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FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 1908.

A Gas Bill that Should Pass.

On Monday last Chairman Smith, of the House District Committee, introduced a bill having an important bearing on the local gas situation. It provides—

"That section 5 of an act entitled 'An act relating to the sale of gas in the District of Columbia,' approved June 8, 1885, and all amendments thereto, be, and the same are hereby, repealed, and all pending proceedings thereunder shall be terminated, and no judgment, decree, finding, permit, or valuation of any kind mentioned or intended to be mentioned in said section shall be made or ascertained."

The section here proposed to be repealed is that authorizing the local gas companies to increase their capital stock to the amount of the cash valuation of their plants, the valuation to be determined in such manner as the District Supreme Court shall prescribe. It will be remembered that the District Court of Appeals has recently declared this section unconstitutional for delegating to a judicial body a legislative or administrative power.

An appeal from this decision to the Supreme Court of the United States is pending. The Smith bill vacates all judicial proceedings and repeals the section adjudged unconstitutional. If enacted, it will force the gas companies to forego their project of increasing their capital stock, or else make a fresh appeal to Congress for authority to carry out that project.

The bill is unquestionably in the public interest, and should become law. No matter what else may be done with respect to the gas question, this measure is absolutely essential in order to clear the way. Whether Congress shall decide to authorize a public utilities commission to regulate the local public-service corporations, or shall continue to regulate them itself, as in the past, by specific acts, the gas companies should be deprived of any authority to increase their capitalization on their own motion, without any consideration of the public interest in the price of their product.

That done, Congress will be in a position to consider both the price of gas in which the public is interested, and the matter of capitalization, in which the companies are interested, in their proper relation with each other.

By the way, what has become of the Madden and other bills to fix the price of gas in the District of Columbia? We hope the able chairman of the House District Committee has not overlooked the very illuminating annual report of the Washington Gaslight Company—a report which shows on its face that gas can be manufactured and distributed at 5 cents a thousand cubic feet without affecting in the slightest degree the present dividends of the company. Perhaps gas could be sold at a fair profit for 80 cents or less. Who knows? It wouldn't be a bad idea if the District Committee, or the subcommittee to which has been referred complaints about the gas situation, would initiate an inquiry into the cost of local gas production, with a view to affording relief to the consumers.

A deaf and dumb man wants to come to Congress from Oklahoma. So far as the Washington Herald is concerned, it hereby declares for him, unanimously!

Shall We Harbor the Alien Criminal?

The recrudescence of anarchistic manifestations in various parts of the country, coupled in a few instances with a virulent form of anti-clericalism, has aroused a fresh discussion of the immigration question and of the laws intended to bar the entrance of undesirable classes. That the present legislation directed against alien anarchists is more or less ineffective is shown by the activity of the anarchist propaganda. Theoretically, the law excludes all foreign anarchists from American territory, and it provides a very comprehensive definition of the anarchistic class; but in practice the law fails to protect us from immigration of that class, for the obvious reason that a state of mind or of the nature of a political belief is impossible of detection, and the unknown anarchist slips by the inspectors without trouble. According to the annual report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, but 341 persons were excluded as criminals during the last fiscal year, this number presumably including anarchists. It is extremely difficult to get evidence against this class of aliens, and the Commissioner General admits that many more enter than are detected and deported. He suggests legislation "requiring the presentation of a passport as a prerequisite to the examination of an alien applying for admission," saying that some such provision is imperatively needed. A passport would necessarily show the alien's criminal record, if he had any.

Unfortunately, there is a good deal of false sentiment in Congress on the subject of immigration. The opposition from bifurcated orators who fill the air with platitudes, ignoring the real point, which is that we are admitting to this country a large and very dangerous class of foreign criminals, whose activities keep our police busy and swell the population of our jails and prisons. In 1901 there were 855 alien murderers in our prisons, 278 aliens charged with attempted murder, and 41,885 aliens in penal reformatories and charitable institutions. Yet only a day or two ago the House rejected an amendment to the immigration law authorizing the deportation, at the expiration of his sentence, of every alien convicted of a felony. Representative Perkins, speaking for the amendment, said that laws were being enacted for such legislation among law-abiding Italians, who wished to rid the community of dangerous aliens of their own race and nation. Mr. Bennett, of New York, ably defended the amendment as tending to decrease crime among aliens, to deter the alien criminal from coming

here, as a necessary measure for the protection of society, and as having the unanimous support of all the immigration commissions. But all sorts of sentimental and technical objections were raised to it, and not a sufficient number of members voted in the affirmative to pass it. Why should we not deport aliens convicted of serious crime? What obligation are we under to harbor the foreigner who comes here and transgresses our law? The immigration officials believe that the Bennett amendment would help to rid the country of alien criminals. The rejection of the amendment amounts to a declaration that this end is undesirable, and that the foreign-born criminal should be permitted to enjoy the freedom of American institutions on the same footing as the peaceable and law-abiding alien. We are convinced this attitude is indefensible, and it certainly is not improved by recent events in Denver and Chicago. We trust Mr. Bennett will again bring forward his amendment and press it to a favorable consideration.

There is apt to be a great deal more campaign fun than campaign funds in the national elections this year.

"Dementia Rooseveltia."

Resentment of official activity on behalf of the President's candidate for President has inspired an Arizona circular bearing the above caption which has found its way to Washington.

"While the Republicans of Arizona," says the circular, "may be for Taft, Foraker, Hughes, or any other candidate, they are entirely capable of expressing their opinion on the Roosevelt issue in the proper manner, without instructions and without being told what to do by the governor or any other victim of 'dementia Rooseveltia.'"

What is it? "Dementia Rooseveltia," according to this Arizona circular, is a disease, and it is somewhat vaguely defined or diagnosed as follows:

"The disease has been quite prevalent throughout the United States, but it is rapidly subsiding, and is now being confined to offenders. The affliction, when in its most virulent form, as it appears in Federal appointees who are perniciously intent on trying to control nominating conventions, inflames the brain to synchysis, makes rubber of the spinal column, and destroys all control of the knees. It is repulsive, and the remedy is to be promulgated from Washington."

Rapidly subsiding, indeed! Where are the evidences? Ohio seems to have a most virulent attack of this "dementia Rooseveltia." And down South it is worse than epidemic. It is fairly raging. The "perniciously" active officeholders—the of the sycophantic brain, the rubber spine, and the trembling knee—seem to be getting there just the same, like the whiskey and the nature-faking fame. As for the "drastic remedy" which Arizona hears is to be "promulgated" from Washington, we doubt it. We cannot help but doubt it. As the situation impresses us here at close range, this "dementia Rooseveltia," as diagnosed in the Arizona circular, is causing not the slightest alarm at Washington. Dr. Hitchcock, the famous specialist, is in receipt of daily advices from his corps of trained fellows—specialists in the field, and, while frankly admitting the wide prevalence of the disease, he views the spread with perfect equanimity. We know whereof we speak.

The Republicans appear almost as well agreed on a plan of financial relief as the Democrats are on almost everything in general.

The Cleveland Holocaust.

The Lakeview school holocaust at Cleveland, unparalleled in horror, brings home to school authorities everywhere the solemn, imperative duty of providing safe school buildings by keeping them under the over-riding of a building committee. This respect is an official crime. School buildings should not only be fireproof, or as nearly fireproof as human ingenuity can make them, but eternal vigilance should be practiced to prevent the possibility of loss of life by flame or panic.

The assurance now given that all these precautions have been taken in Washington and that fire drills are a daily part of school life should be supplemented by additional safeguards. Any building about the safety of which there exists the slightest doubt should be abandoned, and the overcrowding of a building should not be permitted in any event.

A significantly damaging statement stands out in the harrowing details of the Lakeview calamity. This tells that the furnace was located under the stairway in the basement in front of the building. Possibly the fire did not start there, but certainly faulty construction is disclosed. The location of a furnace beneath a stairway, or in proximity to one, is unwarranted, especially in a school building, where so many lives may be placed in peril.

Increasing vigilance is called for generally as the result of this awful object lesson.

The report that the President is about to take up the study of Esperanto is interesting. Does he think his last message about exhausted the possibilities in old reliable English?

A Quicer State of Things.

The Washington Herald made note some time ago of the rather unique situation in which the postmaster of Pensacola, Fla., finds himself. It seems that this gentleman, originally a recess appointee, was formally rejected by the Senate last winter, but still holds on because of the fact that the post-office regulations do not permit him to get out until his successor is named and qualified, and that successor has not yet been named and qualified, and may not be soon!

From the Chattanooga Times we learn that the nomination of Mr. Robert S. Sharp, a recess appointee to the office of collector of internal revenue for Tennessee, may be opposed in the Senate by Senators Frazier and Taylor. In this connection the Times significantly says:

"In the great schemes of Mr. Sharp, success in preventing the nomination of his appointee, he will probably continue in office, as he is a recess appointee. Should the administration desire to continue him in office, he can be reappointed by the President, so that it will be necessary for the Senate at the next Congress to turn down, indefinitely, when the administration can again reappoint him. The process can be continued indefinitely, as has been done in a number of cases, until the Senate is compelled to confirm the appointment."

We have no knowledge of the prevalence of this practice, so far as a "number of cases" is concerned, but certainly if it is possible in the case of the Pensacola postmaster, it may well be true in many more. And if such practice may, as the Times says, ultimately serve to "compel" Senatorial confirmation of executive appointments, doesn't it open a rather serious question, well worthy of consideration? If the Executive, by a little legerdemain such as this, is able to get at night the heretofore highly respected "advice and consent" of the Senate in the matter of appointments, what sort of days have we fallen upon, indeed? The right to reject nominations may as well be taken away from the Senate, if that right is to be made, or may be made, ridiculous and of no effect. And if it is not made ridiculous and of no effect in the Pensacola man's case, why, indeed, may it not be made equally so in the case of Mr. Sharp, provided it suits the administrative policy of the hour to so set it at naught?

We confess that this possible situation as to past and future appointments by the President is something remarkable in American affairs. It has taken the executive department over a hundred years to discover that it has the right to laugh at Senatorial confirmation, if it wants to. Verily, we are moving along—"going some," as the irreverent have it—these days!

A Wilkesbarre woman ate an indelible pencil a few days ago, and, naturally, felt a trifle blue over it afterward.

The first photographs were taken in 1820, but the most photographs were taken during the first Thaw trial.

The New York World says "no newspaper or private person whatsoever can make too many suggestions." Never in the proper manner, without instructions and without being told what to do by the governor or any other victim of "dementia Rooseveltia."

Maybe our gunners were all to the bad at Santiago; but somebody's ships and somebody's sailors certainly got hit, and they weren't Uncle Sam's.

The first robin is bobbing up here and yonder.

"The situation has narrowed down to Taft," says a contemporary. Still, even at that it is a rather expansive situation.

"Billy O" is the affectionate name by which Senator-elect Bradley is known to his intimates and admirers. Evidently he is a chip-in-law off the old block.

"Vituperation and venomous outpourings" and "financial brigands" are two choice selections from one of Mr. Nicholas Longworth's recent speeches. Evidently he is a chip-in-law off the old block.

We suppose the convention hall wherein the Democratic hosts will gather in June has located one mile from the nearest saloon as a sort of rep to the prohibitionists.

The Mexico Record of recent date carries an editorial headed "The Gambler Is a Relic." The article generally comes to that part in the end—a relic and a ruin.

A Little Nonsense.

LULLABIES. The Boston bible They tried with Greek. Whereat he raised A peevish shriek.

But nurse came And nurse kneed. She soothed him with A Sanskrit ode.

His Plea. It occurred in front of the general store, "I'll bet a hundred thousand dollars," bawled Hiram Squash, "that Roosevelt succeeds himself."

"I'll bet a hundred thousand he don't," roared Pelee Boggs.

"Don't take all that money over circulation, boys," beseeched sarcastic Uncle Goshall Hemlock. "The community don't want no more panicky times."

A Good Rule. "I seldom make a mistake," said the man, as he placed the lighted end of his cigar in his mouth.

"But when I do," he continued, "I rectify it immediately."

And he reversed the cigar, and went on with his conversation.

Poured. "I have poured every day this week at some function or other," remarked the vivacious girl.

"Well, well," murmured the old gentleman, who overheard her. "Now I know what is meant by the term, a reigning belle."

Politics Never Change. "That man Brutus is a smart one," declared Senator Antony.

"But he is not with the administration," averred Senator Lepidus.

"In that case, we'll put him on the committee for the distribution of useless papery."

What He Took. They offered him a seat far back. But he did grum. Denounced them for a churlish pack, And took affront.

Sure of Both. "How do you like being in Congress?" Miss the spot light, eh?

"Sometimes," admitted the ex-congressman. "But Congress has its recompense. Now, when I make a speech, I can sprinkle in my own laughter and applause."

Gymnastics. "Yes, I admit when I proposed I got on my knees."

"Well?"

"And shortly after marriage I got on my uppers."

NOTHING SERIOUS.

From the Philadelphia Press. Pleasant Relief. "Your husband seemed to be in a very good humor this morning when he left the house," remarked Mrs. Naybor.

"Did he?" inquired Mrs. Spender.

"Yes, I couldn't help wondering what it was."

"Pshaw! I know! I forgot to ask him for any money."

What He Had Missed. "Gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Goodley. "Just listen to that clergyman! I'm positive he's swearing. Evidently he's missed his vocation."

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No Tobacco There. "Why don't you try one of those tobacco cures on your son?" asked Gaddie.

"That wouldn't have any effect on him," replied Poppley.

"Oh, yes, they simply kill all appetite for tobacco."

But he smokes cigarettes.

Honorable Youth. "Here you, sir," cried Miss Roxley's angry papa, "how dare you show your face here again?"

"Well," replied young Nervey, "I might have worn a mask, of course, but that would have been deceitful."

CAPITOL GOSSIP

One of labor's champions in the House of Representatives is William Joseph Cary, representing the Fourth district of Wisconsin.

His life has been one of hardships and toil ever since he was thirteen years old. He was left an orphan at that age, with five other children, all younger than he.

The younger children were placed in an orphan asylum, and young Cary started out to earn a livelihood as a messenger boy. Five years after he was promoted to an operator's table, and after one year's work at the key took the younger children from the asylum and gave them a home.

Mr. Cary soon won the affection of the people and was elected alderman on two occasions. In 1904 he was elected sheriff of Milwaukee County, leading his ticket by 3,000 votes. Wisconsin having passed a primary election law, Mr. Cary went before the people as a candidate for Congress and was successful, defeating his nearest opponent by over 3,000 plurality.

He is always ready to listen to the plaints of the laboring classes, and is particularly interested in any measure affecting the welfare of the organized labor which has his unqualified support.

Representative Cary is a member of the committees on District of Columbia and Ventilation and Acoustics.

There seems to be some difference of opinion as to the standing of the convention in South Carolina, which recently met and instructed two delegates for Hon. Joseph G. Cannon as first choice for President of the United States. The fact is, however, that the convention was regular, called by Mr. A. Collins, district Congressional chairman.

The convention was composed of delegates from the counties comprising the First Congressional district, numbering thirty-six delegates and a corresponding number of alternates.

Mr. T. L. Grant, who describes the meeting as a fake, announced the convention chairman, representing the Federal officeholders' idea of South Carolina politics. This same Mr. Grant in the last election for Representative from the First district, received one vote, while the contestant for the seat now held by Representative Legare received twenty-eight, or four less than the Republican candidate for governor.

Representative Champ Clark, who would be Speaker of the House of Representatives in case the Democrats should control the next body, is not without his champions for more elevated position than that of President. Rev. Charles N. Conrad, chaplain of the House, is a great admirer of Representative Clark, and on one occasion, when responding to the toast "America," said, in no emphatic terms, that "Champ Clark is the one man fitted to lead the Democratic campaign next fall, and the party will make a mistake if Mr. Clark is not placed at the head of the ticket."

Nice things said about the Hon. Champ do not ruffle him one bit. During the dry debates in the House, he spends the time reading newspapers, but, nevertheless, is all attention, and at times, when apparently absorbed, drops his paper, looks over his glasses, and gets a timely word in when necessary.

David Moore, who sits down in the room just off Statuary Hall, the old meeting place of the House, now known among correspondents as the "ex-doc. room," is an orator, but he's particular about when he orates.

At a meeting of the new social organization among the secretaries of Congressmen, held recently, Mr. Moore was a spectator, drinking in the physical and intellectual comfort which was on and about the banquet board.

When the meeting was about to break up, the president of the organization thought that he would honor Mr. Moore and also act for the good of the members by having that gentleman speak.

Therefore, he called upon Mr. Moore to come forward and address the group. In frankness, that the intention merely was to angle for the negro vote in Ohio. Some such motive may be to-day in the minds of Taft's Ohio managers. But it is, nevertheless, a large and vital matter which they propound, and if Secretary Taft declines to make his position his own, thus going far beyond any public utterance of his own, it will put an entirely new aspect upon his Presidential candidacy.

From the Baltimore Sun. Secretary Taft has made notable addresses in the last few months on suffrage conditions in the South. So far as we are informed, he has not advocated the reduction of the South's representation in Congress. Perhaps this plank in the Ohio platform is intended as an offset to the "Brownsville incident," which Senator Foraker is issuing to stir up revolt among the loyal colored voters. In this view the declaration in favor of reducing the Southern representation may be only Pickwickian.

From the New York Times. That is meant as an offset to Brownsville. It is not intended by its authors or by the administration of Theodore Roosevelt that the principle here enunciated should be enacted into law. The colored voters of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois will not be fooled by this transparent buncombe.

From the Wall Street Journal. Legislation has done its work when it has provided just enough laws—and no more—to secure public order and equality of opportunity. Beyond this it is vain. It is one Congressional measure that is needed. No legislation can accomplish these things:

- 1. Make a bad man good. 2. Make a weak man strong. 3. Make a foolish man wise.

From the Boston Transcript. According to the Nebraska Supreme Court, if a woman gets off a car backtracking damages in case of accident. That is one Congressional measure for which provision must be made.

From the Indianapolis News. After reading Gov. Hughes' reply to the suffragists there must be a general conviction that if he is no politician he is something just as foxy.

From the Baltimore News. No doubt Harriman believes that he will be doing business at the old stand long after the big stick bus disappeared from the White House.

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CHANDLER'S EARLY DAYS.

Old-time Politics as Recalled by a Veteran Youngster. From the Hartford Courant.

The members of the New Hampshire Press Association ate dinner together at Manchester, N. H., last Saturday, and after dinner Hon. William E. Chandler talked to them. He's in his seventieth year now—a half-year older than Uncle Joe Cannon. That's a long time to live; long enough, anyhow, for a really "live" man—and Mr. Chandler is as tingling full of life as an electric eel—to accumulate a lot of interesting recollections.

Mr. Chandler was five years old when the Presidential campaign of 1840 came along. He remembers the log-cabin procession at Concord, the hard-core dollops, the beds made on the floor by his good Whig father and mother for Whig visitors from out of town. One of his chores was to go to Main street and buy a Boston Mall for papa. He read the paper himself, and was confirmed in his Whig principles, and shared the grief of the grown-ups when New Hampshire rejected "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too" and gave her electoral votes to "Little Van."

He has been reading the newspapers ever since, he says.

Another thing he remembers is a winter stagecoach journey from Concord to Boston, in 1841. It was bitter cold. The only other passengers were two men—one of them, Joseph Lowe, destined to be Concord's first mayor. To keep the small boy from freezing, they put him under a blanket and the says "sat" on him. "I don't remember that I have often been sat on since," he says. "I always make it a point to keep the cold off me, and that is the President of the United States."

He was on hand-wide-eyed when the first railroad train ever seen in his part of the country puffed and rumbled into Concord. That day it was a case of free rides for all comers—up to the capacity of the cars, of course. "I rode on that train from Concord down to Bow Crossing and back," says Mr. Chandler, "and it is just as vivid a ride as the one I took coming from Boston here to-day. The cars were crowded, and there was a Concord man who took me in his knee and held me. I have often wanted to see that man and see if I knew who he would be, but he would be very old now, so that he might realize what a pleasure it was for him to carry me on that first trip on the Concord railroad."

One of the dangers, if you want to call it that, is the fact that one never knows the Oriental way of reasoning. You never know where you're at.

"I don't think the simultaneous reappearance of Baron Takahira and Minister Wu Ting-fang in this city has any connection with the policy which Secretary Hay submitted to the powers with regard to the entity of the Chinese empire."

Gen. Stewart Lyndon Woodford, former Minister to Spain, and now acknowledged leader of the Hughes movement in New York and elsewhere, was at the New Willard last night. Replying to the questions as regards the condition of the Hughes boom, he said:

"Now, boys, I am awfully glad to see you, but I have nothing to say. You can simply say I am not hunting with a brass band."

"Gen. Woodford looks as young and healthy as he looked twenty-eight years ago, with the exception of his hair and whiskers, which are snowy white to-day," said Representative Sturgis, of West Virginia, at the New Willard, last night.

"The general was the only outsider Republican," continued Mr. Sturgis, "who came to us and helped us to stump the State for the Republican ticket. And his efforts in that campaign made a lasting impression on the political complexion of the State of West Virginia."

"I was then a candidate for governor. At the end of the campaign the general said to me: 'You may not win this time, but I tell you that it won't be many years before you will find West Virginia in the Republic of the United States.'"

"And he was right. To-day the two United States Senators are Republicans, the Representatives in Congress are Republicans, the judiciary, with the exception of a few judges, are Republicans, and Taft is going to sweep the State in the coming Presidential election."

T. B. Davis, former Representative, of West Virginia, is at the New Willard. Mr. Davis is a brother of Henry Gasaway Davis, the running mate on the Democratic Presidential ticket with Judge Alton B. Parker. He is from Keyser, Mineral County, W. Va.

Mr. Davis is eighty years of age, but looks at least fifteen years younger. His movements are quick and his eyes clear. He converses on any subject in a most interesting fashion. He said in an allusion to the "Davis boys" down in our State:

"Mr. Davis is a Democrat, and was succeeded in Congress by Mr. Sturgis, who is a Republican. Mr. Davis thought the battle in the coming Presidential campaign would be between Taft and Bryan, and that the latter had an excellent chance of winning, whether Taft or Roosevelt was put in the field against him."

Milton E. Robinson and Thomas H. Mordue, coal merchants, of Chicago, in the city on business before the departments, are registered at the Raleigh. Both express the hope and belief that the national government would round up every anarchist and deport them.

"The 'Iguale' is," they said, "we forget things too easily. In a few days nobody will think of the anarchist and their doings any more. That'll be the end of it until some one else is killed."

"I have been in business all my life," said Mr. Robinson, "and though I don't agree with President Roosevelt on all propositions, I must admit he is doing the right thing in trying to bring about a more honest and healthier moral tone in general business methods in our country."

"Although a Kentucky Democrat by birth and conviction," said Mr. Mordue, "I would vote for Roosevelt for President if he were the ticket."

"I have a question in the Interstate Commerce Commission is a Virginia Democrat. We only talked about the Presidential nomination this morning. He is as much of a Roosevelt admirer as I am."

"We are both Southern Democrats and there are thousands of others like us."

"I see that Bishop William A. Leonard, of the diocese of Ohio, denied the report that he was to succeed the late Bishop Satterlee as head of the church in the District of Columbia," said T. W. Freeman, of Cleveland, Ohio, at the Cochran last night.

"The canon laws of the Episcopal Church," added Mr. Freeman, "forbid the transfer of a bishop from one diocese to another. The ground for the report was the fact that Bishop Leonard, for a number of years, was rector of St. John's in Washington, and while occupying that office he was elected Bishop Coadjutor of Ohio. Owing to the resignation of former Bishop Gregory T. Bedell, he became at once Bishop of Ohio, which office he has held since."

From the Boston Herald. President Eliot's high praise of the Canadian labor disputes act and the rising tide of interest in it in this country have been noted at Washington, and one of the best experts of the Department of Commerce and Labor has been sent to study the law's workings in a concrete case soon to be heard at Ottawa. Having reached the office in flurry of interest or curiosity, the stage of imitation should follow.

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