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RECORD-CLASS MAIL MATTER.

TEN PAGES.

SCRANTON, MAY 7, 1897.

There are three names in the list of senators who voted against the arbitration treaty that look out of place there. We refer to Senators Mason, Penrose and Quay. It would be interesting to know their reasons for the attitude thus assumed.

A Foolish Agitation.

If the agitation in Wilkes-Barre for the organization of the government of that municipality so that it will be in the third class rests upon no more substantial ground than the desire to increase the city's bonded indebtedness for the purpose of establishing municipal water works, then those who are foremost in it would do well to make careful calculation of the costs. Concerning the water question we have nothing to say but there are other things than water to be considered when there is in contemplation a change from one form of charter to another.

We understand that Wilkes-Barre has one tax collector who receives state, city and school taxes; that its legislation is enacted by a single council, that the government of the schools is satisfactory and that the city tax rate is comparatively low. Its charter is possibly weak in not centralizing greater authority in the mayor and thus making him directly responsible to the people for the police, fire and street cleaning service. In this direction there appears to be room for amendment, it being undoubtedly the best judgment of students of municipal government that authority centralized in one officer answerable at frequent intervals to the voters is preferable to power dispersed among various boards, commissions and councilmanic committees.

But to wish for an exchange of this compact and relatively inexpensive scheme of government for the cumbersome, costly and awkward plan provided in the present act governing third-class cities seems at this distance to be conspicuously short-sighted and unwise. It is not our funeral in any sense; and these few words of advice may be taken or rejected as the mood inclines; but nevertheless we feel bound to offer to the citizens of Wilkes-Barre the admonition of Punch to couples about to marry—"Don't! Or, in the words of Hamlet, 'tis better to endure the ills that be than to fly to others that ye wot not of."

The third-class charter would accomplish only a few things not feasible under the charter upon which Wilkes-Barre's present government rests. It would create a brood of new offices, to be scrambled for by political workers more anxious to draw pay from the taxpayers than to earn an honest living by ordinary toil. It would complicate municipal legislation; open a big door to extravagance and log-rolling in the financial management of the public schools; introduce an ineffective machinery of tax assessment and collection, and offer incentive for innumerable raids upon the city treasury. At the best it would give the city not one whit better government than it can order as its charter stands; and at the worst, it would multiply manifold the opportunities for mischief.

Do as you please about it; but don't think the change proposed would be for the better.

First-Class Doctrine.

Mayor Harrison of Chicago offers a sensible and timely comment on civil service reform when, in justification of his recent removal of a partisan board of civil service commissioners, he says: "If the civil service law means anything, it is for the whole people and not for the benefit of any one party. I thought so before I was elected and I think so still. I think every honest Democrat is in favor of real civil service, the taking out of politics of all the strictly clerical and subordinate positions of the municipal government. The mayor does not wish to be bothered with place hunters of this character, nor does any other official. The public service is bettered by having these positions filled by merit examinations. But, no matter which party is successful, the chief executive of the city is entitled to surround himself with a cabinet of his own, made up of men in harmony with the manner in which he proposes to conduct the affairs of the city. The civil service law never meant to deprive him of this privilege."

To this broad principle of interpretation it is impossible to take honest exception. Those extremists who argue for the retention in office, after a change in party administration, of all held-over incumbents do violence and harm to the cause which they profess to advocate. It is proper that subordinate duties should not be subject to disturbance by every variation in the political weather-vane; but on the other hand, responsible lieutenants entering intimately into the execution of a new administration's policy should be in political sympathy with their chief and should be held answerable to him for the manner in which they perform their duties. Any law that hampers the opportunity of an elected chief official to put into practice the principles for which his candidacy stood sustains by so much the will of the

people and is therefore out of joint with the spirit of popular government. We do not pretend to understand the situation in Chicago or to know how far Mayor Harrison's practice conforms with his precepts; but his words apply very aptly to the situation at Washington and justify President McKinley in making a clean sweep of Democratic hold-overs in responsible positions.

The saloon business enjoys one advantage in prohibition states. It does not have to pay a license.

"Industrial Combinations."

One would hardly expect the president of the Oliver Wire company, the largest manufacturing establishment of its kind in the world, to take a decided stand against the evils growing out of the organization of "trusts," yet this is what he does. In a paper in the Forum for May Mr. Oliver presents the clearest array of those evils that we have seen, and offers to the opponents of industrial combinations some rational and timely advice.

At the beginning he divides into two classes combinations in restraint of trade—transitory and permanent. As typical of the former class he mentions "pools"—that is, agreements among producers in a given line to divide production among the constituent members in proportion to capacity, each member to contribute to a common fund which goes to pension the weaker plants or to suppress outside competition. For obvious reasons pools are short-lived. Differences over percentage allotments kill the most of them. Internal friction and jealousy sacrifice many of the others. And, finally, extortionate prices, by inviting competition, end the remainder. The fate of the steel rail "pool" is one which vividly illustrates these arguments. It was the strongest "pool" ever organized, yet despite its immense capitalization and virtual monopoly of a staple product, it proved unable to survive a crisis in general business. The conclusion of Mr. Oliver is that "pools" are their own worst enemies, and that no legislation is necessary to their extinction since they carry with them independent of legislation, the seeds of their own destruction.

Coming, though, to industrial consolidations of a permanent nature, a more difficult problem is presented. Mr. Oliver's enumeration of the advantages arising from such unification of energy and control and such economy in production and distribution is exceedingly thorough, but space forbids more than a reference to it. His principal points may be indicated by means of an illustration. Let us suppose there are ten plants in the United States engaged in the production of a certain commodity. They represent an average investment of \$100,000. Each has its corps of officers and salesmen; each spends large sums in advertising; each has to spend other large sums in improvements simply to make sure that the others will not get ahead; and each has to buy raw materials at the mercy of the seller. They combine. One organization manages the whole number of plants. Executive and advertising expenses are reduced; uniformity prevails and the consolidated industry is in shape to dictate terms to the producer of raw materials. It is clear, consequently, that in union there is not only strength but marked economy. Wisely conducted combinations—as for example the Standard Oil company—divide the advantages with the public and do not operate primarily with a view to speculation in stocks.

But, alas, all combinations are not thus prudently conducted. Some (to carry out our previous illustration) instead of uniting ten plants worth \$100,000 each on a consolidated basis of \$1,000,000 and being content with the profits secured through economized production and distribution, mark up the capital stock to \$2,000,000, \$3,000,000 or even \$5,000,000, and increase prices so as to provide dividends on the inflated stock. Right here is where Mr. Oliver's paper merits close attention. It being practically impossible to abolish combinations in trade, his suggestion is that an effort be made to regulate them. Concerning methods he says:

I would propose either to enlarge the duties of the Interstate Commerce Commission, or to create a new tribunal with ample powers to investigate the methods of corporations, associations, or individuals engaged in the manufacture or supply of articles of general or public use. Upon the complaint or elation of any citizen, setting forth that such corporation had obtained a substantial monopoly of any industry, and by reason thereof was oppressing the public by extortionate charges or unjust regulations as to trade, it should be the duty of this tribunal to summon the parties and, after a full hearing, to award damages to the party injured, to punish the delinquent by a heavy fine, and to certify its decision to the governor of the state in which it was incorporated, with a recommendation of the withdrawal of its charter privileges.

This, of course, would involve legislation by the various states as well as by congress; but I feel certain that if congress would take the matter in earnest the state would not be slow to follow. I would also provide that the fine should be increased with each succeeding offence, and that a member of the legislative council in Hong Kong, which is a position of great honor, and he filled it with such distinction that he was invited to become legal adviser to the government. In connection with this last position he has been the director of the Imperial railway of North China. He figured prominently in the peace negotiations with Japan, and also in the making of the last commercial relations between that country and China. In recognition of the valuable service he had given his government in this last transaction he was appointed minister to Washington.

Rev. Miles Myers, of Simpson county, Miss., is in the city looking after the bill to pension the ex-slaves. The bill was introduced in the senate some years ago and created a great excitement among the slaves in the southern states, particularly those in Mississippi and Louisiana. Because of the inability of the legislature to pay over 6,000 Mississippi ex-slaves, who have sent him here to investigate the matter and see what can be done. He is indignant by the colored people and the colored press of the south, and proposes to state his business before congress in a few days. He is a remarkably good old slave class; is 75 years old, and was a slave forty-seven years. He is black, tall, eloquent, and full of reminiscences.

Colonel Tom Ochiltree, the world famous story teller and also noted for being the first Republican to break into congress from Texas, has been temporarily ill at a hotel in this city for several weeks.

dent by free trade votes and that therefore his administration should abandon protection and go in for a tariff for revenue only. Such a claim has nothing but nerve to stand on.

The bill at Harrisburg providing for the deduction of the amount of mortgages and other liens of record from the assessed value of real estate is clearly impracticable. If enacted it would encourage gross frauds in tax evasion and make it more difficult than heretofore for a poor man to borrow money with which to purchase a home. The legislature had better drop it.

Either as minister to Spain or as librarian John Russell Young would exemplify the right man suitably placed. The president has no other name on his eligible list of superior merit.

Whether the Cuban people are fit to govern themselves or not is something which cannot be determined theoretically. They at least are entitled to a trial, and they cannot learn younger.

If the present legislature violates the Republican party's reform pledges, its members can rest assured that the people will subsequently do some reforming on their own hook.

The dominion of Canada will have to grow first before it can scare the United States with a tariff threat.

Gossip at the Capital

Special Correspondence of The Tribune.

Washington, May 6. The Masons of the jurisdiction of the District of Columbia are determined to have a new temple. The temple may be of a national character, and if so, Washington will receive the headquarters of the Masonry in the United States. Several months ago a call was sent to each of the forty-nine lodges in the jurisdiction of the District of Columbia, comprising of all the lodges, chapters, commanderies, and Scottish Rites lodges. The call was to convene in a committee of five from each body to meet and discuss the building of a new temple. On March 20 the committee met and organized into a general committee. Thirty-four bodies were represented by 105 delegates. The only work done was to elect a chairman and secretary, and to instruct the committee to appoint the five following committees: law and organization, site, plans, and superintendence. On Monday evening the general committee met in the city. Ninety lodges in the district were represented. There were fully 200 hundred delegates present. The committee on law and organization submitted a report, which was elaborated in detail. After suggesting a preliminary organization of the Masonic Temple association, the committee proposed plans by which the required money may be raised. This is to be done by subscription to stock, ordinary subscriptions, or by sales of bonds. Each Masonic body in the jurisdiction of the District of Columbia which contributes \$1,000 to the stock of the association will be entitled to one representative on the board of directors. Two-thirds of the stock is to be held by Masonic bodies. There is to be an issue of \$250 a lot at least 100 by the committee plan and whatever additional amount is needed is to be raised by the sale of bonds, or by private subscription, or by the issue of three new bonds. The committee recommended that \$500,000 be invested in the enterprise, and that the temple is to be a lot at least 100 by 100 feet. It was also suggested that the temple be national in its character; thus allowing Masonic bodies all over the country to become holders of stock. The committee on plans recommended that an architect be employed to submit plans for the building.

A motion was made that the enterprise of building a Masonic temple be made national in its character. After some discussion the general assembly of the Washington and Lee University, of Virginia, was simple and logical enough. Mr. Wilson has done far for his country than any other young man of his generation. He can manage more felicitous and appropriate arrangements than that which has just transpired. Mr. Wilson from the turmoil of the political battle-field to the repose of the academic groves.

SAFEST ROAD ON EARTH. From the Wilkes-Barre News-Dealer. The Delaware, Lackawanna and Western railroad is doing a very prosperous business these days. Past time it is made on all trains and every accommodation is provided for passengers. And as regards safety, why you are just as safe traveling on a Delaware, Lackawanna and Western passenger train as you are in your own home. Accidents are unknown on that road.

PHASES OF THE MOON. From the Susquehanna Transcript. A man named Moon was presented with a daughter by his wife. That was a new moon. The old man was so overcome that he went off and got drunk. That was a full moon. And when he got sober he had 25 cents left. That was the last quarter. But when the old lady met him with a rolling pin there was a total eclipse with a comet in the distance.

FAITH. Cheer up, chillum! Don't yoh fret When de foe am strong. Nebber wa'n't no tellin' yet; Which way it waz safe ter bet; Seems dah's someth' dat won't let Victories go wrong.

Don't yoh worry 'bout de fate Ob dat Greelan host; Tell Miss Cuba foh to wait; Waiter bring in soon or late; Tain't de size, I want ter state Dat'll count foh most.

DAVID DICK DE GIANT. By jes' a keepin' cool, An' Sampson slew de ahmy Wif de Jor-bone ob a mule Don't yoh worry 'bout de fate Ob dat Greelan host; Tell Miss Cuba foh to wait; Waiter bring in soon or late; Tain't de size, I want ter state Dat'll count foh most.

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His ailment is a general breaking down, and his friends fear that he will never be the same old Tom again.

Appropos of office-hunting, Senator "Billy" Mason recently told a story to the amusement of his neighbors. The story was as follows: Pat McCarthy gave a dinner, to which he invited three or four of his neighbors. Pat had allowed his wife to cook only one chicken. When dinner was served Pat, took possession of the carving knife and in a most hospitable tone said to Mrs. McCarthy: "What part of that fowl will ye have?" "A leg if ye please," was the answer. "An' what part will ye have?" Would ye loiter on the lady's side?" Pat inquired of Mrs. O'Hooligan. "An' a leg will do me," she answered. As each answered the part of the fowl she desired, water for foreign waters. "What part will ye have, Moike Walsh?" Pat blandly inquired of his neighbor. "O' balave O! will take a leg, too," said Moike, in his most modest way, wishing to follow in the footsteps of the rest of the company. "Begorra," said Pat to Moike, "what does ye think O'm carving—a spider?"

No one ever seriously doubted the steadfast loyalty of Senator Penrose to machine politics, but a story told by him emphasizes this devotion. Senator Penrose, advised his wife to get married. "A wife and an establishment will give ye a better standing, and be more in keeping with the dignity of your position as United States senator," was the argument used by Mr. Cameron. "All right," said Senator Penrose, "bring on the lady I am ready to marry whomever the state organization indicates."

Up to this date we have heard no suggestions in this line from the state organization.

WHY GOLD GOES ABROAD.

From the New York Sun. The balance of trade cannot be taken as an accurate indication of the trend of the gold flow. The figures in the balance sheet take no cognizance of the exchanges constantly passing between this country and the rest of the world. These are numerous, and the exact state of them at any one time cannot definitely be known. Remittances and interest are divided into two classes: those for foreign countries and those for property here. Queen Victoria herself owns property in New York city. The great number of American in Europe expended a lot of money there which has got to go over in gold, in exchanges, or otherwise. There are individual New Yorkers over there who compare favorably with short visits who do not hesitate to make purchases up to \$25,000 and \$30,000, or up to \$100,000 or \$200,000. If they see something that they happen to want there are, besides, rich Americans who live abroad now and draw incomes from here. The earnings of their property are remitted to them, and these are a few of the incidental reasons why gold goes out, and the relation of the various conditions to each other. The commercial and financial worlds differ at different times.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF RAILWAYS.

From the Washington Post. Public ownership of railroads is a scheme that has a record. It has been tried in Germany, in Italy, in Australia, and in Brazil. Why do its advocates cite the facts of experience in those countries? Higher cost and inferior service are reported from Germany. Good frauds and general mismanagement are reported from Australia. In Italy and Brazil the government management of railroads was so bad that it had to be abandoned, and the business was farmed out to corporations. But, if all the facts of experience were reviewed, how could the United States government get control of the railroads? They represent a capitalization of about \$2,000,000,000. Should we undertake to borrow that amount to pay cash? The annual interest on such a loan at 4 per cent. would be almost \$500,000,000. Where is the party that would dare to go into a campaign on a proposition to add \$2,000,000,000 to our public debt? Where are the voters who would vote to add \$500,000,000 to the list of federal place-holders?

MR. WILSON'S BEST GIP.

From the Washington Post. The Hon. William I. Wilson's acceptance of the presidency of the Washington and Lee University, of Virginia, was simple and logical enough. Mr. Wilson has done far for his country than any other young man of his generation. He can manage more felicitous and appropriate arrangements than that which has just transpired. Mr. Wilson from the turmoil of the political battle-field to the repose of the academic groves.

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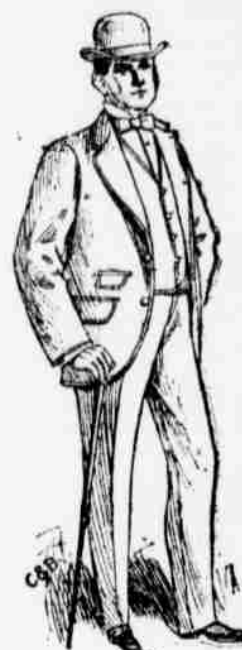
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