

BRIBERY REPORT

The committee in conformity to a resolution of the House of Representatives, on the 31st of March, 1843, to examine whether certain members of the Board of Canal Commissioners have held out inducements and bribes, to members of the Legislature to corrupt them, and thereby influence their votes on certain measures pending before the Legislature, beg most respectfully to report:

The committee to whom the above subject was referred, submit to the House, the evidence touching the charge which it was raised to investigate. The committee confined their investigations to the individual case which elicited the attention of the House, to the charges of interference on the part of the officers of Government; with the votes and opinions of members of the Legislature. They did not feel themselves authorized to extend their inquiry beyond the instance alluded to. Enough, however has been given in evidence on oath before them, to show that a member of the Board of Canal Commissioners did improperly tamper with, and endeavour by corrupt promises, to influence the vote of a member of the House of Representatives.

However incredible the fact may appear, and however reluctant the committee were to come to such a conclusion, it is none the less true, if the sworn testimony of a member of this House can be believed, that William Overfield one of the Board of Canal Commissioners, did promise to Jacob Hill, a Representative from Armstrong county, an appointment for a friend of his, provided he would sustain the Governor's veto of the Canal Commissioner's Bill.

From the testimony annexed, it will be seen that Mr. Hill had two conversations concerning the appointment he was solicitous of obtaining, from both of which he was led to believe that the condition of his obtaining the office would be to support the Canal Commissioners, and sustain the veto. Gen. McCulloch, who appears only as an intimate friend, to have preferred his assistance to Mr. Hill, and who, according to his sworn declaration, spoke without authority, nevertheless gave it as his opinion, that if Mr. Hill was successful in the application, he would be expected to support the Canal Commissioners. In his testimony before the committee, Gen. McCulloch said: 'Mr. Hill came over to my desk, either in the morning or evening, I am not certain which, and asked me what the Canal Commissioners would require of him, provided he made application for that appointment. I told him I could not tell, but I presumed they would expect him to support them.'

The committee, in referring to this evidence, that Mr. Hill was acting by authority of the Canal Board, in expressing such an opinion to Mr. Hill, on the contrary, he declares under oath that he was not. They merely refer to it, to show that in the opinion of a friend of the Canal Commissioners, they would expect the support of any member of the Legislature, who obtained from them an appointment for one of his friends. This simple declaration of Gen. McCulloch, unauthorized as it was, the committee cannot but regard as corroboratory of the opinion they have formed, as to the improper influences exercised by the Board of Canal Commissioners, over members of the Legislature.

When a department of Government lays it down as a rule of action, for the dispensation of its patronage, that the members of the Legislature, at whose request it may bestow an office are to support its measures when such slavish requisitions are made by the Executive upon the Representative branch of the Government, the time has come for a radical change in the depositary of power, and apprehensions may justly be excited, as to the purity of legislation, brought about under such influences.

The committee refer more particularly to the evidence of Mr. Hill, in relation to the overtures of the Canal Commissioners. In detailing the conversation held at Buehler's with Mr. Overfield, concerning the Collectorship at Freeport, Mr. Hill swears to the following effect:—'After talking about one thing and another, I mentioned what I understood from Gen. McCulloch that they (the Canal Commissioners) were willing to make a new appointment at Freeport. He said he was not informed of the appointment at first—he then said that the Legislature had got them into a tight place, and if I would help them through, and sustain the Governor's Veto, they would appoint any man I wanted.'

Mr. Hill upon being again questioned by a member of the Committee as to the language used by Mr. Overfield on this occasion, said: 'I understood distinctly if I would sustain the veto, I could get the appointment.'

The committee deem it unnecessary to give further citations from the evidence, they cannot believe that Mr. Jacob Hill, by the solemn obligations of an oath, did affirm and re-affirm that which he knew was not true, or as true, that of which he had no certain knowledge, and of which he had not a clear and accurate recollection. On the contrary, they had been led to believe, from the repeated admissions of Mr. Hill upon this point, that there cannot be any doubt but that

William Overfield promised him the appointment he was seeking, if he would sustain the veto.

The fact, then, being established by the oath of Jacob Hill, nothing remains for the committee but to report it to the House.

The Legislature is the guardian of its own purity—it has the power to expel a member for open corruption, and it has the power to impeach a functionary of the government for corruptly influencing the votes of its members. It is invested by the constitution with full authority to vindicate its character and preserve its integrity. The reputation of the whole people of the Commonwealth is implicated in the character of the Legislature. It would be false to itself—false to the people whom it represents, and whose interests it has in keeping, and regardless of the maintenance of our form of government in its original purity, did it permit its privileges to be attacked, and the official integrity of its members to be assailed by a co-ordinate branch of the government, without resorting to its constitutional authority to uphold its independence, preserve its virtue, and defend its honor. What course of action the Legislature ought to pursue in the present case the committee will not undertake to decide. They leave it to its own sense of self respect, and its fidelity to its constitutional obligations, to determine.

The committee offer the following resolution:

Resolved, That the committee be discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

JEFFERSON K. HECKMAN, E. JOY MORRIS, J. H. DEFORD.

Testimony in the case of the Canal Commissioners, taken April 1st, 1843

JACOB HILL, sworn.—I think it was on Wednesday last, to the best of my knowledge—Gen. McCulloch and me were walking together, and I was going to turn up towards Prince's. The General made mention, we would go up the other way opposite to the Capitol. He broached the subject about some appointment out at Freeport. We thought the appointment was very unpopular—the appointment was Alexander Scott—he had been appointed for seven years, the present board re-appointed him this spring. There was a good deal of talk backward and forward between me and the General, relative to that appointment. Then he told me he had been up, and seen Major Reynolds, who, I think, he said, was sick in bed. He told me if I would say the word, that I could get that office myself. I told him I had a family and could not attend to it, he said if I did not want it, I could appoint some one under me, I told him I did not want to do that, or else he said that I could get any man appointed I would choose.

Mr. Reynolds, and had a conversation with him; and all that he had to say was, that I could have the office myself, or get any one appointed that I would say. That day towards evening, I went to his desk, or to Mr. Hult's desk, I asked him what I was to do if I accepted these offers. He said he did not know, but of course they would expect me to sustain the veto. He said likewise, that Mr. Reynolds had told him that he, and Mr. Overfield were opposed to the appointment, and left it to Butler; who had appointed him. I did not apply for the appointment myself, I have never asked it for myself—yesterday morning Mr. Overfield and I, were talking together at Mr. Buehler's out at the door; and at the stone steps. After talking about one thing and another, I mentioned what I understood from Gen. McCulloch, that they were willing to make a new appointment at Freeport. He said he was not in favor of the appointment at first, and he said then that the Legislature had got them into a tight place; and if I would help them through and sustain the Governor's veto, they would appoint any man I wanted; I was just to write one or two lines on a piece of paper, and put my name to it; and send it up, it would be sufficient. He said the reason they wanted that, was so if they went out into that country, and the appointment was not popular, they could show it. I understood distinctly if I would sustain the veto, I could get the appointment; I told him I would study, and see Mr. Karns about it, that he knew the men in that country. Mr. Kerr and I walked together the other evening; we got talking together that Scott was unpopular out there, he told me, he thought I could get a new man appointed out there.

Cross-examined by Mr. Barrett, for the Commissioners.—I cannot tell exactly where I first talked about it; I do not think that I can name him, I told it for one to Mr. Russell, I told it to Mr. McBride here. I told it to different ones I had no particular detailed conversation about it. There was one or two who thought I ought to make it public; I could not say exactly to who, I think it was one of the printers, but I would not say which one it was, I could not say which it was; I think it was a printer that told me I ought to make it public; I do not recollect that I had any conversation with any of the members about making it public; I had a conversation with six or eight members, but do not recollect which. The Speaker met me at the back of his chair, and asked me whether it was true that there was an office offered to me; it was some time yesterday, that I told the Speaker. The Speaker met at the back of his chair, and asked me whether I had been

offered an office; I told him I had, I think likely that the Speaker or some of the rest, told me that I ought to make a statement to the House; I said I did not care who knew it; that all the Canal Commissioners on the hill could not buy my vote. I do not recollect that I ever told any person that I would go and see them, and then expose them. I told General McCulloch that I would likely go and see the Canal Commissioners, and the General told me he would go with me at any time. What was your reason for going to see the Canal Commissioners? I will tell you my object: I heard a great deal for years back about buying and selling members, and I thought I would see myself if it was so. I voted in favor of the Canal bill. I did not tell Overfield that I wanted to be appointed, neither did he ask me. I had letters for two or three of the men for that office; I told Mr. Butler that if they appointed any of the three; I would be satisfied. I spoke of Nesbet, and I think likely of Esq. Galespy; I did not show him the letters. He told me I should fetch my letters to the office in twenty minutes; I went as near as I can tell about that time, I was in the office may be half an hour or longer, Mr. Butler did not come: I told Mr. Reynolds then what my errand was. I told him I would go down in the House, and after being there a while, I came up again; Mr. Butler still was not there. I stayed a little spell, and went to Mr. Overfield and told him what Mr. Butler had said. I told Mr. Overfield I do not want you to make the appointment until I show Mr. Butler the letters I had; and I thought Mr. Overfield gave me his word they would not make the appointment without letting me know.—This took place in February; I went up that same forenoon about a half an hour afterwards, and the office was locked up. The next I heard that afternoon that the appointments were made, without having read my letters or consulting me. Did not Mr. Overfield tell you during your conversation at Buehler's that the way he made the appointments was on his line, that if the members put their names on paper, so that he could show it? I think he said he mostly took that course. Yesterday afternoon at about quarter past three o'clock, Mr. Heckman called me, and asked me if it was so; and I told him it was. He told me he would offer a resolution, I said I would sooner he would not do any thing about it; that is about all the conversation, I had no written statement in my hands about this matter yesterday afternoon. Question by General McCulloch. Did I ever call you out on this occasion, and tell him I had some propositions to make? I tell you the way how it was, a minute or two before I went out to the best of my knowledge, the General, Mr. Overfield, and some other gentlemen were in company, after I had seen Mr. Overfield accept of his company. I told him I would be very glad of it, and during our walk to the Capitol this conversation took place. Did not this conversation commence about the Reform bill? I do not recollect General, how it commenced. Butler's question. Did Mr. Scott support the Democratic nomination? He supported the nomination as I believed. I believe that Wm. J. Noble Nesbet supported me and was turned out for it, as far as my own knowledge extends; I believe he is honest, and some others say he is not. This board appointed him last winter.

Mr. Barrett asked for General McCulloch, that he be also examined.

Gen. George McCulloch, sworn.—It was on Wednesday morning, when I came out of Mr. Buehler's, that Mr. Hill was a few steps before me. I asked if he would accept of company, he said he would and thank me too; our conversation commenced on the reform bill which we both appeared to approve of, with the exception of the sixth section which I said to him, that, that with many other things, induced me to believe that there was a disposition to divide the Democratic Party, and I should not think it strange that he and I would live to see another Wolf and Mulienberg scrape. I then mentioned that the Canal Commissioners had made various unpopular appointments, and asked Mr. Hill if he still remained dissatisfied with the appointment made in their country. He said he was dissatisfied with the appointment; and the man was very unpopular and could not get twenty votes in their township; that he thought that there was much injustice done to him in making that appointment; that he had letters which he had showed to Mr. Overfield and Reynolds, (Mr. Butler was not present) he retired and returned the second time; Mr. Butler was still not present; that Mr. Overfield gave him his word that there would be no appointment made until he could get notice and produce the letters. That he returned and found the door locked and could not get in; that, that evening he had learned that the appointment had been made without consulting him to which I replied that I had not the least doubt that he could either get the appointment himself or any other man that he would name. That I had heard Major Reynolds say that the appointment was an unpopular appointment, that it was contrary to his wish in the first place, but that the public works were divided into different sections, and Mr. Butler had charge of that section of the public work. That he made the nomination, he being better acquainted with that country. Mr. Overfield said himself did not feel at liberty to oppose it, and I did not believe that there would be any difficulty in getting the appointment

changed—at all events, I would give him all the assistance that I could to having the change made. He replied that it would not suit him to take it himself, to which I said he might apply in his own name, and get some person to attend to it; or if he preferred it, to apply in the name of any other person; I would give him my word and honor I would assist him all I could.—That ended the first conversation. Mr. Hill came over to my desk, either in the morning or evening, I am not certain which and asked me what the Canal Commissioners would require of him to do, provided he made application for that appointment. I told him I could not tell, but I presumed they would expect him to support them; and as I seen Mr. Butler had come home the night before; and Major Reynolds was sick and in bed; that I suppose he would not be able to attend the board, and that Mr. Butler and Mr. Overfield would constitute a board, and I would go up with him then and see whether they would make the appointment. I cannot tell how we parted. This is the last conversation we had.

General McCulloch—continued and cross-examined by Mr. Hill.—Did you not say that you had a conversation with Major Reynolds, and that he told you that all I was to say was yes? I did say that I thought all you had to do was to say the word, but I never said I conversed with Major Reynolds about it. I say upon my solemn oath, that I never told Mr. Hill that I had authority from any of the Canal Commissioners to say any thing about it. I say upon my solemn oath that I never pledged any word to Mr. Hill, that he could get the office; as I have a God to meet I never mentioned Veto to Mr. Hill; I never had any conversation with any of the Canal Commissioners, about this conversation with Hill. I never spoke to Mr. Overfield on this subject, until, since the conversation of Mr. Hill. I never spoke to Mr. Butler on this subject. I never had any conversation with any of the Commissioners since, except with Mr. Overfield of the propriety of changing that appointment. He said he believed that Mr. Scott was unpopular, I was talking to Mr. Hill as an intimate friend and acquaintance. We boarded the same House, and have been the best of friends.

GEORGE McCULLOUGH, Mr. Barrett asked for Mr. Samuel Kerr, that he may be sworn.

Samuel Kerr sworn.—I never had any authority from the Canal Commissioners to make any overtures or offers to Mr. Hill. S. SAMUEL KERR. Mr. Hill—continued and cross-examined by Mr. Overfield.—Question, did not you ask me first about the appointment. I think it likely that I might have commenced it first I do not recollect. It is a fact that Mr. Overfield told me that he wanted me to sustain the Veto. I believe Mr. Scott is an honest man, and a good officer but is unpopular.

JACOB HILL, ANOTHER. The N. Y. Commercial gives the following particulars of another most outrageous case: A case of seduction, fraught with uncommon interest, was before the sheriff's jury on Monday evening; for assessment of damages, the defendant having allowed judgment to be taken by default. The parties had sustained the most exemplary character—both being highly respectable and well educated—the defendant having travelled extensively, and being withal a gentleman of winning manners and address. What renders the recital the more painful is the fact that the acquaintance of the parties commenced in a Sunday school—the seducer being the secretary of the school, and the young lady a teacher. We are told that he prosecuted his design upon her for months, with all the art of the most earnest protestations of honorable designs, and the most solemn pledges of marriage. He succeeded in winning the affections of his victim to the deepest recesses of her heart, and although, like other villains, having gratified his passions, he has flung her like a loathsome weed away, yet she, a mother now of seven months, loves him with all the ardor and singleness of woman's heart. The damages claimed in the declaration were ten thousand dollars; and of so aggravated a character did the sheriff's jury consider the case, after a full examination, that they awarded the whole amount.

Caught.—The St. Louis Republican says:—Orin Porrior Rockwell, the Mormon who had been accused of being the person who attempted to assassinate Ex-Governor Boggs last fall, was apprehended on board of a steamboat at the wharf, yesterday, and committed to jail. He will now have to stand his trial.

The Boston Bulletin publishes an account of a magnificent wedding which took place in that city on Wednesday of last week. The bride wore jewels worth \$10,000, a lace veil worth \$1,200, and the whole expense of the affair was \$15,000. Hard times! Hard times!

Of pork, bacon and lard; put up at Cincinnati during the past fall and winter, to the value of \$2,000,000, about half a million, says a Cincinnati paper, was for the English and French market, 'now for the first time open to this species of American produce.'

DEMOCRAT. "TRUTH WITHOUT FEAR" BLOOMSBURG: SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 1843.

FOR PRESIDENT, JAMES BUCHANAN (Subject to the decision of a National Convention.)

The week ending on Saturday last, has been an exciting time at Harrisburg. The veto of the Canal Commissioners bill,—its defeat in the house—its re-passage within half an hour afterwards; with the exception of that part electing them by the Legislature—the passage of the state apportionment bill—the chartering of three companies; with the privilege of purchasing a portion of the public works, on the North Branch Canal, another the Delaware Division, and the third the main line from Philadelphia to Pittsburg—the charge of bribery against William Overfield one of the Canal Commissioners, and the preferring articles of impeachment against him—the defeat of the project to elect a state printer—the passage of the bill for the sale of the state stocks—the disclosures fixing upon the governor and the Canal Commissioners, the conspiracy to transfer the democracy of the State to Captain Tyler, and the attempted assassination in the house, have all conspired to render it one of the most exciting weeks ever experienced in Harrisburg, excepting even the "Buckshot War." What will be the end thereof time alone can disclose.

The election in Connecticut has terminated in the re-election of Governor Cleveland the Democratic candidate, four Democratic members of Congress, and a large majority of Democratic members of both branches of the Legislature.

Rhode Island election has resulted in the election of a whig governor and a majority in both branches of the Legislature.

THE LATE DEVELOPEMENT.

We have been well persuaded for some months, that attempts were making by certain "officials" in this state, to prevent the nomination by the National Convention of James Buchanan, for President, and transfer the democracy of Pennsylvania to Captain Tyler. Late disclosures at Harrisburg, have fully confirmed our suspicions by producing proofs as "thick as blackberries," of the fact. It is shown conclusively that Governor David R. Porter, has been using the influence of the station conferred upon him by the people, to betray them into the hands of Captain Tyler, for the consideration of his brother, James M. Porter, being raised to the post of Secretary of War, and in view of making himself Vice President. We have no objections to David R. Porter selling himself, his family and his pets, but we do object to the democracy of Pennsylvania being transferred to Captain Tyler, for the benefit of the Porter family alone.

THE MAILS.

In our last, (April 8.) we mentioned the deranged state of the mails, between this and Harrisburg, and the difficulty we labored under in corresponding with our friends at that place. Our papers were mailed South on Friday evening, on Saturday we received letters mailed in Harrisburg on the 31st day of March, 9 days previous. On the 10th, we received letters mailed on the 3d, 7th, and 8th of April, and Harrisburg newspapers a week old. What pigeon hole they had been hid in during the time they were missing, we are unable to tell.—The public, however, may judge for themselves.

DEMOCRATIC PAPERS AT HARRISBURG.

The Harrisburg Reporter, Gazette and Keystone, all deserve thanks of the Democracy of the State, for the fearless and independent manner in which they have exposed the attempts now making by those placed high in authority, to transfer them to TYLER. The Democracy of Pennsylvania always have and always will stand by their faithful and fearless sentinels, and in this case they will not be found wanting in gratitude.

Henry Clay has commenced the practice of Law in Kentucky, in connection with his son, J. B. Clay.