PUT "DOLLAR GAS" IN THE DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM!

Municipal Supervision of Quality and Distribution.

PROF. BEMIS'S OPINIONS.

Some Weighty Reasons Why New York Should Have Cheaper Gas.

OTHER CITIES HAVE IT.

Greed of the Local Monopoly to Earn Big Dividends on Heavily Watered Stock.

PRESENT RATE PAYS WELL

Percentage of Profits Is Just as Great Now as When Gas Sold at $1.25 a Thousand.

"Dollar Gas!" will be a great issue in the next campaign—a burning question.

"Dollar Gas, with municipal supervision," is the pledge to be exacted of every Senatorial and Assembly nominee, without reference to party.

The Democratic managers are awake to the importance of taking this stand, and the Republican leaders will have to make the same pledge to the people when the campaign opens.

"The Democratic city convention will adopt a plank in its platform declaring clearly for cheaper gas and restrictive control of the gas monopoly," said John C. Sheehan yesterday. "Every Tammany nominee for the Assembly this Fall will be pledged to work for it. The thirty-one Assemblymen that Tammany Hall will elect this Fall will vote solidly for cheap gas. No man will be nominated who will not pledge himself to do so."

This declaration was all the more significant as it was delivered by Mr. Sheehan, the acknowledged leader of his party, as he came out of the room at Tammany Hall where the Committee on Platform was in session for hours, considering the planks to be incorporated in the report of the committee, which will be adopted at the city convention September 30.

Tammany Out for Cheap Gas.

Mr. Sheehan was emphatic in saying that there had been no recession from his position as previously stated in the columns of the Journal. Said he: "Tammany Hall has made a stand in favor of cheaper gas. There is nothing equivocal or misleading about it. Tammany will work for gas at a dollar or less from this time until a law is passed bringing the price down to that figure or less.

"It was a Republican Legislature that defeated the will of the people in this matter last Winter. There was no excuse for the passage of the worthless measure known as the graduated reduction law. It was enacted to blind the people. No legislation that simply reduces the price of gas without providing a means of regulation for the kind and quality furnished is of any value.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the gas companies will make just as much money under the present law, even at the end of five years, when the price is to be one dollar a thousand feet, as they have been making at $1.25. I am strongly in favor of not only cheaper gas, but of the creation of a commission in Greater New York whose business it shall be to protect the consumers from every form of injustice practised by the gas companies.

A Dollar Plank Certain.

"The Tammany convention will adopt a plank in its platform declaring clearly for cheaper gas and restrictive control of the gas monopoly. That is certain. I believe that the movement for cheaper gas and the practical victory of the gas monopoly at Albany las Winter have greatly improved the prospect for the municipal ownership of the gas plants. If the companies persist in their present course, they are certain to embitter public feeling. No man needs to be a politician to know that the people are in earnest in their fight for justice from the gas companies. It is not too much to say that the demand for cheaper gas is practically unanimous. Residents of this city are paying more for gas than those of any other large city in the world.

"If municipal ownership is necessary to correct this abuse, then municipal ownership is sure to come. But, in the meantime, it is the duty of every citizen to work for a reasonable reduction in the price of gas and decent control of the monopoly.

"I will add that the Journal is responsible, in my opinion, for about all the good work that has already been done in that direction. It was the Journal that stirred the Board of Aldermen to action and presented a true picture of the situation to the Legislature. There has always been a strong current of feeling among the people in favor of cheaper gas, but it was never so well expressed as through the Journal last Winter. The plain people of New York—the people who pay most of the gas bills—owe much to the Journal's faithful and intelligent work in their interests."

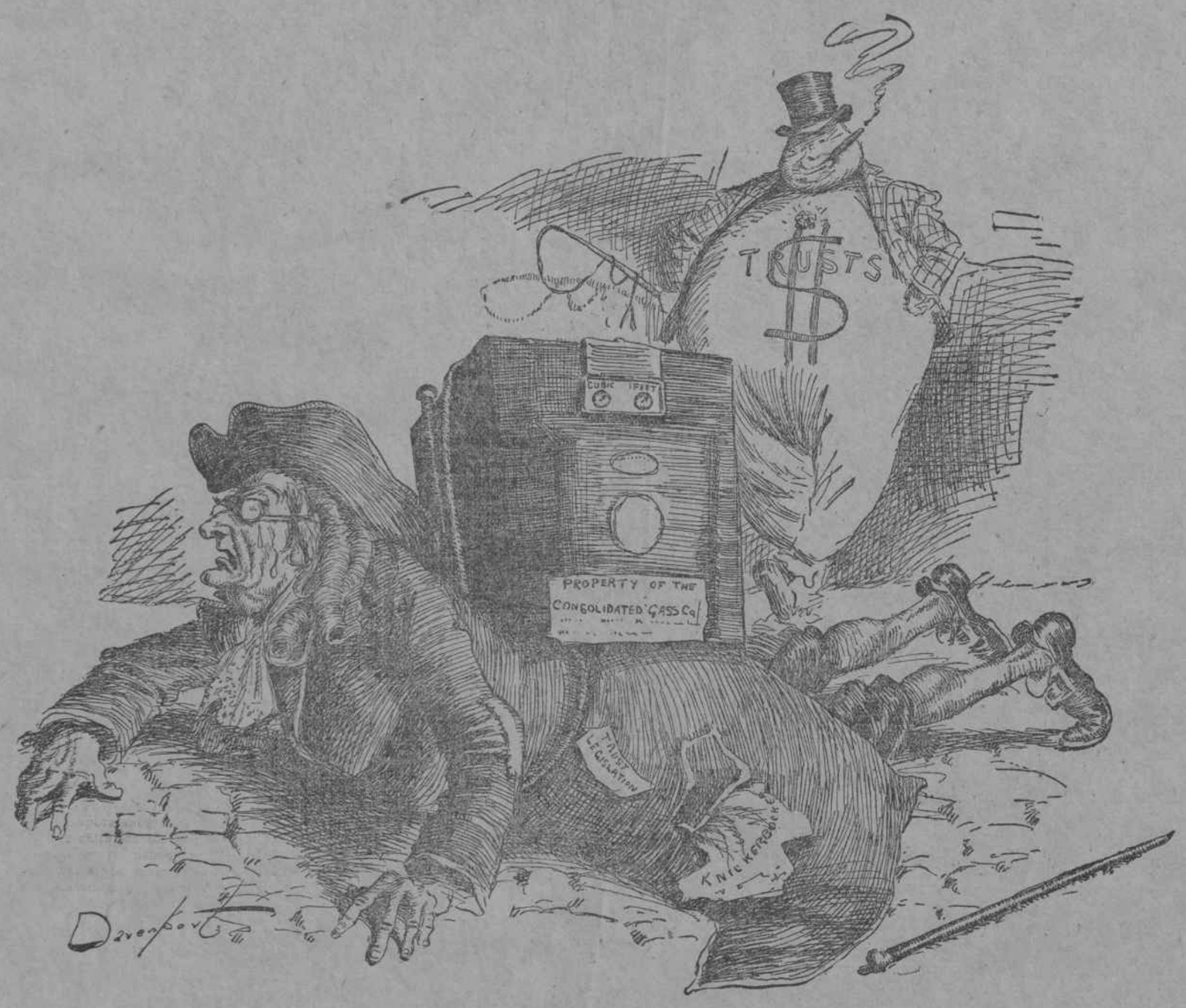
A Menace and a Bluff.

The gas companies, combined for the spoliation of the public, are arrogant toward the people, imperative toward the legislators and whining to the newspapers.

The citizens of New York are told that if they don't want to pay for gas at prices that the companies decree, they can burn candles or sit in the dark.

Senators and Assemblymen are convinced of the "folly" of cheap gas by practical methods that commit them to any imposition that the gas barons may choose to impose. Weak-kneed country members are told that all efforts on behalf of the overcharged citizens of the metropolis are blackmailing strikes by a few of their colleagues, who are "out for blood."

What makes the Journal "wants" grow? Fertilizer of circulation and big results. •



TOO HEAVY A LOAD TO CARRY.

To newspaper reporters who visit the officials of the Consolidated or Equitable companies the general statement is made that the reduction by the last Legislature is causing a heavy loss to the companies. To a Journal man yesterday O. F. Zollikoffer, secretary of the Consolidated Gas Company, said:

"The reduction in price is causing quite a falling off in receipts. Although the law only went into effect in May, and the poorest months of the year for the gas business have since occurred, we can discover that we are taking in considerably less money than last year." Price of stock $220 per share.

The People Cannot Eat Gas.

Again a wail from J. P. Miller, secretary of the Equitable Gas Company, explained the situation of the poor gas companies thus: "Not only has the Legislature reduced the price, arbitrarily, but we find that people are burning less gas than formerly. Despite the introduction of gas stoves the consumption per capita has fallen from 3,000 feet per month to 2,800 feet. This is surprising and cannot be accounted for by any facts we have. It is just as tangible a loss as the 4 per cent. reduction made at Albany. It shows that we do not force more gas through the pipes, as is charged. The gas business is showing a serious decline."

How very sad! Equitable Gas Company's stock was selling yesterday at $295 per share; par value $100!

A Poor Monopolist's Protest.

These statements of distress are not nearly so radical or amazing as the one put forth by E. C. Benedict during the Journal's last agitation for dollar gas. He then actually threatened to go out of the gas business and leave the country.

Benedict's Threat.

The people of New York are perfectly satisfied with the price they are paying for gas. There are some trusts which need watching by the press, but the Gas Trust is not among them. The gas companies have been great sufferers from unwarranted attacks of blackguarding newspapers and sandbagging Legislative schemes. If we are let alone we will reduce prices of our own free will. This country is going to the dogs, and should this one dollar gas bill become a law I will leave the country.—E. C. Benedict, president of the Equitable Gas Company.

Not only did Mr. Benedict fail to part with his gas stocks, but the stock of his corporation was one of the first to respond to the rise in the market on the assumption that its dividends would be increased rather than decreased.

Fictitious Excuses for High Rates.

These facts show that all the gas barons are shedding crocodile tears. Their efforts are directed to deferring the inevitable reduction of gas to $1 per 1,000 feet, though the officers of the corporations know that it can be made for 73 to 80 cents per 1,000 cubic feet—as wages, oil and coal are higher or lower.

All temporizing and delay on the great issue between the people and the gas monopolists must come to an end this Fall. The question is not one of party, and though the gas barons, who have fattened upon the public, are, as a rule, affiliated with the party that protects and encourages trusts, the great masses of the Republican element are just as heavy sufferers as their Democratic fellow-citizens.

The Platt Mayoralty Favorite for Dollar Gas.

The trouble with the attempts to secure legislation in favor of dollar gas have heretofore been that the introducers of such measures have always been called off.—W. M. K. OLCOTT, Senator Platt's Mayoralty candidate.

WHY DOLLAR GAS IS THE ISSUE.

Number consumers of gas in Greater New York	350,000
Thousand feet burned annually	12,000,000
Cost citizens of New York, at $1.20 per 1,000	$14,400,000
Saving at $1 per 1,000	2,400,000
Dividends paid by Consolidated Gas since 1884	$30,000,000
Annual profits of gas companies in New York State	108.59 per cent.

[Conclusion of Labor Commissioner McDonough from companies' confidential reports.]

Gas legislation this Winter will not be overshadowed by anything. The Greater New York charter last Winter had the right of way and rightfully commanded grave attention. Substantial relief may be looked for from the Democratic Assemblymen elected this Fall in the Greater New York.

This year nothing stands in the way of this great reform.

"Dollar gas," with absolute municipal surveillance of the meters, will not be sidetracked. Every member of the Legislature will be confronted with the issue between the people and the monopolists. Their conduct and their votes will be subject to the closest scrutiny.

Mr. John C. Sheehan recognizes the gravity of the issue when he declares that no member of the Legislature can be nominated by Tammany who is not pledged to give the public this great boon.

Sheehand is Right.

Mr. Sheehan's views are based on cold facts obtained from other cities where dollar gas is the rule, Boston, Cincinnati, Columbus, Grand Rapids, St. Louis, Milwaukee and Pittsburg have dollar gas. He knows on the testimony of experts, like Bemis and others, that gas can be produced in New York at a price that will yield the consolidated companies a net profit of from twenty-five to twenty-seven cents per thousand feet. Ease of collection, compactness of market and accessibility to the coal and oil supply render Greater New York one of the most profitable cities in the country for gas making.

Senator Cantor Out for It.

While the plain statement from the leader of Tammany Hall sounds the keynote for the platform of Democracy in the present canvass, the echo of it is heard in many quarters. Senator Cantor, who fought valiantly for dollar gas last Winter at Albany, is now in Chicago, but his position is unmistakable on this matter. He says: "The advocacy of dollar gas is perfectly proper. Expert opinions prove that gas can be sold at a handsome profit at that price. No one can charge the champions of such a measure as being antagonistic to capital, and no one can oppose such a measure on tenable grounds. The most important provision in the matter is that of municipal supervision. That is an innovation, but it seems a crying necessity. There is now no way to keep up the standard or regulate distribution. The gas companies have all the advantages; the consumers all the disadvantages.

"In 1886 we succeeded in enacting into law a bill reducing the price from $1.75 to $1.25. Last year it was brought down to $1.20. But there have been many devices introduced of late years enabling the gas companies to save money in the manufacture of this commodity. Boston, Philadelphia and other cities have dollar gas, and New York will have it, too."

The Assembly Champion.

Assemblyman Francis E. Laimbeer, who introduced the bill providing dollar gas in the Assembly last year coincidently with Senator Cantor's action in the upper house, says "New York should have dollar gas as a matter of justice. Dollar gas is rational, moderate and just. If secured, the change will prove a boon to all citizens, and still enable the companies to declare good dividends to their stockholders."

"If my constituents choose to return me to the Assembly next year I shall reintroduce a bill to provide for dollar gas in New York City," concluded Mr. Laimbeer.

Thus it is patent that the farseeing men of both parties are ready to respond to the popular demand for equitable gas rates. The Republican leaders are for the most part very chary of committing themselves upon the subject, while admitting the strength of the cry for dollar gas; but the leaders of the Democracy are outspoken in thei rdesire to heed the call.

They Must Speak.

When the various candidates for Democratic Assembly nominations realize what a prominent place in the platform dollar gas is bound to have, it is considered indubitable that they will align themselves on the side of the people and pledge themselves to work for its achievement at Albany this Winter.

With a Legislature that cannot be swayed at will by Senator Platt and the attorneys for the gas concerns, the prospect for lowering the legal rate for this household necessity and placing its manufacture under the supervision of a municipal gas commission will be bright.

Platt's Man, Olcott, on Gas.

When W. M. K. Olcott was an Alderman he led the fight for the reduction of gas rates. He it was who introduced a resolution providing for the selection of an Aldermanic committee of seven to investigate the feasibility of the municipal ownership of gas plants. In that connection he said: "The trouble with the attempts to secure legislation in favor of dollar gas has heretofore been that the introducers of such measures have always been called off." Now that Mr. Olcott, District-Attorney, is the Mayoralty candidate of Mr. Platt, whose efforts to "call off" the supporters of dollar gas in the last Legislature were markedly successful, it is inconceivable that Mr. Olcott's position in the matter should be altered. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect that he will insist upon a plank being inserted in the Republican municipal platform soon to be formulated, declaring unequivocally for the granting of dollar gas to Greater New York, and the placing of the manufacture and distribution of it under municipal control.

Millions in Dividends.

That one dollar gas can be profitably manufactured and sold in New York is shown by the enormity of the dividends earned on the grossly stock-watered corporation known as the Consolidated Gas Company. A statement of the capital and earnings of the several gas concerns composing the Consolidated will astound even the most phlegmatic citizen of the metropolis. They show that the stockholders of the six original companies never invested more than $11,530,000. Up to 1885 this investment had received sums in dividends equal to ten per cent per annum for the entire period, and an additional amount equivalent to 250 per cent. Since 1884 until the time of consolidation fully $30,000,000 additional have been paid in dividends, which is equivalent to returning the investment nearly three times more.

Enormity of Their Greed.

The figures given below, from official sources, establish the astounding fact that the original investment, already more than five times repaid, is still receiving twenty-five per cent per year of extortionate profit.

HISTORY OF THE CONSOLIDATED GAS COMPANY.
Before Consolidation.

Companies	Put into Consolidated at	Nominal capital in 1884.	Paid in by stockholders.	Dividends to 1885.	Excess of dividends over 10 P. C. for entire time up to '85.
New York	$ 7,560,000	$4,000,000	$ 750,000	$18,524,078	$ 9,814,225
Manhattan	11,940,000	4,000,000	3,280,000	25,847,675	15,509,544
Metropolitan	7,175,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	7,673,749	1,973,949
Municipal / Knickerbocker	8,100,000	4,500,000	3,000,000	2,806,192	870,907
Harlem	3,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,329,917	———
Totals	$37,775,000	$17,000,000	$11,530,000	$57,081,611	$28,168,625

A glance shows that the original capital was in all instances watered 100 per cent, and in some cases more. Not only was the monopoly established, but the public was asked to pay a price high enough to insure dividends of 8 to 12 per cent to the greedy stockholders. When we see such social outrages as this the existence of Anarchists ceases to be surprising.

There was a Harlem janitor,
And he had "Flats to Let."
He put an ad in the Journal "wants,"
And they're rented now, you bet. •

BROOKLINE'S 70 CENT GAS.

And It Is Just as Good as the High-Priced Kind.

Boston, Sept. 21.—Dollar gas is a success in Boston, but it was only brought about by just such a determined fight as that now being made by the Journal in New York. Mr. A. C. Burrage, the well-known gas magnate and president of the Consolidated Companies, which have the monopoly of the business of the "Hub," says that dollar gas seems to give satisfaction and other gas officials gave the Journal man the same information. Several city officials said that the quality of dollar gas is not inferior to that furnished before the cut in a sufficient degree to cause any trouble or complaint at present, although there had been some charges of poisoning caused by leakage of gas from the mains into the cellars of tenement houses; but the authorities are inclined to discredit the claim that this was the result of any decline in the quality of gas. This might occur from any grade of gas with defective pipe.

In the street lighting department in City Hall the Journal man was informed that there was no perceptible difference in the quality of the gas now and before the change in the price.

"That's for the public to decide," said President Burrage, when the Journal man talked to him about the comparative quality of dollar gas. "The people use the gas and seem to be satisfied with it. That's all I can say about it. The question of the quality of gas must be answered by them, not by me. I can't say anything about it. It's not my place to, you see. All I can say is that it gives satisfaction. If you want anything further, you must ask the people themselves."

"We can't see that the quality of dollar gas is any different from that of dollar and a half gas," said a superintendent of the Boston Street Lighting Department, in response to the Journal correspondent's question. "We get gas for even less than a dollar, you know. In one section of the city, we only pay 70 cents for gas, and it is exactly as good as the $1.50 kind. We advertised for bids, and the Brookline Company put in a proposal for 70 cents. They don't supply gas at that figure for fun. If they make a profit at 70 cents here, I don't see why they can't furnish gas in New York for a dollar."

Dollar gas is admitted to be a success in Boston.

A DOLLAR IS TOO HIGH.

President Gahan, of a Chicago Gas Company, Finds Profit at 90 Cents.

Chicago, Ill., Sept. 21.—Thomas Gahan, of the Ogden Gas Company, said that in his opinion "dollar gas" would, in a few months, be a thing of the past.

"It has been demonstrated by our company," said he, "that gas can be furnished here for 90 cents—the price charged by our company. We have found that figure profitable. During the present year we have added twelve miles of main to our lines, which now gives us something like forty miles of piping. The other companies are fighting us, and have, by various methods attempted to make us conform our prices to theirs. There is no occasion for our making any advance in prices.

"If there should be any change at all, I imagine it would be in the interest of the consumer. Coal has cheapened every year in all cities for the past decade, and why shouldn't gas?

"Our company will remain undeterred by the threats of rival companies, unterrified by the threat that we shall be crowded to the wall and uninfluenced by the pressure to have us join hands with the other corporations and increase the cost of our service. Ogden Gas Company stock is good collateral. And it will be better some day."

All Assembly Candidates Must Be Pledged to Work for It.

SHEEHAN'S PLAIN TALK.

He Says the Demand Is a Determined One, Yet Reasonable.

CANTOR'S RESOLUTE STAND

Senator Who Introduced the Journal's Bill Says We Pay Too Much for Our Gas.

LAIMBEER AND OLCOTT TOO.

These Republicans Are Also Firmly Bound to Aid in Furthering the Cause of Justice and Decency.

Large Cities That Have Dollar Gas.

	Illuminating Gas.	Gas for Fuel.
St. Louis	$1.00	.80
Milwaukee	1.00	.80
Grand Rapids	1.00	.80
Boston	1.00	..
Cincinnati	1.00	..
Columbus	1.00	.75
Pittsburg	1.00	..
Cleveland	.85	..
Chicago (on heavily watered stock)	1.00	..

Professot Edward Bemis, Gas Expert.

SUFFERINGS OF THE GAS COMPANIES.

Total stock of Greater New York gascompanies (including water)	$69,000,000
Market value Consolidated Gas stock	220
Par value " " "	100
Dividends " " " 1895 (gas 1.25)	8 per cent
Dividends " " " 1897 (gas 1.20)	9 per cent
Dividends " " " 1898 (gas 1.00)	?

THE JOURNAL'S DOLLAR GAS BILL.

DEFEATED LAST YEAR.

AN ACT to regulate the price of illuminating gas in the city of New York, as such city was constituted on the first day of January, 1896, and to create a Board in this city to be known as the "Municipal Gas Commission."

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1.—No corporation or person in the city of New York, as such city was constituted on the first day of January, eighteen hundred and ninety-six, shall ask, demand or receive for illuminating gas a sum to exceed one dollar per one thousand cubic feet, and such gas shall have an illuminating power of not less than twenty-four sperm candles of six to the pound, and burning at the rate of one hundred and twenty grains of spermaceti per hour, tested at a distance of not less than one mile from the place of manufacture, by a burner consuming five cubic feet of gas per hour, and shall also comply with the standard of purity now or hereafter established by law; but this act shall not apply to any district or ward of any such city which district or ward is separated from the main portion thereof by a stream or other natural boundary.

Section 2.—The officials in said city having power to contract for lighting the streets, avenues, piers, parks and places are hereby constituted a Board to be known as the "Municipal Gas Commission," which Board shall have all the powers of said officials, and, in addition thereto, shall have authority, and it shall be their duty, to investigate and supervise the methods, appliances and plant of any corporation or person engaged in the supplying or distribution of illuminating gas in said city, to regulate the distribution thereof, and to inspect, examine, ascertain and prove the accuracy of any and all gas meters used, or intended to be used, for measuring or ascertaining the quantity of illuminating gas furnished by any such corporation or person.

Section 3.—The Board hereby constituted shall have authority to make all ordinances necessary for the carrying out of this act, and shall have the power in any investigation instituted by it to issue subpoenas, to summon witnesses, to compel the production of any books and papers, to administer oaths to the witnesses so subpoenaed, and to do each and every thing necessary for the full and complete enforcement of this act.

Section 4.—The Board hereby constituted is authorized to employ such assistance as may be necessary for carrying out the provisions of this act, and the financial officers of such municipality chargeable with the making of appropriations shall pay all requisitions made upon them by the said Board, either by the issue of bonds or by the insertion of the amount required in the annual tax levy of such city, as said financial officers shall deem proper.

Section 5.—Any corporation or person violating the provisions of this act, or the ordinances enacted by said Board, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not less than two hundred dollars, or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period not exceeding thirty days, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Section 6.—This act shall take effect immediately.