

The Scranton Tribune

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When space will permit, The Tribune is always glad to print short letters from 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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SCRANTON, DECEMBER 8, 1902.

The next recorder of Scranton can be a Republican if factionalism is buried.

Thomas B. Reed.

THE UNEXPECTED death of Thomas B. Reed has awakened a sentiment of national regret. He was an unique as well as a picturesque figure in American politics. His withdrawal from all active participation in political affairs, so far from deadening the memory of his forceful and extraordinary personality, actually kept his name and his fame and his doings as a protagonist of uncompromising Republican principles before the public in high relief, from the day upon which he resigned the speakership until the hour of his death. And yet if we are to analyze minutely Mr. Reed's career, we shall find to find in it an extraordinary or indeed unusual number of constructive or speculative statesmanship. His range of political vision was not very wide. His intellectual insight into political and social problems was ponderously solid, but not remarkably perspicacious. He did not trouble himself very much about prospective results, so long as the solution of the question he had in hand demanded prompt and forcible immediate action. His estimate of human nature, if not very generous, was essentially just. He cared little for the sensitiveness and self-complacency of the individual in dealing with the crowd. If he did not regard the House of Representatives as an inchoate mob, he adopted a relentless pedagogic way over it which was irresistible because he made no pretense or bones about it. His attitude toward the house as speaker was simplicity itself, yet only a strong man with an abiding sense of his own powers and confidence in his own personality could have assumed it and maintained it as he did, session after session. Tom Reed never said an ill word of anybody, or perhaps thought an uncharitable thought of any human being, yet he dominated one of the greatest representative legislative bodies in the world by a forcefulness of will and an autocracy of discipline that some congressmen openly declared to be unconstitutional and tyrannous, and the most complacent of whom found it to be irksome.

Mr. Reed had no love of power for its own sake. His resignation of the speakership was as sudden as it was unexpected. The country had come to look upon Tom Reed and the plenary dispensation of the chair as essential to productive legislation. He might have maintained that position until a Democratic house was returned, at whatever time the future has that consummation in store for us. Mr. Reed's private interests suffered while his political ascendancy was towering skyward. He was not rich enough to sacrifice his professional prospects to the dignity to which he was elected and he was not poor enough to have regarded the salary of his office as a determining factor in retaining the most influential and commanding political office outside of the presidency to which a citizen can aspire. What the law galvanized in reasserting Tom Reed, politics lost. It is a topic of much constitutional perplexity and altogether outside the consideration of Mr. Reed's personality, whether the speaker of the House of Representatives should command such enormous practical influence in that assembly in addition to his nominal and ritualistic functions. The evolution of official life proceeds upon two lines. Some great offices lose in influence with time; others gain with it. The governing prerogatives of the King of England have lost almost every vestige of their original force. Even those which they retain are almost useless survivals. The initiative of the president of the United States, on the other hand, has enormously increased, at least since the Civil war. The discretion of the speaker of the House of Commons is negative, or in its widest scope mortal; that of the speaker of the House of Representatives is directly and pervasively dominating. Mr. Reed did not enlarge the powers of the chair. He stimulated those that were feeble and resuscitated those that were dormant. His predecessors had had exactly the same powers and had used them only tentatively in the same way. Speaker Reed breathed into them the breath of his own superabundant vitality and seemed to create what he in fact simply revived. He never denied or disquieted that he was fundamentally a partisan. He did not take refuge in sham compromise. He did what he did as he believed in the best interest of the people, and because he was brave, manly and frank the people respected and honored him, though not to the limit of his ambition and desire.

The courts having practically deprived the postal authorities of jurisdiction over the mails, at least in relation to certain frauds and reforms, it is up to congress again to revise the statutes.

George Francis Train says he planned an American shipping combine fifty years ago that would, if it had gone through, have been bigger than Mor-

gan's. But it is not what's planned but what's done that counts.

The announcement by the Lackawanna Railroad company of a voluntary increase in the pay of all employees to date from December 1 is glad news and reasonable news. The Lackawanna has always been a liberal employer of labor. Its rates of wages have compared favorably with those of competing lines, and, moreover, its institution of a pension retirement system for faithful employees was a step in advance of most roads in this region. It is only fair, however, to say that its employees deserve all they get. They are a splendid corps of servants.

Examining the Consequences.

THE New Orleans Times-Democrat, one of the intelligent and conservative journals of the South, comments respectfully on President Roosevelt's recent letter defining the attitude of his administration with reference to the appointment of creditable negroes to federal office. It credits the president with honesty of purpose, but disqualifying lack of direct knowledge of the race problem as it exists in the South. After presenting the usual arguments why social equality between whites and blacks is inherently impossible, it proceeds: "Now, it may be said that civil recognition of the negro, as illustrated in appointments to important federal offices, is to inaugurate, if anything, to do with social recognition. To this plea there are many answers, and one certainly that is convincing; namely, that anyone who entertains such views little understands the temper and disposition of either race. The effect of such appointments need not be concealed. They are always followed by resentment on the part of the whites and by a singular manifestation of truculence on the part of the blacks, not always in the latter case, by the black appointee, but by the black race. A post-office is not a private library; a custom house is not a lady's drawing-room. Each is a place of public business. The moment these offices are occupied by negroes they become a sort of center of magnetic attraction for negroes in the community. The blacks instantly begin to imagine that the custom house or postoffice, in large measure, belongs to them. The sense of proprietorship, carried to delirium, animates the negroes. It is reflected in their manner in public places, in the streets, and wherever persons congregate. It tends to make them even more truculent than they naturally are. It disturbs the peace of the community, leads to the violation of law and costs the whites, in the end, not a little money—not to speak of the humiliation they suffer. It retards the progress of both races. It defeats honest purposes. It spoils well-laid plans. It makes the more difficult and postpones the solution of the race problem. Economically, it is unwise. Ethically it cannot be justified."

The conclusion which the New Orleans paper reaches is that the South is the white man's country, that the negro must for ages if not perpetually remain an inferior and an object of suffering, gaining independence only as he wins it economically and then having it only to such degree as the superior race shall graciously allow, and that office-holding must be one of the privileges reserved exclusively for the whites. It pronounces this arrangement the order of nature, which man may try to change but will try in vain. Notwithstanding constitutional guarantees to the contrary, this is the arrangement of the recognition of which it urges upon the national government, and any other course, however honestly and benevolently intended, will, we are assured, wind up in disaster.

All of which may be fundamentally true, if this nation is to accept it as such, it should bravely face the consequences. One consequence arising inevitably from the southern promise is the necessity of putting our constitution into conformity with it. It is not good for a nation any more than for an individual to live a lie. Another consequence is the necessity of the readjustment of southern representation to fit the basis of actual suffrage in that section. It is preposterous to suppose that the whites of one part of the country will forever remain willing that the whites of another part shall exercise a per capita voting strength several times their own.

Schenckstadt has organized a Citizens' Alliance, the president of which is Dr. Raymond of Union college. May it have length of life and strength of backbone.

Alaska.

THE president's recommendation that a committee of congress pay a visit to Alaska in order to become familiar with that territory's resources and needs is timely and should be acted upon. Though it would probably mean a junket, the country would excuse that in consideration of the important benefits. Alaska, in magnitude equal to the wind of the United States east of the Mississippi river, has been a territorial possession of this country for a period of time equal to more than half the span of an average lifetime, and yet, in this long interval it has been all but neglected by congress. Although inhabited permanently by more people than inhabit the states of Nevada and Idaho, with their four votes in the United States senate, Alaska has never been allowed even the scant justice of a delegate in congress, a privilege freely vouchsafed to the youngest of our ultramarine possessions.

In the fertile Canadian northwest, Alaska's natural rival in attracting immigration, the homeseeker is allotted 80 acres of land upon homestead title; in Alaska, where rich land exists in abundance in sheltered valleys, fairly aching for the plow and harrow, the homesteader can only get 20 acres, or only half that which is allotted in the states. The city attorney of Nome, who is now in Washington trying to induce congress to give a little attention to this subject, gives it as his belief that if homestead laws were to be enacted for Alaska similar to those which led to the development of the Oregon country, within a year 50,000

persons would be attracted to the Yukon, Tanana and Cooper river valleys, where grass grows as high as a man's head, every conceivable species of temperate zone vegetation can be grown in profusion, and the soil is so rich that in the language of Captain Wilson of the United States army, "it would be sold by the pound as fertilizer if it were in New York." In these localities navigation is open all the year round and the coldest weather in mid-winter is only 14 degrees below zero. Sitka, the capital, is as warm as Washington, D. C., one of its drawbacks being that there is not enough cold weather in winter to freeze ice for summer use! There are millions of acres of fine land in the territory where homes can be built and comfort enjoyed equal to any in the states. Alaska's cry for attention is worthy of heed.

The reason given by Mr. Lansing for declining to become a candidate for recorder—that his personal and official interests might clash—is applicable in some degree to every citizen. No man worth his salt could work for the city for the salary the city pays and bear the unjust criticism attaching to public office-holding without necessarily sacrificing and subordinating private to public interests. We do not think that any reasonable Scrantonian would question Mr. Lansing's good faith. But since he is evidently in earnest in his attitude, let the hunt for a man of his character and ability proceed. The next recorder of Scranton should be a man equal to the job.

There are operators in the coal business who have been known to go back on workers who have stood by them in times of trouble; but, without discourtesy to the strike commission, we think that J. L. Crawford is not one of them.

Galusha A. Grow promises to conclude his long career in congress by delivering a farewell address giving his views and predictions regarding capital and labor. It should be a speech worth reading.

It is one thing to propose and another thing to effect a short session of the Pennsylvania legislature. If Brother Durham chops it off in April he will need a sharp axe.

IS MINING UNHEALTHFUL.

In Saturday's issue of the Journal of the American Medical association appears a long editorial entitled "The Healthfulness of Coal Mining," which embodies a review of the statistics, figures and statistics. The conclusions reached differ from those indicated in testimony before the strike commission. Quotation is given in the article from Louis' "Dangerous Trades," the most recent standard work regarding the healthfulness of mining in England, and figures are cited showing that while the mortality of all mines in Great Britain during the years 1899-1902 was 18.71 per 1,000, out of which 0.57 deaths were due to accidents, leaving 18.14 per 1,000 due to natural causes; yet the mortality among coal miners from all causes for the same period was only 12.33, that due to accidents being given as .29, making the death rate due to natural causes only 12.04 per 1,000. It should be said in explanation that English mines are generally dry and the ventilation is good. The Journal says there are no correspondingly authoritative figures for American coal miners, a circumstance certainly to be regretted; but from the mortality figures given in the last census report it finds that miners and quarrymen included together lost by consumption less than one-tenth of their total mortality as against over one-ninth among farmers and agricultural workers, over one-eighth among professional men, merchants and common laborers, and between one-sixth and one-seventh among manufacturing employees. Their proportion of deaths from pneumonia was about the same as agriculturalists and common laborers, but rather greater than among other classes of workers; while that from heart disease and disorders of the nervous system was among the lowest in all occupations. Only in accidental deaths does the mining industry have a specially bad preponderance, and here it is exceeded by the railway service, the per centage being 24 and 29 respectively of the total mortality. Nearly one-seventh of the deaths of miners are at 65 and over and more than one-fourth at over 55, a fact, as the commission reported by the editor of the Journal is as follows: "The facts collected from all available sources seem to indicate that the occupation of coal mining is not either relatively or absolutely unhealthful as compared with the majority of other means of earning a livelihood. It has its inconveniences and exposures, but these can be minimized by proper care, appliances and legal regulations. The special diseases to which miners are liable seem also to be largely preventable. Thus greater care in changing the equable atmosphere of the mine to the extremes of heat and cold would probably reduce the proportion of respiratory affections, such as asthma, etc., that are now claimed to be incident to the occupation."

VERY MUCH RATTLED.

From the Wilkes-Barre Record. "The Scranton Times charges that great frauds were committed in the interest of Mr. Cornell and none in the interest of Mr. Howell. If that be true the Times ought to court the investigation a contest will develop, and welcome it as a means of bringing to ignominious exposure the Republicans it has already condemned as guilty. Our Scranton contemporary has become "rattled."

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THE TRIBUNE'S SECOND ANNUAL Junior Educational Contest. A Contest in Word-Building. Who Can Make the Most Words Out of the Letters in T-H-E H-O-M-E P-A-P-E-R. THIS IS much easier than last year's contest, and twenty of the brightest boys and girls will secure Christmas Gifts in cash for making the largest number of words out of these letters. It is lots of fun to think of the words and hunt them up in the dictionary, and besides it will help you with your spelling. You will be surprised at the number of different ways these twelve letters can be used. Rules of the Contest. Presents will be given to the boys or girls, whose parents or guardians are subscribers to THE TRIBUNE, building the largest number of words out of the letters contained in "The Home Paper." No letter must be used any more times than they appear in these three words. As an example, only one "A" could be used, but there might be two "H's" or three "E's." Only words defined in the MAIN PORTION of "Webster's International Dictionary" (edition of 1898) will be allowed. Any dictionary can be used, but in judging the contest THE TRIBUNE will debit all words not found in Webster's. Proper names, or any other words appearing in the "Appendix" will not be allowed. Obsolete words are admitted if defined in the dictionary. Words spelled two or more ways can be used but once. Words with two or more definitions can be used but once. No single letters counted as words except "A" and "O." How to Write Your List. Write on one side of the paper only. Write very plainly; if possible, use a typewriter. Place the words alphabetically. Write your name, age, address and number of words at the top of your list. Write the name of parent or guardian with whom you live and who is a regular subscriber to THE TRIBUNE. Fold the list—DO NOT ROLL. CONTEST CLOSURES SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20TH at 5 P. M. All letters of inquiry for information will be promptly answered. Address your list of words, or any question you wish answered, to CONTEST EDITOR, SCRANTON TRIBUNE, SCRANTON, PA.

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