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THE RAILROAD COMMISSION.

The railroad companies are making an organized opposition to the commission. Representatives of the different lines running in Louisiana have appeared before the committee on general provisions and the pet arguments of the railroad corporations have again been brought into active service. The reasons offered in other States to prevent the establishment of railroad commissions were rehearsed to them before the committee, and every influence is being brought to bear upon the convention.

Several trumped-up mass meetings were held in some North Louisiana towns and resolutions against the establishment of a commission were adopted and sent to the constitutional convention. In nearly every instance these railroad meetings recite the old story that the adoption of a commission will stop the building of railroads in this State and that capital will seek other territory. In those states where the people made up their minds to protect themselves against the extortion and discrimination of railway corporations the same argument was offered by the opponents of a commission.

In nearly all the States of the Union laws similar to the one proposed in Louisiana are in existence and railroad building continues just the same.

Every effort made in this State to establish a commission has resulted in a victory for the railroads. Unfortunately the railroad lobbyist has been more powerful than the voice of the people, and unless the supporters of the present measure keep a vigilant watch upon the lobbyists of the railway companies the commission bill will find a resting place in the proverbial pigeon hole.

When the commission was first introduced a large majority of the convention expressed themselves in favor of its passage. Nothing has transpired since to cause any of the delegates to change their minds.

The reasons which existed then for the creation of a commission have the same force to-day, and should the convention fail to pass it, it will be safe to attribute its defeat to the potent charms of the lobbyist.

WHO SHOULD IMPOSE SENTENCES.

We learn from the New Orleans papers that the judiciary committee of the constitutional convention has decided to recommend a radical change in the manner of trying criminals in this State.

Under the present system the sole duty of the jury is to decide as to the guilt or innocence of the accused. The work of the juror ends with a verdict, which either convicts or acquits the prisoner. The sentence is left to the discretion of the presiding judge, and the jury has nothing to do with it. Sometimes the jury recommends the prisoner to the mercy of the court, but the judge is not bound to act upon this recommendation. In the majority of cases the judge, who is always thoroughly acquainted with all the facts brought out during the trial, decides for himself if any mercy is to be extended to the prisoner, regardless of the advice of the jury. The judge knows that in many instances the jury's request for mercy is made as a sort of compromise to gain the assent of some timid or over-conscientious juror.

The change offered by Mr. Pujot, of Calcasieu, and endorsed by a majority of the judiciary committee, makes it incumbent upon the jury not only to judge the guilt or innocence of the accused, but it clothes the jury with the additional authority of deciding what sentence is to be imposed.

The Gazette believes that the

power to impose sentences should be vested in the judge. The jury has its hands full as it is, and the judge by reason of his experience and education is better qualified to wisely exercise that authority.

Instead of making the conviction of criminals easier the proposed law will place an obstacle in the way of a proper and speedy enforcement of our criminal statutes. The complaint is general, and we believe well-grounded, that juries are too prone to acquit criminals even though the proof be strong and conclusive, and if compelled to impose sentences, there is no telling to what extent their leniency will go. With the present system the plain duty is to convict when the facts adduced justify such a conclusion. They have nothing to do with the sentence, and yet too often known criminals are given their liberty. We believe that the history of criminal trials in this State is indisputable evidence of the unwisdom of the proposed change. Instead of making the duty of the jurymen more difficult to perform, it should be made easier. What is needed in Louisiana is not a more complex system of criminal jurisdiction, but rather a system that will give us a better and speedier execution of the laws.

Judges may be safely vested with the authority of imposing sentences. We do not know of any cases wherein they have abused this power and we do not see how the cause of justice can be advanced by Mr. Pujot's ordinance.

PROVIDE FOR THE CHARITIES.

Daily States.

We regret to note that there is a strong party in the convention in favor of the incorporation into the new constitution of the article in the present organic law under which the Supreme Court has decided that legislative appropriations for charitable institutions are illegal.

This article, interpreted by our Supreme Court, is a blot on the luster of Louisiana's escutcheon. For upwards of a century our State, and especially New Orleans, has been famous throughout the country for her charities. No State in the Union, in proportion to its wealth and population, has been so generous in dealing with those unfortunate whom the inscrutable wisdom of Providence has thrown upon the mercy of humanity.

The duty of caring for the sick and needy is one of the holiest of all human obligations. It is a discipline that develops our best impulses. Why, then, is it proposed to re-enact an article that checks or prevents the performance of such duties?

In view of the fact that the city is entirely destitute of any institutions for the care of the indigent, the insane, the widows and orphans without resources, and possesses itself no correctional institutions for girls of the character of the House of Good Shepherd, the effect of such an article as it is proposed to incorporate in the new constitution would inevitably be to leave the unfortunates of the classes we have mentioned totally unprovided for and place the burden of their maintenance entirely upon the shoulders of private charity. In his speech last night, accepting the certificate of honorary membership of the Army of Tennessee, Dr. Palmer spoke beautifully in commendation of the charities of New Orleans. Will this great convention strike down these institutions or prohibit the Legislature from making proper provision for them?

There may be a question as to whether or not a State is under a moral obligation to tax the people for purposes of public education; there may be a question as to its duty of the policy of making certain exemptions from taxation. But

surely there can be no doubt that it is the sacred duty of the State to provide amply for the care of the sick and needy, for the orphan and the widow.

Then, by all means let the convention delegate such authority to the Legislature as will enable it to make such appropriations for asylums and hospitals and houses of refuge as will comport with the noble reputation of Louisiana and the honor and character of her people.

Pants—cashmere, worsted and linen, at Plosky Bros'.

If the convention fails to adopt a railroad commission the Democratic party will be held responsible for it.

Fifteen dozen shirts, international brands, just received by Plosky Bros.

If the constitutional convention allows itself to be influenced by the specious pleas of the railroad lobbyist the Democratic party will have to pay for it at the polls.

Mouton & Hopkins have just received a very pretty line of summer goods, consisting of tinted and white organdies, lawns, pique, ducks, gingham, percales, etc. Call and see them.

It was shown in the convention committee that rates are grossly unequal and unjust in Louisiana on some of the lines, and that gross discrimination is indulged in. For instance, it is cheaper for New Orleans to ship to Shreveport and have goods restocked back from that town to Mansfield than to send to Mansfield direct.—Times-Democrat.

An yet we are told that a railroad commission is not needed in Louisiana. But when that statement is made it is safe to say that the one who makes it is either interested or ignorant of the means employed by all corporations to get all they can out of the people.

Visit the new store of Hebert & Landry near the depot.

The Times-Democrat concludes an able editorial with the following:

As we have pointed out, the ordinance should give the commission control over the telegraph companies equally with the railroads. This has been done in all the States recently legislating on the subject. The telegraph companies exist through the favor of the State, and under franchises granted by it, yet they give nothing in return, but plunder the people with the most exorbitant tolls, six and seven times as high as such services cost abroad, and as it actually costs here. Since the beginning of the trouble with Spain telegrams have flown right and left. The Western Union has enjoyed a magnificent harvest, but although it was coining money at the expense of the government and the people, it has proposed no reduction in rates, nor will it ever propose a reduction, no matter how much the cost of telegraphing may be reduced. Its tolls can only be brought down by a commission; and that commission we can only get if the members of the Constitutional Convention refuse to listen to the honeyed words and promises of the lobbyists and refuse to betray the wishes of their constituents.

Just try the Goodlander Flour at Mouton Bros. There is nothing better.

Firemen's Celebration.

The fire department of Lafayette will entertain the excursionists from New Orleans to-morrow, and on April 16, Company No. 1 will give a ball at Falk's hall.

A meeting of the companies was held Wednesday night and steps were taken to make arrangements to receive the large number of visitors Lafayette will have to-morrow.

At the arrival of the excursionists the fire department will conduct them to Falk's hall, where Mayor Caffery will deliver an address of welcome. A matinee will be given, and refreshments will be served at the hall. The Home Fire Company's reel will be christened at St. John's Catholic church at 6:30 p. m. That evening at Falk's hall a concert will be given, after which a dance will follow. The committees in charge of the reception and entertainment of our visitors are doing their utmost to make the celebration a decided success, and The Gazette hopes that not only the firemen, but everybody in town will give a helping hand to this laudable undertaking.

The Cotton Compress.

The gentlemen appointed by the Business Men's Association as a committee to take steps towards the erection of a cotton compress in Lafayette, have succeeded in obtaining an exemption from the Police Jury of ten years' taxation on the property to be owned by the company that will build this much needed improvement. The resolution was carried by a majority of 1 vote. This practically settles the question as to the locality of the compress, and it can be safely said that it will be in full blast in our midst next fall. This adds another to Lafayette's fast increasing improvements. This town, situated as it is, affords a splendid field for such an undertaking. The special adaptation of the neighboring country to the cultivation of cotton and the unusual railroad facilities make this the most suitable location in this section of the State for a cotton compress, and it will undoubtedly prove a successful business venture.

Extensive preparations are being made for the concert and ball to be given to-morrow for the benefit of Home Fire Company.

Holy Week.

To-morrow is Easter and the solemn ceremonies in the Episcopal and Catholic churches of the land will close the forty days which the devout of these two churches have given to retirement, temperance and pious meditation. The six weeks which mark Jesus Christ's most eventful period of life, have been devoted to deep worship of God in keeping holy the Lenten season, these denominations thus testifying their love of and respect for the lowly Nazarene. Last Sunday the faithful brought to the churches palms and evergreens to be blessed, in commemoration of the strewing of the branches of palms under the feet of the Savior and His followers as they entered the City of Jerusalem, and thus blessed, to keep them as emblems of faith in Christ. Thursday and Friday were celebrated in all the solemnity of religious devotion and fervor, and Easter will be the dawning of this period of seeming darkness and despair.

The firemen will be out in full force to-morrow.

The familiar "fizz" of the soda fountain at the Moss Pharmacy is being heard once more, and it awakens pleasant recollections of last summer, in the mind of the connoisseur of fine soda water, for the Moss Pharmacy has a well merited reputation for the fine quality of its soda water.

Postponed Until Monday.

The long-expected message from the president which is to bring our relations with Spain to a crisis, was not forthcoming Wednesday and the American people will have to wait until another Monday.

The president gave his reason for withholding it, saying that Consul General Lee had asked for delay, alleging that the proclamation of the message would endanger the lives of Americans in Havana. The cablegram from Gen. Lee came at an opportune time for the peace-at-any-price element. But the general opinion is that the president will advise intervention by force, and there can be no question but that peace now rests with Spain. The authorities at Washington seem to want peace and have done all in their power to promote it, but as the matter stands, it lies in Spain's hands to accept or reject our propositions. Meantime the preparations for war are steadily being made and steps are being taken to increase our regular army force to 80,000 men.

A complete assortment of baby caps at Mrs. Bailey's.

The Fair at Carencro.

The sisters of The Mount Carmel convent at Carencro will give on Saturday and Sunday, April 16 and 17, the concert and fair which was unavoidably postponed from Feb. 22. The affair will be for the benefit of the convent, which being newly established has need of assistance. It will be conducted by Father Laforest and the superior, Mother Joseph, and will consist of music and a drama by the children of the convent, assisted by local amateurs who have kindly volunteered their services for the occasion. The admission fee will be a small one and refreshments, as well as dinner and supper, will be sold at a reasonable rate.

The Mount Carmel Convent although recently established at Carencro has accomplished much good in an educational way. The good sisters have worked with unremitting energy in educating the children entrusted to their care, and we have no doubt that the people of the whole parish will show their appreciation in a substantial manner now that they have an opportunity to do so.

The people of Carencro are loud in their praise of the sisters who are striving to build for them a school that will not only be the pride of the community, but in every way worthy of the most liberal support of all.

Ben Lewis and William Pellerin, two popular drummers, visited Lafayette during the week.

George Fay, of Jeanerette, was in our town this week.

The opera house in New Iberia was destroyed by fire a few days ago and the New Iberia Enterprise office was also burnt. The opera house, which was the finest building in that town, was not insured, while the Enterprise plant was partially covered by insurance.

The new rolling top desk recently installed in the directors' room at the First National Bank, for the private use of the president, is "a thing of beauty" as well as a thing of usefulness.

Beauty Is Blood Deep.

Clean blood means a clean skin. No beauty without it. Cascarets Candy Cathartic cleans your blood and keeps it clean, by stirring up the lazy liver and driving all impurities from the body. Begin to-day to banish pimples, boils, blotches, blackheads, and that sickly bilious complexion by taking Cascarets,—beauty for ten cents. All druggists, satisfaction guaranteed, 10, 25, 50 cents.

Dress goods in latest novelties, at Plosky Bros'.

Important to Patentees.

The following communication explains itself:

U. S. Land Office, New Orleans,)
April 4, 1898. }

HON. CHAS. D. CAFFERY, Lafayette, La.

Dear Sir:—Herewith I send you a list of Homestead Patents now on file in this office, belonging to parties residing in your parish. It is important that the patentees should secure their patents at an early date. To obtain possession of them, they must transmit to the register their final receiver's receipts, and, in case of loss of receiver's receipts, an affidavit of loss must be substituted. In event transfer of the property has been made, the present owners of the land must file an affidavit showing ownership.

Very respectfully,

CHAS. P. JOHNSON, Receiver.

Attend the ball to-morrow.

Joe E. Mouton will receive subscriptions for the following papers: Times-Democrat, Picayune, Courier-Journal, Home and Farm, New York World and Houston Post.

Buy the Goodlander Flour at Mouton Bros. Strictly guaranteed.

Of Interest to Stock Breeders.

The Gazette has received the following communication which explains itself. Dr. W. H. Dalrymple is professor of veterinary science at the State University, and the experience acquired in that capacity fully qualifies him to give his views. No doubt, this question will be of interest to many of our readers.

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY }
A. AND M. COLLEGE. }

BATON ROUGE, March 31, 1898.

DEAR SIR:—The Live Stock interests of Louisiana, and the rest of the Gulf States, are becoming day by day of greater value through the importation of pure bred strains of the different varieties of farm animals. Our people are awakening to the importance of this valuable branch of agricultural industry in the South, and it is one which should be encouraged and fostered. Besides the money involved in stock breeding and raising, as a special enterprise, there is an enormous amount of capital represented by the animals necessary for the carrying on of the work of our plantations and farms; and to be able to subserve our live stock interests, by instituting modern and intelligent measures for the preservation of animal health and life, and rational and humane methods for the treatment and eradication of disease, would doubtless be hailed with satisfaction and delight by every individual in Louisiana. With the exception of but a few localities in the State this line of work is in the hands of individuals who are in no way fitted, either by education or medical training, to treat the injuries and diseases of live stock in other than an empirical manner. The veterinary profession of to-day has taken rank as one of the learned professions, and it is recognized, in the Old World and in the more advanced sections of our own country, as indispensable, not only with regard to the purely medical and surgical part of the work, as applied to animals alone, but as conservers of the public health, in the identification, control and extermination of animal maladies that are communicable to the human family.

I am of the opinion that if a number of our young men were fully equipped with a thorough veterinary medical education, and afterwards located in practice throughout the different sections of this and the other Gulf States, their influence for good, in a professional way, would be inestimable. The opportunity for such an education could be afforded, and without great additional expenditure, by the institution of a regular Department of Veterinary Medicine in connection with our State University and A. and M. College at Baton Rouge. This course would be of great advantage, also, to young men desirous of following the practice of human medicine, who, if possessed of a degree in both branches of medical science, would not only have their knowledge of the general subject of medicine increased, but their value, as practitioners in rural districts, would be greatly enhanced. Up to the present, so far as I am aware, there is no regular school of veterinary medicine in any of the Southern States.

I am desirous of obtaining expressions of opinion on this subject, and will be glad to have yours, as to the probable benefit the State would derive from the institution of such a department in connection with the University; the need of the State for veterinary graduates; and the value of such a department to the University itself.

An early reply will be appreciated.

Very respectfully yours,

W. H. DALRYMPLE.

We are requested to announce that there will be a shooting match to-morrow afternoon at the Oak Avenue Park at two o'clock between Scott and Lafayette.

The St. Landry boys under the leadership of Capt. Willis Prescott, have organized a company and have offered their services to Uncle Sam in the event of a war with Spain.

Mrs. Alma McBride returned to Lafayette last Saturday after a week's visit in Franklin.

Miss Sarah Brown, of Carencro, visited friends in Lafayette Thursday.