HUNTINGTON AND SCHWERIN EMPLOY WASHINGTON LOBBYISTS TO PROTECT THE DISHONEST CHINESE PASSENGER TRAFFIC OF THE PACIFIC MAIL

The Dismissal of the Chief of the Chinese Bureau of This City Reveals a Gigantic Plot of the Steamship Company to Flood the Country With Coolies.

Dispatches received from Washington last night throw a new and startling light upon the secret causes of the dismissal of B. E. Meredith as chief of the Chinese Bureau of this city. Meredith was discharged from his position of trust for cause. The Call, in its endeavor to remedy the glaring abuses of the Chinese Bureau, exposed the methods of Meredith, and to-day it will expose the powerful corporations which stood sponsor for Meredith in his manipulations. The Chinese Bureau of this city is the only practical barrier on the Pacific Coast to the uninterrupted influx of Chinese coolies to the United States.

The officers of the bureau are expected to be honest, efficient and vigilant. In their hands rests the vitally important duty of enforcing the exclusion act and of preventing the degraded laborers of the Orient from entering the port of San Francisco. Meredith, the chief of the bureau, was dismissed from the service of the Federal Government because he was found grossly negligent of his sworn duties.

The Call will show to-day that the Southern Pacific Company, C. P. Huntington, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company and R. P. Schwerin were the supporters and sponsors of Meredith, his close friends while in office and his persistent defenders while in disgrace. The officers of the Southern Pacific Company and of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company exercised every influence within their power to restore Meredith to his position after he had been discharged.

They appealed to John P. Jackson, Collector of the Port, and secured his unqualified indorsement of Meredith, in character and ability. An effort was made at Washington to induce the Secretary of the Treasury to reconsider his decision of dismissal. Paid lobbyists of the Southern Pacific Company and of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company were ordered to use their seductive arts upon Federal officials at Washington and if possible save Meredith from dismissal. An appeal was even made to President McKinley himself to save from final discharge this officer whose duty it was to keep Chinese out and not to let them in.

The cause of this campaign to save a petty official from dismissal, the motives of telegrams, letters and vehement personal instruction, might, by a stretch of the imagination, be a mystery. But R. P. Schwerin, the protege and beneficiary of the bounty of C. P. Huntington, gives the reason. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company profits by the illegitimate traffic in Chinese coolies. It reaps an ill-gotten harvest in freights and fares from coolies that by legislative enactment are barred from an entrance into the United States.

Every Chinese who is brought from China to this port and is then denied a landing becomes a burden upon the Pacific Mail. Every Chinese who comes and, rightly or wrongly, is permitted to enter is an element of profit to the corrupt corporation that lives to make money at whatever cost to the people it preys upon. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company has been and is involved in an illegitimate Chinese traffic. Any measure which interferes with that traffic is, to the officers of the Pacific Mail, an affront and a trespass upon their vicious rights. And when B. E. Meredith was removed from his position as chief of the Chinese Bureau R. P. Schwerin wrote to C. P. Huntington in New York:

"You must have Meredith reinstated. His removal means a body blow at the Chinese passenger traffic of the Pacific Mail Company."

And C. P. Huntington replied:

"I will do all I can."

And C. P. Huntington did all he could to save the Chinese passenger traffic of the Pacific Mail. He had advocated Chinese immigration before and after the United States Government prohibited this terrible influx of coolies into American territory. He had championed the cause of degraded hordes of cheap laborers because that cause meant profit to him. He had used his steamship line as a vehicle with which to cheat Federal laws and injure American workingmen. When his lieutenant sounded the alarm C. P. Huntington needed no second warning. He at once communicated with his agents at Washington.

Letters between Huntington and Schwerin passed in quick succession. The wires were laid and Huntington soon issued his orders to David A. Chambers, one of the paid "attorneys" of the Southern Pacific Company at Washington. Mr. Chambers was not slow to act, and in the following dispatch he tells what he did and how he tried to save B. E. Meredith from the ax of official decapitation:

"WASHINGTON, April 28.—David A. Chambers, who is the regular Washington attorney for the Southern Pacific Company in all land matters, was asked to-day if he was interested in having Meredith reinstated as inspector and chief of the Chinese Bureau. He replied:

"Several weeks ago I received a letter from our people saying that Meredith was a good man; that he had been highly recommended by Collector Jackson and should be restored. I went to see Assistant Secretary Howell, who explained that Meredith had been found guilty of negligence and collusion in allowing Fong Suey Wan to escape when she should have been held as a procuress and therefore Howell emphatically declined to take any further action in the case."

"By 'our people' do you refer to Southern Pacific officers?" inquired The Call correspondent.

"Yes," replied Mr. Chambers. "I wrote them that nothing could be done for Meredith."

The Treasury Department expects J. R. Dunn to arrive in San Francisco in a day or two to take charge of the Chinese Bureau, vacated by Meredith. Collector Jackson will not have supervision over it as reported some time ago.

The foregoing dispatch is doubly significant. It shows that the Southern Pacific Company and the Pacific Mail, allied powers of corruption, are engaged in using their tremendous power to defeat the purpose of the exclusion act and to flood the country with coolie laborers. The dispatch shows also that Collector Jackson will have nothing to do with the administration of a department that has been frequently sullied by scandal and mismanagement since its establishment. The history of Meredith's regime in the Chinese Bureau may indicate in a measure why C. P. Huntington and R. P. Schwerin were so anxious to have him retained in office.

The final turning down of Meredith and his backers, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, Collector Jackson and other of kindred sentiment by the Secretary of the Treasury, will be hailed with delight by all the friends of labor in the United States, particularly on the Pacific Coast. During the period of two years in which the affairs of the Chinese Bureau were "managed" by Meredith and Jackson the number of Chinese immigrants, including those returning to this State, jumped to a figure more than double that under Wise's administration, even when Dick Williams stood at the gates and made a fortune for himself and his pals out of the business of being a member of the Chinese Bureau.

It is noteworthy that about the first official act of Customs Collector Jackson on assuming his office was the announcement to the members of the press that he had confirmed Mr. Wise's appointment of B. E. Meredith as chief of the Chinese Bureau, and it is equally noteworthy that during the two years of Mr. Jackson's administration of the Chinese Bureau Mr. Schwerin and the other officials and friends of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company felicitated themselves when they read in the daily papers that the number of Chinese immigrants arriving and settling in California had increased from 1700 annually, which was the number under the Wise administration, to 3500 annually under the Jackson-Meredith administration. It is a fact equally noteworthy that since the Secretary of the Treasury kicked Meredith out of office, the business of the Chinese brokers has fallen away to a minimum.

Certain lawyers who almost made the bureau their home when Mr. Meredith was there have disappeared from the Appraisers' building and are looking for Caucasian clients. Certain attaches of other offices in the same building who were wont to go into the vault and examine papers in Chinese cases every day are now conspicuous by the rarity of their presence. The lodgings maintained by the steamship company in the Mail dock for housing Chinese immigrants awaiting a landing are no longer overcrowded, and the abuse of keeping those unfortunate creatures six months on the dock before being granted a hearing has been stopped. But it is noteworthy, also, that the abuse was not abated by any initiatory step taken by Jackson or his friend Meredith. It was done at the suggestion of Special Agents Linck and Smith, who, when they arrived here and looked into the matter of the gross mismanagement of the Chinese Bureau, made such representations as to bring about a general and speedy clearing up of the Mongolian debris.

The laborers of California owe a debt of gratitude to the firmness and clearsightedness of the Secretary of the Treasury, who refused to be influenced by a great corporation and who was too shrewd to be misled by the lies told both here and in Washington in Meredith's behalf to waver for an instant in adopting heroic measures to protect the people of the United States from this flood of yellow paupers coming in through the Golden Gate at the rate of nearly 4000 per annum. The first of these measures and one that brought consternation to the coolie brokers was the appointment of Chinese Interpreter Rev. John Endicott Gardiner, D. D., as a Chinese inspector. Gardiner was the last man in the world that Jackson or Meredith wanted to see in the bureau. Meredith had spoken in the most contemptuous manner about him and to him on one occasion threatening physically to kick him out of the office. Jackson was known to have a disparaging opinion of the reverend gentleman also. Inspector Lynch was equally disliked by Meredith, and although Lynch and Gardiner had been the two most active and successful members of the bureau, Jackson refused to appoint either one to the head of the bureau when the place was vacated. The cold shoulder extended to the inspectors named might be interpreted, in the absence of a more plausible theory, as an intimation that virtue was to be its own sweet solitary reward in the bureau. In other words, that Gardiner and Lynch had got themselves disliked because they were too zealous in the discharge of their duties.

Hence the totally unexpected appointment of Dr. Gardiner to a position where he would be untrammeled in the discharge of those duties with which he had been intrusted was a bitter dose for the coolie ring. It also revealed the seriously alarming fact that the Secretary of the Treasury was fully informed of the mismanagement of the bureau, and that he had resolved to put an end to it, no matter whether a major or a general was to be displaced thereby. The fact also that the appointment was made without consulting either Jackson or Meredith, or asking them for a letter of recommendation, was another disagreeable element of the episode. This was followed shortly after by the appointment by the Secretary of Chinese Inspectors Tippitt and Barbour, sent from the East to become members of the bureau at San Francisco. In the selection of these three men the Collector and Meredith had no voice whatever. They had to accept what they received in a spirit of resignation or indignation, whichever suited best their official moods, and no vote of thanks has yet appeared on record for the same.

But the hardest blow of all was the appointment of James R. Dunn as chief of the bureau without previous notice to the Collector. More than that, the fact of the appointment was known to the Washington correspondent of The Call and was announced in the columns of The Call long before Collector Jackson admitted that he had heard anything at all about it. These acts on the part of the Treasury Department are susceptible of only one interpretation, and that is that the department has determined to manage the bureau from Washington and in its own way, the bureau to be independent of the Collector, and the bureau and the Collector being a check upon the lapses and errors of each other. Furthermore, that the department will not tolerate the methods heretofore pursued in the bureau which permitted that office to be made the rendezvous for Chinese brokers and their attorneys.

It is understood that Customs Surveyor Spear, who has charge of the immigrants on the Mail dock, will be allowed to prevent gangs of highbinders from visiting the immigrants and scheming with them to secure their illegal landing in this State. It will be remembered by The Call's readers that about the middle of last September Surveyor Spear issued an order to the customs inspectors at the gate that no permit to visit the Chinese on board the steamer or on the dock should be recognized unless countersigned by himself. This action was taken by the Surveyor in order to stop a grave abuse of the visiting privilege, whereby the efforts of honest officials to prevent the illegal importation of coolies was thwarted. For instance Mr. Spear came into possession of passes issued by Meredith for four persons to visit one immigrant—two white men and two Chinamen. When Collector Jackson's attention was called to the matter he said that the permit was proper, the four persons being no doubt the white lawyer, the Chinese client, the Chinese interpreter and a white photographer. On the very next day Mr. Jackson issued an order proclaiming that no permits should be recognized, except such as bore the signature of Meredith, thus nullifying the order issued by Mr. Spear and leaving the management of the detained Chinese in the hands of Meredith. When the Collector was asked why he had practically revoked the order issued by Mr. Spear he replied that he, the Collector, was the person designated by law to handle the Chinese, and that Spear had no authority in the premises. Yet it is the fact that Mr. Spear always has had custody of the Chinese at the Mail dock by virtue of his official position and still exercises the function of jailer.

It is understood that under the new method of conducting the bureau, a Chinese interpreter in the service of the Government will be present at every interview with a Chinese immigrant seeking to land and that highbinders and coolie brokers will be no longer allowed to ply their nefarious avocation under the noses of the Federal officials. Mr. Spear, who is responsible for the safe keeping of the Chinese prisoners at the Mail dock, will be allowed to take such measures as he may deem necessary to insure their detention until legally landed.

Much good will be accomplished by the new mode of enforcing the exclusion act. The head of the bureau will no longer be the creature of the Collector, and will be therefore more independent in the performance of his duties. He will be directly responsible to the Secretary of the Treasury for whatever mistakes he may make, and there will be no collectors and ex-collectors to intercede for him and furnish certificates of character to save him from the departmental wrath. He must stand upon his own feet, and his character must speak, not through hearsay certificates, but through his official acts. The trouble with Meredith has been that his certificates of character don't dovetail with his official mistakes which, unfortunately for him, if they were mistakes, were on the wrong side. They were invariably on the side of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company and the slave dealers and against the interests of the exclusion act and the Government. No merchant will keep a clerk who makes mistakes in giving change against his employer or who doles out good coins for counterfeit.

Again, if, after Mr. Jackson shall have retired from office to rest upon such laurels as he may have won, a bad man, working in the interest of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, should receive the appointment as Collector of the Port, the head of the Chinese Bureau will be an eye of the Government glaring upon him. If he allows a Chinaman to enter without being entitled to the privilege, the Chinaman will be arrested and the act of the Collector will be reviewed by the bureau and the court. Thus there will be an effectual check upon the Collector; and on the other hand, if the Pacific Mail Steamship Company shall foist into the bureau another Meredith, the Collector may act as a check upon the chief, and may take such measures as may be calculated to expose and punish fraud or criminal mistakes.

Consistently with their past record of mendacity and low cunning, Meredith and his backers have made use of misrepresentation and prevarication in their unsuccessful and shameless effort to have him reinstated into his old position as chief of the Chinese Bureau. They have circulated a report that he was dismissed, not because of any neglect of duty, but because he used insulting language to a reporter of The Call and to Dr. Gardiner. They argued both orally and on paper (from the office of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company) that his offense arose from great provocation and that, after all, all that he was guilty of was giving way to his temper. He was not dismissed because Fong Suey Wan escaped, they said, and the assertion that her escape was the cause of his dismissal they declared to be an oral slander and a printed libel. A letter written by Collector Jackson and exhibited by Meredith's friends is so worded as to befog the subject. The circulation of such false statements is not calculated to do the Pacific Mail Steamship Company any good, for the Secretary of the Treasury knows why Meredith was let go. In order to set the matter right, it is necessary to recapitulate briefly the nature of the investigation which resulted in the recent upheaval in the bureau for the good of the service.

An exposition was held last summer in Omaha and among the concessions was one of the Mee Lee Village Association, a Chinese company, which reproduced a Chinese village on the grounds and gave theatrical and acrobatic entertainments. About five hundred men and women of more or less—generally less—virtue were imported from China to take part in the village show, and they were admitted under a special privilege granted by the United States, under the terms of which the actors, acrobats, shopkeepers and attendants were to return to China at the expiration of three months after the close of the exposition. It was found that before the exposition closed about 200 women, mostly of the boatmen's class, had left Omaha and had gone to reside in different cities in the Union, San Francisco getting the most of them. This becoming known, the Government ordered Major Moore to organize a raid upon the Chinatown bagnios in this city for the purpose of arresting and deporting the runaways. Collector Jackson detailed a large force of customs inspectors to assist in the raid, but for some reason never made public the police were informed of the contemplated movement and were stationed in the houses to be raided, where they were found a half-hour later by the Federal posse in full possession and the whole of Chinatown advised of what was going on. The Federal posse were detained at the Custom-house awaiting the order of Jackson to start. Notwithstanding the publicity given to the affair about twenty-seven women without certificates were captured. Among the number taken to the Presbyterian Chinese Mission on Sacramento street was a middle-aged woman named Fong Suey Wan, a notorious procuress of considerable wealth and the wife of the partner of Little Pete, a noted Chinese boss and slave dealer, lately deceased by the grace of a highbinder's bullet in a Chinatown barber shop.

When the women were being questioned at the mission Miss Cameron, the matron, recognized the procuress and informed Meredith of her identity. Meredith ordered her to be detained notwithstanding that her certificate in due form was then being presented for inspection. Nothing further was done by Meredith to hold the woman. He filed no complaint against her, he did not even inform the United States Marshal, the District Attorney or any one else in authority that he proposed to place any charge against her. On the next day after her arrest Arthur Lotto, a reporter, warned Meredith that the woman would be discharged on presentation of her certificate before Court Commissioner Heacock if Meredith did not file a complaint charging her with being a procuress. Meredith replied that it was "all right," he was getting up "a great case" against her. On the next morning the woman was taken before Commissioner Heacock, on the same floor as the Chinese Bureau and about seventy-five feet distant, and her certificate being produced, the court stated that he would recommend her discharge, there being no complaint accusing her of any offense. She was then taken to the office of the United States Marshal, directly underneath the office of the Chinese Bureau, and kept there until 2 o'clock in the afternoon, when she was brought before United States District Judge de Haven and discharged. Then she disappeared.

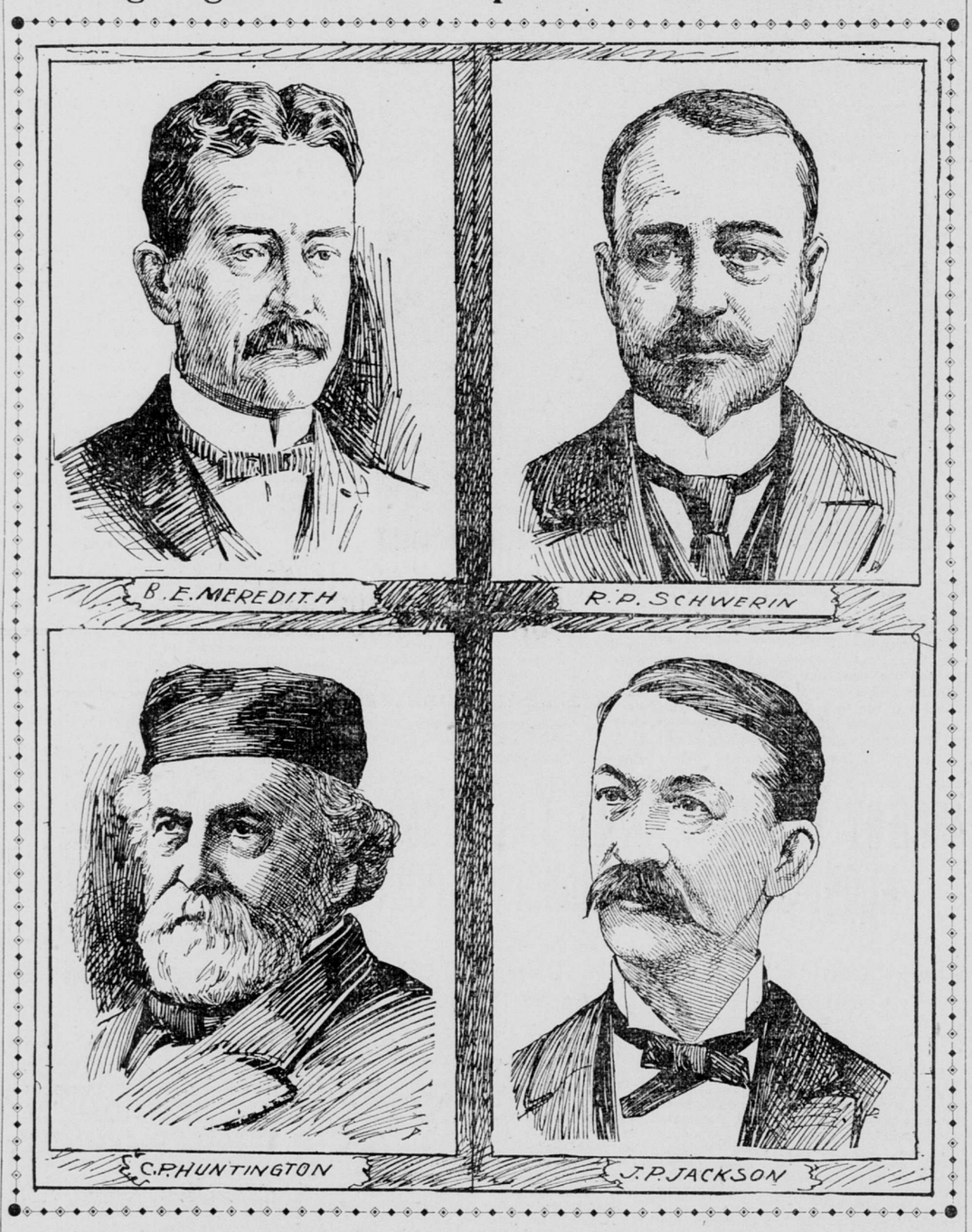
Meredith could offer no reasonable explanation as to why he had allowed the woman to escape, and public clamor was raised, the episode savoring too strongly of corruption to be passed by in silence. Special Agent Moore, in pursuance of instructions from Washington, made an investigation, examining witnesses and taking affidavits of all parties concerned. He sent his report to Washington, and about the time that the department was looking into the report ex-Collector Wise appeared in Washington and told the Treasury people and the newspaper correspondents a fairy story to the effect that the woman was allowed to ge because Major Moore and Miss Cameron had asked that Fong Suey be allowed to return to China.

As a matter of justice to Mr. Wise it must be said that he knew nothing of the case of his own knowledge, as all his information had been derived from Meredith and his friends. Then charges were filed against Special Agent Moore for making an assault upon a woman employed in his office as typewriter, and the Secretary of the Treasury, in view of Moore's disgrace, sent Moore's report back to this city to be verified by Special Agents Linck and Smith. The witnesses were re-examined and the Fong Suey Wan report was sent on to Washington once more. It was upon this report, which dealt with the Fong Suey Wan incident alone, that Meredith was dismissed.

Subsequently the special agents sent a supplemental report to Washington in connection with the matter of Meredith having used abusive language to Dr. Gardiner and a reporter of The Call, but before it had reached the Secretary of the Treasury Meredith had been dismissed from the service.

That is why Meredith's application for reinstatement was found to have no force, for he utterly failed to show that he was innocent of the charge of having allowed the noted procuress to walk out of his hands.

Leading Figures in the Expose of the Pacific Mail.



Four Men Who Are Thoroughly Informed on the Traffic in Chinese From the Orient to This Port.

LUMBER COMBINE MAY COLLAPSE

Competition Enters the Field and Big Firms Seek to Resign.

Another local combination of lumber dealers is in the throes of collapse. Time after time the dealers in lumber in this city have attempted to organize for what they believed to be their best interests, and each time the effort has been followed by failure. Competition has been so keen that one by one there have been defections from the combinations, and then each dealer entered the competitive field for himself. Prices have fallen until the necessity for organization again asserted itself, and again combinations were formed. Some time ago the Pine Manufacturers' Association was formed in this city. The organization was established by several of the more influential firms, and as usual the organizers overlooked the importance of firms that were not taken into the compact.

These firms have been working quietly but effectively and they have won their reward in seeing the first material signs of disintegration in the exclusive association. The Pine Manufacturers' Association met a few days ago to discuss the affairs of its members. Trouble had been brewing and an effort was made to silence the discontent. Outside firms had been cutting prices and securing trade which the members of the association believed belonged to them.

At the meeting held to consider the matter the following firms were represented: Tacoma Mill Company, Pope & Talbot, D. H. Bibb Lumber Company, E. K. Wood Lumber Company, Renton, Holmes & Co., E. B. Dean & Co., Bellingham Bay Improvement Company, Gardiner Mill Company, Pacific Pine Company, E. S. Slade Lumber Company, Clatsop Mill Company, Grays Harbor Commercial Company and Simpson Lumber Company.

Shortly after the meeting opened the representative of the Gardiner Mill Company asked permission of his associates to withdraw. He announced that it was impossible for his firm to hold its own patrons unless prices were reduced to meet the competition which had entered the local field through outside firms. The application of the firm was placed upon the table and then more trouble followed. The representative of the E. K. Wood Lumber Company also announced the wish of his firm to withdraw. It was evident that the Pine Manufacturers' Asssociation was going to pieces and some remedy, even if it were only temporary, must be devised.

Under the authority of a resolution the Gardiner Company was given permission for two weeks to sell to its own people at competitive rates on condition that the company withdrew its resignation. The Wood Company was allowed to sell for the same period, at the best rates it can command. The other members of the association will strive to maintain prices and wait for results. There is a growing fear, however, that the association will not be able to withstand the serious defections from its own ranks.

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Some articles cut 50 per cent.
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DECLARE THAT THEIR SISTER IS INSANE

STRANGE ACTION AGAINST MISS MARY DEFFEBACH.

Friends of Miss Mary Matilda Deffebach think they see in a recent application for guardianship over her an attempt to railroad her to an asylum for the insane. The application was made by Michael Flood, who was joined by the brother and sisters of the young woman.

Dr. J. F. Twist is the trustee of her property, and according to her friends has administered it carefully and successfully. It consists of 140 acres of land in Mill Valley, near Millwood station. If properly handled it is claimed that it will be worth $75,000 in time.

The only allegation in the complaint against Miss Deffebach is that she authorized the sale of some property that her relatives thought should be held for a higher price. The property was sold to satisfy a pressing mortgage. The complaint against her will be heard by Judge Hebbard on May 2. Durst, Stevens and Knight are attorneys for Miss Deffebach.

Railroad Officials Sightseeing.

Sir William Van Horne and the party accompanying him are being extensively entertained during their visit to this city. Yesterday Sir William Van Horne, W. D. Mathews (director in the Canadian Pacific Railway Company), Hon. R. M. Wells (counsel) and Dr. J. P. Roddick (consulting surgeon of the road) left the Palace in a four-in-hand and were driven through the city and shown the principal points of interest, with which they expressed themselves as highly pleased.

In the Wasp.

"Comedy Without a Comedian" is the subject of the Wasp's theatrical criticism this week. Overcapitalized Hawaiian stocks of the mushroom variety, which have been put on the market quite recently, are commented on in the Wasp's characteristic style. The Wasp's puzzle pictures for tax-payers are calculated to make property owners thoughtful and City Hall employes anything but cheerful. The Wasp's cartoons and photo-engravings are admirable this week.

Wanted to Go to Manila.

James Holmes, a bright boy, 13 years of age, was found wandering around the water front early yesterday morning by Policeman Bailey. He interrogated the boy and ascertained that he came from Buffalo, N. Y., with Company H of the Thirteenth Infantry and was going with them to Manila, but the transport sailed without him. He was hungry, and after Bailey had fed him he sent him to the Harbor station. Bailey took the boy to Chief Lees, and later the Chief wired to his father, who lives at 142 Rhode Island street, Buffalo. Meantime the boy will be kept in the City Prison as a lodger.

Estates in Probate.

The will of Arthur A. Hooper of the firm of Hooper & Jennings, who died August 5, 1898, leaving an estate of unknown value, was filed for probate yesterday. The entire estate is devised to Martha S. Hooper, mother of the testator.

The will of Peter J. Canavan, who died a few days ago, was also filed. Decedent bequeaths his personal property to Annie Smith and his real property in equal shares to his three sisters—Julia, Mary and Kate Canavan.

Columbia Council's Ball.

On Tuesday evening next Columbia Council No. 55, Y. M. I., will give an entertainment and ball in Pioneer Hall. The following excellent programme has been arranged for the evening's pleasure:

Overture, Hynes' Orchestra; remarks, President Thomas F. Harney; tenor solo, W. J. O'Brien; recitation, J. R. Bockman; soprano solo, Miss C. Stanley; banjo, duet, Arthur Black and William McCrory; barytone solo, B. Georges; soprano solo, Mrs. J. Klein; the Cadenza Mandolin Club, under the direction of Professor J. Lombardeno; fancy dances, Arnold Grazer.