

The Scranton Tribune

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SCRANTON, DECEMBER 8, 1898.

An interesting point has been raised in Wisconsin where the Democratic candidate for governor refuses to file a statement of campaign expenses, claiming the law to that purpose is unconstitutional. Evidently the candidate believes that expense statements should state.

The Naval Personnel Bill.

Forty pages in the North American Review for December are given over to a discussion from every standpoint of the naval personnel bill now before congress. The father of the measure, Hon. Francis H. Wilson, of Brooklyn, tells how he was led to draw it up; Colonel Roosevelt, who, as assistant secretary of the navy, had much to do in pushing it along tells how he got the discordant elements in the navy to agree to it; Commodore Philip for the line and Chief Engineer Melville for the engineering branch explain why from their respective standpoints the bill's adoption would improve the personnel of the service, and Congressman Foss of the house naval committee, speaking as a representative of the people, gives reasons why the people should not only assent to but demand the bill's enactment. Let us, then, consider what this would mean.

At the present time, speaking roughly, about 40 per cent. of the inhabitants of an American war ship have nothing to do with the fighting part of the ship's work and are only nominally in subjection to the commanding officer. These men are in charge of the machinery of the ship; they come under the command of the ship's chief engineer. The chief engineer and the engineering officers under him are in a branch of the naval service entirely distinct from the executive or fighting branch; they report to a separate chief at Washington; they are held responsible only for the correct working of the mechanism of the vessel; they are in a sense civilians in a military calling. From this cleavage between the ship's machinery and the ship's sailors a good deal of friction has resulted and a good deal more is bound to be the result of the machinery of navigation becomes more and more complicated unless steps are taken to prevent it. A ship, like a house, cannot well have two masters or shelter satisfactorily two families.

In the bill now before congress it is proposed to amalgamate both branches into one and to put every naval cadet in future through a course of training which shall not only make him a good sailor but also a capable engineer; at least sufficiently conversant with the ways and use of machinery so that if he should rise to the command of a ship he would know how to direct the movements of the boilers and engines as well as how to manoeuvre the ship and fire the guns. In this way there should not be an officer on board ship who would need to be helplessly dependent on any other officer if called during action to take command. To the argument that this would destroy specialization and make naval jockeys of all trades it is replied by the advocates of amalgamation that naval officers are invariably encouraged, after they receive an all-round foundation training, to pursue some particular branch as a specialty, and the growing importance of the mechanical features of ship construction and navigation would suffice to develop always enough specialists in engineering to supply the current need. We know as it is that our navy has some of the brightest specialists in the world, and we can see no reason why under the conditions proposed it should not continue to have them.

There are other features in the pending bill. As the navy stands promotion ordinarily is by seniority. Once in a long time, in an emergency, subordinate officers are bumped to a high command, as was true when Captain Sampson was made commanding rear admiral. But under normal conditions the only hope which an ensign has of becoming a captain or better is based safely upon the longevity or brevity of existence of the men in line above him. It thus happens that our commanding officers receive as a rule no opportunity to display their executive qualities until they have reached the age of fifty or over, a time in life when originality and the quality of initiative are generally upon the decline. "No one in private life," very aptly says Commodore Philip, "would think of managing a large and important business by arbitrarily discharging all of his employees when they reach a certain age, and filling the highest positions with the employees longest in service, irrespective of their special fitness for them. When presented in this way the idea seems perfectly absurd, and yet this is exactly the system under which the navy is organized today."

It is proposed to enable officers to attain command rank at the age of 45 years. This will be accomplished by examining for retirement each year a certain number of officers who have been in the service twenty or more years. This examination is to be conducted by a board of high naval officers and will take into account the state of health of those examined, their temperamental qualities, etc., as well as their seamanship, and professional skill, with a view to retiring those officers only who are least adapted to responsible commands. Inasmuch as retirement will be in some cases would very likely prove welcome. Retirement is made now at an age limit, the only difference being that the good, the bad and the medium officers are at present retired indiscriminately.

These features with an equalization of pay between the army and navy (our naval officers now receiving less pay than army officers of corresponding grades) and a few minor provisions constitute the Naval Personnel bill

which the administration asks congress to pass at this session. The navy has earned this consideration.

The Michigan supreme court has just filed an opinion confirming Justice Edwards' views of the constitutionality of Bible-reading in the public schools. Thus laws linked with common sense.

That Duryea Challenge.

The offering of a \$5,000 reward for the apprehension of the Corcoran murderers was doubtless a wise step in its place, although it has called to the front a number of amateur detectives who are making a deal of trouble and perpetrating a lot of outrages in the abused name of justice.

But something more than the disposition to be liberal in rewards is needed to get to the heart of this big problem of lawlessness in the anthracite region. It is proper and necessary and commendable to follow up with determination the perpetrators of so cold-blooded a crime as that last reported at Duryea. We view admiringly the spirit shown by the authorities of Luzerne county and do not doubt that they will result in the speedy apprehension of the criminals and in their capital punishment.

Yet the complete success of the hopes and plans of the authorities in this one case would not materially affect the widespread prevalence and audacity of the criminal spirit in the coal fields, nor reduce perceptibly at all the extraordinary strain which this is placing upon all the activities of government in this section upon industry and thrift, and upon the community's fame throughout the country.

We do not want to borrow the trappings of an alarmist nor fall to the tactics of yellow journalism, yet we would impress upon every thinking reader before whom these words may come the thought that the spirit which can lead four masked men to invade a prominent home at midnight and with deliberation assassinate its owner, afterward coolly pausing for a fitting time for the wrecking of a safe by dynamite, calls for more than the ordinary work of detection, arrest and punishment. It is a challenge to the whole strength of civilization as exemplified in our churches, schools and law-respecting homes; a deliberate flaunting of the signal of combat, which must be repelled to with unmistakable effectiveness all along the line.

We have no hobbies to ride. We are open to suggestions as to what is wisest to be done. But is it not clear that the fight against crime in these parts requires reinforcements?

Hobson, it seems, is to be transferred to the line and made a ranking lieutenant commander, which would make him an admiral ere he is 50. Of course Hobson deserves the promotion, but we dare say he would prefer to be permitted to raise the color.

To Revive American Shipping.

The strongest thing in Secretary Gage's report is his plea for a restored American merchant marine. After showing how greatly expansion has multiplied our trading opportunities he continues: "A positive policy which shall create anew an American seagoing merchant fleet is not intrinsically more difficult to establish than has been the recent rehabilitation of the American navy, or that, a third of a century ago, was the establishment of transcontinental railroad communication. Great Britain, Germany and France have consistently pursued for years the policy of contributing liberally from the public funds to establish steamship lines as a political measure, regarding such lines as national necessities rather than as commercial investments. This country is now so placed that the same motive must at least be fully considered in deciding upon our course of action. Even if the motive were absent, the fact of government aid to the foreign lines of steamships with which American vessels must compete cannot be ignored. The events of the summer have brought home to us the reliance which a peaceful country in time of war must place on its merchant marine and merchant seamen.

"By selection and combination from the methods referred to, it will not be difficult to evolve a legislative project for the development of our merchant marine and of domestic shipbuilding, adjusted to our special needs and based upon the prevalent conditions of competition in the ocean-carrying trade. The method recommended may be specifically set forth in the following propositions: "First—A remodeling and extension of the Act of March 3, 1891, relating to the carrying of ocean mails in American steamships, so that it shall meet requirements which have arisen since the law went into operation. "Second—The establishment of a system of graded bounties upon the mileage navigated by registered American vessels while engaged in the foreign carrying trade as compensation for the training of seamen available for the national defence, the system to have regard also to the construction of vessels which may be promptly and economically converted into cruisers, troopships, colliers, and supply ships for the use of the government. Special provision should also be made for vessels and men engaged in the deep sea fisheries. "Third—Extended application of the principle of the act of May 10, 1892, by virtue of which the St. Louis and St. Paul were constructed in this country upon the registry of the foreign-built steamships New York and Paris, this extension to continue for a short term of years and to be so guarded as to preserve the coasting trade to American-built vessels. "Fourth—A moderate increase in the rates of our tonnage taxes, equalizing them with the corresponding charges at present imposed at London, Liverpool and Hamburg. "Fifth—The restriction of the trade between the United States, Porto Rico and Hawaii and the coasting trade

of those islands to vessels of American registry.

"These propositions are drawn from the current practices of our maritime competitors. They can be put into operation promptly upon their enactment. They will not raise diplomatic difficulties, delaying action and involving us in prolonged discussion or a war of commercial retaliation. They will not raise political questions upon which parties, as now constituted, may divide. They are believed to be entirely adequate to our needs. Let congress try them."

The fact that the peace commissioners at Paris declined to give Spain any satisfaction in the way of mapping out a programme for Cuba ought to be convincing evidence that this government has no desire to conduct the affairs of the island any longer than is necessary.

Alabama offers to exempt from taxations for ten years any manufactures which may be established within her borders during the next five years. Manufactures are certainly what the south needs; manufactures and justice.

The Cologne Gazette doubts whether the Americans possess the required aptitude for colonizing. This position ought largely to increase the Gazette's circulation in Boston.

The cheerful manner in which New York explains that the fireproof skyscraper is not dangerous, indicates that heroism is not dead in Gotham.

The Congressional Record will issue no colored supplement this season, but it is expected that the winter numbers will be exceedingly lively.

One by one the anti-expansionist senators are getting into line with the peace commission and the administration. Senator Butler is the latest.

It is feared that the Pittsburgh people have made Mr. Carnegie believe that he is the whole caravan.

There is yet some doubt as to whether Boss Croker has succeeded in depriving Mr. Bailey of his air bags.

The anti-expansionists will now proceed to expand.

TOLD BY THE STARS.

Daily Horoscope Drawn by Ajacchus, The Tribune Astrologer.

Astrolabe Cast: 18 a. m. for Thursday, December 8, 1898.

A child born on this day will be kind to his neighbors and will be engaged in business actively engaged in spring politics. The Christian who puts on airs because he is on speaking terms with great men, should remember that the ox and mule frequently browse in the same pasture.

In referring to the president's message the general sentiment seems to be that Mr. McKinley still has something up his sleeve.

Even great men sometimes fail to become famous, but many small specimens have no difficulty in becoming notorious.

The alleged journalist who stole the article is often in danger of giving away his own game.

Ajacchus' Advice. Do not say unkind things of an enemy. Send him one of those "endless chain" begging letters.

NEWS AND COMMENT

Major Lawrie, one of the officers concerned in the late Sudan campaign, is the hero of a strange story if we may credit the London correspondent of the Chicago Record. Before the battle of Albara he found in his helmet, the ventral of a big spider, which came out in the evening, caught as many flies as possible and returned to its strange lair. The major, perhaps from a remembrance of the story of Bruce and the spider, or, perhaps, from superstitious reasons, left his little friend alone and went to the battle of Albara wearing the helmet with the spider safely inside. Men fell all around him, but Major Lawrie received no such wound as a scratch. On the other hand, the spider was still cozily nestled in his helmet. The major commanded a battery, but again he came through unscathed, and the spider, slumbering peacefully, waited for the battle to finish before getting his supper of flies. When the campaign was over Major Lawrie packed his belongings to send them home, among them being the helmet with the spider still inside. Afterward he remembered with remorse the little friend that had not forsaken him through the fire of battle, and that he had sent him home packed up without anything to eat. When he arrived home himself he opened his helmet box, expecting to find a little corpse, but instead he found the spider alive and vigorous and the possessor of two very vigorous little spiders. The story, it is to be noted, is the most conspicuous presents to the bride of the recent wedding was a diamond spider.

For this true romance of the rails we are indebted to the Philadelphia Times.

"While the Buffalo express was speeding over the Reading railway from South Bethlehem to this city yesterday afternoon, one of the crew, Mrs. John Burns, of Raven Run, Northumberland county, gave birth to a baby boy. Shortly after Hellerstown was passed brakeman Kurose noticed the woman in the toilet room and was astonished to behold a newborn baby by her side. He immediately went in search of a physician and returned with Dr. Moulton, of West Philadelphia, to find that the woman had taken a seat in the car, her latest born to her arms. Several women bound for Baltimore furnished the doctor with articles of clothing, and one man gave his shirt, so that the baby was soon clothed. At Wayne Junction Mrs. Burns, carrying the boy and accompanied by her five other children, left the train and took a seat in the station until the Fourteenth district police ambulance arrived. She was placed in the ambulance and taken to the home of a relative on Wingoheoking street. Mrs. Burns and her children were here to join the husband and father, who is employed in this city."

An enterprising Greek merchant at that city has discovered that American flour can be brought to Constantinople and sold for less than the same quality of the Russian production, and he has placed several large orders with western millers. There is no doubt that with the improved freight service, which is bound to come within a few years, American butter, cheese, hams and many other agricultural products, as well as manufactured articles of every description, will find a ready market in Turkey.

General Garcia expresses thorough satisfaction with the president's message. "It is an indication," says he, "that the American executive intends that the language of the resolution intervening in Cuban affairs shall be carried out; that Cuba shall have a free and independent government. We can well afford to trust to the action of congress regarding our

welfare. I will say, and at the same time echo the voice of all of my colleagues upon the commission, that we have been especially pleased with the reception which we have met in Washington, both publicly and privately, and with the regard which has been shown us by the officials of the government and the evident concern which members of congress, both senators and members of the house of representatives, have exhibited in Cuban affairs and their determination to provide for the best interests of the island."

This from yesterday's New York Sun will possess local interest: "The old Moses Taylor home, at Fifth avenue and Seventeenth street, was sold yesterday for Charles A. Peabody and the other executors of the Taylor estate, and it is reported that a twelve or fifteen story building with apartments especially designed for artists will be erected on the site. The old house was the home of Moses Taylor, who was born in 1806, became a merchant and shipowner with a large Cuban trade, and then a banker. He was president of the City bank in 1855, and during the civil war, as chairman of the loan committee of the associated banks, negotiated \$20,000,000 in government securities."

Senor Romero, the veteran Mexican diplomatist who has just been made an ambassador, was dean of the diplomatic corps until some of the European governments sent ambassadors to Washington. After that he was obliged to wait on diplomatic reception days until the ambassadors had finished their business before he could receive an audience with the secretary of state. Now he is of equal rank with the highest of the diplomatists and carries with him a large retinue of ministers and over all ambassadors who reach the state department after he has sent his card to the secretary. Another privilege which Senor Romero obtains with his new rank is that of transacting business directly with the president whenever he deems it necessary to do so.

It doesn't pay to dream. In the United States district court in Washington, Ky., a day or two ago, Albert Jackson, a witness from Pineville, Ky., fell asleep in a conspicuous place. Soon he awoke and his dreams became troubled and he began to talk. The court proceedings were much disturbed, and Judge Barr had him awakened. Cullott angrily protested, and Judge Barr finally ordered him taken to jail for twenty-four hours.

Vice President Hobart has now a \$100,000 inkstand. It is of solid silver and made in the form of the capitol in miniature. The small domes of the old senate chamber and the house of representatives are the tops of inkwells, while trays for pens are formed on each side of a stamp box in front of the building. It is 24 inches wide by 18 inches high. It is a luxury drive a fresh nail in Jeffersonian simplicity.

Bismarck's memoirs are the big literary thing in contemporary Europe. The first week they were in print 75,000 copies were sold and they have been selling like wild ever since. Bismarck got \$2000 for the manuscript and rights. The publishers have already cleared \$1,200,000.

According to the Harvard Bulletin, over 250 Harvard men were in the war with Spain. President Eliot Norton will find in this a new cause for pessimism.



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