

THE TRUE DEMOCRAT.

JOHN G. COLLINS, Publisher.

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Tallahassee, Friday, June 23, 1905.

An unknown correspondent at Tallahassee of the Tampa Tribune has amused himself, and with little credit to his own judgment, by anonymously lambasting the Legislature and some of its investigating committees. Those who have seen this extraordinary screed should remember that its anonymous writer does not at all reflect the public sentiment of Tallahassee concerning the matters he discusses.

The old adage to the effect that it is the hit dog which howls, is strikingly illustrated by the appearance, since the adjournment of the Legislature, of a few ill-natured and entirely undeserved criticisms of that body and some of its committees. A remarkable feature of these newspaper comments and correspondence is the fact that they invariably emanate from well-known champions of the late unlamented Jennings administration.

As predicted in these columns, the Pensacola city election resulted in a tremendous victory for the candidate for Mayor, C. H. Bliss, who had been nominated in a Democratic primary. The efforts of his opponent, led by the outgoing Mayor and the Daily News, to discredit the primary and elect independent candidates, were fitly rebuked at the polls and it seems certain that the attempt will never again be repeated, in Pensacola or elsewhere.

Under the Everglade drainage law enacted at the recent session the drainage commission authorized by the act has been organized by the choice of Governor Broward as president, with Treasurer Knott, Comptroller Croom, Attorney-General Ellis and Commissioner of Agriculture McLin as the other members, and M. A. Brown, secretary. The commission began its work by designating the limits of the first drainage district, to include the area commonly known as "the Everglades" and lists of the lands embraced therein are being prepared.

No one will deny to Hon. Frank Harris, editor of the Ocala Banner, the distinction of being "the Nestor of the Florida Press." Not only is he one of the oldest men engaged in the business of journalism in Florida, but he possesses a record far more remarkable than any other Florida newspaper man can boast. His excellent journal, of which he was the founder, has recently completed its fortieth year of continuous existence under his management. Long may the Banner wave, and long may genial Frank Harris be its able and distinguished editor!

A new train between New York and Chicago is scheduled to make the run of 905 miles in eighteen hours, a speed of more than 50 miles per hour, including stops. Some record-breaking runs on American railroads are: Michigan Central special, April 27, 1904, Niagara Falls to Windsor, 225.6 miles, in 191 1-2 minutes; Empire State Express, July 10, 1904, New York to Buffalo, 440 miles in 375 minutes; Twentieth Century Limited, October 20, 1904, Buffalo to Chicago, 540 miles in 480 minutes; Pennsylvania Special June 8, 1905, Chicago to Pittsburg, 468 miles in 440 minutes. This is, in truth, a record-breaking age, and the American railroads are maintaining their reputation most brilliantly.

The Jacksonville Time-Union, with characteristic enterprise and liberality, has devoted a large space to its editorial page to the controversy over the location of the several State institutions of learning provided for in the Buckman college law, and in each issue appear strongly written arguments in favor of the respective locations contending for the honor. "A Citizen," writing from Tallahassee, had in Monday's issue one of the most effective articles that has yet appeared, urging the claims of the capital city as the best location for the university. If the people of Tallahassee really want that institution located here, they should assemble in mass meeting and prepare and adopt a formal address to the Board of Control, setting forth in the strongest terms of which the language is capable, the advantages possessed by the city as a location for the university, and select a strong committee to appear before the board and present and urge the same.

The number of visitors to Louisville last week it is thought will exceed 100,000. That city has made elaborate arrangements to entertain the old soldiers, and over \$40,000 has been spent in decorations and illuminations alone.

THE I. I. FUND.

In his message vetoing the act to require the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund to pay into the State treasury all moneys in their possession, etc., Governor Broward cites the swamp land act of Congress of 1850 and the act of 1855 creating the board, and declares that the moneys controlled by the board are "not subject to legislative control."

While it is true that the act of 1855 vested in the board "irrevocably" the lands and their proceeds, is it not also true that no Legislature can "irrevocably" bind and control the action of its successors, and that a law made by one Legislature may be repealed or amended or modified by any of its successors? If this is true, the Legislature of 1905 had the right and the power to abolish the board by the repeal of the act of 1855, and therefore it had the right and the power to amend that law (and it was amended subsequent to its enactment), and to change or modify it in any manner it might see fit to do.

Is it not also true that for many years the Legislature has assumed control of these very lands, granting them to railroad and canal companies, the board conveying the titles in accordance with the terms of the several grants? If the Legislature could thus grant the lands, does its power stop there, and not extend to the proceeds of those sold by the board?

Another curious thing occurred in connection with the expressed functions of the board, "to the purpose of reclaiming said lands by means of levees and drains." Why was it necessary for the accomplishment of this purpose in the Everglades that a new board should be created, with functions practically identical with those of the I. I. board, and for identically the same purpose?

The new "drainage commission" appears to be quite a useless appendage to the old board, although composed of the same officials as members. Why incur the expense of two boards, for the execution of the same purpose, when one would have sufficed?

Still another feature, quite as remarkable, is the reason given by the Governor for vetoing the act providing for the auditing of the accounts of the I. I. board by the State auditor, viz: That it was not broad enough to compass the investigation which the Governor seemed to regard as necessary. Half a loaf is better than none at all; and if, in practice, the auditor's work should be found to be restricted by the terms of the act, nothing would have been easier than to enlarge his powers at the next session of the Legislature.

These queries are not made in a spirit of captious criticism of the action of the Legislature or the Executive, but from a sincere desire to draw out, from those competent to answer them, such response as may inform the public as to the true state of affairs.

The Tallahassee True Democrat refers to former Governor Jennings as a carpet-bag Governor. This is evidently a fair sample of what that paper believes to be true Democracy. Evidently for the simple reason that former Governor Jennings did, in some way, differ from the ideas of the Tallahassee paper as regards policy, he must be designated as a carpet-bag Governor, thus insulting every man in the State that comes from another State—and there are thousands of them in Florida, and what would we do without them—simply because of a difference of opinion. It is a pity that men with such narrow ideas can stand before the public as expounders of political principles, because no good can come to the State as a whole by such characterizations as this. The Herald respects the opinions of the Democrat, but differs with it as to the manner of its expressions and feelings toward men who have helped greatly in the development of the State.—Tampa Herald.

The only response to the foregoing which The True Democrat regards as at all necessary or expedient is to remark—what every other reader except the Herald must have noted—that the reference to Jennings as a carpet-bag governor was the similarity existing between his methods and those of Florida's former Republican carpet-bag governors, rather than to the accident of his birth-place. The True Democrat in common with all true Florida Democrats, respects, esteems and heartily welcomes all good people who come to Florida from other States, North and South, to make their homes among us and become good citizens, with respect to their political affiliations.

It is said that the asylum will doubtless be moved before another two years have passed. If it was stationed at Tallahassee it would certainly be more convenient for the Legislature to investigate and the Cabinet officers to oversee. The question that is doubtless troubling some is, how are these mammoth brick buildings to be moved about over the country?—Quincy Times.

STATE PRINTING CONTRACTS.

The time is fast approaching when the Board of State Institutions will be required to advertise for bids for the execution of the State printing for the two years from October 1, 1905, to October 1, 1907.

As that board is primarily responsible for the acceptance of and payment for the work done under State printing contracts, whenever complaint is made to it of deficiencies in the character of the work which would operate as violations of the contract, it would seem that much of the "rotten work" of which so much general complaint has been made might have been corrected and made to pass muster, by reprinting according to the contract, if the proper representation of the facts had been duly made to the board by the several officials for whom the work was done; that the defects in the work were not so corrected indicates that the board was not properly or officially informed concerning violations of the contract.

So much has been said, however,—in the newspapers, in public and in private—concerning the character of the work performed during recent years, that the members of the board are doubtless now fully advised in the premises, and the board, as a body, cannot plead ignorance of existing conditions.

It is therefore extremely probable that in making the new contract for the ensuing two years, and in watching and supervising the execution of the same, the officials composing the board will adopt the most rigid and effective measures to protect the interests of the people, whose servants they are, and to prevent in the future, a recurrence of the experiences of the past.

In the first place, the proceedings of the board in the matter of opening and considering the bids are of the most vital importance. Evidence exists (and was ready to be presented to the Senate investigating committee if the same had been called for and drawn out) concerning the manner in which the contract for the State printing was awarded two years ago, and the circumstances under which the bids were made four years ago, which, if known to the board as a body, would have reflected little credit upon it as a guardian of the people's interests. Of course, now that the present contract is nearing its end, and the legislative committee failed to probe the matter to the bottom, no good purpose could be gained by dwelling upon that which is past, except to use it as a warning for the future.

The leaking of important information concerning the probable amount to be required of any particular class or classes or items of printing should be carefully guarded against. The consideration of the bids in private by any person or persons not members of the board, for the ostensible purpose of ascertaining the relative merits of the respective bids, should be absolutely forbidden. The bids should, of course, be opened and considered by the board in public, and in the presence of all bidders or their representatives who may desire to attend. In short, there should be no possible opportunity or chance for advantage of any one bidder over another. Nothing less than this will be honest; nothing less will satisfy those who propose putting in bids.

The character and business reputation of bidders should be a prime factor in the decision of the board. Any person who has been known or shown to have violated previous printing contracts should be summarily barred from the contest. Neither the State nor the board can afford to do business with that sort. The bids should be required to name the bondsmen who will stand for the execution of the contract. And the widest possible publicity should be given the call for bids, to the end that every printing concern or every individual printer in the State who may be disposed to bid on the work may do so understandingly.

Our printer friends throughout the State should remember that the State printing for the term beginning October 1 will include the printing of the Revised Statutes and several back volumes of Supreme Court reports, besides other work which can be done elsewhere than at the capital. So far as we are concerned, we want only a fair deal for every printer who desires to bid, and we shall labor to that end regardless of our own special interests.

Summer Tourist Rates

Now on sale, via G. F. and A. Ry. and C. T. and G. R. R., to all Mountain and Water Resorts. Elegant schedules and splendid sleeping car connections made to all points.

For rates and other information, phone 26, or address R. C. Snipes, Traveling Passenger Agent, Tallahassee, Fla.

THE EQUITABLE WRECK.

Although the report of the investigating committee of stockholders in the Equitable Life Assurance Co. to the board of directors was rejected by that body, its publication could not have been less than a revelation to the policy holders. Its statements of facts do not appear to have been even doubted, and they include such counts as the following: That securities of doubtful or actually small value had been unloaded upon the society by underwriting syndicates composed of individuals who composed a majority of the executive and finance committees, including President Alexander and Vice President Hyde, both of whom the committee declares were "guilty of a serious breach of trust;" that the president had been "culpably negligent" in his relations with Vice President Hyde, openly encouraging the practices of which he now complains; that salaries have been unduly increased, and that all of the officials who were cognizant of irregularities in their several departments, and which are shown to have existed in nearly every branch of the management, are equally guilty of failure to promptly correct or report the same.

According to the reports of the officers the business of the society in May was eight millions less than in May 1904, the amount of insurance in force June 1 was less than at the beginning of May, and the record for June promised to be worse than that for the month of May.

While this exposure of the methods whereby the interests and safety of the policy holders are imperiled may not be "the beginning of the end" for the Equitable, there exists no doubt that it will hereafter be exceedingly difficult to induce any one to patronize the society, and the panic-stricken policy holders of other "old line" companies will be on the anxious seat until time and shrewd management shall have convinced them that it is to their interest to continue to pour their surplus earnings into the coffers of the big institutions in the shape of "investments," when the chances are that they could much more wisely and cheaply manage their own accumulations.

The fact is, that life insurance as now practiced by the big—and little—"old line" companies, is not for protection—except as an incident—but for the gratification of the spirit of acquisition, to get a great deal for a little, something for nothing. The only real, genuine protection men secure through life insurance is by the assessment plan, a purely mutual and reciprocal benefit, equal to all, and dangerous to none.

ABOUT LAKE CITY.

While The True Democrat firmly believes that neither Lake City, nor Gainesville, nor any other place in Florida possesses qualifications for the location of the State University superior to those of Tallahassee, and that Tallahassee possesses advantages in which others lack, its interest in the heated controversy now going on between the two cities named is in a measure purely academic; and it believes that the Board of Control, in locating the university and the other State institutions, will scarcely be affected or influenced by the multiplication of words in behalf of one or the other of these two contending aspirants.

Actual evidence, however, differs from forensic contention, and when furnished by a competent witness is of real value; hence we reproduce from the Ocala Banner, whose editor has for years been a member of the board of trustees of the college at Lake City, the following testimony concerning the fitness of that place:

If Lake City shall lose the University of Florida it will be largely her own fault and she will have herself to blame. Almost since the birth of the institution the lives of its presidents have been made "uneasy as the head that wears a crown."

From Kost to Sledd, a period of more than twenty years, it has almost been a continuous repetition of the same story.

Dr. Andrew Sledd, the present head of the university, son of a distinguished Virginian, son-in-law of the famous Georgian, Bishop Candler, and as grand and pure a man as ever put foot on Florida soil, a man of great intellectuality and strength of character, and by education and training splendidly fitted for the position he occupies, was held up to public censure in the Florida Legislature by one of Columbia county's own representatives.

The institution is a veritable "fiery furnace," through which its presidents and officials are made to pass like the Hebrew children of ancient times.

Lake City has permitted the institution to become mixed up in its local politics and factional fights, and in consequence of which its hands have not been upheld by its people and its usefulness

The State University.

The people of Lake City owe a debt of gratitude to Senators Gillen and Adams for the successful fight they made for the University which they can never repay.—Lake City Index.

We have known for years of the existence in Lake City of factions, political divisions, strifes, and betimes disgusting scandals in connection with her school system. The public generally has been apprised that a large part of the community were not in sympathy with the State University.

But with all this before us, we were not prepared for the above statement on the part of the Index. Senators Gillen and Adams voted for the bill, that in one fell blow abolished the University of Florida, located at Lake City, and the Index says that the people of Lake City owe a debt of gratitude to these gentlemen for their successful fight.

Is this a confession that the presence of the University is obnoxious to the people of Lake City? That they do not want a State institution of learning in their midst? What other interpretation can be given?

Perhaps this is the method that they have adopted to serve notice upon the Board of Trustees, provided for in the Buckman bill, that they do not desire the new University to be placed there; that they feel grateful that the old one has been abolished and don't care to be annoyed with another. Certainly the Board of Trustees will not attempt to force upon the people of Lake City an institution that they do not want.

No school can thrive in an antagonized atmosphere. The establishment of a University is a momentous undertaking. The social, moral, political, religious and intellectual environment should all be favorable to its growth and development.

Let the Board consider well the surroundings before fixing upon a location of the State University.—A. C., in Palatka Times-Herald.

Legislative Criticisms.

The last Legislature, as to its leading members, was as remarkable for its economy as its predecessor was for extravagance and waste. It is well remembered that the timely veto of divers appropriations made in 1903, saved the State from actual bankruptcy. And the clamor which was raised for even greater appropriations at the opening of the session of 1905 evidently moved that body to pass the Buckman bill which abolished every institution heretofore receiving State aid.

The DeFuniak school, the State University, the Gainesville Seminary, the Tallahassee Seminary, the Bartow Military academy and the St. Petersburg Industrial school were all wiped out at a stroke, in so far as State aid is concerned, and provision made for the establishment of two State universities—one for women and one for men. This was a sweeping and radical change, the purport and effect of which will not be understood until the change is completed.

But in view of the fact that politics cuts so great a figure in all smaller details of our State affairs we must be pardoned for the belief that the Legislature made an egregious, if not a cowardly blunder—by creating another political machine who shall have the power of selection of sites for the colleges or universities that are to be established.

Why did not the Legislature do their duty and name these places? Are the 100 wise representatives of the people less capable of settling this question than the small body of regents created by them for that duty?

The visiting committee to the University at Lake City had given that institution a backhanded blow as to its buildings, its attendance, etc., without ever touching upon the questions of insubordination or want of discipline that has smirched the character of the institution. And while it is not a pleasant thing to speak of, it is nevertheless a crying shame that in the highest institution of learning of the State, that a game of fistcuffs between the president and a student should occur. This emphasizes the duty of the Legislature to do its duty, and not delegate it to others.—Braidenton Herald.

The legislative committee certainly discovered a great deal of rottenness when it investigated the administration of the asylum for the insane at Chattahoochee, and this rottenness has been there for years. Governor Broward and the standing committee appointed by the Legislature should make a thorough investigation, and give to the people of the State all the facts in this shame and disgrace on Florida, and also see that every official knowing such conditions to exist is kicked out of the institution, prosecuted and punished.—Volusia County Record.

Rev. J. Edgar Wilson, presiding elder of the Tallahassee district, dropped in on us one day last week and brightened our sanctum by his genial presence. He reports his district in fine condition; his pastors well, happy and hopeful.—Florida Christian Advocate.

has been hampered and at times almost paralyzed.

Here recently when the attack was made upon it by the legislative visiting committee and it wanted defenders on the floor of the Legislature, its home representatives were its worst detractors. It was sorely wounded in the house of its friends.

The people of Florida, outside of Lake City, are beginning to feel that the University ought to be located where it will not be subjected to those constant perils; where it will be more loyally upheld and where all pull together as one man for its success.