

The Scranton Tribune

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SCRANTON, FEBRUARY 27, 1895. THE SCRANTON OF TODAY.

Come and inspect our city. Elevation above the tide, 740 feet. Extremely healthy. Estimated population, 1894, 103,000. Registered voters, 25,592. Value of school property, \$900,000. Number of school children, 12,000. Average amount of bank deposits, \$10,000,000. It is 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 1880, 9,223. Population in 1890, 25,592. Population in 1894, 103,000. Population in 1895, 103,000. Population in 1896, 103,000. Population in 1897, 103,000. The end is not yet.

The Republican members of the Kansas legislature have expressed a very decided preference for Major William McKinley for president in 1897. Well, the major is a good man, and Kansas is not the only state that finds much in him to admire.

The Grab for Spoils. The message of Governor Hastings urging upon the legislature the urgent need of caution and economy in its efforts to disburse state funds is in keeping with the almost unanimous sentiment of the commonwealth, as expressed in the state press. It contains nothing new, but it has behind it the force of authority and the implied threat that unless its counsel shall be heeded, the executive will make free and fearless use of his wholesome power of veto.

It would be unfair to the legislature to leave uncorrected the impression that much of its activity in the special direction of creating new state offices has been dictated by extravagance. Up to this time, such creation of offices, while apparently adding to the cost of government, has in reality decreased that cost through the economical consolidation of various departments and the better classification and organization of the commonwealth's executive work. This work of the legislature has had the governor's entire and cordial approval, and his message of yesterday does not criticize it but merely calls attention to the possible danger of stepping beyond the limits of clear necessity.

It is in the formulation, by individual members, of local bids for state aid that the great danger of extravagance lies. The notion is common that a member's supreme duty is to his own district; and that if, by hook or crook, he can secure for that district a liberal handful of commonwealth cash his performance of that duty will be complete. It will not be easy to dispel this very general delusion; but the idea is essentially false, and to it can be traced a large proportion of the jobbery and log rolling now so prevalent in our legislative assemblies.

If Governor Hastings can check this tendency he will do much for the public welfare.

From present appearances it would seem a wise move upon part of the frankfort sausage chef to extend the freedom of the lunch charlotts to Councilmen Sweeney and Regan.

Supreme Court Relief.

The measure which Judge Archbald has drafted and Senator Vaughan introduced provides for a court of appeals to be composed of five judges at a salary of \$7,000 a year and mileage at the rate of ten cents a mile. The first court is to be appointed by the governor, and to serve until Jan. 1, 1896, when it will be succeeded by judges to be elected next November, one for 3 years, one for 5 years, one for 9 years, one for 12 years and one for 15 years. Thereafter the term of each will be 15 years. The first judges to be elected shall decide by lot upon the various terms of service; and the shortest term shall be the presiding judge of the court. The court will not have original jurisdiction except in cases of habeas corpus; and with the exception of felonious homicide and cases in law and equity involving a less amount than \$1,000 its decision shall be final. The court will hold two terms a year, and will sit in the cities of Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Harrisburg, Wilkes-Barre, Williamsport and Erie, but somewhat strangely, it will dodge Scranton despite the fact that its author and legislative sponsor are both Scrantonians.

The measure seems a fair one, in several details superior to the propositions of similar intent which have preceded it. It has the advantage of placing the intermediate court which it aims to create, and which public sentiment very generally concedes to be necessary, upon a solid and substantial basis of its own, rather than upon the basis of a kind of volunteer court, to be made up of common pleases judges working overtime. The supreme court must be relieved somehow, and that speedily. Shall it

be relieved by the creation of a permanent and effective intermediate court having as broad a foundation as either of its companion courts, and fitted to grow with the growth of the commonwealth; or shall its establishment be accomplished in a spirit of indifference to future requirements, and shall it be a mere makeshift?

The legislature, it seems to us, could not better perform its duty in the premises than by adopting the Archbald bill.

There may have been some persons shortsighted enough to believe that Governor Morton of New York would unreservedly align himself alongside Thomas C. Platt, in pique because Mayor Strong chose to fulfil his non-partisan pledges. But those persons will, we think, now admit that they were mistaken.

To Purify Elections.

Probably the most exhaustive bill for pure elections ever framed in this country has just been prepared by the Civic Federation of Chicago, for introduction at Springfield. The bill proposes to revise the present naturalization laws, compelling the would-be citizen to secure his papers purely through his own efforts and without interference of political parties, politicians or bureaus; prevents wholesale naturalization on any one day; reverses the present bribery law so that the briber is the one to be most severely punished and not the bribee; gives a legal status to existing party machinery; forbids non-residents, or alien residents, or corporations to contribute to any campaign fund; limits individual contributions by actual residents to \$500 for general elections and \$250 for any other, and exacts from campaign managers, committees and candidates the utmost publicity as to the amount of money which they expend in any one campaign, where they received it and how they spent it, by items.

The bill, as drawn, contains nearly 11,000 words and hence is much too long to be reprinted. It was framed only after its authors had made a thorough study of the corrupt practices act in England and also of the similar laws now in force in Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Colorado, Kansas, California and New York. As a circumstance of interest it may be noted that the same subject is pending in Rhode Island, Connecticut and Wisconsin, with every probability of an early legislative agreement in each state upon the terms of the act best fitted to eliminate from our politics the corrupt use of money both before and at elections, and also to diminish the jobbery in party spoils which amounts to almost as grave a nuisance. This latter feature is also present in the Chicago bill, which compels elected candidates to make oath that they have not promised the patronage of their offices in exchange for political support.

Nothing is clearer to the careful student of events than that public sentiment is arming for a battle to the death with the twin evils of bribery at elections and the prostitution of the public service, after election, in the payment of party or personal debts. The first evil is already generally reprobated. A Chicago orator, Mr. F. B. Peabody, has well said of the second one: "A more vicious and demoralizing system cannot be conceived. To remove a competent and useful officer for the purpose of replacing him by a personal or party follower is a breach of public trust. It has been well said, in effect, that such a removal is as great a crime as to use the public money for private gain, and President Madison is quoted as declaring with righteous indignation that 'such action justified the impeachment of the offender.' These indiscriminate removals have become so common a practice that the enormous wickedness of it is too generally overlooked, or else justified on the plea of party necessity. The party that shall hereafter continue to justify or condone this nefarious practice has not long to live."

Merit and purity may cause the "unwashed" to smile; but they are bound to be increasingly demanded in our politics as the public conscience quickens and awakens.

The Lancaster New Era eloquently defends the much-abused "bird book" of Dr. Warren, and contends that its republication, at state expense, is not a bit of extravagance. How would the New Era like it if the legislature were to print, at public expense, a daily newspaper in Lancaster county? If a bird book, why not a newspaper, a dictionary and a magazine? The fact is the printing of the bird book was a trick of ignorance at the very beginning. What right has the commonwealth of Pennsylvania to go into the book-printing business?

An Unfortunate Argument.

The tone of the Philadelphia Press' comment upon the proposition to Lexow Philadelphia is, we should say, a shade unfortunate. Some of the terms used by it in referring to the proposed committee are: "Senatorial smut machine," "sheer political device," "factional weapon in a factional fight," "rash reveal of factionism" and "a committee of which one or more members were notorious corruptionists, who were guilty of bribery and being bribed, and whose trafficking in the shambles of jobbery is perfectly well-known." This last phrase is particularly interesting in view of the fact that no committee has yet been appointed and hence none has any membership to base. Finally, the Press somewhat sullenly says: "Now, if any people really hanker after that sort of business and want a little personal experience, let them try it on."

Exempting Certain Property.

A bill has been introduced by Representative Scott, of Philadelphia, which exempts from taxation public property used for public purposes, places of religious worship, places of burial not held or used for private or corporate profit and institutions of public charity.

another" cry proving rather than removing the need of an investigation. Now, The Tribune, too, is opposed to the suggested investigation, upon the broad principle that Philadelphians ought to be able to govern themselves. We are not specially concerned in Philadelphia politics, one way or another; but we are concerned in the limiting of the senate of Pennsylvania to its proper sphere of duty. We do not want it to begin an impertinent intermeddling in the municipal affairs of Philadelphia for the obvious reason that if it did that, it might some day take it into its head to poke its nose into the municipal affairs of Wilkes-Barre, or Carbondale, or Scranton, in neither of which places has it one iota of business.

The Press, it seems to us, ought to stand up for the principle involved; and not try simply to spatter mud on the state senate.

The night lunch wagons of Scranton do for the hungry wayfarer of temperate inclinations what is done for bibulous citizens by the restaurants that are operated in connection with bars. These restaurants may object to the presence of the lunch wagons on the streets; and so may revengeful commenters; but the people are not complaining and it is safe to guess that the lunch wagons will stay.

According to reports from daily bulletins, Actor Gentry, who murdered Mudge York, is not out of danger yet. It is probable, however, that at present he is in greater danger of the hangman's rope than of death from any slight wounds inflicted upon himself in his bluff at suicide after shooting the defenseless girl.

Senator Clarence Lexow, through force of circumstances, became prominent, did the public a great service, and had the opportunity to do it a greater, likewise to perpetuate his fame. He threw it away, in order that he might put on the collar of a broken down boss. And now it is proper to say: Exit, Lexow.

If the legislature at Harrisburg would vote to have the general laws of its enactment properly condensed into plain English and then printed in a limited number of Pennsylvania newspapers of general circulation, it would do a thing of manifest common sense.

Why should not this legislature acquire for itself the desirable credit of having given to the state an honest revision of the present antiquated law governing libel?

LEGISLATIVE TOPICS.

Status of Liquor Legislation.

Correspondence of The Tribune, Harrisburg, Feb. 26.—Several bills affecting the liquor traffic are either pending or else have recently been negatived in this legislature. The Kunkel bill, which was killed in the house on second reading, provided that the witnesses should be paid as in other cases, and that if the judge was satisfied that protests were made through spite and had no foundation, he could, in his discretion, fasten the costs on the restraints. The temperance people admitted there was equity in the measure, but they were afraid of its effect. Representative Kephart, of Conneville, has introduced a bill forbidding brewers from holding a bottles' license. It also fixes the minimum amount of beer to be sold by brewers at one-fourth of a barrel. Nothing smaller than this is permitted. At present brewers sell eighths. The main objection to the existing regulation is that it enables corrupt parties to buy beer in quantity too easily. Then there is the Fow bill making the distillers' and brewers' license \$1,000 all over the state. The small manufacturers of intoxicants protest that this idea for uniformity is intended to drive them out of business and that if the bill becomes a law they might as well quit at once. The six-cent bill forbidding the sale of less than gallon packages of hard liquors like whisky and brandy has been out of committee for some time and will soon be on second reading. Mr. Mitchell is thinking seriously of reducing the amount from a gallon to a half gallon. There is very little doubt that the prohibitionists would like to have a new appeal to the people on the constitutional amendment question; but they have as yet taken no formal steps to this end.

An Anti-Hazing Bill.

Mr. Seyfert is after the college hazers with a sharp bill. It defines a hazing as a bill defining the practice of hazing in schools and colleges as any attempt to inflict personal or bodily discomfort, annoyance or mental anguish or injury upon the person of any student. The bill provides that the president and faculty of every institution of learning are empowered to instantly dismiss students guilty of hazing. And that, in case of willful negligence, criminal carelessness or silent acquiescence of the president and managers in a case of hazing, the said president and managers shall be subject to indictment for conspiracy, and upon conviction shall be punishable by imprisonment for thirty days or a fine of not less than \$100.

Defining Train Robbery.

Representative Seyfert has introduced a bill defining the crime of train robbery and its punishment. It provides that any person who shall remove, displace or injure any switch, frog rail or other railway gear, or who shall place any obstruction on a railway track, with the design of robbing or derailing a train, or shall by any means cause the injury or death of any person traveling or employ of the company, shall be guilty of train robbery, and, if found guilty, shall be punished by death or confinement in the penitentiary for not less than ten years.

An Unique Trolley Bill.

Representative Baldwin is booming a bill which will materially affect the future organization of suburban trolley roads. The power to grant franchises to street railways operated by motive power other than steam, and using the public highways in the townships of the state, is vested in the owners of the property to whom the public roads would revert in the event of their being vacated.

Restricting State Appropriations.

A measure under consideration in the house and known as the Griggaby bill, provides that no appropriation of state money shall be made to any sect, ecclesiastical institution, church, school, hospital or other institution, either wholly or in part controlled by or under the auspices of any religious sect or denomination whatever.

Palms Not Tolerated. London Letter in the Sun. English law has put the official stamp of its condemnation on palmistry as a guide to the future. It is a common thing to punish ordinary fortune tellers, card readers and astrologers in the police courts, for British courts take excellent care of the pockets of British citizens, and fortune telling has long been a punishable offence. The law winked at the fact or crime of hand reading as long as it was a mere drawing room amusement, but when a palmist undertook to read the future for pay from the lines in the hands of superstitious or scientific women the police promptly summoned her before the lord mayor's court. The magistrate seemed to regard it as a peculiarly heinous offence, for he imposed a fine of \$125, equivalent to the combined penalties for half murdering scores of children in this country.

Save the Green Trees.

The state should not permit a single hill or mountain side once forest crowned to be robbed permanently of its mantle of green. Where nature cannot restore it the state should assist, not out of mere sentiment but to conserve and perpetuate a most important and necessary condition of state wealth, comfort and prosperity.

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