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 SCRANTON, FEBRUARY 22, 1897.

Exactly ten days hence the United States will have a president in whose experience, discretion and patriotic impulses it can place implicit confidence.

Inadequate Protection Against Fire.

Saturday evening's fire in Hitchcock court brought vividly to the attention of residents of the hill the need of a hose house in closer proximity to that poorly protected section of the city. Here is a residence area of more than a square mile occupied by property owners who contribute a larger amount of taxes to the city than is derived from any other section of equal size, and yet the valuable homes upon it are practically at the mercy of any chance blaze.

This is said not in criticism of the fire department, which on each occasion calling it to the hill has responded as promptly and as efficiently as it could. It is simply a recognition of the fact that to compel the property owners of this area to wait, when their possessions are threatened by fire, until hose carts and chemical engines can be drawn for a mile or two up a steep grade is to inflict upon them gross and irreparable injustice. Had the fire of Saturday evening attacked any one of the valuable residences in its vicinity, instead of being limited to two small and somewhat isolated barns, the loss would more than have paid for the equipping of a separate hose house and for the maintenance of a new hose company for several years. It was not due to any liberality of council that this fire did not destroy a whole block of some of the city's finest homes.

The present estimates committee of councils having already slaughtered the request of the chief of the fire department for such additional appliances as would tend to facilitate the work of the present companies when responding to calls in the Ninth and Seventeenth wards, it becomes an important question whether the residents of those wards should not take steps to bring their needs more clearly to council's attention. It would seem that they ought soon to realize in what peril they now rest by virtue of the past indifference of our city legislature to the fire problem on the hill.

If Weyler hopes to bring his campaign of infamy to a climax in time to receive the official congratulations of an American president, he had better move rapidly. The day of his ascendancy at the white house is hastening to its close.

Figures That Don't Lie.

The Tribune desires to acknowledge the receipt, through the courtesy of Worthington C. Ford, chief of the national bureau of statistics, of a copy of the Statistical Abstract for 1896 and also a copy of the Monthly Summary of Finance and Commerce of the United States. These two compendiums of statistics with regard to our country's population, finances, commerce, agriculture, mining, railroads and telegraphs, immigration, education, public lands, postal service, prices, tonnage, etc., represent in miniature the activities of all our people and are simply indispensable to students of contemporary economics. Although many public documents may justly be regarded as representing a waste of money, the publications of the bureau of statistics merit the widest publicity and the most cordial support from congress. There should be authorization for at least a doubling of their now too limited number.

At the beginning of the Abstract is a table summarizing on a per capita basis the financial and commercial statistics of the country by years from 1867 to 1896 inclusive. This is most interesting, but a comparison of two of the years included in the table suggests itself as being especially opportune. We shall attend attention to the statistical state of the country in 1892, the year when the Republican party was cast out of power by an overwhelming majority of the voters of the country, and in 1896, the year when by an even larger and more impressive majority, it was summoned to return to power. Here are the figures:

	1892.	1896.
Per Capita, Per Capita.		
Amount of money		
In U. S.	\$36.21	\$23.90
Money in circulation	24.44	32.10
Net national debt	12.88	13.41
Interest on debt	.35	.49
Ordinary federal		
Receipts	5.43	4.29
Ordinary expenses	5.28	4.94
Spent for pensions	2.16	1.96
Internal revenue		
Collected	2.35	2.96
Cost of collecting	2.52	2.62
Exports	\$15.33	\$12.11
Imports		
Of agricultural products, per cent. of total exports	78.0%	69.6%
Raw cotton consumption of	5,913 bu.	4,783 bu.
Corn, consumption of	36,333 bu.	34,473 bu.
Coffee, consumption of	5,617 bbl.	8,013 bbl.
Tea, consumption of	1,373 bbl.	1,313 bbl.
Liquors, consumption of	37,043 gal.	36,423 gal.
Increase in tonnage of vessels	5.88%	1.47%

A study of these figures will be likely to explain very clearly why the people have decided to restore, as nearly as possible, the political conditions which existed prior to the election of Mr. Cleveland in 1892. It discloses plainly, by the official figures of Mr. Cleveland's own administration, that the defeat of General Harrison in 1892 was a mistake for which the people of this country are still paying dearly.

It having been decided in a Florida circuit court that the steamer Three Friends, which is under suspicion of having conveyed arms and ammunition to the Cuban insurgents, committed no offense inasmuch as from a federal standpoint war is not in progress in Cuba, the attorney general appeals to

the United States Supreme court and there makes the point that if the officers and crew of this staunch ship be not punishable as filibusters, they should be convicted of piracy, the penalty for which is death. We think we see an American president ordering the execution of a group of American citizens for the crime of imitating Steuben, Kosciuszko, Rochambeau and Lafayette.

The Price of Gas.

In its role as a defender of trusts the New York Sun ably counterbalances much of the rabid and unreasoning demagoguery which is at the front of the contemporary opposition to concentrations of capital in our industries, but it itself sometimes falls into errors which injure its clients' case. It makes one of these mistakes when it opposes the right of our people through law to establish regulation of the price of illuminating gas.

"The fact," it says, "that the legislature cannot fix the wages of the laborers nor the cost of the materials employed by the companies in their operations is not considered as having any bearing on the question. The price of gas is to be established by law, and the companies must do the best they can with their employees and the furnishers of the materials they use. That since they first began operations the price at which they have sold their product has steadily diminished from \$10 per 1,000 cubic feet to \$1.25 per 1,000 cubic feet, while their plant represents investments worth many millions of dollars more than their original cost, is used as an argument against them. The newspaper decree has gone forth that they are making too much money, and that they must be compelled by law to make less."

This is an ingenious defense, but it overlooks certain essential points. In the very first place, no gas company can do business until it gets permission from the community to occupy the public streets. Its franchise is its most valuable asset. Usually that franchise is exclusive, and secures for its owner protection against competition. Now the average cost of making gas is pretty well known. In Boston it costs 22 cents by the thousand cubic feet and in Philadelphia, 37 cents. Therefore, when companies exempt from competition by grace of the community use that exemption to extort from the community, by whose courtesy they are allowed to do business, prices manifestly out of proportion to the cost of making and distributing their product, it becomes the duty of the public to protect itself against such extortion. Now the average cost of making gas is pretty well known. In Boston it costs 22 cents by the thousand cubic feet and in Philadelphia, 37 cents. Therefore, when companies exempt from competition by grace of the community use that exemption to extort from the community, by whose courtesy they are allowed to do business, prices manifestly out of proportion to the cost of making and distributing their product, it becomes the duty of the public to protect itself against such extortion.

The Harrisburg Patriot is informed that the Tribune never said or intimated that the "more money congress spends the less it costs the people." It said, though, that congress' appropriations are not increasing on a per capita basis. This is a billion dollar country.

Just a Word or Two of Casual Mention

The defeat of the venerable war-horse, M. L. Blair, in last Tuesday's Fifth ward aldermanic contest, though only what might be expected from the general public opinion of the ward, still is regretted by the alderman's many warm personal friends. "The old man has clung to the office for twenty-one years. He believed that he would die and still be alderman of the Fifth ward. He thought the place was his as a matter of course, and when he was defeated in caucus he was of the honest belief that the people's friends had been tricked. With that idea he declared to be an integrity. He solicited names for his nomination papers and he used to tell in the pro-

Newcomers from Canada.

It is possible that the alien labor clause of the new immigration act, which was aimed especially at Canada, will be in the United States but live in Canada, will have an effect different from what the Canadian authorities profess to expect. They have repeatedly declared that its enactment would be followed by reprisals at Ottawa, and through the dominion press and in letters and interviews in our own papers have asserted that such a policy would undo a great portion of the sentiment which has in recent years been built up in Canada in favor of closer and more friendly relations with the United States.

But a Montreal correspondent of the Sun presents a different opinion. Says he: "The menace of Mr. Laurier that he would pass an alien labor law to retaliate against American labor does not amount to much. For one American workman who comes into Canada to search for a living, a hundred Canadians are driven over the border to find their existence in the United States. The gentlemen at Washington who may be visited by Sir Richard Cartwright and Mr. Davies need not be alarmed by any threats they may make on behalf of Mr. Laurier on the alien labor question. From Halifax to Vancouver there is one universal wave of depression in the labor market, and but for the outlet afforded in the United States, labor troubles would be assuming a very disagreeable form over here."

The inference to be drawn from this is that rather than remain in idleness on the northern side of the border the Canadians affected by our alien labor clause will make a virtue of necessity by moving into the states and there declaring their wish to secure American citizenship. The fulfillment of this prediction would undecide American labor in its belief that the exclusion clause would reduce its competition, but it would at least keep the bulk of the wages of the newcomers in this country. It would, moreover, simply hasten the natural drift of population from Canada southwards—a drift which has for upward of two decades kept the number of the dominion's inhabitants down almost to a stationary figure.

The problem from any standpoint is a complex one but we shall doubtless soon be privileged to gain wisdom from experience acquired during its solution.

Complaint is general throughout the commonwealth, and especially in counties having a large percentage of ignorant citizens at the operation of the present jury system, and a member of the Allegheny county bar proposes these improvements: Have the law changed so that the president judge shall appoint two men of high standing in the community, of different political faith, who shall with one of the judges of the common pleas act as a board to select names from the county commissioners' book of taxable. Exclude from jury service both city and county employes and other holders of political office, and finally, have the names drawn from the jury wheel by the judge

in person. This would seem to be wholly feasible, but so long as three ignorant men could sit on a jury to convict every man of intelligence, the level would be too low.

Some interesting figures as to the probable future production of the South African gold fields are presented by the famous American mining engineer, John Hays Hammond. He estimates that the Witwatersrand district alone is capable of yielding \$2,000,000,000, while the adjoining districts \$1,000,000,000 additional is in sight. Although the output of the Witwatersrand for 1896 was only \$7,000,000 or about 16 per cent. of the world's annual production, Mr. Hammond feels convinced that South Africa will soon contribute to the uses of civilization from \$100,000,000 to \$125,000,000 worth of gold per annum. These figures if even approximately true, would seem to dispel one of the fears of those who oppose the gold standard on the ground that the available quantity of the yellow metal is inadequate to the world's monetary needs.

The Massachusetts bureau of labor statistics reports for 1896 a gain over 1894 of 9 per cent in the number of men employed in that state, and an increase of 11 1/2 per cent. in their wages. For 1896 the showing may not be so good, because of the fact that it was a presidential campaign year, when business invariably suffers. But there appears to be no good reason why during 1897 the foregoing ratio of improvement should not be increased, not simply in Massachusetts but in the country generally. Politics is out of the way; the fears of capital are at an end so far as national legislation is concerned; the deck is cleared for action and there are plenty of opportunities for the profitable investment of money. Let us again have prosperity.

Representative Martin is quoted in the Pittsburgh Dispatch as having proposed to build a new capital with the proceeds of a state tax on houses of ill-repute. We suspect that this is a mistake. We don't believe there is a law-maker in Pennsylvania who would countenance such a suggestion. This state is above that.

It is asserted by naval experts that not less than six months would be required by the Turkish government to scrape the barnacles off its old, tub-like warships, and at least a year to pump out the bilge-water and fumigate the microbes. (Greece evidently knew what she was tackling.)

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Are we to understand, then, that Pennsylvania is to be punished for being too safely Republican?

MUST ENFORCE THE LAW.

Sec. 4.—It shall be the duty of the chief of the bureau of mines to devote the whole of his time to the duties of his office and to see that the mining laws of this state are faithfully executed and for that purpose he is hereby invested with the same power and authority as the mine inspectors to enter, inspect and examine any mine or colliery within the state and the works and machinery connected therewith and to give such aid and advice to the mine inspectors from time to time as he may deem best calculated to protect the health and promote the safety of all persons employed in and about the mines. And should he receive information in his office, obtained by ten or more miners or operators, and setting forth that any of the mine inspectors are neglectful of their duty, or refuse to perform the duties of their office, or are guilty of malfeasance in office, he shall at once investigate the matter and if he is satisfied that the charges or charges are well founded he shall then petition the court of common pleas of the county in which the mine is situated, which court, upon receipt of said petition and a verified copy of the charges and testimony produced, shall at once issue a citation in the name of the commonwealth to the said inspector to appear before the court on the day named in the citation to answer to the charges and to produce such witnesses as the judge of the court and the chief of the said bureau may require. If the said inspector fails to appear under investigation shall also have similar power and authority to compel the attendance of witnesses in his office. If the charges are not proved, the chief of the said bureau shall certify the same to the governor who shall declare the vacancy as provided for by the mining laws of the state. The cost of said investigation shall, if the charges are sustained, be paid out of the state treasury upon voucher or vouchers duly audited by the controller. If the charges are not sustained the cost shall be paid out of the state treasury upon voucher or vouchers duly audited by the controller. If the charges are not sustained the cost shall be paid out of the state treasury upon voucher or vouchers duly audited by the controller. If the charges are not sustained the cost shall be paid out of the state treasury upon voucher or vouchers duly audited by the controller.

Sec. 5.—It shall be the duty of the chief of the bureau of mines to take charge of the annual reports of the mine inspectors and transmit a copy of them together with such statistical data as may be required by the bureau as may be of public interest properly addressed to the secretary of internal affairs for transmission to the governor and the general assembly of this commonwealth on or before the fifteenth day of May in each year. It shall also be the duty of the chief of the bureau of mines to see that said reports or a copy of them are placed in the hands of the public in such manner as to be accessible to all persons on or before the first day of June in each year, the same to be published under the direction of the secretary of internal affairs and other reports of his department are now required by law to be published; and in order that the chief of said bureau may be able to prepare, compile and transmit his annual report to the secretary of internal affairs within the time herein specified the mine inspectors are hereby required to deliver their annual reports to the secretary of internal affairs on or before the fifteenth day of March in each year. In addition to the reports herein required of the mine inspectors, the said mine inspectors shall furnish to the chief of the bureau of mines such reports of information on any subjects regarding mine accidents or other matters pertaining to mining interests or the safety of persons employed in mines as he at any time may require, or may deem necessary in the proper and lawful discharge of his official duties. The reports of the bureau of mines shall also establish, as far as may be practicable, a uniform style and size of blanks for the annual reports of the mine inspectors and preserve the form and character of subject matter to be embraced in the text and the tabulated statements of their annual reports. The chief of the bureau of mines is hereby authorized to make such examinations and investigations as may enable him to report upon the various systems of coal mining practiced in the state; method of mining; ventilation; machinery employed; structure and character of the several coal seams overlain and of the associated strata; the circumstances and responsibility for mine accidents; economy of coal production; coal waste; area and exhaustion of coal territory, and such other matters as may pertain to the general welfare of coal miners and others connected with coal mining in

Sec. 6.—The chief of the bureau of mines shall keep a journal or record of all examinations made and work done under his administration and copies of all official communications and be hereby authorized to procure such books, instruments and chemical or other tests as may be found necessary to the proper discharge of his duties under this act at a salary of \$1,200 per annum, all these salaries to be paid out of the state treasury.

Sec. 7.—The chief of the bureau of mines shall at all times be accountable to the secretary of internal affairs for the faithful discharge of the duties imposed upon him by law and the administration of his office, and the rules and regulations pertaining to the office shall be subject to the approval of the secretary of internal affairs, who is hereby empowered to appoint an assistant to the chief of the bureau at a salary of \$1,200 per annum, all these salaries to be paid out of the state treasury.

Sec. 8.—No person who is acting as a land agent or as a manager, viewer or agent of any mine or colliery, or who is interested in operating any mine or colliery shall at the same time serve as chief of the bureau of mines under the provisions of this act.

Sec. 9.—That the operator or superintendent of each and every coal mine subject to inspection under the mining laws of the state shall, within six months after the final passage and approval of this act, deposit in the bureau of mines an accurate map or plan of such coal mine, which may be on tracing muslin or sun print drawn to a scale of not less than 200 feet to an inch, which map or plan shall show the actual locations of all openings, excavations, shafts, tunnels, slopes, planes, main headings, cross headings and rooms or working places in each strata operated, pumps, fans or other ventilating apparatus, the entire course and direction of air currents, the location and proximity of the workings of such coal mines to all other adjoining mines or coal lands and the relative elevation of all tunnels and headings and of the face of working places near to or approaching boundary lines or adjacent mines, and on or before the close of each calendar year transmit to the chief of the bureau of mines a supplemental map or plan showing all excavations, changes and additions made in such mine during the year drawn to the scale as the first mentioned map or plan. All such maps or plans to be and remain in the bureau of mines as a part of the records of that office.

Sec. 10.—All acts or parts of acts inconsistent with this act be and the same are hereby repealed.

Plan for a State Bureau of Mines.

Provisions of the Least Objectionable Measure of This Kind Yet Introduced at Harrisburg.

Of the propositions under consideration at Harrisburg looking to the creation of a state bureau of mining the least objectionable is that known as the Mansfield bill, which has, we believe, the approval of the state and a majority of the members of the legislature, as follows:

Section 1.—Be it enacted, etc., that there is hereby established in the department of internal affairs a bureau to be known as the bureau of mines, which shall be charged with a supervision of the execution of the mining laws of this commonwealth and the care and publication of the annual reports of the inspectors of coal mines.

Sec. 2.—The chief officer of said bureau shall be designated chief of the bureau of mines and shall be appointed by the governor upon the recommendation of the secretary of internal affairs within sixty days after the final passage of this act and every four years thereafter. He shall be commissioned by the governor to serve for a term of four years, and his successor is duly qualified and shall receive an annual salary of \$1,000 and traveling expenses. In case of a vacancy in the office of the chief of said bureau, the governor shall appoint on recommendation of the secretary of internal affairs a qualified person to fill such vacancy for the unexpired balance of the term.

Sec. 3.—The chief of the bureau of mines shall be a competent mining engineer having at least ten years' practical experience in the working and ventilation of mines, and shall possess a practical knowledge of all noxious and dangerous gases found in such mines, or other person who shall be fully qualified by his knowledge and practical experience to perform the duties of the office. He shall have passed the examination required by the laws of this state for the position of mine inspector and shall have been recommended to the governor as qualified to fill the office of internal affairs by some of the examining boards duly appointed for that purpose. The said chief of the bureau of mines shall, before entering upon the duties of his office, take and subscribe to the oath of office prescribed by the Constitution, and give to the commonwealth a bond in the sum of \$10,000 with surety, conditioned for the faithful discharge of the duties of his office.

Sec. 4.—It shall be the duty of the chief of the bureau of mines to devote the whole of his time to the duties of his office and to see that the mining laws of this state are faithfully executed and for that purpose he is hereby invested with the same power and authority as the mine inspectors to enter, inspect and examine any mine or colliery within the state and the works and machinery connected therewith and to give such aid and advice to the mine inspectors from time to time as he may deem best calculated to protect the health and promote the safety of all persons employed in and about the mines. And should he receive information in his office, obtained by ten or more miners or operators, and setting forth that any of the mine inspectors are neglectful of their duty, or refuse to perform the duties of their office, or are guilty of malfeasance in office, he shall at once investigate the matter and if he is satisfied that the charges or charges are well founded he shall then petition the court of common pleas of the county in which the mine is situated, which court, upon receipt of said petition and a verified copy of the charges and testimony produced, shall at once issue a citation in the name of the commonwealth to the said inspector to appear before the court on the day named in the citation to answer to the charges and to produce such witnesses as the judge of the court and the chief of the said bureau may require. If the said inspector fails to appear under investigation shall also have similar power and authority to compel the attendance of witnesses in his office. If the charges are not proved, the chief of the said bureau shall certify the same to the governor who shall declare the vacancy as provided for by the mining laws of the state. The cost of said investigation shall, if the charges are sustained, be paid out of the state treasury upon voucher or vouchers duly audited by the controller. If the charges are not sustained the cost shall be paid out of the state treasury upon voucher or vouchers duly audited by the controller.

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Sec. 10.—All acts or parts of acts inconsistent with this act be and the same are hereby repealed.

Sec. 11.—The framer of this bill, Representative Mansfield, of Beaver county, is himself a coal miner and operator of extended experience. His aim has been to frame a measure which would systematize the work of thome inspectors without adding largely to the costs of mine supervision. The principal objection advanced against his bill is the difficulty in the way of finding one man for chief of the proposed department who would be equally posted as to litigation and anthracite mining methods. The Tribune would be glad to hear what its readers have to suggest in way of criticism or amendment of this bill.

Postal Savings Bank. Children are large patrons of the postal savings banks of France. Out of over 800,000 depositors in these institutions, according to official reports, 80,000 are minors.

TOLD BY THE STARS. Daily Horoscope Drawn by Ainechus, The Tribune Astrologer. Astrologic cast: 3:18 a. m., for Monday, Feb. 22, 1897. A child born on this day will purchase a little hatchet at an early age and will never tell a lie when the truth will do just as well. People who complain of ill ventilation in churches can usually ensure a long session in a theater without a murmur. Titles unaccompanied by an American helms do not cut much ice in this age. General Harrison probably has no use for the presidency today. Ainechus' Advice. Do not be afraid to venture off the perch occasionally. It is better to be a "has been" than a social or political 9.

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