

The Scranton Tribune

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When space will permit, The Tribune is always glad to print short letters from its friends bearing on current topics, but its rule is that these must be signed, for publication; by the writer's real name; and the condition precedent to acceptance is that all contributions shall be subject to editorial revision.

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First 500 inches.....	25	27	29
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6000 "	15	17	19

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SCRANTON, DECEMBER 31, 1901.

On Christmas we remembered the newsboys by giving them free papers to sell. Tomorrow our carrier boys will receive without cost copies of a handsomely illustrated carrier's address, consisting of eight pages with a cover in colors. All regular subscribers are urged to make glad the New Year's dawn for these punctual little servants by purchasing of them copies of this address.

One Year's Crop of Laws.

DURING THE past year, 14,233 laws have been passed by the legislatures of the various states according to the comparative summary and index prepared by the New York state library. Of these, 5,422 are general in their scope and have therefore been included in the library's digest. During the year 69 state enactments have been declared unconstitutional or void by the people. Some of the more interesting features of these various laws are worth noting.

In order to facilitate voting on constitutional amendments, Nebraska has provided that the state convention of any political party may declare for or against a constitutional amendment and such declaration shall be considered a portion of the party ticket. A straight vote for the ticket of a party declaring in favor of an amendment will be counted as a vote for the amendment. Inasmuch as it takes a majority of all the votes cast at an election in Nebraska to validate a constitutional amendment, this act is expected to prevent good amendments from failing, by default.

In the nature of political legislation, the extension of the direct primary system in Wisconsin throughout the entire state; the passing of laws by Kansas and South Dakota providing that no person may accept the nomination of more than one party for the same office and can be placed on the official ballot as the candidate of but one party; the adoption by six states of legislation looking to the employment of voting machines; the enactment in California of a law making it a misdemeanor to write, print or distribute an unsigned circular or pamphlet intended to injure or defeat any candidate for nomination or election to any public office by reflecting on his personal character or political action; the educational restrictions on suffrage imposed in Alabama and Maryland; and the appointment by the legislature of Pennsylvania, Georgia and Arkansas of committees to confer with similar committees representing other states with a view to having United States senators elected by direct vote of the people present points of general interest.

Perhaps the most interesting act of the year was that, in Illinois, which provides that on petition of 25 per cent. of the voters of a locality or of 19 per cent. of the voters of the state any question of public policy is to be submitted to the people. Steps to submit a constitutional amendment providing for the initiative in referendum have been taken in Oregon, and Nevada has referred this matter to the legislature of 1903. Last year Utah adopted a constitutional amendment authorizing the application of these principles, but the legislature of this year refused to enact the laws necessary to put it into effect.

At one time, most of the legislatures met annually. Now only six states have annual sessions and Alabama has led the way for quadrennial sessions; a precedent Virginia is considering. The trend of public opinion is manifestly adverse to frequent legislative sessions. The people want them short, sweet and long between.

In the direction of economics the year's legislative developments are equally interesting. The decision of the United States supreme court, sustaining the Illinois progressive tax, has had a marked effect in bringing about similar legislation in other states. During the past year the inheritance tax has been adopted by Minnesota, Utah, Arkansas, Washington, Nebraska, North Carolina and Colorado. The Arkansas law provides for the taxation of collateral inheritances only, but the laws of all the other states for the taxation of both direct and collateral inheritances. The tax imposed is progressive as regards collateral inheritances in Washington, North Carolina, Nebraska and Colorado. The new Alabama constitution contains a provision permitting the legislature to levy a collateral inheritance tax. Four antitrust laws were passed in 1901 as against 18 in 1899. All of the laws of the present year, however, show a tendency to grapple with what is admittedly the greatest evil: the driving out of competition by unfair means, such as factors' agreements and local price cutting. Free employment bureaus have been authorized or established

during 1901 in Connecticut, Kansas, Minnesota, West Virginia and Wisconsin. During the past year Colorado has enacted the most thoroughgoing employer's liability law yet enacted by any American state. The act makes the employer, visiting a person or a corporation liable for all injuries resulting from the negligence of any employee.

The laws regulating marriage and morals are many. We mention only a few of the more curious or striking. Minnesota has prohibited marriage between persons either of whom is afflicted with insanity, feeble-mindedness, epilepsy or insanity. New York has abolished common law marriage, a written contract and witnesses are now required and the contract must be filed within six months with the city or town clerk. A number of states have provided probation officers who may recommend that convicted juvenile offenders be released on probation and shall exercise supervision over those so released. Massachusetts in 1891 was the first state to extend the system to adult offenders. Vermont during the present year has revised its probation law adopted in 1888, and New York has established a system of probation for adult offenders. In order more effectively to prevent gambling Texas has prohibited card playing at any place except private residences. Oklahoma has prohibited entirely the sale or gift of cigarettes and Massachusetts and Vermont have increased the age of minors to whom the sale is prohibited.

State examination and certification for practice of trades and professions is to be extending very rapidly. Many states during the past year revised their laws relative to the practice of law, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and veterinary surgery. A number of states have this year provided a state examination for mine foremen. Laws for licensing barbers have been passed by California, Connecticut, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota and Washington. Plumbers are required to obtain a license in Michigan, Nebraska, Pennsylvania and Washington. Stationary steam engineers are to undergo an examination in all cities of Florida of over 5000. Washington has provided for the examination of horse-shoers and California for the licensing of architects and accountants.

Upon the whole, the year's showing in new legislation is creditable and many valuable revisions of old laws have been effected. Fewer enactments and those better digested constitute the chief need, and gradually this is being recognized. The output of law-making assemblies in the year ending today compares favorably with that of any other year in American history.

Governor Odell's refusal to sanction any plan of Sunday opening for New York city leaves Mayor-elect Low in a hole, but he was bound to get into one sooner or later, anyhow. Tammany represents Gotham's moral average; and no plan can be devised to keep a self-governing community above its moral average.

More Bother in Cuba.

CONSIDERABLE agitation has arisen in Cuba and to some extent in the United States over the provision made by the United States authorities for holding the Cuban elections. It appears that what is known in Cuba as the central board of scrutiny, that is to say, the board having charge of all the arrangements controlling the polling and counting of the vote, as well as the matter of challenging at the polls, was appointed before the Cuban people had divided into two presidential parties, one favoring the candidacy of Tomas Estrada Palma and the other supporting Bartolome Maso. The men named upon the board were representative Cubans, but it subsequently chanced that after the division came these men all belonged to the Palma faction.

At once the cry arose that the United States had packed the board in the interest of Palma, who had already become, to a large degree, the candidate of the Cuban office-holding class.

Of course, there was no truth in this charge. While most Americans have more confidence in the ability and character of Palma than of Maso, because they know him better, it does not have to be said that the American government meant and means to be entirely impartial. But the Cubans are a suspicious people. They are also new to the task of electing presidents and therefore more than ordinarily anxious to have their own way about it. Consequently the Maso supporters immediately wired a protest to Washington, asking that the date of the election be postponed so as to enable them to lay their case before the highest authority in this country and dispatched a telegram.

The delegation has arrived, visited Washington, seen the authorities and failed to get them to look at the matter from the Cuban point of view. Upon the communication of their fate to the Maso campaign committee in Cuba, notes were immediately sent out to the faithful that Maso, despairing of securing a fair count, would no longer consent to remain a candidate and he accordingly withdrew. The whole proceeding is unfortunate. But it is difficult to see how the United States authorities could consistently have done otherwise than they did. It was not their fault that the Maso people were tardy in getting into the arena. When they selected the election supervisors no complaint was offered. The men they named were as good men as could be found. Charges of partiality were inevitable in any event after the second candidate entered the field. To have put back the date of the election under the circumstances would simply have invited more tuning and fussing. It would also have been construed as an act of partiality in the interest of Maso and would justly have incurred the resentment of the supporters of Palma.

There was really no tenable means of escape from the original decision. It was fair when made and it is not fair now the fault does not lie with the American government.

This mix-up is to be regretted, for it gives a handle to the elements in Cuba who are unfriendly to everything American and looking for opportunities to make trouble. But in a few months it

will have passed into oblivion along with many other troublesome incidents which have disengaged more largely in the newspapers of Havana than they intrinsically deserved. If Cuba is capable of self-government she will soon move away from all these little annoyances and occupy her energies with affairs of real importance. If she is incapable of self-government, it does not much matter.

When confronted with the experience of this country with the manufacturers' trusts and the labor trusts, it is no wonder that the inhabitants of the Danish West Indies prefer to remain on the outside.

General Chaffee's explanation of the reported differences between himself and the Philippine commissioners is entirely satisfactory. If all the people in this world thought alike, it would be a dull world.

Small-pox appears to have been brought under control in Luzerne county, but there are still one or two critical cases of chronic scold among the editorial fault-finders of Wilkes-Barre.

So long as Ohio continues to roll up the good old Republican majorities, the leaders may be excused for occasional indulgence in the parting of making faces at each other.

The quickest way to build the transistimian canal is the best way. The country is in no mood to witness a deadlock in congress over routes.

The South American representatives at Washington continue to belittle the efforts of the war correspondent by looking pleasant at each other.

If Joseph Benson Foraker is really after Mark Hanna's political scalp this time, Mark had better prepare for trouble.

There is no reason why Manila should not have a fire department second only to that of Scranton.

The weather bureau is respectfully petitioned to turn over a new leaf.

Outline Studies of Human Nature.**A Synonym for Mystery.**

"Ask Mr. Walsh," is the stock phrase at the Bureau of Navigation in the navy department when anything is missing or lost and is used with stock sayings. There is a story behind it, says the New York Times. One day the Bureau sent a telegram to the Commandant of a certain naval station instructing him to immediately forward to the Bureau a copy of the instructions he was given. There was no answer, but several days after the commandant was received by mail. Admiral Crownfield, the chief of the bureau, was indignant, and a hot message was sent to the commanding, demanding to know why he had not obeyed the orders. He replied that he was on such an important matter. "What certainly I do not?" said the solicitor. "What about the transfers?" "Only this, sir—I've got them on!"—London Answer.

One Occasion When Words Failed.

Innumerable stories are told by former trials and acts in the companies producing Hoyt's laugh-provoking farces, tales of the New York Clipper. One is related here. Hoyt came behind the curtain to tell the next presentation of "A Gentleman To His Wife" of his new position. The manager, thinking he had come to receive a compliment, said: "How do you like your new position?"

Hoyt, after giving his opinion, was asked if he was gratified.

"Well, I guess that's all."

Just then, the manager, much pleased with Hoyt's answer, turned up in the wings.

"You have forgotten me, Mr. Hoyt. You haven't told me what you thought of my performance."

Hoyt turned and, during the brief space of ten seconds looked intently into the eyes of the expectant young fellow, whose vanity a moment earlier received a most有力的 blow.

"I'm not bad, but one of the players received some word of criticism or suggestion for improvement of his part."

This night, all but one of the players received some word of criticism or suggestion for improvement of his part.

Hoyt, after giving his necessary directions to his players, turned to go, with my remark: "Well, I guess that's all."

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