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The Patriot & Union

HARRISBURG, PA., THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 1861. VOL. 3. NO. 128.

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The Patriot & Union.

THURSDAY MORNING, JAN. 31, 1861.

THE COMMERCIAL, AGRICULTURAL, MANUFACTURING AND MINING INTERESTS OF PENNSYLVANIA: HOW CAN THEY BE PROMOTED?

HOW CAN THE INTERESTS OF PENNSYLVANIA BE PROMOTED?

The most serious and interesting topics, concerning both the honor and the interests of the Commonwealth, are those which relate to commercial communications, the development of our vast natural resources, and our traffic, domestic and foreign.

It is proposed in this paper to present to the people of Pennsylvania, a plan for the removal of the existing obstructions to the further development of their resources, and the opening of the incalculable but still hidden treasures of the State.

We ask for it the dispassionate examination of all men whose sober sense can truly test the questions presented; and its adoption or rejection according to its absolute merits, apart from prejudice, passion or party.

It is believed that an arrangement can be made for developing resources, and thus increasing the value of vast portions of the Commonwealth, by which our entire State debt will be speedily extinguished, without resorting to increased taxation of any kind, and all the internal improvements of Pennsylvania be placed upon an equality, without restrictions to prevent them from moving the property of our people at minimum rates.

We find that in the present position of affairs, it is impossible to carry a pound of freight from the East to the West or the West to the East, at the actual cost of transportation—but that the Commonwealth, having taxed the Pennsylvania railroad company, not only on its property but on its business, the company makes that business pay this tax, so that, in fact, Pennsylvania taxes its own citizens for the privilege of using their own road.

Let us enquire then HOW AND WHY THE TONNAGE TAX WAS LAID. The Atlantic slope of the United States is separated from the valley of the Mississippi by the Appalachian Mountains, a natural boundary better defined than those which divide some of the independent nations of Europe.

Two generations ago, some wise men thought that a substantial union between these several parts could not be long continued, and in others, ambitious projects were based on the supposed discordant interests of the East and the West.

In fact, they presented marked contrasts in the most material particulars—climate, soil, productions, channels of communication, origin of the inhabitants, customs, manners, language, laws.

JEFFERSON'S far-reaching wisdom, revealed by the purchase of Louisiana, the chief source of political discordance; but the barriers erected by nature still remained.

Speedy settlement of the West would probably have been fatal to the unity of the Republic. Fortunately, the unfriendliness of the French and Spaniards for rapid colonization of the country, combined with minor causes, delayed the settlement of the lands drained by the Mississippi and its tributaries, until time had developed a surplus population in the East, which sought the rich alluvial and lime-stone soils of the West, and infused its own restless and resistless energy into the slumbering colonists who they found scattered on the margins of the streams.

These emigrants carried also to their new homes recollections of those which they had left, and all the wholesome prejudices of their early training. The ties of birth and breeding, and of a common descent, impelled them to desire to control and finally to accomplish, means of communication easier, cheaper, and speedier than the pack horse, slowly and painfully toiling ten to twenty miles a day over the rude paths which were called, according to their width, trails or roads.

So, also, with land owners and explorers. They saw the boundless treasures of the virgin soil, anticipated the time when this profuse bounty of Providence would become available for man, and predicted the mighty empire—destined to supplant the ferocious savage and the contented Indian.

But all knew and said that there must be roads across the mountains. The highways of a country are sure tests of its civilization, and measure its progress as a thermometer indicates temperature. The history of the roads across the Alleghenies is the history of the prosperity of the people. In the great and beneficent work of opening these means of intercourse, States and citizens cordially concurred. No short-sighted selfishness threw obstruction in the way. Bounties were offered. Taxes were not levied. He who could have been sold enough to propose laying a duty on freight would have been scorned as a public enemy. The policy of Pennsylvania especially, indicated the wisdom of her founders. In the first quarter of the present century, she subscribed vast sums of money to turnpikes leading to the West. Her FRANKLINS, MORRIS, CLYMERS, M'KEANS—all the fathers of her freedom, founders of her greatness—had passed away before the modern contrivance of taxing civilization by a tonnage duty was ventured on.

The differences between the savage and the citizen arise from, or tend towards, separation of individuals. The former lives by himself and for himself. Sole despot of his solitary family, he knows no community of interest or action, except as sometimes impelled by hunger in the chase or by passion in war. His wants are few, because his knowledge is limited. He needs, for his infrequent travel, only the sun, the stars, the course of streams, to guide his steps. Roads and intercourse are inconsistent with his wild independence. Improving on the slow process of taxation as means of impairing efficiency, he would at once destroy what he disapproves, and banish road-makers as intolerable nuisances. This is the absolute reign of ignorance and selfishness.

When the ring of the wood-chopper's axe resounds through the forest, the first blow has been struck for intelligence and intercourse. The work proceeds, houses and barns appear, fields and pastures team with grain and cattle, schools and churches are built, towns and cities spring up. During all this, another process has been going on, at once dependent upon and aiding the progress of man from his lowest to his highest condition—creation of means of intercourse—building bridges, making roads, &c.

Without these facilities there cannot be ready communications, which are essential to social combination, without which, concentration of effort is impossible. All refinement results from this union of many, in their several parts, for the comfort and convenience of all.

As early as 1784, GENERAL WASHINGTON wrote to Governor Harrison, in anticipation of the trade of the West and the competition for it: "A people who are possessed of a spirit of commerce, who see and will pursue their advantages, may achieve almost anything. In the meantime, under the uncertainty of those un-

der takings, they are smoothing the roads and paving the way for the trade of the western world. The New York will do the same, no person who knows the temper, genius, and policy of these people can harbor the smallest doubt. Common policy, therefore, points clearly and strongly to the propriety of our enjoying all the advantages which nature and our local situation afford us, and clearly evinces that unless this spirit could be totally eradicated in other States as well as this, and every man be made to become either a cultivator of the land or a manufacturer of such articles as are prompted by necessity, such stimulus should be employed as will force this spirit, by showing to our countrymen the superior advantages we possess beyond others, and the importance of being upon an equal footing with our neighbors."

Time developed this predicted rivalry of our northern neighbors. The completion of the Erie Canal gave New York such supremacy, that Pennsylvania was compelled, in self-defence, to enter on a large scale, upon the construction of canals, and subsequently of railroads. Thus our State debt expanded to forty millions.

Our canals, free from taxation, lost for the State, many millions of money while competing with those of New York for the commerce of the West; as is evident from the fact that the State debt continually increased, while the very year after the Main Line was sold, began to decrease. The disadvantage of political management was common to both States; and as our officers were not less honest and competent than theirs, the loss on the canals is to be imputed to their peculiar construction and disadvantage of management, notwithstanding the rates then charged were higher than those now charged on competing lines. But the policy which projected and executed these works was sound. Public credit partially developed the powers of the Commonwealth, and secured her position as a trading and manufacturing community. To accomplish this gigantic result, private capital was then incorporated. The evil of the State entering on commercial enterprise was tolerated, rather than incur the impending and greater evil of loss of commercial equality or ascendancy.

The acts for a canal destroyed the value of stock in competing turnpike lines, and the Commonwealth lost large amounts which had been thus invested.

As turnpikes were partially supplanted by canals, after a while canals were still more injuriously affected by railroads.

The Erie and New York Central and the Baltimore and Ohio railroads were begun, and again the alternative was presented to Pennsylvania of surrendering her material property, or of constructing a railroad, competent to meet the ardent rivalry of New York on the north and Maryland on the south.

By this time, from causes over which we throw the charity of silence, our people were heartily sick of all public works of improvement by the Commonwealth. To pass a bill through the Legislature for making a railroad by the State from Philadelphia to Pittsburg was impossible. The extremity was admitted to be embarrassing—some considered it desperate.

For extrication from this difficulty we are indebted chiefly to the mingled pride and patriotism of many citizens in various parts of the State, who, in the face of the condition of life, and to the prudent counsels of the city and districts of Philadelphia, and the county of Allegheny. These persons and corporations subscribed enough to commence, and, by the subsequent aid of loans, to complete the Pennsylvania railroad.

The charter contained a clause taxing all freight carried on the road; and this, notwithstanding the Pennsylvania canals had always been operated at a sacrifice of money, was the charter, which, carried away by instant desire and expecting speedy relief from the Legislature, was accepted by the projectors of the enterprise. This tax, modified by subsequent legislation, is now three mills per ton per mile.

It was said that the tonnage tax was imposed to protect the canals, and indeed, as the original tax was only to be levied from the 10th day of March to the 1st day of December, that is, while the canals were open; but tonnage was free of duty all the rest of the year, that is, while the canals were closed; it is plain that this was the ostensible reason for laying this tax, and it is equally clear that as the canals, so far as any interest of the State is concerned, are now, since their sale, never open, that the sole reason for the law has ceased. But it could only effect this by increasing the expense of transportation by railroad to a rate exceeding that on the canals; thus defeating the very object for which the railroad was made. The tax was made to be absolute and selfish. No one would use either the canals or railroad, unless it was his interest, and, if legislative incumbence compelled charges greater than those on other available lines, those lines would alone be employed. Those who had no alternative—our own people on the line of transport—would be compelled customers, but merchants and others from the West, who had a choice, would go where they were best and most cheaply served. The necessities of the Commonwealth, protection of property, her dignity, supremacy, legislation, could not move the trader, who had an eye single to his own service, and cared no more for the transporter than for other—negro porter or sovereign State, he considered them alike as common carriers.

But we need not pursue this topic, for all argument drawn from the canals ended when they were sold.

The reasoning then, if sound before, had, logically, a reverse application. If the object of the tax on the railroad was to protect the canals, when the canals no longer needed protection, the tax should cease, because the reason for its imposition had ceased. Especially is this view sound in this case, inasmuch as the railroad company having purchased the canals, they could not need protection against themselves, and the canals and railroads having now a common owner, tax on one was a tax on both, and thus, what was pretended to have been originally imposed as a virtual premium to the canal, became ultimately an actual burden on it.

The Legislature which directed the sale of the Main Line of the public works, recognized this view by providing, that if the Pennsylvania railroad company became the purchaser, they should, under certain contingencies, be forever discharged and freed from the tonnage tax and all other taxes, with certain specified exceptions. The Supreme Court held that this was too broad, inasmuch as it amounted to a contract to bind future legislatures. But the legislative declaration of public policy, and of what justice to the company demanded, was complete, and thus the company purchased the canals and connecting railroads. An implied moral obligation therefore rests on the legislature to carry out, to the extent of their power, the intentions of their predecessors of 1857, by repealing this tonnage tax, and the more so, inasmuch as while the Main Line, under State management, never yielded a dollar of net revenue they now produce a revenue of \$275,000, so that the Pennsylvania Railroad so

far from injuring the State works was the sole means of giving them any value whatever as a source of profit.

Few laws, however, affecting large interests are passed except from different and often discordant motives. This case illustrates this truth. For, while protection of the canal was the ostensible, and with some the real motive, for imposing tax on the railroad freight, it was but the specious seduction of a false pretence, the result chiefly of hostility to Pennsylvania interests. It will be recollected that during the session of 1840 the Legislature was distracted by the attempt to procure for the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, a part of which was then in operation and the rest in process of construction, the right of way, through the south-western section of Pennsylvania, for a branch of that road from Cumberland to Pittsburg. This, and the project of our own road, were rivals in the Legislature, and extraordinary as it may seem, the same Senate and House of Representatives which chartered the Pennsylvania Company also gave full corporate rights to the Maryland Company in our territory, and imposed a tax on the freight business of the former of four mills per ton per mile.

On the 21st of April, 1840, when the Baltimore act was approved, Harrisburg resounded with the boisterous acclamations of the Marylanders, who, aided by the mistaken views of some of our own citizens, had laid this great Commonwealth at the feet of a comparatively feeble power. It was exultingly proclaimed that now our western fields, mines, forests, rivers and the lakes were all a commercial part of Maryland, and that the products and people of that region were tributary to the growing greatness of a rival, superior in enterprise and energy. They forgot an element of the Pennsylvania character, never obtrusive, but never wanting when demanded; solid, steady strength of will, which, once aroused, moves with silent effectiveness; sometimes slow, but always sure to accomplish its work. This feeling is accompanied by that liberality which is willing to give to all our people and all our neighbors every reasonable facility not inconsistent with the commercial equality which political justice demands. Fair play for all parties is the old fashioned Pennsylvania doctrine; almost unimpaired save by the burthens on the business of the Pennsylvania railroad.

The obstructions placed on our own Company failed of least one of their objects. The State was subscribed, and the road was built, through the heart of Pennsylvania, notwithstanding this combined opposition.

PENNA LEGISLATURE.

SENATE. WEDNESDAY, JAN. 30, 1861.

The Senate was called to order at 11 o'clock, a. m., by the SPEAKER. Prayer by Rev. Mr. Fellwell.

Mr. FINNEY presented the annual report of the Erie canal company.

The SPEAKER laid before the Senate a communication from the Auditor General of the number, classification and license rates of all dealers subject to the payment of rates in the different counties of the Commonwealth.

Also, the annual report of the Delaware and Hudson canal company.

Also, the annual report of the Sixpenny saving fund of Philadelphia.

Also, a report of the Saving fund society of Philadelphia.

A committee resolution from the House, appointing a committee to make the necessary arrangements for raising the flag on the dome of the Capitol, on the 22d of February, with appropriate ceremonies, was taken up and passed.

Mr. SERRILL called up the bill authorizing the directors of the poor of Delaware county to sell certain real estate. Laid over.

Mr. SCHINDEL, an act relating to the Catawaga and Fegelsville railroad company.

Mr. CHAWWORTH, a supplement to the act relative to the claim of Thomas Morley.

Mr. MEREDITH, an act to incorporate the Kittanning water company.

Mr. IMBRIE, an act to decriminalize the fee bill of the prothonotaries of the courts of common pleas of this Commonwealth.

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THE DAILY PATRIOT AND UNION will be served to our subscribers residing in the Borough for six cents per week payable to the Carrier. Mail subscribers, seven cents per annum.

An act extending the limits of the borough of Johnstown was, on motion of Mr. MULLIN, considered and passed.

Reports of standing committees were received.

The committee in the contested election case of Luzerne county returned LEWIS PUGHE as entitled to the seat.

Mr. DUNCAN offered a resolution appointing a special session for this afternoon, to consider the resolutions from the Senate relative to the appointment of commissioners to meet those of Virginia at Washington.

Mr. RIDGWAY moved to amend by continuing the present session until the resolutions are disposed of.

After considerable debate, it was finally agreed to hold a special session this evening for their consideration.

Mr. RIDGWAY moved that the House proceed at once to the consideration of the resolutions in question which was agreed to.

The resolutions were then read.

The House then resolved itself into committee of the whole. The first resolution was read. Mr. HILL moved to strike out certain words, so as to allow representatives from all States to attend, instead of only from those States which still declare their adherence to the Constitution.

Mr. BALL opposed this. It was then withdrawn for the present, by Mr. HILL. The first resolution was then agreed to.

To the second resolution, Mr. HOFIUS offered an amendment, instructing the Commissioners not to accede to any demand on the part of the southern representatives, by which they will be introduced into any new State or Territory under the Constitution. He defended his amendment, urging the policy of instructing the Commissioners.

Mr. GORDON held that the resolutions already contained instruction limiting the powers of the commissioners. He declared himself to be radical on the subject of slavery, and professed to understand the whole question at issue.

Mr. WILLIAMS hoped that in such case the gentleman would volunteer an explanation.

The amendment of Mr. HOFIUS was withdrawn.

Mr. ARMSTRONG replied to the point that it was not advisable to amend the Constitution. That instrument had already been subjected to sundry amendments. It was dangerous and unwise to trammel the commissioners with instructions of a character to embarrass their action.

Mr. HOFIUS was not opposed to amendments to the Constitution at a proper time, but merely at present.

On motion of Mr. TRACY, the committee rose, reported progress, and asked leave to sit again.

The SPEAKER having resumed the Chair, the House refused to allow the committee to sit again.

A message was received from the Governor enclosing the report of the commissioners of the Western penitentiary.

A message from the Governor announced that he had signed the following bills:

An act relative to the appointment of a notary public in Luzerne county.

An act appointing two notaries public in Philadelphia.

An act relative to Fayette county, etc.

A supplement to an act authorizing the commissioners of Dauphin county to borrow money. Joint resolutions relative to the tariff, and providing for the erection of an American flag on the Capitol. Then adjourned.

GENERAL NEWS.

KEEP PINS OUT OF THE MOUTH.—As the oldest daughter of Mrs. Lemuel Holman was preparing for church on Sunday last, says the Lancaster Express, she threw back her head, and asked her mother if her neck was clean, and immediately fell down, crying, "A pin, a pin." She began to choke and grow black, and struggled as if she must die, while the pin, which she had held fast in her mouth, struck fast in her windpipe. Drs. Chittenden and Lane were summoned, and after a skillful operation, which lasted three hours, succeeded in opening the throat and extracting the dangerous intruder.

THE VIRGINIA STATE CONVENTION.—The Hon. William C. Rives has declined the nomination as a candidate for the Virginia State Congress. He is opposed to secession until every other effort fails to secure the just rights of the South. William Mason is a candidate in Stafford and King George counties, and James Barbour and Mr. Stringfellow candidates in Culpeper county. The secessionists of Norfolk city have nominated James B. Hubbard, an "old line Whig," and the conservatives have brought out Gen. George Blow, a Democrat.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.—In communicating intelligence at the "Monthly Concert" in the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, New York, the pastor incidentally noticed a letter which he had just received from the father of "Florence Nightingale," wherein it was stated that this noble woman was still suffering from the effects of her severe experience in the military hospital at Scutari, but was actively engaged in literary efforts. The father remarks that "even to the last, she will be found pen in hand."

PENNSYLVANIA POSTOFFICES.—The postoffice at Elm, Allegheny county, Pa., is established, and J. M. G. Saint appointed postmaster. Theodore O. Kryder is appointed postmaster at Nesville, Lancaster county, vice C. H. Kryder, resigned. Isaac R. Brown, postmaster at West Earl, Lancaster county, vice Jacob Busser, Jr., resigned.

THE SEIZURE OF REVENUE CUTTERS.—It is alleged that Secretary Dix has given positive orders to the commanders of the revenue cutters that in case of any efforts to seize them the officer in command shall resist to the last extremity, and when he finds further resistance unavailable, to run them ashore and blow them up.

NOT A VERY PLEASANT LOCALITY.—A missionary residing at Karadine, Ceylon, once famous for venomous reptiles, says that he has killed within a short time twenty-five cobra di capello and twenty-two pudran snakes. The bite of the former is certain death.

DEATH OF AN OLD SOLDIER.—Major M. A. Bingham, of the "heroes of San Jacinto," died at Houston, Texas, on the 12th inst. The deceased was a native of Virginia, but went to Texas on the eve of the revolution, and fought through it to the peace.

ANOTHER GORE.—On Wednesday last the remains of Dr. Clarence H. Frick, late a captain in the second regiment of Pennsylvania volunteers, who served in Mexico, were interred at Danville, Pa., with military and Masonic honors.

Col. Fremont and Thomas Francis Meagher and wife were among the passengers in the Ariel at New York from Aspinwall last week.

There are now 253 churches in New York city, valued at \$11,818,400. The aggregate number of seats is 268,188.