

The Pittsburgh Gazette.

THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.

Its Origin and Early History—Its Relation to the Postoffice Department—Interesting Statistics—The Electric Telegraph—We make extended extracts from the address delivered by Prof. S. F. B. Morse, the originator of the Electric Telegraph system, at the great banquet given in his honor, at New York, on the 29th instant. He said:

In 1832, on board an American ship in her voyage from Havre to New York, the first telegraph was conceived, and its essential peculiarities brought forth and established in 1833 according to the concurrent testimony of many witnesses, it is the first accented and automatically recorded them in this city, a few blocks only distant from the spot from which I now address you.

These few facts suffice here to indicate the time and place of the birth of the Telegraph. In 1832 it was planned on board the ship, in New York City University, in the winter of 1837 and 1838 it was presented before Congress. Whether the telegraph had or had not in its composition anything in common with the so-called telegraphs in Europe (but which were simply electro-magnetic semaphores) and not electro-magnetic telegraphs, it is evident from the dates that the American telegraph could scarcely have derived anything from them, since these did not practically exist till some years subsequent to the invention and planning of the telegraph on board the ship; nor did the first English electro-magnetic semaphore exist until after the first practical operation of the American electro-magnetic telegraph in this city, New York.

In claiming for the United States the birth place of the telegraph, do I claim too much? Am I unjust to the distinguished savans of the Old, and some also in the New World, whose patient and brilliant discoveries were prepared for its advent? No one more sincerely appreciates than myself the scientific researches of Oersted, of Schweigger, of Amiere, of Arago, of Sturgeon, of Christie, of Faraday, of Daniell, and a host of distinguished workers in the mines of science from out of every country—without whose labors, and the materials for combination which they furnished, the telegraph of America would have been unknown.

These labors and researches were equally necessary in making effective, the electro-magnetic semaphores, and the electro-magnetic telegraph as well. However this may be, there are few men in the country to whom science is more indebted for reliable labors and researches than Professor Henry, the eminent Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

of the amendment, and it was read by the Clerk as follows: "Provided that one-half of the sum shall be appropriated for trying mesmeric experiments under the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury."

Mr. Mason (of Ohio) rose to a question of order. He maintained that the amendment was not bona fide, and that such amendments were calculated to injure the character of the House. He appealed to the Chair to rule the amendment out of order.

The Chairman said it was not for him to judge of the motives of members in offering amendments, and he could not, therefore, undertake to pronounce the amendment not bona fide. Objections might be raised to it on the ground that it was not sufficiently analogous in character to the bill under consideration; but in the opinion of the Chair it would require a scientific analysis to determine how far the magnatism of mesmerism was analogous to that to be employed in telegraphs (laughter), he, therefore, ruled the amendment in order.

On taking the vote the amendment was rejected. Yeas 22, nays 101. The bill was then laid aside to be reported.

The temper of the House is easily inferred from this narrative. To those who thus ridiculed the telegraph it was a chimera, a visionary dream-like mesmericism, rather to be a matter of merriment than a seriously entertained. Men of character, men of position, men who in ordinary affairs had foresight, were wholly unable to forecast the future of the telegraph. I was told at the time by many persons, friends in the House that the bill finally passed, more out of deference to my personal standing than from any just appreciation of the importance of the invention, a compliment however gratifying to my personal pride, was fully offset by perceiving the low estimate of the result of my labors. Other motions disparaging to the invention were made, such as propositions to appropriate part of the sum to a telegraph to the Pacific Ocean.

The majority of Congress did not concur in this attempt to defeat the measure by ridicule, and the bill was passed by the close vote of eighty-nine to eighty-three. A change of three votes, however, would have consigned the invention to oblivion. That this was not its fate is mainly due to the perseverance and foresight of the distinguished member from Maryland, Hon. J. P. Kennedy, and Hon. C. G. Ferris, of New York, and Hon. Colonel Ayer, of New Jersey, and Mason, of Ohio. The struggles of the telegraph before Congress were not ended with the passage of the bill, to test its capacity between two cities. Another year witnessed the triumphant success of the test of its practicability.

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