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A Department of Agriculture.

The house of representatives a few days ago passed by an almost unanimous vote the bill to create an executive department to be known as the department of agriculture. Bills for this purpose have had a somewhat eventful experience. The first measure of the kind was introduced in the forty-sixth congress and failed by only one vote of passing the house. A similar bill passed the house of the forty-seventh congress but did not go through the senate, and this experience was repeated in the next congress. In the second session of the last congress the house passed a bill to create a department of agriculture, which was also passed by the senate with amendments, but at a date so near the close of the session that there was no time for the house to act on the amendments and again the measure failed to become a law.

It will thus be seen that congress has given the matter very thorough consideration, or at all events has had ample time and opportunity in which to consider it, so that the last action taken may fairly be supposed to be the result of careful and mature deliberation. The proposition is to very considerably enlarge the scope of inquiry and service now performed by the agricultural bureau, and to transfer to the new department the weather service of the signal service bureau. It is thought by the advocates of the bill that a department of agriculture, administered by a secretary who will be a member of the cabinet, will have more influence in behalf of the agricultural interests of the country, and can render more efficient and useful service, than is possible to a bureau presided over by a commissioner. This view prevails largely, also, among those engaged in agriculture, and the bill has received strong support from this class, though the farmers of the country are not a unit in approval of the measure. On the contrary, many intelligent men engaged in agriculture regard the present bureau as a practically useless institution. This, however, is an unreasonable view, for although the bureau is confessedly not all that it should be, and is perhaps less serviceable than similar branches of the government in France and Germany—where, by the way, they are ministerial departments rather than bureaus—the service of our agricultural bureau is not without important advantages to the great interest it has to care for. It is quite possible that the defects and shortcomings now complained of may be remedied by the organization of a department of agriculture, and if this could be assured there would be no opposition to the proposed change. It is certainly most desirable that our vast and steadily growing agricultural interests should receive from the government the most careful and liberal attention, and if they can be helped and improved by committing them to the guardianship of a department instead of a bureau, the slight additional annual expenditure that would be involved should not be seriously considered. Germany, France, Austria and Hungary have ministers of agriculture, whose positions correspond with that of cabinet officers in the United States, and no good reason appears why the agricultural interests of this country, which are very much greater than those of any of the European countries named, should not be equally well represented in the government. Whatever considerations have led these foreign governments to afford agriculture the highest opportunities will apply with at least equal force in the United States.

Judge Kelley's Obstinacy.
It seems that the republican members of the house ways and means committee would have little difficulty in framing a tariff bill to offer as a substitute for that of the majority of the committee, if it were not for the obstinacy of Judge Kelley, of Pennsylvania, nationally known as "Pig Iron Kelley." The sticking point is on sugar. The republican colleagues of Mr. Kelley are in favor of putting certain grades of sugar on the free list, leaving a duty on one or two grades sufficient to pay a bounty of two cents a pound on the home product. But Mr. Kelley is implacably hostile to free sugar, or to any reduction in the duties on sugar, and all efforts to induce this veteran champion of protection to yield in the least degree have thus far been without avail. How to deal with sugar in a revision of the tariff has greatly perplexed both parties. The democratic majority of the ways and means committee blundered in the matter and then attempted to correct the mistake, but with only partial success. Their bill would give little or no relief to the people from the exactions which the sugar trust is enabled to make by reason of the duties. The proposed republican policy would hurt the trusts, but in cutting off fifty millions of revenue from sugar a reduction of duties on all other articles would be prevented, and thus the people would not be relieved from exactions much greater than could possibly result from retaining the duties on sugar. Besides, the bounty plan is not popular, and the more it is discussed the more unpopular it is pretty sure to become. The attitude of Mr. Kelley is undoubtedly giving the republicans of the ways and means committee a good deal of annoyance, but it is understood they will complete their bill and have it ready to offer at the proper time. From what has been stated respecting its probable character, however, they cannot be very hopeful regarding it. Meanwhile it is an interesting fact that the obstructionists to the policy of the majority of both parties in the house come from the same state—Pennsylvania—and they are equally obstinate in their opposition.

The School Board Question.
The politicians had every reason to know where THE BEE would stand on the school board question. This paper announced its position last year in explicit and unmistakable terms, and it sees no reason now to change a single view then expressed. It held then, and it holds now, that we must eliminate political creed as we do religious creed from our school management. We must

choose candidates by reason of their character and qualifications for managing our public schools. We must seek to elevate the standard of our public school system by inducing our ablest and best citizens to accept positions on the school board. The only issue on which the contest for school board membership should be fought out is that of individual fitness of each candidate and his intentions with regard to the management and supervision of our schools.

The tendency everywhere is to divorce the public school system from politics, to keep it wholly free from all partisan influence. The wisest and most experienced friends of the system insist that only in this way can it attain the highest efficiency and value. That proposition, it would seem, must commend itself to all intelligent citizens who will give the matter a moment's thoughtful consideration. It must be obvious to every such citizen that if the school board is to be annually a source of partisan contention—if the management and supervision of the schools is to be made a spoil to be fought for every year by the political parties—improvement and progress will be impossible. The alternating control between parties would necessarily result in changes of methods and policies which in the very nature of things could not always be to the advantage of the schools. From such a state of things demoralization and deterioration would inevitably flow, and in a few years there would be no settled system.

The deplorable consequences certain to supervene from attaching the schools to the political machine demand of the friends of public education the most energetic and zealous efforts to defeat the declared policy to establish such connection. There is no matter of more vital concern to our people, and it calls for their immediate and most serious attention. If the partisan schemers are permitted to succeed this year it may be much more difficult to defeat them hereafter.

AS MIGHT have been expected, the injunction asked for to restrain the Omaha base ball association from playing on Sunday was denied by Judge Wakeley. The grievances complained of were not directed against ball playing at the park as a nuisance during the week, but as a nuisance only on Sunday. The court very properly ruled since the plaintiff did not rely on the statute governing Sunday games and sports, but in the face of evidence to the contrary, the disturbance on Sunday was not so much greater than on week days as to entitle him to an injunction stopping the Sunday game. The decision is certainly fair, and Mr. Purnalee can find fault with the court's position on the grounds of his complaint. At the same time, it is in order to suggest that the people residing in the neighborhood of the base ball grounds are not without rights which the authorities are bound to respect, and among these is that of having a reasonable degree of order maintained both within and without the grounds. The association must be required to make ample provision for preventing disturbances and unnecessarily noisy demonstrations, and if this is done there will very likely be no further serious complaint against Sunday base ball.

The Republic of Peru has fallen into hard lines. It is virtually bankrupt, and is about to fall into the hands of an English syndicate. The helpless condition of Peru, about to be plucked by unfeeling creditors, is a sad reflection on the Spanish-American republic. Rich in mineral resources, Peru is compelled to hand over her silver, coal, tin, iron, lead and other mines and her guano deposits to English capitalists. Other trade and fiscal concessions are made which practically places Peru out of the control of the Peruvians. The causes of her downfall are many. Peru's uneven struggle with Chili left her in a deplorable condition. Her internal dissensions, corrupt government, misrule and the disasters of fire and floods completed the work of ruin. Peru being unable to straighten out the anarchy and bankruptcy which overwhelmed her, English creditors are about to step in and foreclose their mortgages on the whole country. To all intent and purposes Peru has become the property of an English syndicate, and has lost her autonomy as a nation.

The last number of Citizen Train's Paper published at Sussex, New Brunswick, dated May 20, 1888, has been received. The reason of its suspension is due to the fact that the New Brunswick postmaster general refuses to recognize the "Paper" as a newspaper, and in consequence it is barred from the advantage of newspaper rates. But in the editor's own picturesque language, "Citizen Train's Paper" was boycotted, whole edition was kicked out of the postoffice, Omaha was hurled into the Bay of Fundy." We are extremely sorry that the cordial and friendly relations existing between Omaha and New Brunswick are liable to become strained in consequence of this international episode. That the authorities of Sussex are jealous of Omaha is apparent. The very reason why Citizen Train's Paper was not recognized as a newspaper by the New Brunswick postoffice department was on the grounds that "its contents do not belong properly to newspaper publications but intended for another distinct use ('booming Omaha')." We can sympathize with Omaha's old friend, but never mind. Charles Francis Train, we hope you will see the day when Sussex will be annexed as a suburb to Omaha.

CHICAGO has a genuine case of Jacob Sharp jury fixing in the trial of Sumner C. Welch, the employee of the South Side Cable railway who is on trial for bribery. The Chicago Jacob Sharp in this case is C. B. Holmes, the president of the road, whom the grand jury has indicted on a charge of conspiracy to suborn witnesses and jurymen. It looks as though the influential bootlegging politicians who are sojourning at Joliet will be joined by a select delegation of Chicago's prominent business men when the evidence of tampering with juries is established.

PROMINENT PERSONS.

Walter Besant, who has gone to Italy to rest, is one of the hardest working literary men in London.

Andrew Carnegie says that the coaching trip which he and Mr. Blaine will take will last at least until July 1.

Archbishop Horion, of San Francisco, is on his way to Ireland, and will visit Rome before returning to America.

Mrs. Whitney, wife of the secretary, is a fearless rider, and