago has caused quite a flutter in supernatural circles in the Windy City. None save the clairvoyants, however, have been able to get a glimpse of the ill-fated craft.

Mr. Astor has concluded to dispose of the Pall Mall Gazette. The luxury of running a newspaper for the fun of the thing has proved too expensive, even for a man with \$7,000,000 income a year.

It is feared that the anxiety of the Smoky City to shoulder municipal responsibility will give "greater Pittsburgh" a lame back. If all the proposed annexation schemes shall be carried out.

LEGISLATIVE TOPICS.

Forest Protection Is Assured.

Philadelphia Inquirer. The legislature is bound to establish a forest policy for the state. Governor Hastings knows the importance of protecting the forests of the commonwealth, and is said to be heartily in favor of the pending measure. The fight against the bill has been led in the main by two or three farmers who seem to fear that the privilege of burning the heaps of sawmill timber, now caused by the clearing fire of the farmers. This objection met with an amendment which provides that the word "forest" shall not apply to cultivated farms unless they are adjacent and contiguous to forest land. An attempt was made to amend the bill in several particulars, but the friends of the measure under the leadership of Mr. Lyle, of Huntingdon, were on guard and it passed third reading. It will come up on final passage next Tuesday.

As to Sanitary Day.

George N. McClain in the Philadelphia Press: We are to have another holiday if Representative Keimhoel, of Lebanon, can get it on the calendar. It is proposed to make the first Friday after the first Monday in May "Sanitary Day." It is proposed by this means to inculcate a love for sanitary science in the minds of the rising generation. They are to be taught by the holiday system that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" and to avoid breathing bad air and inviting ill health by living in unsanitary conditions. On this particular day the public schools are only to have a morning session and the children are to be left to themselves during the afternoon. There is nothing in the bill which provides for a tin wash basin, a coarse towel and a bar of yellow soap on a bench outside the school house near a pump or hydrant. This is practical sanitary science; the other is the ornamental side of it.

Has a Difficult Task Before It.

Philadelphia Inquirer: The house committee on appropriations is getting down to business and it will be engaged day and night for the next six weeks giving hearings to those who desire to press their claims for a share of the state's benefice. Two years ago the estimated revenues were \$10,000,000 for two years, but there has been a shrinkage in values and in volume of business since that time, so that the committee enters upon its work this session with an estimate of \$10,000,000 for the next two years. They are confronted with the big job of squeezing about \$3,000,000 into \$10,000,000. The general appropriation bill for the necessary expenses of the state and public schools will carry about \$16,000,000, leaving about \$3,000,000 to be divided among all sorts of institutions and for state aid, whose aggregate demands already approximate \$12,000,000.

Of Interest to Builders.

A bill recently introduced by Representative Hicks, of Philadelphia, will be an important help to owners of large building operations, as it provides that whenever a permit has been issued to improve land which had previously been unimproved in cities of the first class, there shall be no increase in taxation for at least one year after the permit was issued. An effort will be made to amend this measure so as to have it apply to second and third class cities as well.

Reading the Bible in School.

Representative French, of Washington county, has introduced a bill requiring all teachers in the public schools to read the Bible at the opening of each session for at least five and not more than fifteen minutes. For a violation of the proposed law a teacher is to forfeit her position and pay a fine of not less than \$20 nor more than \$50.

Will Be Vigorously Opposed.

The Coyle bill creating a commission on mining will be met with much opposition when it gets properly before the legislature. Up to the present time the labor combine has taken no action on this measure.

New County Prospects.

The consensus of opinion at Harrisburg seems to be that the Quay new county bill will pass the legislature, and receive executive approval.

REED TO THE RESCUE.

It Does the Work.

Syracuse Post: While Democratic statesmen in Washington have been agonizing over some scheme for meeting financial difficulties, ex-Speaker Reed, the Republican leader of the house, has quietly prepared a bill to tide over the present emergency. Mr. Reed's bill is so simple and plain in its provisions that it will be appreciated by all, and many will wonder that something like it had not been suggested before. It certainly, if adopted,

would tide the government over the present financial crisis, and maintain the public credit without impairing the gold reserve.

Is Simple but Effective.

Philadelphia Record, Dem.: Thomas B. Reed's substitute for the house banking and currency bill makes no pretension to offering a solution of the currency question, but it offers in a simple, business-like way, a stop-gap for the treasury in the present emergency; and if patriotism ruled the hour in Washington some such measure would speedily be framed into a law.



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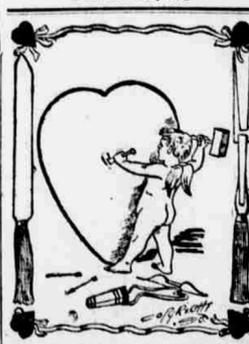
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