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FRIDAY, - - - JUNE 4, 1897

A GAUZY SCHEME.

Congressman Fowler of New Jersey has introduced a bill providing for the establishment of "a tariff commission for the purpose of investigating federal taxation, recommending changes therein and adjusting any inequalities in existing law." The bill provides that the commission shall consist of seven members, and that they shall hold office (except the first seven, who go out one every three years) for the term of twenty-one years, drawing a salary of \$7,500 per year. It is further provided that each commissioner be furnished a secretary at a salary of \$1,200 a year, and that all expenses of members be paid by the government.

The bill is a monstrosity, even considered as a New Jersey product. Its author has been very careful to throw lots of safeguards around the salary part of the bill, but does not seem to realize how such a law would place the people at the mercy of that commission. The trusts and the corporations wouldn't do a thing to it but put it in their pockets inside of six months, and long before the first report was made out.

The commission may only recommend the levying of further duty or tax, but may, with the approval of the president, suspend a part or whole of any tax. The junketing features of commission work have also been looked after carefully, for it is provided that the commission may visit different sections of the United States, and send a committee, or committees, to foreign countries for the purpose of collecting information.

One can hardly believe that Fowler was in earnest when he originated that bill, and yet it is barely possible Fowler is afraid of losing his job as congressman, and is arranging his little commission with a view to being appointed on it as a tail-end, say for eighteen or twenty-one years.

The Oregonian states that its editor was not appointed through the recommendation nor efforts of Senator Mitchell; but that he received his appointment through the recommendation of Senators Williams and Corbett. In the vast array of the Oregonian editor's shortcomings, it is possible and probable that we were mistaken. One finite being cannot well be expected to keep track of all of them, hence we conclude the Oregonian is right and we are wrong with regard to his appointment. The "fleshy incubus" letters and other interesting matters occurring about that time, probably misled us. We wish to add that our heretofore good opinion of Senator Mitchell has been enhanced by the Oregonian's correction, and an additional reason has been advanced why Corbett should not be seated.

One week from today Theodore Durrant will suffer death for the murder of Blanche Lamont. For two years, in season and out, in the courts and out, his attorneys have fought to save his life. They have now played their last card in taking an appeal from the U. S. court to the supreme court on the former's refusal to grant a writ of habeas corpus. A special messenger has been sent across the continent to present the appeal to the supreme court; but there is little chance of it benefiting the prisoner. The chances are overwhelmingly against his being alive one week from this time.

ORIGIN OF THE EAR.

Nature Made It Out of the Gill of the Fish Long Ages Ago.

When the fish came ashore, its water-breathing apparatus was no longer of any use to it, writes Prof. Henry Drummond in McClure's Magazine. At first it had to keep it on, for it took a long time to perfect the air-breathing apparatus which was to replace it. But when this was ready the problem was, what to do with the earlier organ? Nature is exceedingly economical, and could not throw all this mechanism away. In fact Nature almost never parts with any structure she has once made. What she does is to change it into something else. Conversely, Nature seldom makes anything new; her method of creation is to adapt something old. Now when Nature started out to manufacture ears, she made them out of the old breathing apparatus. She saw that if water could pass through a hole in the neck, sound could pass likewise, and she set to work upon the highest up of the five gill-slits and slowly elaborated it into a hearing organ.

There never had been an external ear in the world until this was done, or any good ear at all. Creatures which live in water do not seem to use hearing much, and the sound waves in fishes are simply conveyed through the walls of the head to the internal ear without any definite mechanism. But as soon as land life began, owing to the changed medium through which sound waves must now be propagated, a more delicate instrument was required. And hence one of the first things attended to was the construction and improvement of the ear.



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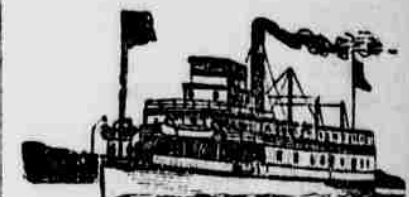
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