

RANGE OF THERMOMETER. The range of the thermometer at the Times office yesterday was as follows: 7 A. M., 32; 10 A. M., 33; 1 P. M., 32; 4 P. M., 31; 7 P. M., 27; 10 P. M., 24; average, 28.5.

TELEPHONE BILL WAS DISCUSSED

Committee Heard Five Gentlemen on Measure. OTHERS WILL SPEAK.

The Hearing Will be Resumed at 10 O'clock This Morning.

ABLE LAWYERS ON BOTH SIDES.

Messrs. Frank W. Christian and Eppa Hunton, Jr., for the Act and Messrs. B. B. Munford, Henry B. Pollard and A. C. Gordon Against It—Objections Made and Answered.

The Senate Committee on General Laws spent three hours yesterday afternoon hearing argument for or against the bill to incorporate the Virginia Telephone and Telegraph Company.

Mr. Frank W. Christian, of Richmond, and Hon. Eppa Hunton, Jr., of Warrenton, spoke for the measure, and Senator B. B. Munford, City Attorney A. C. Gordon, and City Attorney H. B. Pollard, of Staunton, against it.

The measure will be further considered at 10 o'clock this morning.

The hearing took place in the Senate Chamber, which was well-attended. Interested persons among the spectators, who occupied front seats, were General T. P. Meany, president of the American Telegraph and Telephone (Long Distance) Company.

By agreement each side was allowed three hours in the argument. Mr. Frank W. Christian was first heard in favor of the bill. He said he was satisfied the objections to the bill were founded largely upon a misapprehension of what the legal effect would be. The chief objection, he said, was that the act took from the cities and towns the right of local self-government. He thought it could be shown that this claim was not well founded. The bill guaranteed every right of a municipality and left to the cities and towns the power to control and regulate the operations of the proposed telephone company.

THE PRINCIPLE INVOLVED. Mr. Christian went on with an able argument as to the difference between the power to "control and regulate" and the authority to "prohibit." The bill contemplated a system of telegraph and telephone lines extending over the entire State. It was designed to establish an enterprise that would be of great benefit to all the people of the State. This proposed system would, in effect, annihilate distance and reduce to a minimum the time and expense of communication by offering to deposit with the State Treasurer \$100,000 of Virginia bonds as a guarantee that they would establish this system in all the cities and counties of the State within a specified time.

Mr. Christian called attention to the fact that under the existing laws the company can erect its poles and establish its wires along the public roads of any county but when it reaches the borders of a city or town the permission of the council of such municipality is necessary in order to use the streets. Business men would not put up their money to build up such a system when a town or city council could, by arbitrary action, keep the company out.

This is a matter, Mr. Christian argued, of interest to the whole State, and it should be considered from that standpoint. It was not just, nor practicable, he contended, that a city should have the power at any time to drive out a great enterprise, and he believed that the necessity of the system. All that is needed for the public good is that the cities shall have power to apply reasonable regulations to govern the company's operations within its borders. The cities should not be allowed to hold the reserve power of revocation. If the cities should have the power to make rates some other section of the State would suffer thereby. The corporations were perfectly willing that the Legislature should define the rates and towns should see that they were not too high. The cities should have the right to impose harsh conditions upon the company.

THE REGULATIONS. Taking up the phrase, "Reasonable regulations," which has been criticized in the bill, Mr. Christian said this was the proper legal expression. But he was perfectly willing to strike out the word "reasonable." He was frank to say, however, that the meaning of this provision would be the same, for a municipality could not impose "unreasonable regulations."

Mr. Christian said as long as the telephone was a local institution and a company confined its operations to one city or town, it was proper that the city or town should have the right to say whether or not a company should use its streets. But this is no longer a local question. If there is to be one great system embracing the whole State, every town should not have the right to arbitrarily keep a company out of its borders. It is but natural for one locality to try and get all it can for its people. Under the general law now in existence the cities and towns are not allowed to do this. Other in seeking to impose harsh conditions upon the company.

Objection had been made to the bill on the ground that litigation growing out of the measure might go to the Federal courts, and a longer time should elapse before the question or questions could be settled. Mr. Christian said the corporations were willing to amend the bill in order to provide that all questions arising out of this act should be settled by the courts of this State.

Senator Foster asked Mr. Christian if it was proposed to allow this telephone company to enter a city on different terms from those accorded companies already in operation. Mr. Christian replied in the affirmative, but said that the company asked for only what was just. If there are companies in existence upon which unjust conditions are imposed, and a longer time should elapse before these conditions are removed, that the object sought to be attained by a general law, for his company did not ask, nor desire, any special privilege.

MR. MUNFORD'S POSITION. Senator Munford read the resolution adopted by the City Council of Richmond, protesting against the passage of the bill. He pointed out his objections, which were: First, that it would require the company to secure the

THE PORTO RICAN TARIFF BILL

Debate Opened in the House on Yesterday.

INTENSE INTEREST

Democrats are Solidly Arrayed Against the Measure

GREAT DEMAND FOR TIME.

The Most Important Measure That Will Come Before This Congress as it Involves the Question of Constitutional Power to Govern the Newly Acquired Island Possessions.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 19.—The debate upon the Porto Rican tariff bill, which is to continue throughout the week and possibly longer, opened in the House today. On all hands it is agreed that this bill, although it applies only to Porto Rico, involving as it does the question of the power to govern our new possessions under the limitations of the constitution, is the most important measure which will come before this Congress.

Interest in the bill is intense among members on both sides, and there is a general demand for time. The Democrats are solidly arrayed against the measure, and they will have powerful support from the Republican side in Mr. McCall, of Massachusetts, and Mr. Littlefield, of Maine, both able and forceful debaters.

How far the Republican dissatisfaction will extend, or whether the bill will be passed, it is impossible to say at this time.

Mr. Payne, the floor leader of the majority, refused to agree that a vote should be taken upon a substitute to be offered by the minority. The substitute, which is in substance the bill originally introduced by Mr. Payne, providing for free trade with Porto Rico by the extension of the customs and revenue laws of the United States over the islands, which was the subject of the debate yesterday.

The debate to-day lacked exciting features. It was in the nature of a long-range bombardment between the clash of the contending forces in battle. Mr. Payne opened with a general argument in support of the measure, and Mr. Littlefield, of Maine, followed him in the material side of the situation, which the bill is designed to relieve.

Mr. Richardson, the Democratic leader, joined issue upon the power of Congress to enact the proposed legislation, in support of the bill, and Mr. Littlefield, of Pennsylvania, backed Mr. Payne with a constitutional and legal argument.

SOP TO RICH BREWERS. The bill to amend sections 323-4 of the revised statutes, whose chief object is to abolish small packages of beer, the one-half pint ones, was passed after a debate in which Mr. Sizler, (Dem.) of New York, charged it was a sop to rich brewers.

Mr. Bartlett (Dem.) of Georgia, said the humble asking of relief from war in cottons should first be granted, and Mr. Terry, (Dem.) of Arkansas, said his understanding with Great Britain made expression of sympathy for the Boers by this government impossible.

Mr. Payne, of New York, the floor leader of the majority, expected a big battle on the floor. He said that seventy of the Whittiers were killed at Colseberg, and that thirty wagons with forage and provisions were captured, but no ammunition was lost.

Mr. Payne, in charge of the bill, in opening the debate, received marked attention. "This bill, by its terms," he explained, "relates only to the island of Porto Rico. It cannot be taken as a precedent of any legislative action in reference to the Philippine Islands, when the present instruction shall have been overcome, except so far as we assert our view of our power under the American Constitution."

The original bill, introduced on the 19th day of January last, provided that the customs laws of the United States and the internal revenue laws be extended to Porto Rico. The idea was to give the producer of sugar the free entrance of this staple into the United States, saving a duty of over \$30 a ton. Under that bill the duty saved upon tobacco would be 35 cents per pound for the main portion of the crop, and for the wrappers \$1.55 per pound.

After consultation with General Davis, the present Military Governor, it was found that this action would not produce sufficient revenue to meet the expenses of the government. He estimated that not more than a million dollars could be collected from both customs duties and internal-revenue tax. This substitute was then brought forward, which imposes a duty equal to our own tariff upon all articles imported from abroad other than those of the United States into Porto Rico, and a duty equal to 25 per centum of the rates of our own laws on all articles imported into Porto Rico from the United States or from Porto Rico into the United States. The best estimates that can be obtained show that this will produce a revenue of \$1,500,000 from customs duties, which, added to the internal revenues of the island, will produce \$2,300,000, a sum sufficient to pay all the expenses of the government, including the postal service and \$750,000 for the public schools. The total estimated by the Military Governor is \$3,050,000.

Four of Her Crew Went Down With Her and Were Drowned. NEW YORK, Feb. 19.—The barge Oakland, 200 tons, with a Norfolk crew, went down off the Jersey coast in the recent storm, four men on the barge perishing. She was formerly a three-masted schooner, and was formerly commanded by Captain William Hinks, of Norfolk, Va.

THE CITY ATTORNEY. City Attorney H. B. Pollard, of Richmond, followed Mr. Gordon. He said that one remarkable provision of that act was that at one "sawney" was set out from the provisions of three chapters of the Code. No restriction was placed upon the amount of real estate that may be held; no books were to be opened for subscriptions to the capital stock, but this matter was to be attended to privately, and the capital stock might be increased upon ten days' notice.

Replying to what Mr. Christian had said about a telephone company being permitted to use the public highways without the consent of the city or town, Mr. Pollard reminded the committee that a suit for damages for an accident happening on a public road could not be maintained against a county. Yet, if a bill is held liable for injury to a person by reason of the unsafe conditions of its streets.

Mr. Pollard said Richmond has been trying for two years to force all the electric wires in the city to be placed in conduits. Within ninety days all the wires will be placed in the conduits. If this bill is passed the new company would come along and place its poles and wires where the others were removed from. This would simply be an outrage.

BROAD POWERS. Mr. Pollard stated that under this act the company could enter any or all the streets of the city at its "sweet will." The bill allows the company to occupy the public parks, a privilege never given to any telegraph or telephone company. It authorizes the company to occupy the public works of a city. It could place its wires on the gas pipes, almshouses, other public buildings.

Mr. Littlefield said a remarkable provision of this act was that the company could acquire private property and immediately sell or lease or otherwise dispose of it, thus violating a cherished principle of the common law. The City Attorney next addressed himself to the alleged monopolistic feature of the question, which he declared to be in violation of Democratic principles. It had been contended in the public

CRONJE'S ARMY IS SURROUNDED

French Between Boers and Bloemfontein.

BULLER'S SUCCESS.

He Has Completely Broken the Boer Line of Fortresses.

HLANGWAN HILL CAPTURED.

This is of Great Strategic Importance as it Commands the Flank of Boer Defences at Colenso—A Successful Advance and Capture of the Railway May Now be Looked For.

LONDON, Feb. 20.—3:45 A. M.—A member of the Cabinet told H. W. Lucey to-night that the War Office had received a telegram announcing that General Cronje was hopelessly surrounded.

Mr. Wyndham was beset by anxious members of the House, but would only reply that the government's news was extremely satisfactory. The sole object of the government in withholding good news is that confirmation and further details are awaited.

LONDON, Feb. 20.—12:30 A. M.—The War Office at midnight announced that it had nothing further for publication from South Africa.

Members of the House of Commons last evening, however, it was rumored that General Cronje's army was surrounded, that General French had got between the Boer forces and Bloemfontein, and that he was only waiting reinforcements to close in on the enemy.

No confirmation of this rumor is obtainable, although the general idea is that the government has received important dispatches.

BOER LINES BROKEN. CHEVREUILY, Monday morning, Feb. 19.—The Boer line of fortresses is broken. The British have achieved a decided success in capturing the enemy's position in Monte Christo. The Boers, however, effectively executed a retreat, removing their guns and convoy wagons. The British have comparatively few casualties.

LONDON, Feb. 20.—The Daily Mail has the following dispatch from Pietermaritzburg, dated Monday: "It is reported that Sir Redvers Buller has captured Hlangwan Hill. Large numbers of Free Staters have left to meet Lord Roberts's force. It is believed that a number of the big guns have been taken back across the border."

EXPECT BIG BATTLE. LONDON, Feb. 20.—A dispatch to the Daily Mail from Lorenzo Marques, dated Monday, says: "According to advices from Pretoria the Boers are expecting a big battle on the 21st. They claim that seventy of the Whittiers were killed at Colseberg, and that thirty wagons with forage and provisions were captured, but no ammunition was lost."

THE POPULISTS HAVE A SPLIT At their Meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska, Part of the Delegates Organize a Bolt.

LINCOLN, NEB., Feb. 19.—A split and a walk-out followed a turbulent meeting of the Populist National Committee to-night. The anti-fusion leaders, after having a number of their followers turned down by the Credentials Committee, organized a bolt and formed a new committee. The report of the Credentials Committee, adjourned until to-morrow, when in all likelihood it will elect a committee of three to call the national convention at the same city and at the same time the Democratic convention is held.

Discussions and conferences early to-day among the contending factions boded an inharmonious meeting for the full committee, which began at 8 o'clock this evening. The anti-fusionists and the fusionists were ahead were emphasized ten minutes after Chairman Butler called the committee to order and announced that it would at once go into executive session.

The differences of the members, of whom there were about eighty present, and holding proxies for near the whole committee, hinged primarily on the old question of fusion.

Senator Allen, with apparently the strongest following, insisted on fusion, and to that end the committee be empowered to call the convention for the same day and place as the Democratic convention.

J. A. Parker, of Kentucky, replied on behalf of the Middle-of-the-Road, or Anti-Fusion men. He asked why, in calling the roll, the proxies of Committee-men Files, of Arkansas, and McReynolds, of Lincoln, had been omitted.

In the midst of an uproar the Middle-of-the-Roaders, led by Parker, of Kentucky, and Weller, of Iowa, left the hall; engaged a room down town and organized a bolting meeting.

The main committee shortly after midnight adjourned until to-morrow morning.

The Bolters called a National convention for Cincinnati on Wednesday, May the 9th.

INACCURATE AND MISLEADING

What Mr. Williams Says of the New York Story.

WORTH SMALL NOTICE

Doubtless Prepared Under the Supervision of T. F. Ryan.

WERE INCORRECTLY QUOTED.

The Appointment for Meeting With General Thomas or Mr. Gould. Total Interest of the Produce Exchange Company in the Syndicate is Scarcely 7 Per Cent.

A special to The Times last night from Baltimore says: Mr. John Skelton Williams was in this city to-day, and was asked what he had to say in regard to the statement which appeared in a New York paper Sunday, to the effect that the Produce Exchange Trust Company might block the Seaboard consolidation through its refusal to assent to the plan of the Greater Seaboard syndicate.

"The article," said Mr. Williams, "which, by the way, I did not see until I read it in Baltimore today, was undoubtedly prepared under the supervision of T. F. Ryan, but was full of inaccuracies and mis-statements that I hardly feel it worth while to notice. So far as General Sam Thomas and the Produce Exchange Trust Company are concerned, I do not believe that they have been correctly quoted in regard to the matter. We have no appointment for any meeting with Gen. Thomas or Mr. Gould to discuss this matter, as was alleged in the New York article, and we have not been advised by the Produce Exchange Trust Company of any final determination on their part to refuse their assent to our plan."

"The total interest which the Produce Exchange Trust Company has in both the Seaboard and the Florida Central and Peninsular syndicate is not twenty-five per cent, as intimated in the article referred to, but is scarcely seven per cent. of the total. Every other subscriber to the Seaboard syndicate has already assented to the plan of the Greater Seaboard syndicate, and practically every subscriber to the Florida Central and Peninsular syndicate, except the Produce Exchange Trust Company, has done the same. As to Thomas E. Ryan and his remarks as quoted in the New York paper, I have only to say that the courts now have Mr. Ryan in charge, and they have already expressed their opinion of him and his methods in no uncertain terms, and his attempts to impede the progress of a great enterprise have been ignominious failures in the past, and will continue to be so in the future, if he further pursues the same course."

Scheme for the Consolidation of Several Roads Into Seaboard Air Line. The following is the New York Herald's article to which Mr. Williams had referred:

It is likely that the scheme for the consolidation of several Southern railroads into the Greater Seaboard Air Line organization, supposed to have been finally consummated by the Baltimore contingent headed by John Skelton Williams, yesterday, is regarded as highbanded and that they will have a long fight with the Produce Exchange Trust interests to carry it through. Particular stress is put by the objectors, on the prominence in the consolidation scheme of the Continental Trust Company, of Baltimore, which, it is intimated, has been brought into the affair in much the same way as the Produce Exchange Trust before the collapse was headed with a part of the Seaboard Air Line syndicate.

THE PLAN. "Briefly stated, it is the plan of the Williams contingent, to consolidate the Seaboard Air Line, Florida Central and Peninsular, Georgia and Alabama, Chesapeake and Carolina Railroad systems, and the Georgia and Alabama Terminal Company's properties into the 'Greater Seaboard Air Line System.' The several syndicates now controlling these properties are invited to exchange their holdings for certificates in the greater company and to sign an agreement which puts their interests in the hands of a 'Managing Committee,' composed of President Williams and six of his friends, among them is S. Davies Warfield, president of the Continental Trust Company of Baltimore."

"Under the agreement this committee has unlimited power to do what it may please for a period of ten years, which period may be extended. Syndicate interests who sign the agreement virtually enter into a co-partnership with the committee in the management of which they have no say, while the committee has power to go into debt on the credit of the railroads to any extent which it may consider necessary for the carrying out of the consolidation scheme."

"This is the part of the plan to which the Produce Exchange Trust Company makes strenuous objections. The company is interested in the syndicate now in control of the Seaboard Air Line system to the extent of something like \$1,600,000. President Williams, of the Seaboard, is a director of the trust company, and is said to have induced its managers, before the recent collapse, to go

MR. W. B. TAYLOR CRUSHED TO DEATH

Almost Every Bone in His Body Was Broken.

CAUSED BY ELEVATOR

In Which He Was Riding, Falling to Basement.

HIS SKULL WAS FRACTURED.

Knee Broken; Compound Fracture of the Thigh; Fracture Over Ears; and Many Bruises About the Body—Death Came Quickly to Him—The Funeral Arrangements Later.

Mr. William Benedict Taylor met a horrible death by the falling of the elevator at the store-house of Christian & Winfree, fourth and Cary streets, at 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon, while in the elevator in their building. His body was badly crushed, many bones being broken so as to protrude through the flesh. His arms were wrenched out of their sockets, and the entire body was so badly bruised that it was hardly recognizable.

The ambulance was called, with Dr. W. W. Parker, Jr., in charge. The wounded man was then beyond the reach of medical or surgical aid. He was taken to the Almshouse, where he died a few minutes after arriving there.

Upon examination, Dr. Good, Trevilian and Parker found that the dead man had a fracture over the base of the skull, one over left ear, a compound fracture of the thigh, a simple fracture of the left thigh, the right knee broken; a fracture over the right ear, and many bruises about the body.

HOW THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED. Mr. Taylor had been in the habit of going up and down in the elevator, and had occasion to be on it several times during the day. It was shortly before 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon, when he was going up to the top floor of the building. When the top floor had been reached the large propelling rope gave way, and the elevator car fell to the basement, working destruction in its way. The crash made by the elevator as it fell struck the other men in the store, and they ran to see what had happened. Down in the dark they could see the almost lifeless form of Mr. Taylor, crushed, bruised and smothered among the debris of the wrecked elevator.

Mr. Taylor was superintendent of the wholesale house of Christian & Winfree, and was an efficient and valued employee. He was about thirty years of age; of strictly moral habits, and unostentatious in business and social intercourse. He was held in high esteem by all who knew him. He resided at No. 32 north Eighth street.

The body of Mr. Taylor was turned over to Mr. Joseph W. Biley, the undertaker, about 8 o'clock last night to be prepared for burial.

Coroner Taylor viewed the remains and deemed an inquest unnecessary, as the death was accidental, and could not be attributed to the fault of any one. The arrangements for the funeral will be made to-day.

CELEBRATION OF PHI BETA KAPPA

Dr. Thomas Nelson Page Delivered an Address on "Character the True Test of a Civilization"

WILLIAMSBURG, VA., Feb. 19.—Special.—The annual celebration of the Phi Beta Kappa Society was held in the chapel of William and Mary College to-night in the presence of a large and distinguished assemblage.

Mr. R. M. Hughes, of Norfolk, president of the society, presided and introduced Rev. Dr. White, of Lexington, who opened the exercises with prayer. Dr. Page welcomed the delegates and closed by introducing Rev. B. D. Tucker, of Norfolk, who read a poem by John R. Thompson, delivered originally by the author here at a similar celebration.

The orator of the occasion, Dr. Thomas Nelson Page, of Washington, D. C., the distinguished author, was introduced in eloquent words by President Hughes. The subject of the address was "Character the True Test of a Civilization." Dr. Page declared that the historic associations of Williamsburg, of Williams and Mary and of Phi Beta Kappa prevailed upon him to break a determination to deliver no more addresses, and that he could not resist the power that drew him here where he would deliver his address.

The speaker dwelt upon the relations of Phi Beta Kappa to William and Mary, of the latter to the Commonwealth of Virginia and of Virginia to the Union, showing principle and character as the true test of the college and State. He drew many practical lessons for the young gentlemen before him, pointing out how the impress of character left upon the past by their fathers would affect them.

Dr. Page, in his language beautiful and lucid, presented to them examples of character in men whose manners are linked with Williams and Mary, bringing out in bold relief the meaning of the subject he had chosen.

The speech of the young author was listened to with rapt attention from beginning to end, and was pronounced by many present as one of the finest ever delivered here on such an occasion.

A BANQUET. After the address the members of the society, no less than a few invited guests, repaired to the library of the college, where the banquet was served.

Among the prominent gentlemen present for invitation to-night were: Dr. Thomas Nelson Page, of Washington; Colonel Willson Miles Cary, of Baltimore, Md.; Mr. John L. Williams, of Richmond; Dr. Alex. Henry White, of Washington and Lee University, Lexington; Prof. Robert T. Funnell, of Norfolk; prominent among the visiting members are: Dr. J. W. Southern, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Richmond; R. M. Hughes, Esq., of Norfolk; Messrs. Rosewell Page, S. Gordon Cumming, Hampton; E. B. Jones, Dr. B. D. Tucker, P. S. Stephens, of Norfolk, besides the members of the faculty of William and Mary College.

The following members sent letters of regret at their inability to attend the celebration: Secretary of War Elihu Root, Washington; Prof. Charles Dabney, University of Virginia; Ex-Governor Nichols, of Louisiana; James Lindsay Gordon, of New York; Bishop Randolph, of New York; General G. M. Jones, of the University of Virginia, and Mr. J. W. Maddox.

WEATHER-FORECAST.

Forecast for Tuesday and Wednesday: Virginia—Partly cloudy and not so cold Tuesday; warmer and probably rain Wednesday; variable winds, shifting to easterly.

North and South Carolina—Fair and warmer Tuesday; rain and warmer Wednesday; variable winds, shifting to southeasterly.

Arrested in New York. ELMIRA, N. Y., Feb. 19.—Frederick Anderson alias "Wisconsin Fred," wanted in Virginia for trial on eight indictments for post-office robberies, was taken to Staunton, Va., to-night.

Dead in Bed. CANTON, GA., Feb. 19.—Mr. John Burke, of Boston, was found dead in bed here yesterday. He was the stepfather and the only father General Patrick Collins, of Boston, ever knew.

SUMMARY OF TO-DAY'S NEWS. Local. Arguments on the Virginia Telephone and Telegraph bill heard by the Senate Committee on General Laws.

Work of the Legislature. Governor's candidate for post office, Mr. Michael Mayo killed at the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac shops.

Lecture at Richmond College by Professor Wheeler. Horrible death of W. B. Taylor in an elevator shaft.

State. Fire destroys a planing mill in South Carolina. No insurance.

General. Porto Rican tariff bill creates great interest in the House. Kentucky easiest no nearer settlement.

Foreign. General Cronje's army is said to be entirely surrounded. General French between Boers and Bloemfontein has captured Hlangwan Hill.