he magnified the importance of his committee and the duties with which it is charged.

Mr. Kasson objected to the sweeping authority proposed to be given to the committee in the matter of expenditures. Mr. Belford has not forgotten that Judge Wylie compelled him to pay a fine of $100 for contempt of court when he was a witness in the Star Route trial last summer, and he used some vigorous language to-day in support of Springer's proposition and in denunciation of the manner in which the Star Route prosecutions were conducted.

The resolution was adopted, after Mr. Springer had so modified it as to limit the expense of the investigations to $5,000. Chairman Springer will therefore have at his disposal more patronage than is enjoyed by the chairman of any other committee of the House, with one or two exceptions.

READY FOR CAMPAIGN WORK.

THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE NOW ORGANIZED.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21.—In the choice of officers and of an Executive Committee the Republican Congressional Committee to-night completed an organization which will commend itself to the Republican party throughout the country. The chairman, General Hawley, is Chairman of the Senate Committee on Civil Service. Edward McPherson, the secretary, has served several terms in the same capacity, and his selection means a thorough and comprehensive management of the details of the campaign.

The members of the Executive Committee besides Senator Hawley are Senators Aldrich, Allison and Miller, of California, and Representatives Hiscock, McKinley, Washburn, Davis, Campbell, Peele, O'Hara, Goff and Pettibone. These names are a sufficient assurance that the work of the committee will be well and thoroughly done, and in a manner which will afford no just grounds for complaint or criticism as to the methods adopted.

A NEW PHASE OF THE PORTER CASE.

A RESOLUTION OF INQUIRY IN THE HOUSE DEFEATED BY DEMOCRATS.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21.—A statement was published yesterday on the authority of a Democratic Congressman, that the maps and diagrams in the Fitz John Porter case have been submitted to the last three graduating classes at West Point, for their criticism, and that the members of those classes have unanimously expressed the opinion that Porter would have been guilty of a grave military error if he had obeyed Pope's orders. Mr. Bonfoile to-day offered a resolution requesting the Secretary of War to inform the House whether "for several years past the maps, diagrams, etc., in the case of Fitz John Porter have been submitted to the members of each graduating class of the pupils of the Military Academy at West Point, for the purpose of inviting their criticism of the proceedings and findings of a general court-martial held in pursuance of law and duty, approved by the Secretary of War and the Commander-in-Chief; that, if said report be true, the Secretary be requested to inform the House by whose authority or instigation the minds of those successive graduating classes of youth, educated at the public expense for the military service of the Government, were thus directed to the discussion and questioning of the official action of their lawful superior; and if it be true, as alleged, that these youths just emerging from their course of study, and just entering upon their service as subordinate officers of the United States Army, have been persuaded, or encouraged, or permitted to discredit the action of their superiors by expressing their opinion that the action of Fitz John Porter was perfectly proper, and that had he done otherwise he would have committed a grave military error, the Secretary be requested to inform this House whether, in his opinion, the inducement to or the expression of such a disregard for the judgment of the highest military tribunal, is not prejudicial to good order and military discipline, and calculated to foster a spirit of insubordination, and to incite among the officers time educated for the United States Army, a demoralizing and dangerous contempt for the authority of law."

Two or three Democrats promptly objected to any action on the resolution, and one carried his objection far enough to prevent its reference to the Committee on Military Affairs.

AGAINST LOBBYING ON THE FLOOR.

A RESOLUTION TO EXACT PLEDGES FROM EX-CONGRESSMEN.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21.—At least twenty ex-Congressmen have settled in Washington, and are engaged in the practice of law or the prosecution of claims against the Government. Some of them are men of ability in their profession, and they have all they can do in a legitimate way. Others are lawyers only in name. They make a more or less precarious living by pushing claims in the executive departments, and in "promoting" measures of legislation, for which they are paid. All ex-Congressmen enjoy "the privileges of the floor"; that is, they can enter the House when it is in session and converse with the members in their seats, not only when a bill in which they are interested is under consideration but at all other times as well. This, of course, facilitates their business, and for this reason alone they are frequently employed and paid by individuals and corporations interested in pending legislation. The lobbyists who have never been members of Congress complain that their business is greatly injured by the ex-Congressmen who enjoy these privileges. There may be something in the complaint.

A good many Representatives have also been greatly annoyed by the presence in the House during its sittings of ex-members, industriously engaged in plying their vocation. Mr. Anderson, of Kansas, to-day gave expression to this annoyance by a resolution, which was referred to the Committee on Rules. It requires an ex-Congressman, before being entitled to the privileges of the floor, to obtain an order from the Speaker, which order shall only be issued upon the ex-member's declaration, upon his honor, that he is not interested, directly or indirectly, in any corporation or person having a pecuniary interest in the defeat or passage of a measure before Congress or the committees, and pledging that, while the House is in session, he will not communicate with any member respecting any claim which will affect the welfare of any company, corporation, or person having an interest in legislation. In case of the violation of this pledge, the Committee on Rules shall declare the ex-member forever deprived of the privileges of the floor.

WASHINGTON NOTES.

WASHINGTON, Monday, Jan. 21.

INDIANS WANTING TO BECOME CITIZENS.—Four hundred Winnebago Indians, now upon their reservation in Nebraska, have petitioned the Secretary of the Interior to allot to them land in severalty so that they may acquire rights of citizenship.

CLAIMS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES.—A bill introduced in the House to-day by General Slocum limits the time for presenting claims against the Government arising out of the late war, with the exception of pension claims, to two years from its passage. Claims hereafter accruing must be presented within six years of the event from which they originate.

SUPREME COURT QUORUMS.—Senator Garland to-day reported favorably from the Committee on the Judiciary his bill to provide that hereafter a majority of the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States shall constitute a quorum thereof, and that no member of said court shall sit at the hearing or participate in the decision of any cause in the decision of which he acted in the court below.

TO EXTEND THE PENSION LAWS.—In the Senate to-day Senator Logan introduced a bill to provide for the extensions of the benefits of all pensions already granted or hereafter to be granted to soldiers, sailors and mariners of the Marine Corps who served in the late war, and upon the death of any such person to his widow or minor children, under the laws and regulations which now govern in such cases, except that it shall not be necessary for such widow or minor children to prove that the death of such person was the result of any disability contracted in the service.

A STATUE OF SIMON BOLIVAR.—In the Senate to-day a bill was introduced by Mr. Lapham, to provide for the erection of a bronze statue of Simon Bolivar in Washington or New-York.

UNDERVALUATION OF WOOL IMPORTS.—The Senate to-day agreed to the following resolution by Mr. Sherman: "That the Secretary of the Treasury be directed to transmit to the Senate copies of official reports from Treasury agents and collectors of customs, tending to show fraudulent undervaluation or classification of wool imported into the United States, and such further information in the Treasury Department as may enable Congress to provide guards against such frauds."

RETIRED ARMY OFFICERS.—The Senate to-day passed the bill permitting retired Army officers to hold civil office in the territories.

EDMUND TAPPAN'S CONDITION.

It was decided yesterday that for the present Edmund Tappan, the self-confessed murderer of the Maybees, should not be taken to Brookville. Since his second confession, made to the District-Attorney of Queen's County on Saturday, he has broken down completely. He eats but little, and cries continually. Yesterday morning he fainted twice. When he was taken up to the court-room, the two officers having him in charge were obliged to hold him up. He had no counsel, and when he was arraigned before Justice Betts at the Town Hall Jamaica, yesterday, with the consent of the District-Attorney the examination was postponed until Wednesday.

THE BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

The annual meeting of the stockholders of the Brooklyn Academy of Music was held last evening. Judah B. Voorhees presided. The treasurer's report showed receipts of $32,567 33, and a balance of $11,944 55. On motion of Henry W. Maxwell, it was voted to expend this amount in providing new scenery, and refitting the interior of the building. The following directors were elected: Alexander M. White, Josiah O. Low, Samuel McLean, Henry D. Polhemus, E. H. R. Lyman, Henry W. Maxwell.

RAILWAY INTERESTS.

TO AMEND PACIFIC RAILROAD ACTS.

PROVISIONS OF A BILL INTRODUCED BY SENATOR EDMUNDS.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21.—Senator Edmunds introduced in the Senate to-day a bill to amend the Pacific Railroad Act of July 1, 1862, and the Acts of July 2, 1864, and May 7, 1878, which provided for the settlement of the claims growing out of the issue of bonds to aid in the construction of the railroads mentioned in the Act and for the securing to the United States the indebtedness of said companies. It authorizes and directs the Secretary of the Treasury to ascertain the amount of the indebtedness of the several railroad companies to which subsidy bonds of the United States were advanced in aid of the construction of the Pacific Railroad and branches, or their successors, as of the first day of October, 1884, by adding to the principal sum of said bonds all sums which have been paid thereon as interest (first, however, deducting therefrom the amounts held in sinking fund or reimbursed to the United States by services or otherwise), up to and including all interest due and payable on said date, and by computing the then present value of said indebtedness from said date to the average date when the said subsidy bonds, and said indebtedness thereafter to accrue shall become due and payable, at the interest rate of 3 per centum semi-annually.

It provides that the several companies which received subsidy bonds of the United States in aid of the construction of said Pacific Railroad and branches, or the successors by consolidation or otherwise of said companies, be authorized, respectively, to make, issue and deliver to the Secretary of the Treasury (who is by the bill authorized to receive the same) bonds of redemption, each bearing date the first day of October, 1884, to an aggregate amount equal to the indebtedness ascertained and computed as above, to which shall be added the interest thereon at the rate of 3 per centum per annum to accrue upon the said sum so ascertained to the average maturity of said bonds of redemption; and each of said bonds shall be for the equal one hundred and twentieth part of said debt, and interest so ascertained.

It provides that each of said bonds shall be payable semi-annually in any lawful money, or in any bonds or obligations of the United States at par, the first on the first day of April, 1885, the second on the first day of October, 1885, and so forth on the first days of April and October in each year until all of said bonds shall have been fully paid and discharged, and that each of said bonds respectively when paid shall be thereupon surrendered to said company; that said bonds of redemption shall be received by and on behalf of the United States in lieu of the claims and demands of the acts of 1862, 1864 and 1878, above referred to; provided, however, that no money shall be paid to the companies or either of them from the United States Treasury for, or on account of services rendered to the United States, or for upon the railroad or telegraph lines of said companies, or over or upon any road or telegraph line, owned, leased, or operated by said companies, or either of them, until the bond nearest maturity shall be fully paid, and that no excess over the payment of said current bond shall be paid to said companies.

It provides, however, that all sums due said companies for services rendered from and after the first day of October, 1884, shall be earned upon the books of the Treasury Department as soon as the same are credited, together with interest at the rate of 3 per centum per annum, all such amounts, together with the interest thereon, to be applied to the payment of the bond of the company nearest to maturity.

It provides that the statutory liens created by virtue of the acts of July 1, 1862, July 2, 1864, and May 7, 1878, to secure the repayment of the subsidy bonds and interest thereon, be retained as security for the payment of the bonds of redemption. It also provides, however, that any of the companies shall be entitled at any time to prepay or anticipate the payment and discharge of any of said bonds; and to this end declares that it shall be lawful for the companies to issue and dispose of their respective bonds to an aggregate of the amount of their bonds of redemption which may remain outstanding and unpaid, or of their first mortgage bonds, so as to bear a less rate of interest, and to run for such term as may be deemed expedient, and to secure the same by mortgages upon their respective railroads, telegraph equipments, franchises and property; and from the proceeds to take up, pay for, and cancel their outstanding first mortgage bonds, and such bonds of redemption in instalments of not less than ten same bonds in each, so long as that number remains.

The bill provides further that so long as the companies shall respectively keep their railroad and telegraph lines, for the construction of which subsidy bonds were issued, in repair and use, and shall at all times transmit dispatches over said telegraph lines, and transport mails, troops, munitions of war, and supplies of public stores upon said railroads, for the Government whenever required to do so at fair and reasonable rates of compensation, not to exceed the amounts paid by private parties for the same kind of services; and shall give the Government preference in the use of the same, as required by the sixth section of the Act of July, 1862, and shall make perpetual payment of the bonds of redemption, no other or further sums shall be demanded of them, and none of the penalties or liabilities provided for in the act, 1862, 1864, and 1878, shall be incurred by or enforced against them, but all such payments, requirements, penalties and liabilities shall be suspended and not deemed to be due or payable, owing or incurred, until default of some of the provisions of this act shall be made, and shall have continued for a period of six months, in which case they shall stand revived, and continue in force to the same extent as if this act had not been passed.

It also provides that the acceptance of the terms of the bill, should it be enacted, shall be held to be an acceptance of the act of May, 1878, passed in amendment of the acts of 1862 and 1864. And further that the act shall take effect as to each of the companies referred to, or their successors, upon its acceptance under the corporate seal of said company, signed by its president and countersigned by its secretary, being filed and deposited with the secretary of the Treasury.

TEXAS PACIFIC LAND GRANTS.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21.—The House Committee on Public Lands, at a meeting held to-night, at which all the members but two were present, unanimously agreed to report to the House a bill to declare forfeited the land granted to the Texas Pacific Railroad Company. The bill agreed upon by the committee contains, beside the proviso declaring a forfeiture of the lands granted to aid in the construction of the railroad in question, provisions vacating all acts of the Department of the Interior, its officers and local land officers, in permitting homestead entries, selections and purchases of lands granted the company, and in issuing patents, certificates and lists thereon, and confirming the rights and titles of parties or persons holding patents or claiming right or title under such certificates or lists of lands.

A DEMAND BY THE CANADA PACIFIC.

OTTAWA, Jan. 21.—George Stephens, president, W. C. Van Horne, general manager, and others connected with the Canada Pacific Railway, were closeted with Government representatives to-day preparing a case for submission to Parliament. Nothing definite is known as to the nature of the demand the company makes, nor as to the amount Parliament will be asked to vote. Rumor places the latter at $14,000,000.

THE CITY OF BALTIMORE'S OFFER.

The directors of the Richmond and Danville Railroad Company have taken no action on the offer of financial aid recently made by the City of Baltimore. It is understood that the city has offered to loan the company $2,000,000 at 6 per cent, payable at the option of the company at any time within fifty years. The object of the offer is to put the Richmond and Danville in harmony with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad line.

A prominent director of the Richmond and Danville Railroad Company said yesterday that the offer did not contemplate an exclusive contract between the two railroad companies. "The offer was made without solicitation by us," he said, "and, as I understand it, the city wishes simply to improve its railroad facilities. The security that the city asks for its loan is the pledge of a like amount of Virginia Midland income bonds, which we have in the company's treasury. There are really no conditions to the loan. The City of Baltimore is anxious to have an interest in the Southern system of railroads, and this is its offer to our company. As to the agreement between the city and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in regard to this action by the city, I cannot speak, for the simple reason that I do not know and have not inquired. What the company's directors will do about the offer I certainly cannot say."

RAPID TRANSIT ROUTES AND PLANS.

The Rapid Transit Commissioners yesterday listened to a further explanation from William J. Sherman, of Chicago, of his plan for an elevated railroad, with either a cable or electric motor, as may be deemed best, propelling cars resting on wheels placed near the roof on either side, two-thirds of the body of the car hanging below the track. Bernard J. Lamothe exhibited models of his elevated road constructed of iron tubes which he declared could be built for $60,000 a mile. Noah Jacobson, of No. 658 Broadway, in a communication advocated an underground rapid transit railroad. Commissioner Earle submitted a list of additional routes on which, in his belief, railways should be built because of immediate need of them, or because they will be required so early in the future that provision should be made at once for their construction. The routes suggested are mainly those comprised in the system already presented and urged by General Viele. The list was referred to the engineer of the Board for examination.

RESTORING TARIFF PASSENGER RATES.

In accordance with the agreement reached between the trunk lines and the Iowa railroads the sale of tickets over the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific and the Chicago and Alton roads was resumed by the trunk lines yesterday. Tariff rates to the Northwest were restored also and the Rock Island road ceased the sale of its own ticket issues.

MISCELLANEOUS RAILWAY INTELLIGENCE.

CLEVELAND, Jan. 21.—On application of the New-England Trust Company to Judge Pease, at Massillon, Saturday night, Samuel Briggs, general manager, was appointed receiver of the Connotton Valley Railroad.

BALTIMORE, Jan. 21.—The annual meeting of the stockholders of the Maryland Central Railroad Company was held here to-day. The following board of directors was elected by a vote of 9,000 shares against 900: William H. Waters, William Gilmor, John M. Denison, Joseph M. Street, Foulk Jones, James P. Street, Thomas Armstrong, Eli Tucker, Caleb J. Moore, Charles M. Hatter, Granville O. Wilson, Caleb S. Taylor, and Henry R. McNally. The election of officers will take place on Friday next.

NEW-ORLEANS, Jan. 21.—The stockholders of the New-Orleans and North Eastern Railroad met here to-day, and elected the following board of directors: O. Plock, New-York; W. A. Goodman, Alexander McDonald, A. Wessel, John Scott, Cincinnati; H. Abraham, E. L. Carriere, Robert Mott, J. H. Ogtesby, New-Orleans. The board then elected John Scott president and general manager; Alexander McDonald, vice president; O. T. Ambrose, secretary; F. Hahn, treasurer. Sidney Dillon, attorney of the Gould Syndicate, S. D. Rigby and P. B. Wyckoff to-day accompanied President Wilson on a trip over the Mississippi Valley Railroad.

OBITUARY.

CHARLES HANDY RUSSELL.

Charles Handy Russell died at his home, No. 417 Fifth-ave., last evening at 6:15 o'clock, in his eighty-eighth year. On January 15 he was stricken with apoplexy, which confined him to his bed. Chronic bronchitis, from which he had been a sufferer for several years, was the immediate cause of his death. The body will be buried at Newport, R. I.

Mr. Russell was the son of Major Thomas Russell, who served on the staff of General Stark in the Continental Army, and was born at Newport on September 13, 1796. He was educated in Providence, and at an early age became a clerk in the mercantile house of Charles Potter, subsequently becoming his partner. In 1817 he went abroad as the agent of several large importing houses, remaining away till 1823. Two years later he came to this city, and, with his brother, William Henry Russell, established the importing dry goods house of Charles H. Russell & Co., of No. 35 Nassau-st. On July 3, 1827, he became a member of the Chamber of Commerce and continued so till his death. He was made vice-president of the Chamber in 1850, and during the civil war took an active interest in the raising of funds for the support of the National Government. He was one of the founders and original directors of the Bank of Commerce, and became its president in 1865, resigning in 1868. He was one of the early directors of the Boston and Providence Railroad, and for nine years he was manager of the Steam Transportation Line running between Providence and New-York. He became a member of the Historical Society in 1828. He was for thirteen years one of the Central Park Commissioners. Among other business enterprises he was one of the early directors of the Hudson River Railroad, and also of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. He was a trustee of the Atlantic Marine Insurance Company for over fifty years, and for twenty years a trustee of the Redwood Library, of Newport. He was the first to meet and recognize General Lafayette on the occasion of his visit to this country, having been appointed to receive him by the City of Providence and the Society of Cincinnati in the capacity of Marshal of the day. During the Dorr Rebellion in Rhode Island Mr. Russell served on the staff of General William Gibbs McNeil in the "Law and Order forces," and he was an active member of the Union Defence Committee during the late war. He was an old line Whig in politics, afterward becoming a Republican when the former party ceased to exist. He never held a political office, though several nominations were offered him.

Mr. Russell was twice married—first to Miss Ann Rodman, of Providence, R. I., on April 13, 1818. She bore him four children, of whom only one, a daughter, survives. His second wife was Caroline Howland, daughter of Samuel S. Rowland, of this city, by whom he had seven children, five of whom are now living, two sons and three daughters. The elder son was at one time private secretary to William M. Evarts when he was Secretary of State. The second son is a civil engineer, and is a graduate of the School of Mines. Mr. Russell once lived at No. 2 Great Jones-st. Of late years he spent his summers at Oak Lawn, in Newport, and passed his winters at No. 417 Fifth-ave.

DANIEL JOHNSTON.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

KINGSTON, N. Y., Jan. 21.—Daniel Johnston, a banker and real estate owner of this city, died suddenly of pneumonia here this morning. Mr. Johnston was seventy years of age, and prominent both in religious and business circles. He was a saddler by trade, having followed the pursuit most of his life and saved a fine competency from it. He was trustee of Ulster Savings Bank, St. James M. E. Church, and a director of the State of New-York Bank at the time of his death.

COMMODORE TIMOTHY A. HUNT.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

NEW-HAVEN, Jan. 21.—Commodore Timothy A. Hunt, U. S. N., died at his residence in this city this afternoon. He was born in New-Haven in 1805, belonged to Yale '26, but entered the Naval service before graduating. In the Mexican War he commanded the supply ship Electra. When the late war broke out he commanded the Narragansett, then attached to the Pacific Squadron; but he was ordered home and appointed to the position of Inspector of Ordnance, which place he retained all through the Rebellion. In 1867 Commodore Hunt was placed on the retired list, and since that time he has lived in this city. He leaves a wife and one son.

E. HARPER JEFFRIES.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 21.—E. Harper Jeffries, City Controller, died at his residence here this morning of pleuro-pneumonia. He was inducted into the office of Controller two weeks ago. The power to fill the vacancy in the office of City Controller, caused by the death of Mr. Jeffries, is vested by law in the Governor of the State. The death of Mr. Jeffries will seriously affect the business of the City Government unless his successor shall be appointed promptly.

OBITUARY NOTES.

TROY, Jan. 21.—Benjamin Boville, one of the famous six hundred who participated in the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, died here yesterday.

FRANKLIN, Mass., Jan. 21.—The Rev. L. J. Fletcher, of the Universalist Church, died last night, age sixty-six. He formerly preached in Buffalo, Brooklyn and Lowell.

BALTIMORE, Jan. 21.—Darius Wheeler, age eighty-six, a drummer boy in the war of 1812-'14, died this morning at Hanover Junction. He was one of the six who attended church service in a body on the Sunday preceding the last anniversary of the battle of North Point.

OTTAWA, Jan. 21.—Senator Bourinot, of Prince Edward Island, who was stricken with paralysis in the Senate Chamber on Friday, died this morning.

NARROWLY ESCAPING THE FLAMES.

Emil Schaeffer's beer shop at No. 130 East Houston-st. caught fire from a stove at 1 a. m. yesterday. Schaeffer and his family were asleep on the second floor, and on the third floor were eleven boarders. They were not aroused until the firemen were in front of the building, and by that time smoke was filling all the upper rooms. The family got out by the front stairway. Several of the boarders went the same way, while two or three climbed down ladders which the firemen placed against the front windows. Henry and David Brister, two boarders, and Elizabeth Miller, a servant, were taken to the roof by firemen and kept there until the flames were under control. The flames destroyed furniture and utensils worth $800 belonging to Mr. Schaeffer, and damaged the building to the extent of $1,000.

A little later a fire broke out in the lower part of the three-storied building No. 184 Bowery, on the first floor of which is the men's furnishing store of Bernhardt Hernstadt. The upper stories were occupied by Mrs. Rosa Cohen, her six children and a lodger. The entrance to their rooms was through the store, while the rear windows were guarded by iron shutters. Policeman Lynch, of the Fourteenth Precinct, went to the roof of the adjoining building and helped to rescue three of Mrs. Cohen's younger children. The firemen placed ladders against the windows and rescued the other members of the family. Mrs. Cohen, age nineteen, fainted while being carried down a ladder. Mrs. Cohen is a stout woman and two firemen had much difficulty in dragging her through a window. Two firemen also went into rooms over Callahan's hat store, at No. 182 Bowery, and rescued two of Callahan's children. Mr. Hernstadt's loss was estimated by the police yesterday at $1,500, but he said it would amount to $6,000. He had an insurance of $3,375, and he said that $275 in cash had been destroyed in a money-drawer. Mrs. Cohen's loss was about $500.

A fire broke out last night in the stables of the Metropolitan Van Company, at No. 202 Mercer-st. Thirty-seven horses in the stables were taken out safely. Above the stables are "furnished rooms." Carrie Lee, Minnie Campbell and Nettie Watson, who were among the occupants, finding their escape cut off by smoke, were taken down ladders from the windows by the firemen.

RENTING BROOKLYN TABERNACLE PEWS.

The third annual sale of the pews of the Brooklyn Tabernacle took place last evening. Upward of 1,500 persons were present. Mr. Talmage introduced the exercises with some remarks. The auctioneer, E. I. Ford, then read the terms of sale and called for bids. The bidding started at $100 and was run up $25 at a time to $260, at which Dr. E. E. Tucker took the first choice, being $50 more than he paid last year. The second choice went at $245, against $150 last year. Seven pews were taken at premiums over $100; the fixed rental of each is $100. The next thirteen pews went at $50 and over. Nearly all the pews on the main floor and a few in the gallery were sold, the last being taken at $1 each. The aggregate amount of the premiums was estimated at $3,980, compared with $3,240 last year. The fixed rentals of all the seats in the church amount to $17,530, and the premiums added make $22,500.

A HOUSE STRIPPED BY BURGLARS.

The residence of Mr. Felte, at Newtown, was entered by burglars on Sunday night. Everything movable in the lower part of the house was carried off. The curtains, piano cover, the bronze clock, pictures and ornaments, bric-a-brac and silver to the value of $1,800 were taken. Mr. Felte was sleeping on the second floor and the servants on the third, and it was not until the servants came down at 7 a. m. that the robbery was discovered. There is no clew to the thieves, but they are evidently experts.

SHIFTING BROOKLYN PASTORS.

The Brooklyn Presbytery met yesterday in the Ross Street Church. Upon the application of the Rev. Arthur Crosby his resignation from the joint pastorate of the Second Presbyterian Church in Charlton-st. was approved, and he was dismissed to the Presbytery of San Francisco. The Rev. J. W. Hageman was admitted to the Presbytery and arrangements were made to install him in the Franklin Avenue Church on January 27.

MR. THOMPSON UNDER FIRE

BOTH LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES AT WORK.

SOME POINTED QUESTIONS PUT BY THE SENATE BODY—THE ASSEMBLYMEN AWAITING THEIR TURN.

Hubert O. Thompson, Commissioner of Public Works, testified for several hours yesterday before the Senate Committee on Cities. He was questioned in regard to the employes of the Department, the method of awarding contracts, unbalanced bids, $999 orders, water meters, and various other topics. The Special Assembly Committee decided to postpone the investigation of Mr. Thompson for the present, and will inquire into the fees of the County Clerk, Register, and Sheriff. Grand Juror Brandon denies that he has told any of the secrets of the Grand Jury room.

THE SENATE COMMITTEE.

MR. THOMPSON ON THE STAND.

TESTIMONY REGARDING EMPLOYES, CONTRACTS, THE WATER SUPPLY AND WATER METERS.

Commissioner Thompson submitted to the Senate committee a list of all the persons employed in the Department of Public Works on October 31, 1883, with the class of work on which each was engaged, and the rate of pay; also a list of all appropriations and funds which could be drawn upon for the payment of expenditures. He explained that a portion of his clerical force had worked on Sunday in preparing these lists. Part of the information called for by the committee would require two or three weeks to prepare; he would furnish it as soon as possible. The total force employed at that time was about 1,900. While Mr. Thompson was explaining the duties of the various classes of workmen he saw Senator Daggett smile. Thinking that the Senator was incredulous as to some of his statements, Mr. Thompson said, half inquiringly, half indignantly: "Why do you smile?" Mr. Daggett made haste to explain that he had smiled in recognition of one of the counsel who had just entered the room. A hearty laugh followed this episode. Mr. Daggett said he supposed that the list submitted included the "election force." Mr. Thompson replied: "We have no election force. There may be something of this kind in Brooklyn. We have nothing of the sort here." The Senator rejoined that they had a reform government in Brooklyn, and presumably nothing of the kind was allowed there.

Mr. Whitridge, the committee's counsel, questioned Mr. Thompson at great length concerning the letting of contracts, his powers in rejecting bids, the character of some of the contractors, what he considered an unbalanced bid and whether he would feel himself justified in rejecting such a bid. The Commissioner explained his manner of receiving bids and awarding contracts. He knew of no case in this city where an award had been vacated because of an unbalanced bid. He had written a letter to the Mayor in response to certain allegations which had appeared in THE TRIBUNE, which cleared up many of the points made in THE TRIBUNE'S articles. He furnished each of the committee with a pamphlet copy of this letter, and asked him to read it.

The counsel then took up the Bronx River additional water supply, work on which has been underway for the past three years, and questioned Mr. Thompson concerning the outlay. Mr. Thompson said that the estimates were made while Mr. Campbell was at the head of the Department. He admitted that there had been a large increase in expenditure over the estimates, but said that this was due to the increase in the price of labor and materials.

Mr. Whitridge wanted to know if some persons had not grown rich from the profits on orders for work and supplies given them by Mr. Thompson. The latter replied that he had heard such allegations, but they were false. No one could grow rich on these orders. Further questioning brought out the fact that coal for the Department was now bought by contract instead of being obtained on orders from two dealers named Tracy and Collins, as was the case until recently. Mr. Thompson asserted that this change was made because he had ascertained that these dealers were charging more than the market price.

In response to questions from Senators Gibbs and Lansing, Mr. Thompson said that there were in use in this city about 9,000 water-meters. There are 90,000 Croton water connections and 125,000 houses in the city. There are only twenty-five meters in private dwellings; these have been put in as an experiment. The law allows meters to be put into manufactories, hotels, livery stables, etc., at the expense of the owners, but in private dwellings at the expense of the Department. Prior to 1879 a charge of two cents per 100 gallons of Croton was made. There was a strong protest from hotel-keepers and others using large quantities, and Commissioner Campbell reduced the price. Finally it was fixed at 1 1-3 cents per 100 gallons, and this is the price now charged. The idea was not so much to raise a large revenue as to reduce waste to the minimum.

In executive session the committee decided that the next hearing would be on Saturday at 10 a. m.

THE PROCEEDINGS IN DETAIL.

Mr. Whitridge first asked Mr. Thompson how much of the information that he had been asked to furnish at the examination he had ready. Mr. Thompson replied that by working on Sunday he had got ready a list of the persons in the employ of the Department of Public Works on October 31 last, with the class of work on which each was engaged. He added that if it were required of him he could also give the particular job on which each was employed and other details. He then specified the different bureaus attached to his Department and outlined the several duties in each.

In answer to questions from Mr. Daggett as to whether the list he had furnished of those in the employ of the Department on October 31 last was a fair average of those employed by the Department throughout the year, Mr. Thompson said that during the winter months—between the end of November and about the 15th of April—there is not so large a force as is employed during the other months because in winter the work of paving and repairing streets has to be generally stopped. He added also that some inspectors were suspended in the winter months because the severity of the weather made necessary a cessation of work on some of the contracts which they were required to inspect.

Mr. Daggett—I was wondering whether your list was that of an average force or an election force.

Mr. Thompson—If you look over the pay rolls you will find that we have no election force at all. It may be that they have an election force in Brooklyn, but we have not one here.

Mr. Thompson explained that the Department of Public Works paid nobody directly, but that all payments were made by warrants drawn upon the Controller, accompanied by vouchers certified and signed by him (Thompson). The pay roll of the Department he said, was certified by him, and the men got their money from the Controller.

ESTIMATES AND UNEXPENDED BALANCES.

As to how the estimates of the amounts needed by his Department are prepared, Mr. Thompson said:

All the heads of the bureaus are notified by me to make a report in detail of how much money they will require for the ensuing year with full explanations. Then I consult with them personally, and after comparisons with previous expenditures, I ask for such amounts as in my judgment are best. Oftentimes I ask for less than the bureau officers recommend, for the reason that I know the Board of Estimate and Apportionment is disposed to keep expenses down to the lowest figure.

Mr. Whitridge—Are the appropriations made by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment disbursed by you for such purposes as they are granted?

Mr. Thompson—Yes. The Board of Estimate and Apportionment is apt to err on the side of economy, and generally gives us a great deal less than is required; for that reason it does not often happen that there is any money left over from an appropriation. In the instance I spoke of on Saturday, when I asked for $10,000 for public buildings, I expected to spend it all for that purpose, but I concluded that something needed to be done to stop the great waste of water, and I spent a great deal of it on ball-cocks for hydrants, etc., the Board of Estimate making the necessary transfer of the money.

Mr. Whitridge—After getting an appropriation do you not sometimes spend more than the amount appropriated?

Mr. Thompson—Never, unless I first get a transfer by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment from the unexpended balance of some other appropriation.

Mr. Whitridge—Do you know any occasion on which unexpended balances have been transferred from any other Department to your Department?

Mr. Thompson—In 1882 Mr. Coleman, of the Street Cleaning Department, consented that the Board of Estimate and Apportionment should transfer part of the unexpended balance of his Department to the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Whitridge—Do you remember how many unexpended balances have been transferred from one branch to another of your Department?

Mr. Thompson—I could prepare a statement covering my term of office that would show that.

Mr. Whitridge—I wish you would. It seems to me possible that in this way you might get an appropriation by a majority vote of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, while the regular appropriations require a unanimous vote.

Mr. Thompson—I think all my transfers have been granted by a unanimous vote. They are not at all large.

THE RIGHT TO REJECT BIDS.

Referring to the letting of contracts, Mr. Thompson explained that every contract had to be approved in writing by the Corporation Counsel; that of each contract three copies were made, all of which were signed by the Corporation Counsel. He said that up to April, 1883, the law required the Commissioner of Public Works, or the head of any other department, to award all contracts to the lowest bidder. He did not know that he had any discretionary power in the matter except where obvious fraud existed, and he was so advised by the Corporation Counsel and his predecessors. In April, 1883, was passed the Consolidation Act which was supposed to be a codification of all the laws relating to the city government. It was not, said Mr. Thompson, supposed to embody any new law. It was not until August, 1883, that he was apprised of the fact that the Consolidation Act gave the head of a department the right absolutely to throw out all bids. He added:

It is very unfortunate that such power should be given to the head of any Department, because you can readily see how such power could be abused by an improper person; and to what imputations the exercise of such power would subject the head of a Department, however cautious and careful he may have been.

Mr. Whitridge—Do you not think the right to throw out bids should be given to somebody?

Mr. Thompson—Yes. In 1879, about the early part of January, when I was Deputy Commissioner of Public Works under Mr. Campbell, there was introduced a bill, which was drawn up largely in the Corporation Counsel's office, by the advice of Mr. Campbell and other persons. Among other things it was provided by a clause of this bill that contracts should be awarded to the lowest bidder, unless the head of the Department concerned should within five days after the letting of the contract notify the Mayor that, in his judgment, all of the bids should be thrown out, with his reasons for such opinion, leaving it to the Mayor to concur or not as he saw fit. I think that would be a very wise provision.

Mr. Whitridge—In cases where the lowest bidder was supposed to be an improper person was there no means by which the Commissioner could change the letting of the contract?

Mr. Thompson—Absolutely none prior to April, 1883. It was an unfortunate state of affairs, and compelled us sometimes to let contracts to men whom we knew to be every way irresponsible. Take the case of the work in Sixty-second-st. It was let five different times. When I first entered the Department in March, 1880, it was being let and was still being let when I re-entered the Department as Commissioner in 1880. For this reason: The lowest bidder was a person who could not qualify, and had irresponsible sureties. The sureties could not be found sometimes; at other times they would not come forward and sign the contract. Early in 1881 I had a conversation with a number of persons in the Department and it was suggested by somebody that if an act was passed requiring contractors to deposit a certified check, or cash, amounting to say about 5 per cent of the surety required, none but responsible men would bid because no one would want to lose the deposit. It was owing to my exertions that such a law was passed by the Legislature of 1881. It has afforded us much relief. If you want to do something practical to remedy these evils introducing the Senators, you ought to pass the bill proposed in 1879.

Mr. Whitridge—Prior to the passage of the Consolidation Act had you any power to examine sureties in such a way as to prevent fraud?

Mr. Thompson—I had nothing to do with examining sureties. That belongs to the Controller absolutely. Let me correct one statement. When I said the head of a Department had to award a contract to the lowest bidder I meant the lowest regular bidder. In the case of an informal bid—that is for instance, a bid where only one surety is furnished when the law requires two, or that one surety is not qualified—this would not apply. Under the old system—before the certified check or cash deposit was required—there was a contractor named Jardine who was bidding under an alias—at least so it was assumed by some people, not by me—and his bondsmen were believed to be people with absolutely no property. It was impossible to find them. The contract had to be readvertised at different times. Until, through my instrumentality, this law was passed it was impossible to get a bona fide bidder for that contract.

BIDDING UNDER ALIASES.

Senator Daggett—Would you be very much surprised to learn that people were bidding under aliases now?

Mr. Thompson—I should. The Department has no suspicion of anything of that sort being done. Very frequently a contractor will have his foreman bid while he furnishes the sureties. Of course the Department has no official knowledge that the contractor is the surety. The man to whom the bid is awarded is the only man of whom the Department takes official cognizance, and on the completion of the work he gets the contract money. It might happen—I don't say there is such a case—that a foreman would bid for a contract and it would afterward be assigned to the contractor who furnished the surety; in that case the surety would gain the contract. That would be perfectly proper.

Mr. Whitridge—Prior to the passage of the Consolidation Act, in cases where incompetent or improper persons had been awarded contracts, was it not possible for you to go to the Controller and make some arrangement about sureties that would prevent him getting the contract?

Mr. Thompson—The approving of sureties rests absolutely with the Controller. I think it would be a very unwise thing for the head of a department to go to the Controller and represent that a certain bidder ought not to get a contract. It would look like favoritism on his part.

Mr. Whitridge—Prior to the passage of the Consolidation Act, would it not have been possible for you, by representations to the Controller, to prev