

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics - Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

MOVEMENT OF TRADE FROM EAST TO WEST.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The expression that "westward the course of empire takes its way" is true in a commercial as well as in a political sense. Indeed, in modern times, political power and national greatness generally go with commercial influence and wealth. It was commerce or trade that made Tyre and Carthage great in ancient times; that made Venice and the Italian republics rich and powerful at a later period; that gave Spain her power in the time of her greatness; that made Holland a small State in Europe—one of the mightiest countries on the globe; that gave England her wonderful wealth, great power, and an empire larger than any that ever existed in the world, and this which has contributed largely to the surprising growth and grandeur of the American republic.

If we look back to history, we shall see that commerce and empire have followed the course of the sun from east to west. From Asia, bordering the Mediterranean and the coast of Africa, they passed over to Europe on the westward side of that sea, and from thence to the western maritime States of the European continent. Finally, the course of empire has taken its way across the Atlantic. The American republic is marching with rapid strides to a point of greatness that will eclipse all preceding or existing nations. Had it not been for the war we should be now the first maritime nation on the globe. We had, just before that event, more tonnage than Great Britain, and far more than any other country. Though we have been compelled to take the second place, it cannot be long before we must take the first. The decline of American tonnage and shipping interests, resulting primarily from the war, must and will be arrested by suitable legislation, by the complete restoration of the republic and our national finances, and by the rapid material progress of the country. The necessity of doing something to this end immediately is seen both by Congress and the people. The Congressional committee who have been sitting in this city for the past week for the purpose of investigating the cause of the decline of American shipbuilding and shipping interests, and to provide a remedy, as well as the mass of valuable information elicited, show that the public mind is alive to this subject, and that we are approaching the turning point. Gloomy as the state of things regarding our mercantile marine has been the last few years, it is impossible that this great, rich, and progressive country can long occupy the second position as a maritime nation.

Before the year 1900—yes, in twenty-five years—our present population of forty millions will be increased probably to a hundred millions. And what is not such an ambitious, industrious, inventive and energetic population capable of accomplishing? Then look at our vast coast, over ten thousand miles in extent, on the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf of Mexico, with its numberless harbors; at the inexhaustible forests of the interior, and the illimitable deposits of the best iron and coal; at the wonderful variety of products that enter into commerce, and at the aptitude of the American people for trade, enterprise and maritime pursuits. Is it possible for such a people and country to occupy long a second rate maritime position?

The British and the people of some other nations are looking to the Suez Canal as destined to change the currents of trade, and no doubt that will produce a great effect, as far as the trade of Europe with India and the East generally goes. To some extent, and in a certain sense, this great work of modern times may turn the course of trade from the West to the East, and may establish an empire again on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. But even then the ultimate destination and concentration of the trade between Asia and Europe will be westward still. France, Italy, Austria, and other countries on the European Continent will get a share and receive great benefit, but a large portion will go to England. All this, however, will not interfere with the increasing tendency of commerce further west, still, across the Atlantic, nor retard the progress towards commercial supremacy and an overshadowing republican empire in America.

Though the course of trade has been throughout history from east to west, it reaches its most western limit in the United States. It may tend more and more from the Atlantic side to the Pacific, as the interior of the continent fills up with population, as the vast West becomes developed, and as the Pacific States increase their commerce with China and other countries of Asia and with Australia, but it will stop here. The empire of commerce cannot pass over the great ocean and fall into the hands of an inferior race, China, India, Japan, and Australia will advance, undoubtedly, but their progress will only tend to increase the commercial power and importance of the United States in a greater ratio. Mexico and the Central and South American States will all be tributaries to our future commercial greatness. The race for this empire now is between England and the United States. While the former has some advantages at present in her larger tonnage, facilities for shipbuilding and accumulated capital, she sees her manufactures, upon which her vast commerce is based, passing into other hands. The cry of alarm has gone up already, not only about this, but from some of her statesmen with regard to the limit of her coal fields also. The thinking men of England begin to look with alarm upon the future. They see that the empire of commerce, wealth, and greatness will be here on the American Continent. This is inevitable destiny. The growth and resources of the country will bring that about, however weak and short-sighted our public men may be. While Congress indulges in its twaddle and miserable party politics, and while commercial conventions occupy themselves with high flown platitudes and impracticable resolutions, the republic is marching on through natural causes to a point of commercial greatness and empire that no nation has attained, and which none hereafter will approach.

COMMISSIONER DELANO.

From the N. Y. World. When this officer was appointed to take charge of the important department over which he presides, or professes to preside, the people of the country were assured that it was done because of his special fitness for the post as well as his ability, integrity, and high-toned character. The reckless and blundering management of its affairs which had marked Mr. Rollins' administration was to be replaced by an able, upright, pure revenue management that would serve to elevate the morale of the service, augment the revenue, prevent fraud, and be approved by all right-minded men, irrespective of

political belief. The bureau affairs, were given to understand, were to be administered upon proper, general business principles, entirely outside of and unimpeded by party politics. In brief, the right person was to have control of the office, and it was to be conducted for the benefit of the whole country without discrimination. How these professions have been carried out we have all seen.

Mr. Delano, as compared with Mr. Rollins, has more energy, perhaps, and is more of a disciplinarian than the latter, but is as little of a lawyer and unquestionably more of a thoroughbred politician. He brought to the office his Congressional experience, which was of incalculable advantage to him, viewed from the standpoint of personal advancement. It was simply a farce to appoint such a man to office and proclaim his intended conduct of its affairs above the reach and influence of politics, and we said so at the time. We confess, however, that his initiative measures induced us to look for a really better state of things than has followed. One favorable sign was his taking our advice, and breaking up the iniquitous clique that had ruled the office so shamefully under his predecessor, and which we took the pains to expose to him in these columns. Another was his removal of certain notoriously corrupt officers from the service in important collection districts whom Mr. Rollins either would not or could not displace. But here the steps towards improvement ended. The same general principles determining Mr. Rollins' transaction of the office business seem to have been adopted throughout by Mr. Delano; and, as a natural consequence, we have had the same narrow-minded, illegal, blundering decisions; the same unjust treatment of claimants and petty resort to avoid refund of taxes unlawfully taken from the taxpayers. The records of the bureau may not perhaps show quite as many unsound rulings as occurred within a like period of Mr. Rollins' reign, but they will show enough of such to stamp Mr. Delano as unfit to be the chief of the revenue office.

It has been triumphantly asserted by Radical papers and politicians that more revenue has been derived from whisky and tobacco under Mr. Delano's rule than under Mr. Rollins'. Mr. Delano himself has had the bad taste to tell us this on the stump. It must be remembered, however, that while this is true the credit for it does not belong to Mr. Delano. The tax on whisky was reduced to a figure that lessened the temptation to fraud, and the legislative requirements governing both that article and tobacco were of such a character as to bring more of the actual production to tax than had hitherto been reached. All this just as Mr. Delano took his seat. There would have been the same increase of revenue under any one else; it came of itself in the natural order of things, and not from any of Mr. Delano's doings.

So far from the bureau being conducted without regard to politics, it has been conducted with special reference to and for the promotion of them; the head of it having always carefully kept in view the advancement of radical interests in general, without neglecting his own chances for preferment in particular. His zeal for the public good has not prevented him from looking towards the Senate chamber and aspiring to a seat therein. He certainly holds peculiar ideas of right and propriety. Something of these may be recognized in his leaving his office to openly take the stump, for which he is much better fitted by nature than for the post he holds. He does not flinch in the least from his ideas of public duty and official dignity to abandon that post, as though the people had no claim whatever upon his services and presence there, and assume a most unseemly personal part in the political struggles of the hour, in opposition to those who contribute equally with others to the too large salary he draws with unflinching regularity from the general treasury; but he does find it inconsistent with them to make a decision conforming with existing law when his personal prejudices or interests run counter to it, or to allow a claim which is plainly as valid as law can make it if he has a purpose to gain in rejecting it. While he has been off electing, the business of his office, involving millions of dollars, has been stopped, to the injury of the immense interests involved; business, too, which should have been settled months ago, and would have been had he conscientiously performed his duties. And this he calls "honest administration" in his public harangues. We have at this moment proofs in our possession which will show that his administration has been anything but honest, and we purpose laying them before the public at an early day. The entire doings of the office are as corrupt and unlawful now as they have ever been; and they need the constant attention which we shall take it upon ourselves to give them. A bureau which controls the collection of one hundred and fifty millions a year and dispenses the patronage of so vast a system is of too much importance to every national interest for either the people or the press to keep silence about.

INFLUENCE OF TENNESSEE LEGISLATION UPON NATIONAL POLITICS.

From the N. Y. Times.

In his message to the Tennessee Legislature, Governor Senter remarks upon the possible influence of its action upon the policy of the General Government:—"Much may depend upon the action of Tennessee, as to the time and conditions for the restoration of the Southern States and the United States. While the former has some advantages at present in her larger tonnage, facilities for shipbuilding and accumulated capital, she sees her manufactures, upon which her vast commerce is based, passing into other hands. The cry of alarm has gone up already, not only about this, but from some of her statesmen with regard to the limit of her coal fields also. The thinking men of England begin to look with alarm upon the future. They see that the empire of commerce, wealth, and greatness will be here on the American Continent. This is inevitable destiny. The growth and resources of the country will bring that about, however weak and short-sighted our public men may be. While Congress indulges in its twaddle and miserable party politics, and while commercial conventions occupy themselves with high flown platitudes and impracticable resolutions, the republic is marching on through natural causes to a point of commercial greatness and empire that no nation has attained, and which none hereafter will approach."

We cannot suppose that any perversity which may be displayed at Nashville will influence the proceedings of Congress with regard to the three States which yet await readmission. Whether Virginia, Mississippi and Texas be declared reconstructed, and entitled to Federal representation and the local rights which must, in all fairness, be decided on its merits. The readmission of Virginia does not depend upon the realization of satisfactory results in the other excluded States, or either of them. Each will be judged with reference to the requirements of the Reconstruction acts and the character and qualifications of the Senators and Representatives who may seek admission in its name. No man in his right mind can propose any other test.

And certainly the nation's sense of justice would revolt against a proposal to apply an extra turn of the screw to Virginia because the Democrats of the Tennessee Legislature happen to elect Andrew Johnson Senator or to reject the fifteenth amendment. To this extent we deem Governor Senter's apprehensions groundless.

And yet it is unquestionably true, as he suggests, that the spirit and purposes revealed by the majority at Nashville will in some degree influence the decision of Congress when a proposal to abrogate disabilities comes up for consideration, and will also influence the feeling of the Republican party upon other questions more directly affecting the prosperity of the South. The result of the late election was due to the generous course pursued by Governor Senter and the resistance of the more moderate Republicans to the prescriptive policy of Stokes and his friends. While the canvass lasted, no mention was made of measures which the Democratic members of the Legislature now propose to enact. There was no talk, then, of a crusade against the common school system or the political privileges of the freedmen. On the contrary, the Democrats who supported Senter professed to be as willing as the radicals who supported Stokes to accept the new order of things—negro suffrage included—as an accomplished fact. The main issue of the election was, continued proscription or the expedient possible removal of all disabilities; and those of us at the North who sympathized with the liberal and generous views of the Senter party saw, or thought we saw, in their success an assurance of harmony and prosperity in the State.

If, then, the aggressive spirit manifested by the majority in the Legislature be persisted in, the reasoning which led Governor Senter, Mr. Brownlow, and the enfranchising Republicans of Tennessee to take an advanced position will need to be reconsidered. Disfranchisement is bad, but its burdens, if they are to be borne at all, better fit the shoulders of those who fought against the Union than those who battled in its defense. And though there may be no immediate remedy for the wrongs which seem to be impending in Tennessee, we may be quite sure that they will indirectly influence Republican opinion in other States, and at Washington, in connection with the disabilities over which Congress retains control. The abstract argument in favor of universal amnesty will continue sound. But the expediency of its enactments will be open to some doubt if the experience of Tennessee prove that those who suffer from disabilities wait but for the opportunity to abuse any power they may acquire. The opposition offered to the fifteenth amendment tends to indicate the necessity for its ratification. And the proscriptive temper of the party which has most to gain from the removal of disabilities is the strongest reason against precipitate action upon that subject.

DECLINE OF AMERICAN COMMERCE.

From the N. Y. Sun.

A Congressional committee, appointed to inquire into the causes of the present state of decline of American commerce, has just concluded its sessions in this city, and has now gone to Boston to continue its labors there. It has been waited upon by some of our most eminent ship-builders and ship-owners, and their testimony has been taken at length. They all agree that the amount of tonnage of American vessels engaged in foreign commerce has fallen off greatly since the beginning of the late war; but when it comes to assigning reasons for this state of things, and suggesting a remedy for it, they are anything but unanimous. The ship-builders say that at present it costs too much to build ships here, but that if the duties and internal revenue taxes on the materials employed could be either taken off directly, or a drawback allowed to counterbalance them, they could build ships better and cheaper than their European rivals, and thus restore the former preponderance of America on the ocean. The ship-owners, on the other hand, say that the dearthness of American ships is the result of the higher wages paid to American mechanics, and their remedy would be to repeal the laws which at present discriminate against foreign-built ships, and allow such ships, when owned by American citizens, to be put on the same footing with ships built here. One party, in a word, wants free trade for the materials for ships, while the other wants free trade in ships themselves.

Between these two rival interests the patriotic American will have little difficulty in choosing on which to bestow his sympathies. If it be possible, by reducing duties and taxes, to enable American shipbuilders to successfully compete with those of Europe, he would, beyond all question, prefer to adopt that policy rather than to let foreign-built ships and tonnage take the mechanics of employment. However plausible may be the theories of free traders, they cannot conceal the fact that the destruction of the shipbuilding business on this side of the Atlantic, as far as it has gone, is a national calamity; and if it were to go still further, so that our coasting vessels and even our ferry boats should be built abroad, it would greatly cripple our national strength. If anything is to be done, let us give up all attempt to collect revenue from the wood, metal, and rigging of ships, and see if that will not restore life to our now idle shipyards.

But while we are about the work of taking off the burdens which interfere with the prosperity of American shipping, we ought not to forget one very important one, which nobody seems to have thought of suggesting. This is the local taxation of our great seaport cities. It will be of little use to reduce the first cost of an American-owned vessel, while, so long as she is engaged in the carrying trade, she has to pay, as vessels belonging to citizens of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia now have to pay, a tax of from two and one-quarter to four per cent. on her value every year to the State and city Governments.

A New York merchant builds or buys a steamer to run between this port and Liverpool. She costs, say, \$250,000. On this amount the State and city of New York require him to pay from \$5000 to \$8000 a year in the shape of personal taxes. A Liverpool merchant puts a steamer of the same value on the same route, and he pays no local tax at all. The New York merchant, therefore is constantly hampered by a discrimination against him of \$5000 to \$8000 a year. Is it any wonder that the vessels which come into this port are all owned in England? Even Americans who wish to invest their capital in ships prefer to do it by buying shares in British navigation companies. The Cunard line owns, say, \$10,000,000 worth of steamers, on which they pay no tax beyond that on the income earned by them! If they were a New York corporation they would pay \$200,000 a year at least of State and city tax!

their part, and by exempting ships from local taxation, enable American ship-owners to start on equal terms with those of Great Britain. If they would also have the wisdom to give the same privilege to capital invested in all branches of commerce, they would do us immense deal more toward establishing on a firm basis the commercial prosperity of the country; but that is perhaps too much to ask for yet.

A WORD TO PENNSYLVANIA.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

In three-fourths of the counties of Pennsylvania, the Republican vote fell off, and our majority was less than at the State election of 1868; in Luzerne, Schuylkill, Wayne, and most of the anthracite counties, the result was different. The men who dig coal have had trouble the past season—they have felt the heavy hand of power—they have been constrained to make a stand for what they deemed their rights—and they (not all, but a goodly share of them) have been led to discriminate sharply between their friends and their foes. They know little of Governor Geary, who lives far away, but they know Asa Packer—know how he made his twenty millions—and they could not feel that he was their man. Hence the result.

Those miners are going to Harrisburg this winter to ask for the enactment or modification of laws so as to give them a chance to live. They object to being forced into caverns where they have no choice but to lie down and be roasted alive—they mean to see whether capital is everything, labor nothing, in the estimation of their lawmakers; they mean to ask for such legislation as will enable them to live in comfort and rear their children to be virtuous, intelligent, useful citizens.

Perhaps they will ask more than is just; if so, we trust it will be refused. We believe in "government of the people, by the people, for the people," and not in the domination of any class, however numerous or capable. An oligarchy of miners or of hod-carriers would be just as selfish, just as oppressive, as an oligarchy of bankers or of lawyers. We would concede everything to justice, nothing to threats or to numbers, whatever the cost.

But knowing what Pennsylvania legislation has done, we volunteer the warning that it won't do for the legislators soon to assemble at Harrisburg to earn the money of the great mining and transportation companies as their predecessors have done. Were they to do so, they would not merely make shipwreck of the Republican ascendancy in their own State; they would render themselves infamous from Maine to Oregon.

The urgency of the case renders plain speaking imperative. The miners must have justice, and they will not pay a cent for it. They must be treated as well as if they had millions, and were ready to pour them out like water. In short, the usages and traditions of Pennsylvania legislation must, at least for this occasion, be wholly overborne. And, on behalf of the Republicans of the Union, who cannot afford and will not consent to see the Keystone of our arch knocked out, we suggest to General Simon Cameron that we look to him to see that this is done. He knows by experience what labor is; he has the reputation of being its friend and champion. It will be a great misfortune to him, and to all of us, if, in money, corruptly disbursed, should defeat the righteous demands of the coal miners in the Pennsylvania legislation of 1870.

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