

TRUTH

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Legislative Matters

Last week we made a few remarks on probable and possible legislation by the coming legislature. Every legislature that we know any thing about, and we have had a more or less intimate acquaintance with a good many state and other legislative bodies, has undertaken too much and done too much, a fact which doubtless has provoked the oft-repeated expression that the less the state legislature does the better it is for the people. There are subjects, however, upon which legislation is needed. Maybe a score of bills would cover the field, but it is certain that several hundred bills will be introduced during the session of sixty days, all of which must receive more or less attention and will take up valuable time. The members of the legislature would do well to single out quickly the meritorious bills and quickly consign the others to the junk pile.

One measure which should receive attention is the proposition to create a state insurance department. The number of "snide" insurance companies doing business in this country is surprising and a goodly number of them invade Utah. There are rotten life insurance companies, rotten accident and health insurance companies, rotten plate glass insurance companies, rotten sick benefit insurance companies and rotten insurance companies of various other kinds doing business in this state, collecting premiums without affording any real protection. They get into business here very easily. They have to file with the secretary of state a sworn statement of their assets, liabilities and so forth annually. Those statements are perfunctory things and perjury, according to latter-day developments, is not considered a very heinous crime. It is also, one of the crimes most difficult on which to obtain a conviction. The secretary of state is not an expert insurance man. He is not expected to be such. He takes the affidavits presented him for gospel truth, files them away and the companies go on doing business, collecting premiums for alleged insurance

which in case of loss would be and frequently is discovered to be no protection whatever. In every state in the union of states but this there is an insurance department presided over by an expert insurance man, who knows the standing and merits or demerits of every company in the country. It is his duty to shut out the "snide" concerns and protect the public from imposition of that kind. A department of insurance could be efficiently maintained here at a very small cost. With some competent, honest man at its head it would be a most valuable adjunct to the state government.

Representative D. R. Roberts, the good roads champion, will probably be to the front again this session with measures for improving the roads and furnishing money for that purpose. Goodness knows the roads in Utah are pretty bad. In most countries they wouldn't be designated as roads at all. In summer time they are almost impassible and in fall, winter and spring they are unthinkable. How the farmers get their produce to market is a mystery. Good roads are indispensable to the prosperity of any community. This matter should receive the earnest attention of the legislature without reference to politics.

Wesley K. Walton will probably be chosen for president of the senate. He has in the past demonstrated that he is a capable presiding officer. He hails from the north country and as Salt Lake county had the honor two years ago it is fitting that some other county should get it now.

For speaker of the house Harry S. Joseph is the favorite. There are other aspirants but Harry has the lead. He deserves the honor too. He did more to win the election for the republicans than most of them and he has the experience gained as a member of previous legislatures.

Major Myton is talked of a good deal for sergeant-at-arms for the senate. Our idea is that the position would be more honored by his accept-

ing it than he would be in taking it. The major is a good working republican and did good service in the late campaign. If he cares for the place he ought to have it.

Brigham Clegg will likely be chosen as chairman of the judiciary committee of the house. He is an able young lawyer, a hard worker and willing to devote the time and attention necessary to that important position.

PAUSE IN THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION.

History condones assassination only when the sacrifice of a tyrant's life saves the lives of his subjects. When the slaughter of those in authority merely results in more savage and bloody repression, as in Russia, says the Literary Digest, it is regarded only as a wretched exhibition of weak and unorganized despair. Such is the view of the present situation in Russia taken by a writer in The Contemporary Review (London). "The iron is hot," he says, "but no one strikes it." The bomb-throwing in the Premier's house was the last attempt. The people seem spiritless and disappointed, he continues. The Douma has really done nothing for the country; the revolutionaries have been playing a game like madmen playing chess and making random moves without regard to the rules or the winning and losing of a game; the middle class are tired of the revolution, and there is a general longing for peace and quietness even under autocracy. Speaking of the bad elements in the liberation movement this writer observes:

"The open alliance between self-sacrificing revolutionists and sordid scoundrels emerging from the lowermost depths has injured the cause of the liberation movement. The mental and moral effort involved in the search among sickening crimes for the simulacrum of noble achievements can not be put forth daily and hourly without producing a reaction, signs of which are already being noticed. The people are downcast and wearied. The force of the revolutionary wave appears to have temporarily spent itself, and it now depends upon the government to determine how long the pause shall continue and what new state it shall usher in. The party of the Ca-

dets, or Constitutional Democrats, has forfeited much of its prestige."

The appeal issued by the Douma inciting the people to rebel against the government has not produced much effect. The Cadets have lost their influence, says the writer, and continues as follows:

"The appeal of the Douma to the people to rebel against the government is still secretly printed and illegally distributed, but it is not generally acted upon. One consequence of that vain appeal is that the party which issued it is no longer treated as constitutional by the government. On that ground the authorities have refused to authorize a general congress of the party. But the masses are sullen and inactive. For the Cadets or any other parliamentary party they will not move a finger. They are disillusioned and wrathful, having received from the Douma naught but words which were never translated into acts, and many of which never would or could be."

The Cadets, or Constitutional Democrats, are themselves becoming discouraged, and see no way out of the present unsettled condition of affairs. Mr. Milliukoff, a prominent member of this party, is quoted in confirmation of this statement. Thus:

"A recognized spokesman of the Cadets, Mr. Milliukoff, who has publicly drawn attention to the political currents of today and given a summary sketch of the national mood of the moment, confirms this account. 'The community,' he declares 'is tired out by the three years' struggle; it yearns for repose. Moreover, a considerable section of the population is frightened by the course of revolutionary events. The absence of a sense of security has become general. The most peaceful citizens are forced to turn their minds to self-defense, and "bourgeois fear" has got the better even of civic virtues.' He goes on to say that these peaceful citizens are satisfied with the liberties already won. They consider that the press has too much rather than too little liberty, and generally that license has usurped the place of freedom. And close observers who have journeyed through the country since the dissolution of the Douma are now narrating events of daily occurrence which fully bear out the despondent view taken by Mr. Milliukoff."

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