

tions by skilled surgeons who have no interest adverse to the Government.

"The most simple and efficient, and at the same time economical plan which I am able to suggest, is as follows: divide the country into districts of such size, considering both the territory and population, as that one surgeon devoting his whole time to the duties would generally be able to make all the medical examinations in any district which the pension laws might require. Appoint as many highly-qualified surgeons as there are districts, with a reasonable annual salary, all to be under the direction of the Commissioner of Pensions; one surgeon to be assigned to each district, subject to be ordered from place to place within the district, and to be changed about from one district to another as the emergencies of the service might require. One competent clerk should be sent to each district to act in conjunction with the surgeon, or separately, as his duties and the regulations of the Commissioner of Pensions should from time to time require. These two should constitute a commission on behalf of the Government to make the required medical examinations in any case, and to receive the parol testimony offered in its support; and to that end the claimant, with his principal witnesses, should appear before them and submit themselves to cross-examination on behalf of the Government. If a material witness resides in another district, his testimony should be taken by the commission of that district and forwarded to the commission having the case in hand. When the claimant has furnished all the proof he desires to furnish, and submitted to such examinations as are required, the whole case to be transmitted to the office for final settlement.

"This commission may be generally charged with the special investigation in the district.

"In case it should be found that work was accumulating in any district faster than the regular commission could dispose of it, a clerk could be detailed from the office for a limited period to aid in bringing it up.

"This plan is simple, and its methods and detail equally simple and direct.

"When an application for a pension is received at the office, copies of the records from the Adjutant General and Surgeon General's offices bearing on the case would be obtained, and, together with the application, forwarded to the commission of the district where the claimant resides. He will at the same time be notified that the case is ready to be proceeded with, and to present himself with his witnesses to the commission for examination.

"The principle upon which this plan is grounded, is universally adopted in civilized communities for the settlement of doubtful or contested questions of fact, and the plan itself is not entirely new; at most, it is but the application of an old plan to a new class of cases. It is suggested by ancient precedents, as well as by the modern practice of the courts, both of law and equity, in referring cases to a master or referee to take and report testimony."

The objections to this new plan readily occur, and will be discussed at length at another time. We are of the opinion, however, that such an arrangement would work to the disadvantage of the great majority of pensioners, although it would save a few dollars to the Government. It would reduce the rate of pension in many cases, and cause thousands of honest pensioners to be stricken from the rolls.

It would seem, a better plan to increase the efficiency of the service than that suggested by Commissioner Bentley, would be to add a sufficient number of clerks to the force on duty in the Surgeon General's Office, to bring the work up to date; to make a corresponding increase in the Pension Office, to apply the evidence as rapidly as received from the Surgeon General's Office; to rate the clerks in the Pension Office as examiners, and assistant examiners, as in the Patent Office, with corresponding salaries; increase the pay of examining surgeons to three dollars per case, and in obscure cases to five dollars; increase the pay of the Commissioner of Pensions to the same amount as that received by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue; give him a largely increased special service fund, to pay for the proper investigation of suspected frauds. Give him these additional facilities for the transaction of business, increase his discretionary powers, and make the Office more permanent, by removing it from politics.

It Should be Repealed.

There is a section of the Revised Statutes which causes a great deal of inconvenience, and works great injustice to the pensioners of the United States, and Congress should repeal it. It is section 4717, and places a limitation on the prosecution of claims for pensions where no record evidence exists in the War or Navy Department, to the effect that if they are not complied with in five years from the date of filing,

no further consideration will be allowed. It is often the case that claimants who contracted specific diseases during the war, are unable to show record evidence of hospital treatment.

Sometimes the regimental surgeon who treated them is dead, or cannot be reached, so that his affidavit may be taken. In other instances the disease did not appear until the time of discharge, or after the discharge of the soldier, although the fact that it was contracted in the service cannot be questioned. Men who suffered from disease, and yet performed their duty as soldiers until their discharge, are debarred from relief under this section, while they may be quite as much entitled to pensions as those who can corroborate their claim by the hospital records.

We hope this section will have the early attention of Congress and be repealed, for it is a hindrance to the prosecution of just claims; and for every fraud that it prevents, it debars ten honest men from receiving their dues.

PUT THEM BACK ON THE ROLLS.

There being political objections on the part of some Republicans to the passage of a bill restoring to the pension rolls those soldiers of the war of 1812 and the Mexican war, who were residents of the Southern States during the rebellion, we consider the speech of Hon. Martin L. Townsend, of New York, as a sufficient answer to them. Mr. Townsend is as radical a Republican as there is in Congress. When the bill was under debate in the House, he said:

Mr. Chairman, as one of the committee who reported this bill, I made this matter a subject of serious reflection. I had some doubt as to what I ought to do, but reflection taught me that I ought to restore, as far as my vote would go, these old men to the positions that they occupied before the war. They are every one of them invalids, every one of them old men. There is not a man of them who has not seen more years than myself. They could not have rendered, from their age and condition, any considerable service to the cause of the rebellion. They have simply been guilty of participating in the feelings of the neighborhoods in which they were born. I am a man of pretty strong prejudices, and I feel the wrong of the rebellion about as strongly as any man can feel it, and yet I know that a man who does not feel to some degree as his neighbors feel in times of excitement, is either less or more than a man; and I do not appreciate very highly the crime which these old men have committed in sympathizing—my friends on the other side must not find fault with it—in the craze of 1861. I feel now, sir, that I am doing not what the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. Banks] says, paying a debt—no, not a debt, for the acts of these men forfeited all their claims as such upon the Government—but I feel that in going for this measure I am doing an act of kindness that I owe to myself, that I owe to the good men of the neighborhood that I represent, that I owe to the feelings of the North, a Representative here representing northern men; and I wish it may be so that those sympathizing with me in my politics might vote as our friends voted in the last Congress, that we shall come forward and do an act of magnanimity to these men who, in the dark days of our Government, came forward and struggled manfully for the right, then, as our boys who wore the blue stood up manfully in the cause of the Government yesterday. I want to do this act as an act of right, and, having done it as an act of right, I want to ask my friends on the other side of the House, coming from the southern side of the Potomac, when you come to get on the hustings once more, do remember, among the hard things you charge upon us—you do not charge us often with hard things here, but to your own people—do tell them that sometimes the northern heart is not quite as hard as it is often represented to be.

Now, sir, I believe this act due on the part of the minority, due to ourselves. It is a duty to ourselves and a duty to our constituents to vote for this bill. What is it? It is a great sum; it is \$500,000; that is about the amount of the money we give to these men, the money which had been suspended; but if it amounted to \$5,000,000, I would pay it. I am not one of those who believe that the country is so much distressed as everybody is representing it to be. It is more distressed by the howling of men here on the one side and on the other than from any other cause. I felt so the other day when the salaries of our foreign ministers were cut down below the position they ought to occupy in the courts to which we send them to represent the country. I felt that the country was not so much distressed as that it could do wrong. We are too poor to afford that; and as to this sum of money proposed to be paid to these old men, we cannot afford to go on without paying it. And I should wish, in honor of the country, in honor of the party to which I belong, in honor of the section of the country from which I come, that we should vote now, as our representatives did in the last Congress and the Congress before, to pay to these men the money they would have had but for the excited condition of affairs in which they lived and participated; but in the wrong-doing that occurred they could take no active part.

No soldier should incur the expense of executing applications for bounty under the Equalization Bill until it has passed both houses of Congress and been approved by the President. You will be informed when that is accomplished, through the columns of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE. Then a proper form of application will be prescribed by the accounting officers of the Treasury. Applications on any form other than the one so prescribed, will be worthless. The first thing is to get the bill passed. Use every endeavor to that end, then there will be time enough to enjoy its provisions. Retain your discharges.

An unjust discrimination is made in favor of the examiners of the Patent office, to the injustice of the examiners of the Pension Office. It requires as much judgment, skill, and education to fill one place as the other, yet there is a wide difference of salaries; and in the Pension Office there is no system of promotion from one rank of examiners to a higher, as there is in the Patent Office. The whole organization of the Pension Office should be changed, and a new system of appointments and promotions introduced.

About some of our Senators.

THE LEADERS ON EITHER SIDE AND HOW THEY DIFFER.

OLD AND NEW FACES—THE MARKED MEN FROM THE SOUTH AND WEST.

If Oliver Perry Morton dies, the Republicans in the Senate will have lost their balance-wheel and will work at zigzags. He is the author and promoter of more great measures than any man who has been identified with American legislation. Since he has been in the Senate nothing of moment has succeeded without his aid; everything of moment that he has opposed has failed. A chronic invalid; a man whose physical life has been tormented for twelve years; who has not drawn a breath without pain for that long time, he has been the Hercules to hold up the Republican world when the knees of Atlas have been staggering. He is like nothing more than the great balance-wheel of an engine. The force may have originated in an abstract motive; other men may have supplied the material and the minor parts of the machinery, but Morton, when he has engaged himself, has been the receptacle of all the force, and by constant, even revolutions, has expended that force upon the object sought, until it has been accomplished. There is no man now in the Senate who can take his place. There is no man living who can fill it. It is said that Governor Williams will send Dan Voorhees here to supply the vacancy, if Morton dies, until the Legislature of Indiana can elect Hendricks.

Compared with Morton, Voorhees is an idle ranter. He is eloquent, but vapid; his tongue is louder than his mind. Morton is not eloquent. He uses too simple phrases when he speaks. Endeavoring to convince, not to impress, he appeals to the sober reason and not to the senses.

Conkling is the next greatest man to Morton, of the Senate, but his strides are too long for the *oi barbaroi* to follow him. He is too lofty to lend himself to the common details of legislation. A great speech, a sublime apostrophe, never passed a bill; no great idea was ever moulded into a fact by the use of a few exquisite paragraphs. Nobody ever goes to Conkling to say, "I wish you would help me with this bill." Nobody ever attempted a measure without making that request of Morton.

Edmunds has a shrewd mind—a "longer head," than either Morton or Conkling, but he is one of the kind that tears down so much that people don't help him when he wants to build up. Anthony and Morrill always stand by Edmunds, and second his motions, but that is very little service when the rest of the Senate are against him. Edmunds looks a hundred years old, when his age is less than half that. He looks like St. Jerome, and when in repose folds his hands across his breast as if he were accustomed to hold a skull under them.

Great things are expected of ex-Justice Davis. No man was ever half so wise as he looks. After the Sergeant-at-Arms had surveyed him and made a chair to fit his fine proportions, he contemplated the Senate with the eyes of a man accustomed to see through things.

"Call me Judge," he said, when I addressed him once as Mr. Senator. "Call me Judge. I've been called Judge for twenty-two years, and by no other name would I smell as sweet."

The bench was irksome to Judge Davis. He was getting fatter and stupider every year, and he knew it. So he was glad that the Legislature of Illinois sent him to the Senate. They could not have sent a better man. He will not be so useful to his constituents as Logan, but will