

TAXATION REFORM FOR PHILADELPHIA

An Appeal to the Legislature in Behalf of Small Property Owners.

EFFICIENT DISCRIMINATION CHARGED

Legislation Requested Under Which the People Will Have an Opportunity to Elect Members of the Board, Who Are Now Appointed by the Judges, to Supervise the Assessment of Real Estate.

(Special Correspondence.) Philadelphia, March 12.—Philadelphia is now demanding reform in the methods of assessing taxes, and she has appealed to the members of the legislature from the interior counties to assist her in getting through legislation which will bring about the desired result.

For years there has been complaint over what was declared to be flagrant discrimination in the assessment of taxes against the owners of small properties. Mechanics and other workmen, who, through industry and thrift, have managed to save up enough to purchase small homes, have been obliged to pay taxes upon assessments which represent full 85 per cent of the market value of their properties, while the mansions of the millionaires, valued at \$200,000 and upward, are assessed at but 25 per cent of what they would bring if placed on sale in the open market.

The assessment of real estate in this city has for some years been made by a board of real estate assessors, who are named by a board of revision of taxes. The members of the board of revision of taxes are appointed by the board of judges of the courts of common pleas.

The complaint is that by this round about system the people have no redress when they have reason to complain of the assessment of taxes. They cannot reach the members of the board of revision of taxes, who are a law unto themselves.

What the people now demand is that the present board of revision of taxes shall be abolished and that a new method of making assessments shall be adopted, under which the members of the board having the supervision of this work shall be elected by the people.

Bills providing for this reform have been introduced in the senate and the house of representatives at Harrisburg, and they are being pushed through as rapidly as possible. There is no doubt that in the event of their passing both houses they will be signed by the governor, who is in full sympathy with the movement for tax reform in this city.

Those who have for years, through the influence of the judges, controlled the patronage of the board of revision of taxes, and the real estate assessors naturally do not want to relinquish their power.

They have, therefore, started an agitation with the view of persuading members of the legislature not to pass bills which will give the desired reform.

They have raised all sorts of objections to the proposed change and have sought to create the impression that the legislation is simply in the interest of certain political managers, whereas the contrary is exactly the case.

The men who now control the board are loth to yield their political influence which these positions represent.

REV. DR. CONWELL SPEAKS OUT. Some idea of popular feeling on this subject can be had from a public statement made by Rev. Russell H. Conwell, pastor of the largest Baptist church in this city. "The Temple," in commenting upon this proposed reform legislation, he said: "It is a good thing, an excellent thing. There was never anything so completely un-American as the present board. I can conceive how the people of this city could ever have permitted themselves to give away their liberty to such an extent as to allow the foundation of a body constituted as this is. Underneath me, I have not a word to say against the individual members of the board; they are admirable gentlemen; but it is the institution that is un-American. The people, in permitting its existence, have created a tyrant against whose dictum they have no redress. They have created a retrograde board, which has the power to tax them to ruin or to tax them to enslave. Once appointed, the tax reviser remains for life. It is a condition creative of abuse.

The abolition of the board as at present constituted and the substitution of a body of men elected by the people is the only logical way to Americanize the institution. I am very glad to hear that such a bill is before the legislature, and I sincerely hope that it will pass and become law. At present there is no way to cure an ailment which has no cure in the hands of our own masters and masters of the people as well. A board elected by the people would be subject to the will of the people, which is as it should be. The grievance in a serious case and cannot be removed too soon. The remedy is that it has not been abolished long ago."

PLAYING FOR DEMOCRATS. An attempt is being made by those seeking to continue in control of the board of revision of taxes to get the Democratic members of the legislature lined up against the reform bill. They are using arguments that this is a Republican "machine" move, and that it will hurt the Democratic party.

The facts of the case are that the proposed legislation will make this new tax board a non-partisan body, giving the Democrats the right to elect a representative on the board and to share in the patronage.

GORDON'S PERSONAL MACHINE. It has been a matter of public scandal for years that former Judge Gordon has practically dictated the selection of a large percentage of the Democratic real estate assessors. They

have been looked upon as his principal political assets. While Gordon was fighting the Democratic organization in this city, in order to get control of the local Democratic machine himself, these real estate assessors constituted an important element in his political organization. They were conspicuously active in Democratic ward and city conventions and nearly all of them were in the movement with David Martin to defeat Governor Pattison when Warwick was running for mayor. At that time Gordon and his political following was in the combine to defeat Pattison, and Gordon has been Pattison's implacable foe ever since.

Gordon is a bitter enemy of Col. Guffy and would not help the Democratic state organization unless it were to his own personal interest. He is regarded as one of the most selfish men in politics.

Upon the death of Mr. Loughlin, who for years was the Democratic member of the board of revision of taxes, Judge Gordon, who was then on the bench, brought about the appointment of R. A. Lukens as his successor, and he is today the Democratic member of this board. Lukens was the Gordon leader of the Eleventh ward and for years had control of the Democratic machine in that part of the city.

HE KNIFE PATTISSON. All of the Democratic appointments since made in the board of real estate assessors have been personal followers of Gordon, and those who declined to bow to the Gordon regime were retired from the board.

Friends of former Governor Pattison declare that for Gordon's opposition and his deals with David Martin Governor Pattison would have been the mayor of this city instead of Warwick.

BIG DINNER TO QUAY. Plans for the great dinner to be given under the auspices of the State League of Republican clubs in this city in honor of the election of Col. Matthew Stanley Quay to the United States senate are progressing favorably. A meeting of the executive committee of the State League was held last night, when the matter was carefully gone over.

The allied Republican clubs of this city will cooperate with the State League in this function. It is intended that the occasion shall be made a notable one in the political history of Pennsylvania.

It is probable that the occasion will be made to cover two days. The plans under consideration contemplate a reception by a delegation of statesmen at Col. Quay on his arrival at Broad Street station on Wednesday, May 8, and late that afternoon it is suggested that a luncheon be given the Beaver Statesman at the Union League, to be attended by about 400 members of the league and other representative Republicans of this city and state.

The big dinner will probably be held in the Academy of Music. The Academy has a seating capacity for 1,500 diners and with room for nearly twice that number of spectators. The present intention is to have the dinner on the evening of Thursday, May 9.

MAGEE'S DEATH ENDS FLINN

Insurgent Boss Will Now Be Obliterated From Allegheny County Politics.

REPUBLICAN REORGANIZATION BEGINS.

Passing Away of the Pittsburgh Leader Will Have a Far Reaching Effect Upon the Insurgent Organization and Will Mean Its Elimination From Practical Politics in Pennsylvania.

(Special Correspondence.) Harrisburg, March 12.—Naturally the effect of the death of Senator C. L. Magee upon the politics of Pennsylvania, and especially of Allegheny county, is being discussed by those who take an active interest in the Republican organization. The late Senator Magee was unquestionably the ablest and strongest of those Republicans who saw fit to join the insurgent movement in the contest over the United States senatorship which was waged in this state for over four years.

Magee, until within a few days of the end of the great deadlock, remained within the Republican ranks and voted for the Republican caucus nominee. Then he insisted that a senator should be elected. While either unable or unwilling to get the followers of Flinn, of Allegheny, into line for the caucus nominee, he with his personal following at home and a few others in the state bolted the caucus and joined the insurgents. He continued his associations with the insurgents until the time of his death.

There are those who believe that had it been in the hands of insurgents, (he was in the hands of insurgents and physicians for the last two years) Magee would never have taken the course he did. It is declared that he was influenced by Flinn and others, who were playing a game of selfish politics, and cared nothing for Magee's record for consistent Republicanism.

STONE'S TRIBUTE TO MAGEE. Since Magee has passed away full credit has been given him by his political opponents of the last few years for the noble traits in his character and his great work of charity.

Governor Stone, in commenting upon his death, among other things said: "There is no man in Pennsylvania whose death causes more grief and is a greater public loss than that of Senator Magee. He was an honest, fearless, able man, who built up his own record, and who leaves behind him a great host of personal friends, who, upon many occasions, have experienced the evidence of his friendship, and who will cherish his memory with the most sincere gratitude. In a private way, without attracting the attention of the public, he has done much for charity and much for the poor—more than many whose names are extended for public beneficence. I have always admired him, and always

1701 there were nearly 400, in July of this year this number had increased to 1,200, and when the epidemic was established excellent authorities estimate the number of afflicted clubs at 20,000, one for every commune in France.

Very soon these clubs became centers of the advanced revolutionary feeling. The young radicals of the provincial cities followed them, and through them they controlled local politics. In Lyons, Aix and Bordeaux there were two clubs. One was composed of the more respectable and the other of the lower elements of society. The latter was always a bunch of the former and in times of recent need supplied it with leaders.—Chautauquan.

respected him, and feel in his death a personal loss.

With the death of Magee the insurgents lost their ablest leader. Flinn should naturally be called upon to take his place, but he is utterly unfitted for leadership. He has the instincts of the slave driver, and even when he is in the hands of men who are associated with him in a political cause, he is domineering, dictatorial and inconsiderate of the feelings of others. He has made enemies in every move he has undertaken during the last few years, and he has done the cause with which he has been associated great injury in many ways.

REVOLUTION DUE IN ALLEGHENY. The passing away of Magee will result in a political revolution in Allegheny county. Flinn would like to take his place as the leader of the organization which Magee spent years to build up and strengthen, but he can never fill the role. He has enemies in every ward in Pittsburgh, who are influential in their respective localities, and who are only waiting an opportunity to close their accounts with him. They will follow almost anybody but Flinn in the proposed reorganization of the party. They are not necessarily supporters of Col. Quay in state politics, but they would gladly join hands with him to prevent Flinn from coming to the front.

FLINNISM TO BE RETIRED. The recent movement which resulted in the passing of the reform charter bill, the so-called "ripper" legislation, was brought about by the popular desire to get rid of Flinnism, which, with Magee on his deathbed, seemed to be cropping out in every branch of the city government.

Flinn's opponents, Flinn contractors Flinn grabbers of every kind and character were developing every day until the people determined that a halt must be called.

Led by the chamber of commerce and kindred organizations of influence in the past, the reform charter bill, the so-called "ripper" legislation, was brought about by the popular desire to get rid of Flinnism, which, with Magee on his deathbed, seemed to be cropping out in every branch of the city government.

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A STUDY IN DINING.

THE VERY FAT LADY AND THE TABLE D'HOUE DINNER.

What This Gastronomic Criminal Ate and How It Impressed an Observer, With Some Remarks on Appetite and Moderation.

The usual thoughtful person who will spend an hour studying the art at his table will disregard his fellow being sitting at the table d'hoie opposite him.

It is a great mistake to let any hour go by without analyzing and dissecting the human things around you.

Impressed with this notion we earnestly, but politely, studied the fat lady as she sat to eat.

She sat down and breathed heavily. That heavy breathing told of asthmatic tendencies—due to an overloaded stomach—and it prophesied an early ending to a placid life. It meant that she should die laboriously for a month.

All fat people have some queer contradiction about them.

This fat lady had for belt buckle a bronze plate four times as big as a silver dollar. On the bronze plate in relief was the bust of a thin, scrawny, boyish man.

High in the air the fat lady held her three pink chins. Below at her belt and far out of her sight was the bronze relief of a woman as a woman should be.

In the old days of knightly frankness it would have been proper to lean forward and say:

"Blessed art thou, radiant being, if you will you can be as scrawny, healthful and pleasing as the thin thing at your belt."

But in these days such frank talk will not do. We could only sit and watch sadly.

"Oysters," said the lady, and ate them, breathing hard and tugging pitifully with her lungs at her cruel corset strings.

"Mock turtle soup," said she, and ate that. Then her breath was a little bit shorter and her face a shade paler.

"I think I'll have some fish." She ate half a flounder, called a "sole" by courtesy.

"Lobster," "Roast beef," "Potatoes," "Corn," "Beets"—no one can digest them.

"Sweet potatoes," "Beans with bacon." This extra out your stomach's lining.

"Browned quail on toast," "Lettuce and tomato salad," "All these she ordered and ate conscientiously.

The waiter could have shamed Poe's raven with his solemn, impassive filling of a wax pedestal with no signs of mirth, amazement, rage or impatience, but only said:

"What else, lady?" "The lady said:

"I don't care for anything else—just give me some ice cream and cheese and bread and a cup of coffee."

She was an agreeable looking fat lady. She was tidy, fairly intelligent in appearance, but evidently been subject all her life to Christian influences.

Undoubtedly, somewhere in this world, some one loves her, and to that person she is a perfect woman, no signs of mirth, amazement, rage or impatience, but only said:

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BETTER THAN MARCONI'S

Secretary Wilson Has a Wireless Telegraph System That May Suit the Needs of the Navy.

WASHINGTON, March 8.—Since last autumn the navy department has suspended the experiments in the employment of wireless telegraphy as a means of communication between naval vessels and between vessels and the shore. Up to this time none of the warships has been equipped with a permanent plant.

While it may be true that Marconi is coming to the United States and that he may while here communicate to the navy department some proposition looking to the installation of his own system of telegraphy on our naval vessels, the navy department has not yet engaged him to do so.

Rear Admiral Bradford, the chief of the equipment bureau, which naturally would install any such means of communication, has had conference with some of the most eminent electricians in the United States as to the availability of the wireless telegraph for naval use. But so far nothing like the ideal system has been found. The latest proposition has been advanced by the department of agriculture.

Secretary Wilson, hearing that the navy was casting about for a serviceable system of telegraphy, has written Admiral Bradford to notify him that the agricultural department has been experimenting for some time with wireless telegraphy and has attained remarkable results. His experts assert positively that they have evolved a system radically different from Marconi's and of far greater efficiency. For obvious reasons the details of the process are kept secret but it is probable that within a short time a practicable exhibition will be made on board of a naval vessel. The bureau of equipment, naturally, has a considerable appropriation made in a lump sum to cover the expenses of installing all kinds of electrical appliances, aside from those connected with the mechanical department of the ship and when Secretary Wilson gives the order a part of this will be spent in trying Secretary Wilson's experts' devices. The outcome will be watched with the greatest interest by all naval men, particularly in view of the announcement that not only England but Germany and the other European maritime powers have ordered the installation of wireless plants in their navies.

GRAIN IN FARMERS' HANDS. March Report of the Department of Agriculture.

WASHINGTON, March 12.—The March report of the statistician of the department of agriculture shows the amount of wheat remaining in farmers' hands on March 1 to have been about 125,000,000 bushels, or 24.5 per cent of last year's crop, as compared with 128,700,000 bushels, or 29 per cent of the crop of 1899, on hand March 1, 1900, and 198,000,000 bushels, or 29.3 per cent of the crop of 1898, on hand on March 1, 1899.

The corn in farmers' hands is estimated at 770,200,000 bushels, or 36.9 per cent of last year's crop, against 774,700,000 bushels, or 37.2 per cent of the crop of 1899, on hand March 1, 1900, and 804,000,000 bushels, or 41.6 per cent of the crop of 1898, on hand on March 1, 1899.

Of oats there are reported to be about 222,000,000 bushels, or 35.2 per cent of last year's crop, still in farmers' hands, as compared with 200,000,000 bushels, or 36.5 per cent of the crop of 1899, on hand on March 1, 1900, and 283,000,000 bushels, or 38.7 per cent of a file crop of 1898, on hand on March 1, 1899.

Of rye there are reported to be about 22,000,000 bushels, or 35.2 per cent of last year's crop, still in farmers' hands, as compared with 200,000,000 bushels, or 36.5 per cent of the crop of 1899, on hand on March 1, 1900, and 283,000,000 bushels, or 38.7 per cent of a file crop of 1898, on hand on March 1, 1899.

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