



Let's Talk It Over, Anyhow.

A friend from a western town writes: "We can trace at least a thousand increase of population the past year from the fact that the fifty-four members of our Commercial Club about a year ago all agreed to have printed on the back of their business letterheads a description of the town, its location, climate, natural advantages, possibilities for business, etc. Thus every letter they wrote was an advertisement for the town. The town booming matter was artistically printed, and the catch line



being visible as the folded sheet was taken from the envelope, few persons failed to read it. Inquiries for more information came pouring in, and then the people came pouring in. Why don't you try to have your people do likewise?"

Now that looks like a sensible proposition. Suppose fifty of our citizens should have their stationery printed with such matter on the back! Say they will average a thousand letters a year. That would be fifty thousand little booms for the town,

going out to all quarters of the compass. One of these letters might strike the eye of just the right party and bring us a new factory, an educational institution, or even a good substantial family looking for a desirable home place.

It is worth trying. We can get up the descriptive matter for you and do the printing. Why don't you start the ball?

LET'S TALK IT OVER, ANYHOW.

The report that "Timmie" and "Bobbie" Seull have been kidnapped and a ransom of 30 cents each demanded for their safe return to their wives, cannot be verified at the hour of going to press.

The miner who held his union's laws to be above his country's, and was on that account refused naturalization, did not differ materially from some of his fellows who are naturalized. The only difference between him and them is that they haven't confessed.—Connellsville Courier.

SENATOR WOLF, of Philadelphia, has introduced a bill to increase the salaries of all the Judges in Pennsylvania. He proposes to give the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court \$15,000 instead of \$10,500, and the Associate Justices \$14,000 instead of \$10,000; President Judge of the Superior Court \$13,500 instead of \$9,000 and the Associate Judges \$13,000; in counties of 90,000 population, the salary of the Judges is to be \$8,500 instead of \$6,000; in all other counties the salary is to be \$7,500. It has not been more than six years since the salaries of Pennsylvania Judges were raised by the Legislature, and the Supreme Court held that they could accept the increase, although the state constitution declares otherwise. This twisting of the constitution did more to lessen confidence in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court than anything that has happened in the last half century.—Washington Observer.

THE LURID GLOW OF DOOM was seen in the red face, hands and body of the little son of H. M. Adams, of Henrietta, Pa. His awful plight from eczema had, for five years, defied all remedies and baffled the best doctors, who said the poisoned blood had affected his lungs and, nothing could save him. "But," writes his mother, "seven bottles of Electric Bitters completely cured him." For Eruptions, Eczema, Salt Rheum, Sores and all Blood Disorders and Rheumatism, Electric Bitters is supreme. Only 50c. Guaranteed by Elk Lick Pharmacy. 4-1

Our Sugar-Makers Should Invade Connellsville.

The people of Connellsville, in our neighboring county of Fayette, are raising a howl about the highway robber prices they have to pay for maple sugar and syrup. Their kick is a just one, and our farmers should send agents there and take orders for sugar and syrup, which they are in a position to sell at much less than Connellsville prices, and still make lots of money on their famous product.

In commenting on sugar and syrup prices in Connellsville, the Daily Courier, has the following to say:

"Although reports from Somerset county are to the effect that maple sugar and syrup are so plentiful that the farmers are unable to handle the yield, there is no noticeable decrease in the price of these commodities in Connellsville. It is said the sugar is selling as low as five and seven cents a pound, with but few takers, while the farmers are unable to handle the syrup because of shortage of cans.

A RELIGIOUS AUTHOR'S STATEMENT.

Rev. Joseph H. Fesperman, Salisbury, N. C., who is the author of several books, writes: "For several years I was afflicted with kidney trouble, and last winter I was suddenly stricken with a severe pain in my kidneys and was confined to bed eight days, unable to get up without assistance. My urine contained a thick white sediment and I passed same frequently, day and night. I commenced taking Foley's Kidney Remedy, and the pain gradually abated and finally ceased, and my urine became normal. I cheerfully recommend Foley's Kidney Remedy." Elk Lick Pharmacy, E. H. Miller, Proprietor. 4-1

THE COMMISSIONERS' MUDDLE.

The County Auditors, who recently completed their audit of the accounts of the board of Commissioners that went out of office at the beginning of the year, which board was composed of Josiah Specht, Robert Augustine and Charles F. Zimmerman, have arraigned the said board of Commissioners in a most scathing manner, charging them with a number of very serious and illegal offenses. The Auditors have published their statement in some of the newspapers of the county, together with their comments on the alleged illegal acts they have discovered in the official conduct of the said Commissioners.

If what the Auditors allege is true, then there is indeed just cause for complaint, and the complaint should be speedily followed by legal prosecutions. Furthermore, if the allegations of the Auditors are true, there is but little doubt that they didn't discover half of the fraud that was committed at the county's expense by the accused board of Commissioners.

A full investigation should at once be made, and if the accused Commissioners should be proven to be a gang of thieves, as the Auditors' arraignment would indicate, they should be sent to penitentiary for long terms. If, however, the accused men are innocent of any intentional wrong-doing, then the Auditors should be made suffer. It is a serious matter to charge men with misappropriation of money, defrauding a county, etc., if they are innocent. If Specht, Augustine and Zimmerman are honest men, they will welcome a full and complete investigation, and will not be satisfied until such investigation is made. If they are not honest men, they will try to ignore the charges made against them, and hope that others will do the same. But, like Banquo's ghost, this matter will not go down, and it is up to Specht, Augustine and Zimmerman to explain their alleged unlawful acts contained in the Auditors' accusation, which here follows:

WHAT THE AUDITORS ALLEGE.

The Auditors report that the following orders and amounts were improperly paid by the Commissioners, and therefore refuse to approve the same, and enter the same as sur-charges against the said Josiah Specht, Charles F. Zimmerman and Robert Augustine, Commissioners of the County of Somerset for the year 1908:

- Order No. 299, payable to J. R. Betts, \$ 8 04
- Order No. 491, payable to J. Eschrick, 125 60
- Order No. 634, payable to Wm. E. Doyle, 18 40
- Order No. 641, payable to A. Pearson, 10 90
- Order No. 889, payable to J. Bisbing, 9 85
- Order No. 288, payable to Josiah Specht, 66 26
- Order No. 289, payable to Josiah Specht, 41 83

Excessive payment to R. M. Rininger in connection with the Primary Election for 1908, 19 75

To payment 190 cu. yds. of masonry at \$6.34 per cu. yd. in excess of actual measurement of the "Pilltown Bridge" in Jenner Twp., 1204 60

To payment of 110 cu. yds. of masonry at \$7.25 per cu. yd. in excess of the actual measurement of the Sipesville Bridge, Lincoln Twp., 797 50

Orders Nos. 299, 491, 634, 641, and 889 were issued to the parties above named in payment for repairs on bridges in Quemahoning township. The Auditors subpoenaed each of the payees in said orders to appear before them, and from the evidence taken it appears that in each instance Josiah Specht, one of the commissioners of Somerset county, was the real contractor for the repairs of these bridges, and that while the orders were issued in the names of J. R. Betts, J. Eschrick, Wm. E. Doyle, A. Pearson and J. Bisbing respectively, in the amounts as above set forth, each of the said parties named in the orders were entitled to receive but a small sum of the amount represented in each of the respective orders, and that while each of the payees indorsed the order as presented to them by Mr. Specht, no part of the money as represented by the said orders has been actually paid to either of the said parties, but each of them testified that they are to be given credit for the amount due them, being a small part of each order, on book accounts held against them by Mr. Josiah Specht. That Mr. Josiah Specht supplied material, performed labor and hired his team for work in and about the repair of these bridges, and drew the money on the said orders after he had secured the indorsement by the payees named therein.

The Auditors are advised that Josiah Specht could not legally enter into a contract for the sale or furnishing of any supplies or materials to be furnished to or for the use of Somerset county, or make a charge on any work during the time that he was a member of the Board of County Commissioners, and that his conduct in the above specified cases is against the policy of the law and not binding upon the county.

Upon notice served upon Mr. Josiah Specht, Mr. Charles F. Zimmerman and Mr. Robert Augustine, each of these parties appeared before the Auditors, when an opportunity was given them to explain the above transactions and others, and Mr. Charles F. Zimmerman and Robert Augustine were each interrogated as to whether they had any knowledge that Mr. Josiah Specht, as a county commissioner, was interested in these contracts for the sale or furnishing supplies and materials for the repairs to the said bridges in Quemahoning township or was being paid for any services in connection therewith. The said Messrs. Zimmerman and Augustine refused to make any answer to these questions and made no explanation to the Auditors.

Wherefore the Auditors have refused to allow the said Josiah Specht, Charles F. Zimmerman and Robert Augustine credit for the amounts represented by these respective orders, and have entered the same as a sur-charge against them as above set forth.

Orders Nos. 288 and 289 were issued to Josiah Specht in payment for the traveling expenses of the Commissioners, Josiah Specht, Charles F. Zimmerman and Robert Augustine incurred in the visitation of several State Institutions for the purpose of securing information to be used in connection with the proposed new County Hospital. On the several trips Josiah Specht acted as the treasurer for the Board of Commissioners and made settlements for them, and for this reason the orders are in the name of Josiah Specht, to reimburse him for the money so paid out. The bill submitted by Mr. Specht shows that these trips were made about the middle of the month of May, 1908, and an examination of the court record shows that neither the Grand Jury nor the Court had taken such action as would justify the Commissioners in expending the money as aforesaid, until after the term of court held in September, 1908. It therefore appears that this money was expended prematurely on the part of the Commissioners and prior to any time that they could legally incur any obligations on the part of the county relative to the new county hospital.

The minute book of the Commissioners shows that the said Josiah Specht, Charles F. Zimmerman and Robert Augustine, as county commissioners, took no official action in connection with the construction of the said county hospital until the day preceding the expiration of their term as county commissioners, at which time they entered into a contract with an architect to prepare plans and specifications for the said building and supervise the same during the course of erection and construction. And while the Auditors would be willing to pass these items if the county would derive any benefit from these trips, they feel that inasmuch as no action was taken by the Commissioners until the day preceding the expiration of their term, and that no benefit can be derived by the county because a new board of commissioners will be obliged to adopt plans and specifications and have charge of the erection and construction of such building, and any information secured by the retiring Board of Commissioners will be of no use or benefit to the county of Somerset under the circumstances; independent of the facts above stated, we believe the charges are illegal, and therefore refuse to allow them.

In connection with the holding of the Primary Election in the Spring of 1908, certain amounts were paid to R. M. Rininger, amounting to \$184.27. These payments if properly made would have been refunded by the State, but the State only reimbursed the county to the amount of \$184.52, and therefore the Commissioners are sur-charged with the difference amounting to \$19.75.

Numerous complaints were made to the Auditors relative to the costs of certain bridges erected during the year 1908, and as a result of such complaint the Auditors have taken occasion to make an examination of two such bridges, one erected in Jenner township and known as the Pilltown bridge, and the other erected in Lincoln township and known as the Sipesville bridge. The Commissioners paid for 405.8 cubic yards of masonry at \$6.34 per cu. yd., to the contractor for the

erection of the Pilltown bridge. The Auditors employed a competent and skillful engineer to make a measurement of these bridges and submit the result of his calculations. Two of the Auditors accompanied the said engineer to the Pilltown bridge, and were present at the measurement, and as a result of the measurement the calculation submitted by the engineer shows only 215 cu. yds. of masonry were used in the construction of the bridge and that the County Commissioners had paid for 190 cu. yds. in excess of the actual number of yards of masonry used in and about the construction of the said bridge, and by reason of this excessive payment by the Commissioners to the contractor, the Auditors have surcharged them with said 190 cu. yds. paid in excess at the rate of \$6.34 per cu. yd., or the amount of \$1204.60.

In connection with the construction of the Sipesville bridge in Lincoln township, we find that the Commissioners of Somerset county paid for 480 1-4 cu. yds. of masonry at the rate of \$7.25 per cu. yd. This bridge was also measured by the said engineer and a calculation was made, which calculation shows that there are but 350 cu. yds. of masonry used in the construction of this bridge, and that the Commissioners of Somerset county paid for 110 cu. yds. of masonry at the rate of \$7.25 per cu. yd. in excess of the amount of cu. yds. actually contained in the bridge, and the Auditors have accordingly sur-charged the Commissioners for such excessive yardage, the amount of \$797.50.

This report shows that approximately \$24,000.00 of the county's money has been expended during the year 1908, in the repairing and building of bridges. How much of this money has been carefully expended, the Auditors are unable to say, but the investigation of the two bridges above mentioned shows that approximately \$2000 of this money has been paid contractors on those bridges, in excess of the amount that was justly due and coming to them.

The Auditors have not been able to make an examination of the numerous other bridges that have been erected during the year 1908, but the result of the examination as made by the Auditors leads them to believe that due caution has not been observed on part of the Commissioners in expending the county's money in the erection and repair of bridges. The superintendent employed by the Commissioners, the viewers and the Court ought to make special examination in each particular case, not only as to the quality and quantity of the work, but as to the amount contracted for and to be expended, and guard jealously the rights of the county in every particular instance. There is a widespread belief that large amounts of money have been unjustly paid in connection with bridge contracts in past years, and while there is perhaps no remedy for the reclamation of the money thus paid out, yet the authorities can perhaps be more careful in the future in the observance of all duties imposed upon them and see that money is not improperly expended. Respectfully submitted,

W. H. H. BAKER,
JACOB S. MILLER,
S. A. KRETCHMAN,
Auditors.

A SWIPE AT THE POOR BOARD.

The County Auditors have also charged the Board of Directors of the Poor and House of Employment with illegal acts, and following is what they have to say on that score:

The Auditors find that the members of the Board of Directors of the Poor and House of Employment of Somerset county, Pa., for the year 1908, issued orders to William Brant, J. F. Reiman and A. F. Swank in the sum of \$135.00 each, in payment of back salary. At the time Messrs. Brant, Reiman and A. F. Swank were elected and qualified as Directors of the Poor and House of Employment, the annual salary of the Directors of the Poor and House of Employment fixed by the Act of Assembly incorporating the House of Employment for Somerset county, was \$50 per year, for each of said Directors. During the year 1907, a general Act of Assembly was passed, increasing the pay of Directors of the Poor in the several counties, and if applicable to Somerset county, would entitle the members of the Board of Directors of the Poor and House of Employment in this county to receive \$300.00 per year. Notwithstanding the passage of this Act, the Directors continued to serve during the year 1907 at the rate of \$50.00 per year, in accordance with the provisions of the act of incorporation aforesaid, and settled with themselves for their services during the year 1907, in the amount of \$50.00. This sum was allowed by the Auditors who had charge of their accounts in the Audi-

tors' report for 1908. Inasmuch as no appeal was taken by the Directors from the said audit, the present Auditors think that audit is conclusive as to them, and that no allowance can be made for services performed by them during the year 1907, other than the amount settled for in the audit of 1908. The Auditors are further advised that the Act of Assembly above referred to, which increases salaries of Directors of the Poor, cannot apply to officers who had been elected prior to its passage, and whose term of office had not expired, even if it should be held to be applicable to Somerset county, and for these several reasons refuse to allow the Directors credit for the same, paid to the following parties for services as Directors of the Poor and House of Employment, and surcharge William Brant, J. F. Reiman and W. W. Baker, as Directors of the Poor and House of Employment, in the following accounts, viz:

Back salary paid William Brant, \$125.00 for 1907.

Back salary paid J. F. Reiman, \$125.00 for 1907.

Back salary paid A. F. Swank, \$125.00 for 1907.

Increase salary paid William Brant, for year 1908, \$250.00.

Increase salary paid J. F. Reiman, for year 1908, \$250.00.

The said William Brant, J. F. Reiman and W. W. Baker, Directors of the Poor and House of Employment, were advised that their accounts were being audited, and appeared before the Auditors.

W. H. H. BAKER,
JACOB S. MILLER,
S. A. KRETCHMAN,
Auditors.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Having now given you the Auditors' remarks in full, we will conclude with the following comment: Relative to the Commissioners' muddle, while the surcharges on bridges may be based on justifiable reasons, yet we can hardly see how the Commissioners can be held responsible. The law provides that after a bridge has been built, the Court shall appoint inspectors to determine whether the contract has been complied with. Such inspection was made of the bridges complained of, and the report of the inspection thereof duly confirmed by the court, if we are correctly informed.

While we are not thoroughly familiar with the law as it concerns this kind of a case, it is our opinion, however, that the report of the viewers or inspectors and its confirmation by the Court, releases the Commissioners from surcharge. And, if it be true, as we believe it is, that the report of the inspectors and its confirmation by the Court fail to protect the county's interests, why should that mode of examination be allowed to exist?

The Commissioners are liable, of course, when they make corrupt bargains in letting contracts, or are found guilty of corruptly paying for extras, etc. It is not claimed that the work done on a few bridges in Quemahoning township, in which Specht had been interested, was to defraud the county. The bills seem to be all right, but the matter complained of is that the Commissioners have been interested in private contracts, contrary to law.

The Auditors' surcharges to the County Poor Board, we view as nothing but mere "tommyrot." The Fayette and Cambria county courts have both held that Directors of the Poor, under a special act of Assembly, are not public officers in the sense as contained in the Constitution, but are officers of a private corporation, and that their salaries may be raised during a term of office. The whole matter of surcharge to the Directors of the Poor, looks like a flimsy, demagogic dodge on the part of the Auditors.

We have known surcharges to be made ever since we know anything about Auditors' reports, but we have never heard of a dollar being collected for the county as a result of such surcharges. We regard this as an opportune time to call the attention of the tax-payers of Somerset county to the fact that audits in the past, so far as the County Auditors' surcharges and arraignment of other county officers are concerned, amounted to nothing, except such use as scheming politicians could make of them. The county never recovered a cent of the various amounts surcharged, and the Auditors in many cases have been merely a set of cheap, incompetent gues acting as plant tools in the hands of fake reformers and "holier-than-thou" politicians. Half of the County Auditors in Pennsylvania haven't got sense enough to carry guts to a grizzly, and we are not sure that the Somerset county Auditors are an improvement over the half complained of. However, their charges in this instance, against Specht, Augustine and Zimmerman, are so serious as to demand prompt and thorough investigation. When the investigation is made, however, if made at all, it is just as likely to show the Auditors and others about as deep in the mud as Specht, Augustine and Zimmerman may be in the mire.