

TAXES REDUCED, DEBT DECREASED.

Mayor Wurster Shows What His Administration Has Done in a Year.

Urges an Increase in Schools and in the Water Supply of Brooklyn.

Plans Soon to Be Submitted to Construct a Railroad Subway on Atlantic Avenue.

Views on Municipal Ownership.

Says the City Cannot Construct Light Plants, but Believes It Wise to Limit the Time During Which Franchises May Be Held.

The Board of Estimate made liberal appropriations for the expenses of the various departments for the ensuing year, but by the exercise of rigid economy the amount of the budget was kept at such figures as to cause considerable reduction in the tax rate. In the older part of the city the rate was lowered from 2.74 to 2.65. In the new wards a still greater reduction was made, namely, from 4.25 to 3.13. The average rate of the entire city is now 2.90 against 3.40 last year.

Mayor Wurster, of Brooklyn, submitted his last annual message to the Common Council yesterday. It shows that the Republican officials who manage Brooklyn's affairs increased the city debt from \$2,037,000 to \$5,948,097 in the eleven months ending December 1, last. It also shows an

Mayor Wurster on Water Supply.

"We are using now about two-thirds of our estimated available supply, and from the best information I can gain, New York is in like condition, and will be required to seek for a new supply about the same time. While there is no fear of any lack of water in the immediate future, at the same time the additional supply required in a few years will no doubt have to be taken from a long distance, and it will require considerable time to procure it. I am heartily in favor of action being taken looking toward a better supply. The proposition emanating from the State Engineer and Surveyor, for opening the upper Hudson and Mohawk valleys and the Adirondack watershed, and supplying it to the cities along the Hudson River and at its mouth, appears the most feasible that has been made, provided the State is willing to assume the expense of the original investment."

Brooklyn Provides Schools.

"In the year there were opened eleven new school buildings and additions to existing buildings, including one high school. This increase is much greater than in the preceding year. To adequately accommodate the present school population, nearly 200 class rooms are required, but 197 will be supplied early in this year by the completion of buildings now in the course of erection. The Board of Education has determined to erect thirteen new buildings and additions as soon as the money is provided therefor. There are now five buildings in course of construction and eight sites have been purchased in the year, making sixteen owned by the city for future use. The gift to the city of the Erasmus Hall school property, worth about \$150,000, enabled the Board of Education to open an additional high school."—From Mayor Wurster's Message.

GLEASON TO HAVE A HEARING.

Question of His Citizenship to Come Up in the United States Court Today. Mayor Gleason, of Long Island City, will have a hearing before United States Judge W. Wheeler in Brooklyn, today, in the proceedings which have been instituted by Coulbert Brothers in behalf of various property owners of Long Island City, to set aside the naturalization papers which Gleason obtained in 1897 on the ground of fraud. The property owners claim that Gleason was of age when he landed in this country and was not a minor, as he represented himself to be, when he secured his first citizenship papers. In the event of Judge Wheeler declaring the papers invalid, another motion will be made before Attorney-General Hancock for a writ of quo warranto to oust Gleason from the Mayorship. Yesterday Gleason spent several hours yesterday in consultation with his lawyers, F. H. Van Vleet and Corporation Counsel Thomas B. Bourke. He thinks that the second set of citizenship papers which he secured from Judge Brown last September will save him from being ousted from office.

Murphy's Burns Were Fatal.

Daniel Murphy, who set his clothing on fire by overturning a kerosene lamp in a room he occupied at No. 376 Bowling street, Williamsburg, early Sunday morning, died yesterday in the Eastern District Hospital, where he had been remained. Before Murphy died a brother, Michael Murphy, called at the hospital inquired, and because so disappointed that he was not allowed to see his brother in the last moments of his life, he was so stricken with grief that he did not know what he was doing. The Magistrate discharged him with a reprimand.

GASTRUIT FAVORITE WINS.

David W. Stewart Elected President of the Brooklyn Board of Aldermen on the First Ballot.

The contest for control of the Brooklyn Common Council which has been waged by the Gas Trust and the railroad interests resulted yesterday in the election of Alderman David W. Stewart as president. He defeated Joseph B. Clark, who presided over the body during 1896. Both are Republicans and Worth men.

Mr. Stewart was elected by a combination of Republicans and Democrats. Both parties held caucuses yesterday morning. The Democratic caucus was a mere formality, so far as the party is concerned, the Republicans controlling the Board by a vote of 17 to 12.

The Board met at 2 o'clock, and City Clerk Benjamin called it to order. The moment Benjamin's voice had died out, Alderman Leitch nominated Mr. Oltrogge for president pro tem. A pro-quo-quo-quo debate ensued; it concerned the regularity of the proceedings. The debate ended with the election of Alderman Wassmuth as temporary chairman.

Alderman Leitch nominated Alderman Clark for president of the Board. Stewart, the Gas Trust representative, was named by Alderman Leitch, and Alderman Doyle, Democrat, named his political colleague, Alderman Galt.

The preliminary ballot stood: Stewart, 4; Clark, 6; Galt, 11; Leitch, 3. Clark and Leitch withdrew, and Galt withdrew in a political sense. The business vote was polled and it resulted as follows: Stewart, Messrs. Leitch, Meyers, Wassmuth, Taylor, Republicans; Bacher, Conly, Doyle, Dunn, Galt, D. F. Dunne, Hennessey, Keegan, Donlon, Maurer and Wellington, Democrats.

Oltrogge—Messrs. Clark, Curtis, Francisco, Haubert, Leich, Ruggles, Singleton, Thompson and Williams—6.

President Stewart's first act was to name the committee on the Board. The committee on the Board, was named by Alderman Leitch, and Alderman Doyle, Democrat, named his political colleague, Alderman Galt.

DEATH RETIRES LIEUT. COFFIN.

Medical Survey Was to Act on His Application When He Expired. The flags at the Navy Yard and on the

ships moored there were placed at half mast yesterday as a mark of respect to Lieutenant John H. C. Coffin, who died suddenly at the home of his brother, Lieutenant W. H. Coffin, Fifth Artillery, at Fort Hamilton. His death was caused by consumption. Lieutenant Coffin was the eldest son of the late John W. C. Coffin, who was the first professor of navigation and astronomy at the Naval Academy. He was born in Washington, D. C., November 18, 1855, and entered the Naval Academy in 1875. He was graduated as one of the honor men in the class of 1883. He was promoted to ensign in 1878, lieutenant (junior grade) in 1879, and a First Lieutenant in 1873.

During his service he spent many years at sea. His last cruise was made in the cruiser Alert, of which he was the executive officer. He was relieved from duty on that vessel in October last, and was appointed a member of the Board of Inspection now convened at the Navy Yard. Lieutenant Coffin had been ordered to report before the Medical Board, which was to have convened at the Navy Yard yesterday morning to pass upon his application for retirement.

THE BROOKLYN THEATRES.

"Brian Boru" Presented for the First Time Over the Bridge—Plays at Other Houses.

"Brian Boru," with its sweet and dramatic story, its wealth of Irish sentiment and scenery, and its abundance of Irish melody, was sung in the Columbia Theatre for the first time in Brooklyn last night by the Whitney Opera Company. Jeff De Angelo plays O'Hara, and the female part is played by Erina, Amanda Fabris is Elfrida, the English princess. Max Eugene is Brian Boru. The opera is by Julian Edwards and Stanislaus Stankiewicz.

Montauk Theatre.

William H. Crane, with the humor and pathos of the thorough artist he is, last night portrayed for Brooklynites a character somewhat removed from those the public has usually seen him in. In Martha Morton's play, "A Fool at Fortune," Mr. Crane has passed successfully the line that separates the lighter comedy from the more serious work. Mr. Crane has in his company Edie Shannon, William Tyler, Kate Lester, Percy Brooks, Boyd Putnam and Edwin Aden.

Park Theatre.

Richard Mansfield began the week in the Park last night with "A Parisian Romance." The star was, of course, Bayona Chevrolet, and his leading lady, Beatrice Cameron, was Marcellie. Mr. Mansfield has been seen before as the Parisian beau, and his work last night was up to his standard.

Bijou Theatre.

"Hogan's Alley," a new farce comedy, was the attraction at the Bijou last night. It is presented by Gilmore & Leonard, who for years have been giving excellent shows of metropolitan life in variety theatres. The farce is founded upon the famous pictures of Mr. R. P. Outen, the former art director, and the characters are those which were born in his brain and given life by his pencil. Mickey Dugan, the Yellow Kid, plays a star part.

American Theatre.

Daniel A. Kelly, a character actor of experience and talent, opened the week in the American Theatre last night in "The Outcasts of a Great City." The play is a comedy-drama of the sensational type.

Amplion Theatre.

"Under the Polar Star" was presented in the Amplion Theatre in the Eastern District last night. The play tells the story of an expedition into the Arctic regions.

HAD ONE DAY OF FREEDOM.

Ella Larrabee Left Prison Saturday, Got Drunk and Went Back Monday.

Ella Larrabee, of No. 217 Himrod street, Williamsburg, was sent to the penitentiary for two months yesterday by Justice Goetting, in the Lee Avenue Police Court, for intoxication. The woman was only released from the County Jail on Saturday, where she had served thirty days for drunkenness. She is known to the police as a female burglar.

PASTOR ATTACKS SCHOOL SYSTEM.

Rev. Mr. Hobbs Says Jamaica Is Behind Other Long Island Towns.

Professor Ballard Replies Courteously and Controverts the Allegation.

Then the Minister Quotes from the Superintendent to Prove His Charge.

"FALSEHOOD," SAYS MR. BALLARD.

Now There is a Little Warfare Between the Church and the Head of the School. They Fight from Pulpit and Newspapers.

The Rev. J. Howard Hobbs, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, in Jamaica, L. I., is engaged in a bitter warfare upon William J. Ballard, Jamaica's Superintendent of Schools. His attacks from the pulpit and in the columns of a local paper have aroused the ire of the Superintendent, and the latter has, over his signature, called the clergyman a wilful liar. All Jamaica is interested in the controversy, because it involves the standing of the local school system.

The trouble began about three weeks ago, when, in a sermon on the Lord's day evening, Pastor Hobbs denounced the village school system. He said that the schools were far inferior to those of the same grade on Long Island and elsewhere, and blamed the Superintendent for this alleged condition of affairs. On the following Sunday he renewed the attack.

Then, in response to an editorial asking him to do so, Professor Ballard published in the Jamaica Journal, answers to Pastor Hobbs's statements, giving proof to controvert the allegation that the Jamaica schools were inferior. This elicited from the clergyman the letter that aroused the wrath of the Superintendent.

This is the statement that, in making confession to me, our schools are already outstripped by those of other islands, and that the Superintendent did not waste much time in calling the reverend gentleman down. In the local paper published the very next day was this paragraph from him:

Rev. J. Howard Hobbs: Sir, your statement in today's Farmer that in a private confession to you I admitted the inferiority of the Jamaica schools to other Long Island, is an absolute falsehood, and you have entered the house of God, and I neither admitted nor deny any such thing, and no one knows it better than you do. Yours, etc., W. J. Ballard.

This letter created a mild sensation throughout the village, and it became the subject of general discussion. The pastor's statement was, however, not new. During that time he has always taken part in secular affairs. During the late campaign he supported McKinley, preaching several strong sermons in aid of the candidate and scoring Democrats as anarchists and repudiators. By this he incurred the extreme displeasure of his Democratic parishioners.

MAN AND HORSE PERISHED.

Farmer Flock's Body Found by Friends in a Swamp in Freehold.

Freehold, N. J., Jan. 4.—Daniel Flock, a prosperous farmer of New Sharon, this county, came here to testify in a case in the county courts last Monday. He started for home again in his buggy, alone, six miles from here is the little village of Manalapan, and at the hotel kept there by C. E. Davis, Flock stopped to get warm. It was noticed at the hotel that he was under the influence of liquor. Flock did not reach home that night. Wednesday morning his friends and neighbors organized a searching party. Day after day they searched along all the roads and byways. Yesterday morning the body of the horse, which Flock had ridden, was found in a swamp near the meadows. Flock's friends, after several hours of hunting, found his body. It was lying in the bed of a shallow stream, face down. Nearly also in the stream was the body of his horse. Tracks along the road showed that the horse, which Flock had probably been unable to guide, had wandered from the road into the swamp and had fallen down an embankment into the water.

Baby Blown Up with Powder.

A little five-year-old son of David Sherry, of Orange, N. J., threw a match into a half-pint can of powder at his home, No. 29 South street, Sunday night, causing a loud explosion, and nearly blinding the child, besides breaking the window glass in the room. Sherry returned from hunting some time ago, and left the explosive in a chest. An ambulance was called and the sufferer was sent to the Memorial Hospital. He will recover.

WIDOW ACCUSES TRACY.

Mrs. Perkins Declares the Colonel Owes Her Money—He Says She is a Crank.

Mrs. Addie Perkins, the buxom widow whom Colonel John Tracy, Chief of the Charities Department, of the District of Columbia, accuses of making life a burden to him, made a statement yesterday. She was arrested on Saturday upon the complaint of Colonel Tracy and John R. Vennart, Tracy's father-in-law, both of whom reside at No. 1029 Boulevard, Astoria, Colorado. Tracy charged the woman with disorderly conduct, while his father-in-law accused her of creating a disturbance, and of attempted assault. In default of \$200 bail, Mrs. Perkins was locked up in the Queens County Jail.

"Colonel Tracy still indebted to me in the sum of \$2,300, which I advanced him on notes which he never paid," said Mrs. Perkins. "Two years ago, he lent me \$2,000 on a note, which I later gave him an additional loan of \$1,000 and a few months ago I cashed his note for \$800. When all these notes were due, Colonel Tracy asked me to allow him to renew them for six months. I consented and gave him the notes. He has since failed to give me when they were due. When I called upon him last Saturday for a settlement of the debt, he had me arrested." Colonel John Tracy is a brother of Congressman Charles Tracy, of Albany, one of the original "cuckoos" of the Cleveland Administration.

"Mrs. Perkins never gave me any money," said Colonel Tracy last night. "I first met the woman in the New York courts, about ten years ago. She was then known as Mary Preston. She was in search of a pension. When I settled in Washington she called upon me and requested me to have her appointed matron of the Woman's Reformatory. I refused, and she followed me in the matter and she has followed me from place to place ever since. She has been in the habit of spending hours at a time in my home. I told her I had no influence in the matter and she kept hammering at the windows of my home until I was forced to have her arrested. I think the woman is a crank and possessed of strange hallucinations."

Mrs. Perkins says she resides at No. 387 D. Kabb avenue, Brooklyn. She will have a hearing before Justice Ingram, in the East Avenue Police Court to-day.

HAD STEEL SAWS IN THEIR CELLS.

A Plot to Break Out of Hudson County Jail Discovered in Time.

A Trio of Bad Men Were Awaiting Transportation to Trenton State Prison.

They Had Saws Completely Through the Bars of the Bathroom Window Before They Were Found Out.

WAS PRISONER'S WIFE IN THE PLOT.

The Window Opened on the Kitchen Window and the Way to the Grounds of the Court House is an Easy Matter. Other Attempts to Escape.

Three prisoners confined in the Hudson County (N. J.) Jail awaiting transportation to the Trenton State Prison, it was discovered, after they had been taken there last week, had made preparations to break jail. The evidence was found in their cells.

They were Joseph E. Westroll, Charles Raynor and Charles Brooks. The first named were cellmates.

The men were arrested in Hoboken charged with burglary, and sentenced to six and a half years each.

Brooks is a tall tapper. He was arrested in Jersey City after he had robbed the cash drawer of a saloon at a Pavonia avenue.

Under-keeper Terrence Sullivan, on Thursday last found a saw scratched behind the tub in the bathroom. He at once notified Warden Lennon. Three bars of the bathroom window had been sawed through at the bottom. The bars were so weakened that when Sullivan pressed his weight against one of them it gave way and he tumbled to the ground.

Further search resulted in the finding of a saw in the cell formerly occupied by Westroll and Raynor and one in Brooks's cell. Both were found in the mattresses. All three had been taken to prison the day before. Had they tested the bars the men might have escaped.

The saws, so the jail officials state, were undoubtedly carried to Brooks by a wife, who frequently visited him. The window of the bathroom opens on the roof of the kitchen. From there it is an easy matter to slip into the Court House grounds which adjoin the jail. Several prisoners have escaped that way. When asked how the men could have sawed through the bars without being detected, Sheriff Heiler said:

"They probably did the work between 6:30 and 9 p. m. Just about the hour the bathroom is closed.

One probably remained on guard at the door. When any one approached an alarm was given and work was suspended. The fine saws they used cut through the bars

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Public Monuments in Brooklyn.

"The city has received many material improvements in the past year in addition to the work done by the regular municipal departments. Grant square, in front of the Union League Clubhouse, has been adorned by the fine equestrian statue of General Grant, unveiled upon his birthday. A statue of General Warren has been erected in the plaza of Prospect Park. The pedestals of both these statues were paid for by the city. Work has advanced upon the statue of General Slocum, to be erected at public expense, and a private subscription has been made for a suitable memorial to the late General John B. Woodward. The first section of the Museum of Arts and Sciences has been erected upon a portion of the east side lands of Prospect Park at a cost of about \$300,000."—From Mayor Wurster's message.

CELL WOULD NOT HOLD HIM.

Colored Man Got Out of the Lockup in Ten Minutes.

Police Officer McCarthy, of Orange, N. J., arrested William Denson, a notorious colored man, on suspicion of being implicated in the robbery of Plaut & Co. and Snyder & Co.'s delivery wagon of Newark. Sergeant Washer put Denson in the corridor outside the cells and swung to the heavy iron doors.

Ten minutes later Sergeant Washer went to the corridor, and to his surprise the prisoner was gone. Denson had climbed to the top of the cells and worked his body out through one of the small transoms, and had escaped on the roof of the adjoining building.

The Sheriff will now station a guard in the bathroom.

HIS BOY GAVE HIM AWAY.

Frank Marshall, a Milkman, Got Drunk and His Helper Told the Police That His Boss Stole His Supplies.

Frank Marshall, twenty years old, of No. 506 Jersey avenue, Jersey City, is a milk dealer. For some time past he has been stealing the milk furnished by other dealers to their customers, and selling it to his own.

Chief of Police Murphy some days ago received complaint from several of the dealers, and detailed detectives on the case. Nothing was ascertained, and Marshall might have continued his thefts had not he been arrested Sunday for drunkenness.

While he was locked up in the Second Precinct Station House his helper, John Smith, called and asked to see him. Then the police questioned the boy and then learned how Marshall obtained his milk. Then they changed the charge from drunkenness to larceny.

It was arraigned before Police Justice Potts yesterday morning in the First Criminal Court. Examination in the case was adjourned.

Sixteen milkmen appeared against him. Detective Pearson, of Police Headquarters, has recognized Marshall as the man who snatched a woman's pocketbook several years ago.

THIS MARRIAGE A MYSTERY.

A Young Couple from Brooklyn Wedded on the Quiet in Jersey City—Gave a Wrong Address.

Justice of the Peace J. C. Lowry, of No. 352 Pacific avenue, Jersey City, on Sunday afternoon married W. J. Franck, twenty-two years old, and Margaret O. Ray, nineteen years old, both of No. 320 Willow street, Brooklyn.

The couple arrived in a coach, and before being married pledged the Justice to secrecy. Both were well dressed, and the groom, when he paid the Justice the fee, exhibited a large roll of bills.

The numbers on Willow street, Brooklyn, do not run above 100. No such place in as described could be located on the street.

BELIEVED TO HAVE ELOPED.

Bessie Abildgaard Said to Have Gone to Cincinnati with John Marks, a Married Man.

Perth Amboy, Jan. 4.—Bessie Abildgaard, sixteen years old, has been missing for the past two months. It is now claimed that she eloped with a young married man to Cincinnati, O. His name is John Marks, and he came from Danville, Ky. He married Miss Dora Green, of this city. About five years ago Miss Green's folks moved to Kentucky, and when only sixteen years old she married young Marks. They lived together a year. A child was born to them. Marks was a tailor by trade, but he claimed to be the son of a nobleman. He finally made the acquaintance of Miss Abildgaard. She at that time was a telephone operator. Finally, about three months ago, he left the town, and many bills. Nothing has been heard from him since.

Marks's wife said yesterday that she had never got a divorce, nor did she know where her husband was. Miss Abildgaard's parents admitted yesterday that their daughter and Marks were together in Cincinnati.

Buried on His Birthday.

John Reed, who, while defending his sister from her drunken husband, James Fleming, was stabbed to death by the latter New York night was buried yesterday.

John Reed, of No. 100 West 10th street, Jersey City, had been living in a hotel here for the past few months. He would have been the twenty-fifth anniversary of his birth. Interment was in the Hudson County Catholic Cemetery. An inquest will be held Wednesday by Coroner Greentree.

Scratched by a Pet Cat.

Member of the Fire Department, is suffering from a badly swollen hand. A large cat, the pet of the department, with which he was playing, scratched him, inflicting some dangerous gashes. There is danger of blood poisoning.

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