

THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE. (Established 1877.) PUBLISHED WEEKLY. ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR, INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT. MONEY sent us, otherwise than by registered letter, postal note, draft, or New York, will be at the risk of the sender.

AGENTS.—We employ no agents. THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE has many volunteer canvassers, and they are generally honest and faithful.

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AN OPEN LETTER

To the Commissioner of Pensions.

Hon. William Lochren.

COMRADE: A multitude of letters from afflicted comrades have reached us complaining bitterly of the interpretation placed by the Pension Bureau for the last few months on the phrase "incapacitates them from the performance of manual labor."

We understand fully that Congress in its wisdom placed the meaning of any language it might employ in a pension law within the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior, and through him in his subordinate, the Commissioner of Pensions.

With the exercise of this discretion even the high and mighty Supreme Court of the United States, which holds a taut rein upon every other branch and official of the Government, has so far never attempted to interfere.

The Secretary of the Interior and his Commissioner of Pensions enjoy the distinction of being the only functionaries in our political system who are both judges and executors of the law, who can place their own construction upon an act of Congress, execute it as they see fit, and be their own courts of last resort to decide whether they have done properly.

But while admitting the distinguished ability which this plenitude of powers would imply, we still cannot smother the surprise that the present interpretation of the clause should be such a variation from the practice of the Bureau for the century and more before you took charge of it.

We have not been at all backward in recognizing your eminent legal abilities, and have done our share, we think, in informing the country of the reputation you enjoyed in the legal profession of your own State.

But as there "were brave men before Agamemnon," so there had been a long line of very able Commissioners of Pensions before you entered the office, and without exception they took a widely-different view of this question of ability to perform manual labor from that which now obtains in the Pension Bureau.

If from the fathers of the Government down to last March they were all wrong and the present practice right, then this country is hopelessly lost in learning what is right.

Then, too, 52 Congresses have, in one way or another, passed upon the acts of all these predecessors of yours, and indorsed them in the most unmistakable way by giving them great amounts of money to expend according to their interpretations of the laws.

In all they have given the various Commissioners some \$1,600,000,000 to disburse. The last Congress before this one, with the House controlled by a strong majority of the political opponents of the then Commissioner, gave him some \$320,000,000 to spend according to his interpretation of the laws.

Can it be possible that all this host of officials and Congressmen were wrong, and you alone are right? We are not yet prepared to admit it.

Thousands of instances have been reported where men who are at frequent intervals confined to their homes, and even to their beds, and yet are decided not to be incapacitated in a pensionable degree from the performance of manual labor.

A case was brought to the attention of the House of Representatives recently of a man in South Dakota who had to be carried by his comrades on a stretcher to the distant town whither he had been ordered for re-examination.

Several instances have been brought to our attention where men have died of the diseases for which they were pensioned, between the time of their suspension and that set for their re-examination.

Allowing the widest possible boundaries to the Commissioner's discretion, these instances, and others much less marked cannot be regarded otherwise than as frustrations of the purpose of the law.

It is a well-settled legal principle that "remedial statutes must be construed liberally." The benefit of any doubt that may exist must be given the men to whom the law applies, and not every advantage taken to exclude them from its provisions.

This is expected by the law-makers, in framing a pension or other remedial law, they anticipate and provide for its being construed with the utmost liberality, in accordance with the invariable practice with such legislation.

To construe a pension law most strongly against the claimant is a legal monstrosity—even more of one than to construe a note, a contract, or a deed in favor of its maker.

It is beyond the strongest credulity that Congress ever contemplated that there should be such a harsh construction given of the manual labor provision that it now receives.

All the debates prior to the passage of the laws and the practical sanction given to the liberal construction by the appropriation of great sums of money to carry it out is evidence of mountains weight against this narrow, severe and cruel interpretation of the intent of these laws.

It is in effect a substantial repeal or nullification of laws, not by Congress, but by subordinates and servants of Congress. It is new legislation, and that by an administrative officer whose sole duty is and should be merely to intelligently and honestly execute the will of Congress as he finds it expressed in the statutes.

We respectfully submit, Comrade Lochren, that the discretion with which you are clothed does not extend to an exercise of judgment that Congress has been unduly liberal in pension legislation, and that you must confine the operation of its measures to much narrower limits than it provided.

That is no concern of yours. The responsibility for changing the laws rests solely with Congress, and is no part of your functions. You may recommend that incapacity to perform

SHALL WE HAVE PROMPT JUSTICE?

Shall we have all the cases now pending in the Pension Bureau settled before the end of the year? Such a thing can be done without trouble if Congress will only say so.

It certainly ought to say so, for there is no more shameful chapter in our history than the life-long denial of justice to the men who saved the Nation's existence.

The delays of justice to a comparatively few men were one of the strongest reasons that impelled our forefathers to begin the war for Independence. They rightly maintained that every man was entitled to a prompt hearing before the tribunals of Government on any matter that concerned his rights or his property, and it was unbearable that anyone should have to wait a year or two, until courts beyond the seas should pass upon his case.

What would those stern old patriots say of a tribunal of the Government they founded to remedy these evils taking 25 or 30 years to decide whether some well-deserving soldier had a right to \$4 a month for rheumatism?

Let Congress end this scandal on the Government and this burning injustice to veterans by providing that all cases shall be settled by Dec. 31, 1894.

THE WILSON ABOMINATION. Opposition to the iniquitous Wilson Bill continues to increase and spread. Every community finds that it will be hurt by it in some way, and none will be benefited.

The Granges everywhere are condemning its discriminations against the growers of sheep, wool, rice, barley, hay, vegetables, flax, hemp, fruits, tobacco, and sugar, the butter and cheese makers.

The miners of coal and iron—90 per cent. of the cost of the production of which is labor—are arising against it, particularly those in the South, while the operatives in the factories, whom it threatens with loss of work, if not already idle, are specially hostile.

The evils that it has already inflicted are mountainous, while the benefits promised are shadowy and uncertain.

What will be the opposition when it comes to distribute the burden of taxation made necessary by the reduction of the revenues?

The best estimates make the amount that will have to be made up by internal taxation at \$72,000,000 a year. When this enormous amount is added on to our people, no matter where it is placed, there will be a storm of righteous indignation which will sweep the authors of the bill into well-deserved oblivion.

E continue to receive many requests from comrades for a printed form for petitions to send to Congress asking that all claims be made special and settled by Dec. 31, 1894.

If the comrades will reflect a little, they will see that it would not be good policy for us to send out these blanks. The cry would be immediately raised in Congress by the pension-haters that these petitions were "manufactured to order," and sent out from Washington.

Their effect would thus be greatly injured. The way to do is for the comrades everywhere to write personal letters to their Senators and Representatives, telling them in plain, homely language of the great desire of the comrades to have Congress make provision for the settlement of every claim now before the Pension Bureau within the coming year.

Where it is thought best to get up a petition let it be upon the letter-heads of the G.A.R. Post that the signers belong to. If this is inconvenient, take sheet of legal cap, write out a plain request for Congress to pass a law providing for the settlement of all claims pending in the Pension Bureau by Dec. 31, 1894, and have it signed, with the addresses, regiments, etc. of the signers, so as to give it the utmost authenticity.

In brief, Secretary Carlisle's plan is to put \$72,000,000 taxation on Americans that has heretofore been paid by foreigners. Cover it up with as many words and as much sophistry as he may, this is simply what it is.

If bonds are taxed the tax is collected off those who have to borrow money. If corporations are taxed, they will, if they continue to do business, collect the taxes with a percentage added off those with whom they do business.

This was well illustrated during the war. Many States had laws that the railroads should not charge more than three cents a mile for passenger fares. When the Government put a stamp tax on all railroad tickets, the roads were allowed to add the amount of the stamp to the price of the ticket.

They took advantage of this to put the price up to four and even five cents a mile, and some of them maintain this to this day where competition has not forced them to come down, although the tax was repealed a score of years ago.

The Democratic Representatives are confronted with this dilemma. Either they will have to adopt Speaker Reed's much-abused method of counting all present to make a quorum during the discussion of the Tariff Bill, or they will have to keep nearly their whole strength constantly present in the chamber. This last will be very difficult—some say impossible.

So many Democrats are disaffected over the provisions of the Wilson Bill affecting their Districts, that unless strong concessions are made to them they will not make much effort to be continually present. The Republicans are going to actively insist on a quorum of being always present.

The pension-haters had much to say in the House about the necessity of investigating the pension-roll, but none of them attempted to explain why it was necessary to stop pension-granting or suspend thousands of deserving pensions in order to examine a few suspected cases.

IT IS REGARDED AS VERY PROBABLE THAT THE INIQUITOUS WILSON BILL WILL GO THROUGH THE HOUSE VERY NEARLY IN ITS PRESENT SHAPE.

If it does it will populate large political cemeteries with the graves of those who vote for it. The expectation of the opponents of the bill is that they will be able to defeat it in the Senate. It ought to be defeated in the House. It will be an awful injury to the people, and the Representatives of the people ought to have the patriotism and firmness to vote against it.

It is the "pic center" at the White House which overrules them.

GRESHAM'S little scheme to ease up the pressure on himself and smirch Blaine's memory by hinting that an important letter of instructions from Blaine to Stevens was missing from the archives of the State Department, did not work at all well.

The first intimation of the thing brought warnings from all sides that he was picking up a sword by the razor edge. Further, there was plenty of evidence outside the State Department that its records were scrupulously intact. Gresham had at least sense enough to drop the thing at once.

IN 1870 the total production of barley in the United States was only 15,235,893 bushels. This was yet much larger than the production of any previous year, as its growing had been greatly encouraged by wise protection. Last year the crop in the United States amounted to 62,000,000 bushels, which, at an average price of 45 cents, put over \$28,000,000 into the pockets of our farmers, which otherwise would have been sent abroad.

The way to defend the pension system and secure its maintenance is to begin the fight now, when the pension-haters are doing their utmost to poison the public mind. Get up everywhere clubs for THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE.

LOOK OUT FOR THE PICTURES. Those whose subscriptions are about to expire should renew them promptly, so as to take advantage of our great picture offer, which begins this week. It will be very inconvenient to miss the first or any number, for these can be only supplied at some trouble and a higher price after the time is gone by.

Also, every one intending to take the pictures should cut the coupon and send it in at once, that there may be no mistake or delay in receiving the parts of this splendid volume.

Of course, the private character of the ex-Queen is not material to the general issue, but it comes in mightily as a concurrent fact. She was not deposed because she was privately immoral, but that furnishes one of the many reasons why she should not be restored.

J. PROCTOR KNOTT was at first offered the Mission to Hawaii, but he says that when he learned what was expected of him, he at once said that he was too good a poker player to make such a bluff as that. "Had I known, however, that the Administration wanted a Queen, I should have consulted my cook." Not bad for Knott.

It is noticeable that the main evidences of business life under the incubus of the Wilson Bill are given by the trusts which it is said tariff reform was to destroy. The famous National Cordage Co. has resumed business, with \$34,000,000 of capital, as the United States Cordage Co.

It is usually estimated that it takes more than a man's weight of bullets to kill him in battle, but in the Brazilian war the ratio must be something like an elephant's weight.

It certainly should not take much longer to get a claim through the Pension Bureau than it did to put down the rebellion.

If the Provisional Government would only hint that it wanted volunteers from this country, what an army it could get!

THE opening of a large charity in New York to furnish five-cent meals to workmen and their families shows the prompt effect of free-trade ideas.

Have you done your duty in getting one more subscriber for THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE? You should do this, for it is the best way to help your comrades.

Something to Read. The man who has traveled around the world has a great advantage over the one who has always stayed at home. The traveler man or woman knows what are the world's great scenes and what is the history of each.

It is no longer necessary, though, to go abroad to learn all about the world, how this place looks or that, and what has happened anywhere. Modern art and modern science have reproduced all scenes, and an appended brief history adds what is necessary to give to the intelligence what is lacking after the eye has rested upon a scene. One need not go around the world in the body.

THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE affords an opportunity to wander all over the earth with the expenditure of but a few cents where, otherwise, hundreds, or rather thousands, of dollars would be required.

The 320 volumes issued by THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE in parts of 16 each, form of themselves a sort of history of the world upon which we live, at least of its modern history. They are the best in existence. They form the material for a great volume, the ornament, as the educator, in any home, which is unsurpassed in subject as in quality.

THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE has improved an opportunity and has transmitted this opportunity to its readers. The advertisement found in another column explains all details.

It is worth the time of any reader to study the advertisement mentioned, and to note just what it is to which this article refers. Sometimes a man's mind is attracted and readers. It sometimes happens that the newspaper, with its many advantages, may secure what would not be available to the ordinary business house. Such a chance has occurred in this year of monetary depression and THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE offers it to its readers. It is something to be considered. The advertisement referred to tells just what it is.

A SHAM BATTLE.

BY CAPT. JACK CRAWFORD.

I went with other people out to whar the sogers yell. To see a great sham battle, an' as with the crowd I tramped. Some great anticipations filled my bosom, an' I got so eager I could hardly keep from strikin' up a treed.

I thought it would remind me of the halcyon days, When in them Southern scrimmages I faced the battle's fray. When shot an' shell war' thickly around an' ever, An' sacred soil war' thickly strewd with pale, unpeopled dead.

I thought I'd hear the groanin' of the wounded on the field, An' feel the birth a shakin' when the deadly cannon pealed. An' see some blazin' bullets from the stomach pit o' hell, An' hear the Union cheerin' an' the 'ol-time rebel yell.

I thought I'd see the battle fire in every soger's eye, An' see the big balloons o' smoke a darkenin' the sky. An' hear the screamin' of the shells on deadly mission bent, An' all the skeery sounds with which the Southern air was rent.

The bugle-blown "assembly" o'er the Summer landscape stole, The men fell in with langour, and the Sergeants called the roll. The officers put on their swords, arranged their gold-trimmed suits, Then waited till their strikers brushed the dust from off their boots.

Marched forward their givers o' creamy white, twined their mustaches, and their hair, In front of their brave warriors undaunted tuk their stand. An' keepin' step to tap o' drum, marched with trumpet lead, To meet defeat or victory—which'er their orders said.

The detailed enemy went forth an' tuk position near A massive, smoky buildin' whar they manufactur'd beer; Some sogers sought seclusion 'neath its high up-roaching dome, Then marched forth to the conflict with their whiskers fluck'd with foam.

The signal bugle sounded, an' the skirmishes begun, The front of their deadly puffs o' smoke an' snicker at the fun, Till from the gallant General the brief command was sent To close the little shidshow an' open the big tent.

Then the contendin' forces—two hundred men they said—Marched forward to the battle, by their smooth-shav'd chieftains led. "Halt! Steady there! Right dress! Front! Load! Now for the conflict, boys! FIRE!" Pipp-pip-pip—Firecrackers 'd made a loud noise.

The "dreadful roar o' battle" that the papers talked about, The "blidin' smoke o' carnage," an' "distant battle shout," The "stead o' sceried columns," an' "the bullet-riven air," Conspicuous by their absence from that field o' battle were.

Sometimes one side'd start an' run like mad a little way, Then elude th' advance' footman back, jes' like two dogs at play. The bugles then'd call a halt, while eager Sergeants To calculate the injuries o' a detailed wounded man.

They felt his pulse, looked at his tongue, an' left him layin' there, An' walked back to their companies with wise an' lofty air, Satisfied and reported that the warrior was dead— I knowed a darned sight better, fur I seed him scratch his head.

Again the tide o' battle rolled—o' rippled, I should say— Till most of the spectators had got tired an' gone away; Toward the town in deep disgust I almost double-back'd, An' didn't keer a tinker's darn to see'tah who I lick'd.

I saw but one thing material in all that lay fight, An' it brought back the war-time days distinctly to my sight— The tent they used for hospital—in which I stopped to peer— War' crowded full o' strikers that complain'd o' die-a-rear!

JOHN BILLINGS used to say that "it was better to know less than to know so many things that ain't so." This remark applies to "Minister Paramount" Blount as if it were made for him.

PERSONAL.

Col. Theodore F. Lang, 6th W. Va. Cav., and well-known to the readers of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, through his articles on "The Local Mountaineers," is getting out a book entitled "Local West Virginia from 1860 to 1865." It will be a complete history of those momentous times, and give accounts of the regiments and officers who held the State fast to its allegiance to the Government.

The birthday of John C. Whitler has recalled one of the gentle poet's peculiarities. He called all works of sculpture "graven images," and once when he was shown a bust of Sumner he liked it somewhat, and said, "There's never a man as a judge of graven images."

Lieut. Lewis Marquet, a veteran of the Civil and Franco-Prussian wars, died last week at Siamok, Pa. The friends of ex-Congressman Berry, of Lehigh, Pa., are trying hard to make him a candidate for the Republican nomination as Congressman-at-large. He is a man of high standing, and has had the best of experience.

Congressman Elijah A. Morse recently preached a sermon at the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church of Worcester, Mass. His text was "A Business Man's View of the Gospel."

Col. Thomas Westworth Higginson will soon finish the book he is writing under appointment from the Governor of his State. It is a "Military and Naval History of Massachusetts."

Gen. Harrison spoke at the graduating class of Pierce's Business College in Philadelphia last week, and in concluding his address said: "Aim high, but have regard to the range of your gun. And above all else, my young friends, do not forget that the most accurate account of your hour of life except the sparrow hawk, is an acceptable foolishness."

John L. Younger, of Maxwell, O., has received a Congressional medal of honor for bravery at the battle of Cedar Mountain, Va. It was while the enemy was charging on the morning of Sept. 20, 1862, that the artillery in the rear became destructive to the Union troops, and Capt. Anderson, of the 12th regiment, asked for a volunteer to go forward and order the artillery to cease firing. Younger took the message in safety, but was badly wounded.

Miss Helen Nicolay, daughter of the Lincoln biographer, is a gifted artist, and her pretty landscapes are often seen at picture exhibits. Miss Nicolay is of great assistance to her father, and helped with the preparation of the Lincoln biography, which were read these weeks.

Joseph Powell, of Cabell County, W. Va., has lost all his earthly goods and chattels by fire, which broke out on his place on Dec. 18. During the war he served in the 1st W. Va. I. A., and was one of the old soldiers, especially of the 1st W. Va. I. A., and is gratefully remembered if they are willing to lead assistance to Comrade Powell and his family. They live at Milton, W. Va.

Sergeant Harris, Hastings, Mich., received some time ago a medal of honor for bravery at the battle of Gettysburg, Pa., on July 3, 1863. He was in the 1st Michigan Cavalry, and was one of the old soldiers, especially of the 1st Michigan Cavalry, and is gratefully remembered if they are willing to lead assistance to Comrade Harris and his family. They live at Milton, W. Va.

There are a half-dozen ex-Union officers in the Senate, and they are all Republicans. One of them is the Hon. William H. Hunt, of Vermont, who was the warrior of the Harrison Administration; Chandler, of New Hampshire, was Secretary of the Navy under Arthur, and Teller, of Colorado, was Secretary of the Interior under Grant, and Henry Collis Hoit, of Pennsylvania, was Secretary of War under President Grant, and John Sherman was President Hayes's financier.

Mr. John W. Mason, the ex-Interior Revenue Commissioner, is a candidate for the Republican nomination for Congress in Chairman Wilson's District, West Virginia. He is very popular, and it is said he will have no opposition. He ran against Wilson when the District was heavily Democratic and yet was beaten by only 10 votes.

A short time before the war a stranger, giving his name as Fred Gray, called on Comrade Gray, the house of a farmer, John Gray, who lived near Middletown, O. Fred said he had been exiled from Germany for some political offense, and claimed to have been a student in that country. He was taken into the house of Comrade Gray, and he engaged as a farmhand and staid two years. In '61 he enlisted in an Illinois regiment, had quite a brilliant military career, and was promoted to the rank of Major. He was taken to Liberty Prison, and was paroled in 1865. His health was broken, and he went back to his native country, where he recovered, and in 1882 he was sent to America as Switzerland's representative. Later he became highly successful in a mercantile line, holding the position of Secretary of War and other offices in Switzerland. The other day Gray told a letter from his former woodchopper, who is now M. Frey, the President of the Swiss Republic.

During the war, Colonel of the 6th Mass. He has been awarded a Congressional medal of honor for conspicuous gallantry in leading the assault of his brigade on the enemy's works at Cold Harbor, Va., June 1 and 3, 1864, where he had two horses shot under him, one while in the act of jumping the breastwork of the enemy.

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THE AMERICAN FARMER. The Oldest Agricultural Paper in America. Published at 1729 New York Avenue, Washington, D. C. Price, only 50 Cents a Year.

THE AMERICAN FARMER is a great National agricultural paper. It circulates in every part of the country, and represents the interests of all the farmers in the Nation. Being located at the seat of Government—and the only agricultural paper that is—it has special facilities for getting information of real interest to all farmers of all that goes on affecting them in Congress, or in any of the Departments of the Government.