

NEW CONSTITUTION READY, BUT ITS UNCERTAIN MAKERS ARE LOOKING FOR JOKERS

When the "Bug Hunters" Have Finished, Convention Will Adopt Instrument. ENDS ITS WORK TO-DAY. Will Be Ten Times Longer Than the Constitution of United States.

By Samuel M. Williams. (Special Staff Correspondent of The Evening World.)

ALBANY, Sept. 9.—Out of the all-summer struggles and compromises of lawyers, politicians, reformers and

reactionaries, the practical men and the theoreticians, the agitators and the lobbyists, there has been evolved a new constitution for the State which will be submitted in complete form to the convention that meets to-night for its final session. All of to-morrow and perhaps on into Saturday will be required to put the finishing touches upon the document and to indorse in the customary complimentary valedictory with which ambitious statesmen like to flatter themselves.

The verdict on their work is to be rendered, however, at the polls in November, when the voters express individual opinions on the involved document, with its innumerable prohibitions, prohibitions, permissions and compulsions of government.

It requires about ten times as many words to govern the people of New York State as are contained in the Constitution of the United States. The Federal foundation, brief, clear and succinct, has been found serviceable for 125 years. The State has to re-write its Constitution every twenty years.

Report of the committee on how the Constitution shall be submitted to the people, whether on blue or in separate paragraphs. There are thirty-three articles in all. The inclination is to divide them into two or more parts, so that weakness or unpopularity of one may not endanger adoption of the others.

According to present indications the article relating to legislative apportionment will be set out by itself, and also the article relating to taxation. All the other articles are likely to be massed.

The November voter will also have submitted to him the question of women's suffrage, but the Constitutional Convention has had nothing to do with this problem, much to the happiness of the delegates who did not want to face it. The Legislature at two previous sessions provided the necessary preliminaries for this feminine demand to be voted upon regarding the Constitution.

The third order before the convention is to adopt an address to the people of the State explaining what the proposed constitution means and

what it will do. The convention of twenty states signed a long list over this point and issued two addresses, one strong was partisan feeling and party politics at that time.

There is a need of some address, for only a student of our report in constitutional law can follow the far-reaching effects of this lengthy document. Some sections are perfectly plain, others are mysterious in what they do not say, while in many there are latent possibilities that may or may not be suspected by their framers.

As amendments to the Federal Constitution just after the Civil War designed to protect the rights of freed slaves has become the backbone behind which great corporations, interests, themselves with appeals to highest courts.

So in the new State Constitution there are analogous possibilities. The search for jokers is going on, but their location is as uncertain as that of a German submarine. Corporation interests and the manipulators of legislative government exerted many efforts, but their accomplishments are not many.

Now that the struggle is over, it has become known that their failure was due largely to interested disseniors. They could not agree among themselves on many propositions which were put forward. The big steam railroad and the little trolley roads were not always of one mind. The city lighting companies and the up-State power companies differed. The interests were split as badly as the politicians. So the public escaped, possibly both damage and benefit.

One of the most important articles to corporations was the Public Service Commission proposition. It was written and re-written, argued and debated. It finally emerged nearly stripped, but still a part of it has been put over. The present two Public Service Commissions are made constitutional bodies. They may be changed in personnel by the Governor and their powers may be altered by the Legislature, but their existence is confirmed for twenty years whether the people want them or not.

The authority designed a few years ago to be the regulating and correcting arm of the people over public service corporations has now become the hope and the defensive trench of these companies. They wanted the system of commission regulation continued and got it in the constitution out of reach from interference by the people and the Legislature, but they failed to agree among themselves on how much or how little power should be unalterably lodged in the commissions, so the compromise is a blank on that subject. The form and the substance of the corporation's defense is there, which is of great indirect influence, but the delegation of authority still rests with the Legislature.

FINANCIAL INTERESTS USE THE FARMER AS A CATPAW. A concealed attack is being made on the tax article by financial interests using the up-State farmer as the innocent catpaw. The most important part of the tax article is that it gives the Legislature the power to determine how and by whom personal property shall be assessed. The farmer has been stirred up to cry that a central commission at Albany will impose taxes on his cows and implements, thus taking away an inherent local right.

What the tax article does is not to impose anything, but to open the way for the Legislature to work out some practical solution of the present chaotic personal tax system, which has degenerated into a farge in many cities. New York City has nearly fifty million dollars of uncollected personal property tax carried on its books to-day.

In particular public service corporations are affected by the amendment, and they have craftily stimulated the opposition by egging on the up-State taxpayers to believe that an inquisition from Albany is about to descend on them.

An educational campaign is planned by the convention to instruct the voters into the mysteries of the lengthy and technical Constitution. They will need it.

LANSING WARNS CITY MUST GUARD SHIPS FROM BOMBS

It was learned today that Secretary of State Lansing had taken up with Gov. Whitman the matter of the planting of bombs on British ships sailing from this port, and that the Governor asked the Mayor to see to it that every possible preventive measure was taken, as the name of the State was at stake.

Gov. Whitman's letter to Mayor Mitchell was written on Aug. 31. In it he said that Secretary Lansing had written him with reference to the matter and had enclosed three notes and a memorandum from the British Embassy, a note from the French Embassy and a despatch from the American Consul at Havre, all dealing with specific instances of the concealing of bombs or other explosives on ships with "a malicious purpose to destroy them and the lives of persons on board."

After stating that he knew that the local authorities had already taken precautions of the premises, the Secretary said that he would call your attention to the attention referred to in those offices and to the importance attached thereto by the Secretary of State and to the fact that the British and French consuls were charged with the duty of preventing the commission of crimes and the disembarking of offenders against our criminal laws. The importance of taking such precautions as will prevent the repetition of offenses similar to those complained of in the future, and to use every effort to bring to justice those guilty of such offenses in the past.

"I cannot too strongly urge upon you the imperative necessity for such action. The good name of our State and of the City of New York is at stake and calls for your active vigilance, and we owe it to the National Administration to render all possible aid in preserving the neutrality of our country as between warring nations of Europe by preventing the commission of such offenses in the future."

Mayor Mitchell being away, Acting Mayor Henry H. Curran wrote the reply to the Governor. He said that close attention was being given to the matter by the Police and Fire Departments, and the Police Commissioner himself, being in touch with the District Attorney, the Federal authorities and the Department of Justice and the Treasury.

"You may be sure that constant and thorough attention will be given to this situation," Mr. Curran concluded.



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