

THE TRUE DEMOCRAT.

JOHN G. COLLINS, Publisher.

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Tallahassee, Friday, June 2, 1905.

The trouble with the Jennings administration appears to be that there was no Taft to sit on the lid, Governor Broward having no taste for the job.

An editorial paragraph in last week's issue referred to an article which was, at the last moment, crowded out for lack of space. It will be found in this issue.

We cheerfully surrender a large portion of our space in this issue to the purpose of informing our readers as to state of public sentiment upon various live topics of general interest, particularly the subjects of recent legislative investigations, as mirrored in the columns of our State contemporaries.

It is stated that South Carolina has gone into the immigration business on her own account. A commissioner has been sent to Europe to obtain immigrants to settle and cultivate a 5,000,000 acre tract of land. The outcome of this experiment will be watched with keen interest by all the southern States, as the success of it will likely cause other States to follow the plan.

"There is no greater incentive to honesty in public office than publicity of the acts of those who hold public office," says the Jacksonville Metropolis. That is precisely the task which The True Democrat has set for itself—to provide the widest possible publicity for all official acts of those chosen to serve the people, their masters, in public office. The commendation it has already received encourages it to renewed efforts in the work it has undertaken.

A dramatic incident occurred at the funeral of the late Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, which demonstrates the fact that the men who fought the battles in the civil war are the first to "get together." Among the escort of civilians were several old Confederate veterans wearing the uniform in which the dead general won his fame as a soldier. These officers wore on their collars the insignia that in the Confederate service indicated the rank of captain. Immediately, in accordance with the military training which requires a junior officer to dismount before addressing his superior, Lieutenant U. S. Grant, who was acting as adjutant, sprang from his horse, and, on foot, assigned Lee's old comrades to position.

A deal involving \$1,000,000 and 193,000 acres of land in Liberty and Franklin counties, Florida, was closed at Brunswick, Ga., last week. The purchasers are a syndicate of Chicago and St. Louis capitalists. The closing of this deal means the building of a railroad to Apalachicola, Fla., from St. Joseph, a distance of forty miles. The road will then extend northward one hundred miles to Quincy, and it is understood that it will then head for Atlanta. The purchase also means the settlement and building of a city at St. Joseph. The purchasers have recently visited the tract and inspected it thoroughly. A visit was also made to Apalachicola. The land sold was owned by a syndicate of Georgia and Florida business men.

The West Palm Beach Sun calls the Fort Pierce News to account for remarking that Florida, in the past, has been poorly represented, in the matter of newspapers, and intimates that the News editor is inclined to extend congratulations to the people of the State because of his timely arrival and his endeavor to show them how a Florida newspaper should be conducted. The Sun says: "To Florida's wonderful progress there is no other one agency to which more credit is due than to its newspapers, and long before Fort Pierce heard much other than the rumbling of the waves, the newspapers of this State were doing work extremely creditable in any country. Like to have you help us out, brother; but you are not licensed to make fun of 'us fellows' who bore the blunt end of the battle and put Florida so close to the front and gave you the chance to climb into the band wagon."

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THE LIBEL LAW.

Of course it is now too late to hope for relief in the matter of a rational libel law from this Legislature—a fact to be sincerely regretted by every lover of fair play.

The newspapers of Florida have never faltered in their loyalty to the interests of the State; or hesitated to contribute to the full extent of their powers to the general welfare, progress and prosperity of the people. Their request, therefore, for a more reasonable and just condition of the law of libel than now exists should have had respectful consideration at the hands of the Legislature. Their State organization, the Press Association, having appointed a special committee on the subject, which committee presented a bill modifying the rigors of the existing law, that bill, or some bill competent to command the approval of the legislators, should have been adopted and enacted into law.

All honor is due to Hon. J. Campbell Avery, member of the House for Escambia, for his earnest efforts in behalf of this just measure; and to those who with voice and vote aided him in supporting it.

To Representative Julian of Columbia belongs the honor—if such it be—of defeating the bill in the House, by moving its indefinite postponement; and those who blindly followed his lead will live to regret their hasty injustice to the Florida Press.

Among the numerous expressions of the State papers on the subject we find the following:

The newspaper libel law bill which the State Press Association prepared to pass through the present Legislature has apparently been killed, having been indefinitely postponed on motion of Dr. Julian, of Columbia county. Just what consideration of public duty or legal equity prompted the Columbia county representative in this action are not known, but one thing certain, the members of the State press will always feel grateful to Hon. J. Campbell Avery for his efforts in support of the bill. Mr. Avery introduced it, got a favorable report upon it from the committee, and ably defended it on the floor of the House.—Pensacola Journal.

The Metropolis has often said and says again that newspapers have few friends in the Florida Legislature. What friendship existed was while the members were candidates and before elected. The ungratefulness of some members of the Legislature should be remembered by every editor and publisher in the State. That the proposed amendment should be killed by a member from the home of the secretary of the Senate and from the place where the last session of the State Press Association assembled was about the unkindest cut of all. Session after session the newspaper men of Florida have sought to have this unjust and partial libel law amended so as to give all parties an equal show before the courts but invariably it has failed. All honor to Mr. Avery and the other members who supported the bill. They are friends of the newspapers, and where has one of those opponents to newspapers distinguished himself as a developer of his section equal to a newspaper?—Jacksonville Metropolis.

The Tribune is heartily disgusted with the average politician. The newspapers make them and as a general thing they are the most ungrateful set of nincompoops on the horizon. The papers of this State should spot every mother's son of them who opposed this bill and the minute their heads bob up again for political preferment and emoluments a crack should be taken at them that will forever sever their political aspirations from their putrid anatomy. They are a diminutive set at the best.—Tampa Tribune.

PENSACOLA PERSONALITIES.

The Jasper News suggests the name of Hon. W. A. Blount, of Pensacola, for the next gubernatorial vacancy, and the Chipley Banner seconds the suggestion, remarking that "a better selection could not be made." It is too early to consider the matter of choosing a successor to Governor Broward; and, although it is clearly West Florida's turn, Senator Blount is not likely to entertain any such aspirations.

Concerning the recent appointment of Judge Charles B. Parkhill to the Supreme Bench, the Pensacola Journal aptly says:

The appointment of Judge Charles B. Parkhill to the Supreme Court will remove from Pensacola one of the most universally esteemed and deservedly popular gentlemen whom Pensacola has ever had the privilege of claiming as a citizen. A sterling Democrat, a polished orator, a charming conversationalist, and, withal, a typical gentleman, Judge Parkhill has a personality which few men possess and which fewer men still can resist, and he holds a place in the hearts of Pensacolians which no ordinary man could obtain. In common with his other legion of friends in this city, The Journal congratulates Judge Parkhill upon his appointment, but it cannot help expressing the regret which all feel at losing him as a neighbor and citizen. He will, beyond question, shed luster upon the position which so many able men have occupied before him, and in it all no one will rejoice more in his good fortune and his increased honor than will his friends in the Deep Water City.

THE WAILES CLAIM.

The extraordinary result of the proceedings in the Senate on Monday in the matter of the Wailes claim is beyond rational explanation, and hence no good purpose could be served by attempting an analysis of the vote, or of the motives of those who voted. A simple, plain statement of the facts as they occurred will abundantly inform the public concerning the transaction.

When the House bill amending the act of 1903 so as to pay \$12,500 each to S. I. Wailes and the Beard estate came to the Senate the judiciary committee presented a substitute providing that the claimants should be authorized to appeal to the courts, by bringing suit against the State in any court of competent jurisdiction for the amount claimed as commissions on the collection of the Indian war claim. After debate, the Senate rejected the amendment to the House bill (being the substitute above mentioned), by a vote of 15 to 16, as follows:

Yeas—Senators Bailey, Blount, Crill, Davis, Harris, Hudson, Humphries, McCreary, Newlan, Raney, Sams, Scott, Stockton, West and Wilson—15.

Nays—Mr. President, Senators Adams, Alford, Baskin, Canova, Clarke, Crane, Crews, Faulkner, Gillen, Jackson, Lee, Massey, Neel, Wadsworth and Zim—16.

Whereupon, Senator Harris moved to indefinitely postpone the House bill which was before the Senate, and, in the language of the war correspondents, "the incident was closed."

As above intimated, we do not care to discuss the matter farther at this time, but will be content with the remark that now Florida is fairly and squarely in the ranks of those sovereign States which have deliberately repudiated their just obligations, simply because they had the power to do so; and the prediction that Florida will yet have to pay the Wailes claim in full with interest.

A TAMPA CRITICISM.

"One of the most serious handicaps under which the people of Florida labor in the matter of legislation," says the Tampa Times, "is the absence of a paper at Tallahassee strong enough to report proceedings fully each day, so that every member of the Legislature would have the preceding day's business fully reported and laid by his plate at the breakfast table. It would wonderfully clear up the air and promote business—not to speak of the greatest familiarity of the public at large with the doings of the solons."

Tampa is a busy, hustling, modern and tolerably well-populated city, and supports three daily newspapers, of which the Times is justly regarded as about the most up-to-date and enterprising; yet, strange to say, its editor appears by the above to be unfamiliar with the course of legislative procedure, in which a record of the preceding day's business is supposed to be supplied to each member of the Legislature and to the public, at the opening of each daily session—if not at the breakfast table.

It is quite true that the service of the daily journals is frequently defective, and that sometimes the members do not see the journals of the previous day until late in the forenoon; but the theory is all right, and the publication of a real daily newspaper at Tallahassee would scarcely prove an acceptable substitute for the official journals.

So far as the publication of a daily newspaper at the Capital is concerned, everybody knows that one really worthy of the name could not be made to pay expenses, save for the sixty days during the session every two years, and even that is doubtful; nevertheless, the proprietor of The True Democrat contemplates its publication daily during the next session of the Legislature.

Elsewhere we reproduce an editorial from the Jacksonville Times-Union concerning the habit of criticism of the Legislature, and wish to add our warmest commendation of the spirit of the article. Criticism, as the Times-Union says, may be expected, but only from those whose view of the results of the session is restricted to the immediate subject in which they are interested. Of this class The True Democrat confesses itself a member, with reference to the defeat of the amendment to the libel law. But the class is a small one, and the sum total of critical complaint will not be such as to greatly disturb the ex-legislators.

Mr. Beeman, the sewerage contractor, has completed his contract and the sewerage plant has been accepted by the city engineer. Mr. Beeman returned to his old home in Louisville, Ky., last Sunday. He expects to bring his family here this fall.

THE UNIVERSITY REPORT.

We printed last week a synopsis of the report of the committee which investigated the Florida University at Lake City, together with a denial of the committee's statements by the Jacksonville Times-Union. Although the passage of the Buckman bill practically eliminates many of the issues raised in the matter of the university, public interest remains centered upon the real conditions existing there, and the execution of the law as enacted must be largely affected by such conditions.

In addition to the prompt editorial response of the Times-Union to the charges made in the committee's report, the president of the institution has published in that journal an extended and elaborate defense, and Editor Harris, of the Ocala Banner, a member of the board of trustees, also comes to the rescue with a lengthy editorial protest. Each of these articles is too long to be reproduced in these columns, but they should be consulted by every one desirous of forming a correct judgment in the premises.

Appropos of this and other investigating committee reports the Palatka Times-Herald pertinently remarks:

Perhaps never before have Florida Legislative committees appointed to inspect the State institutions made reports so plainly and pointedly worded as those which have recently startled the people of Florida. The committees, luckily, consisted of men who were determined to themselves inspect the institutions visited, and to make a faithful report of their findings. In years past these investigating trips were regarded as nothing more nor less than pleasure junkets—at most merely a matter of form. We remember that a few years since a disgraceful state of affairs existed at a well-known educational institution, and the members of the committee, before they left Tallahassee, were notified of these conditions. Yet, despite all this, the committee reported everything "lovely." No real examination of the buildings—no effort in fact, was made to investigate the conduct of the management of the school. It has been hinted that the "findings" were written by a member of the faculty long before the arrival of the committee on the scene. This case was perhaps but one of many.

THE REFORM SCHOOL.

Among the numerous reports of investigating committees, that of Messrs. Herndon and Sparkman of the House, and Neel, of the Senate, on the State Reform School at Marianna, was one of complete approval of everything connected with that institution, and in the absence of any charge or suspicion of "whitewashing," it must be accepted as true.

The report is too long for reproduction here, but the following extracts will indicate its character:

We feel free to say that we are agreeably surprised with what we found at this institution after hearing so much criticism of late through the newspapers and otherwise.

After investigating everything carefully connected with the school and farm, we do not hesitate to say that the appropriation asked for in the report be granted, believing as we do that with proper legislation it will in a few years be not only self-sustaining, but a source of revenue to the State. It is a humane institution, and in our opinion all persons under the age of 18 years should be sent there instead of the chaingang, also all old, infirm prisoners who are unable to do hard labor, as they would be a great aid in instructing the young prisoners in their work on the farm.

We recommend that the laws governing the institution be so amended that there will be no further trouble in enforcing them. We further recommend that it be made the duty of the committing court to furnish a history of the child as far as possible; parents, place of birth, chronic disease, if any, use of intoxicants, tobacco, cigarettes, etc.

These statements scarcely coincide with those made by Hon. Wm. H. Milton, of Marianna, chairman of the board of managers, published in a Marianna newspaper, in March last, and commented on in The True Democrat of March 24.

Which ever is the truth, we sincerely hope that the legislation enacted at the session just ended may result in benefit to this important and necessary State institution.

A Card of Thanks.

To the Members of the House of Representatives:

I had the honor to be elected by your vote to be Page of the House of Representatives for this session, and it gave me great pleasure to be under you and to wait upon you as it was my duty. From what I have seen I think I have had the honor to wait upon the best people of this great State of Florida; and to think that this great honor has been placed upon me, a little country cracker, is something of which I am proud.

Will you permit me to thank you again for the favor you did me, I have the honor to be,

Yours very respectfully,
HARRY B. FANNIN,
Page of the House of Representatives.

COLLEGE LOCATIONS.

The location of the several State educational institutions which escaped annihilation or are endowed with new life by the provisions of the Buckman College Law—as it must now be called—is as yet a matter of considerable uncertainty. Section Seventeen of the act contains the provisions relating to this feature of the upheaval, and is as follows:

In determining the location of the University of the State of Florida, created and established by this act, the said boards in joint meeting assembled shall take into consideration the lands, property, buildings and situation of the respective institutions named in and abolished by this act, having regard to the permanent location of such an institution at some central point in the State, both geographically and as to population, as well as to the needs and requirements of the same as prescribed in this act and the powers given thereunder, and the funds and means at their command, or which may naturally come to the control of the State Board of Education for such purposes, and may, if advisable, after careful consideration, appropriate either temporarily or permanently, the location, lands, buildings, property and effects of any one of said vacated and abolished institutions for such purposes. Said board being hereby vested with an absolute discretion and power in the matter of location and situs of this said institution. That in the location of the Florida Female College hereby created, said boards are hereby authorized and empowered to locate and fix the same (after they shall have located the said university) at one of the places occupied by any one of the said abolished institutions under this act, having especial regard for the character and condition of the grounds, buildings and structures thereon of such abolished institutions as they may select, its location as to health and accessibility, and its adaptability to the particular needs of such an institution. Said boards are hereby further authorized, directed and empowered to change the location of the Institute for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, heretofore created, if they shall deem such change of location wise and expedient, and after they have selected and located the said University of the State of Florida and the said Florida Female College; in case they shall determine to change the location of the Institute for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, they shall change the same to and locate the same at one of the places now occupied by some one of the said abolished institutions which they shall select for such purpose, not already selected by them for the purposes herein provided, having due regard for the necessity and requirements of the same, its situation and accessibility, and its adaptability to the purposes of such institution, and in selecting said location shall have due regard and make provisions for the complete separation, but with equal consistent accommodation and within reach and under the control of the same corps of officers, teachers and managers of the white and colored inmates of the same, so that there will be no admixture or association of the races.

"KNOCKING" THE LEGISLATURE.

From the Times-Union:
The Gainesville Sun says: "The Legislature will now be in line to be 'cussed out' by the State press for the next two months." The State press is already squaring itself for that biennial amusement. The bouquets so liberally showered on this Legislature less than two months ago are already faded, withered.

What is the use of having a Legislature if we can't have some fun "cussing it out?" Only the greenest of lawmakers could have gone to Tallahassee expecting to win the plaudits of the people and the press by this time. The task of pleasing everybody has never yet been accomplished. Each section and each class of the people is likely to see some pet measure defeated.

The criticisms already made in the State press are only an earnest of what is to come. If the legislators now at Tallahassee are not pachyderms they may well wish they were after the coming week. The only consolation any of them can have can come only to him who has pasted in his scrapbook some of the flattering things said about this same Legislature when it first met, its superior intelligence, the fine moral standing of its membership, etc.

Democracy still survives in this nation, and the privilege we exercise of criticisms our lawmakers because they have not done the impossible is one of the few proofs we have of it. But, in truth, the present Legislature has done less harm, so far, as a body exercised more common sense in killing off foolish legislation and promises to leave less behind it to be regretted than almost any former Florida Legislature. Its record is cleaner and it has shown more wisdom than the Legislatures of some half a dozen other state can boast of. These are times when the opinions of men on political and economic subjects are changing rapidly, and the present Legislature has shown a commendable conservatism.

Whether the lawmakers at Tallahassee will yet do something to merit scorn and raise general anger remains to be seen. They have a week longer in which to do it. But their course in the past eight weeks warrants the presumption that the closing hours of the Legislature of 1905 will be marked with moderation, conservatism and wisdom.

Rear Admiral Nebogetoff, true to his name didn't get off—but was taken prisoner as he was about To-go.

For clean Job Printing, see Collins.