

officers are as lenient as possible with thoughtless youths who engage in the use of explosives; but the illustration in this case indicates where a distinctive line should be drawn, when official interference becomes imperative. "Young America" is entitled to all reasonable privileges in displaying enthusiasm on the Fourth. At the same time those people who peaceably assemble to engage in celebrations have an absolute right to lawful protection. The Salina incident is not the only one which shows this. Other places have had experiences which have taught the lesson that city officials who allow the firing of explosives in close proximity to where people are assembled, are recreant of their duty. When that young man with the anvils was found near to where the audience was gathered, he should have been directed to change his location; failing to obey the order, he should have been summarily removed. For the neglect to pursue this latter course, those in charge at the Salina celebration will always be held, in the minds of the people, measurably responsible for the lamentable event of Saturday.

#### THE CITY'S TAX RATE.

The city taxpayers had a narrow escape last evening from the calamity of higher tax rate, in the special session of the City Council called to fix the levy for this year. The matter has been in the hands of the finance committee for some weeks past, but that body failed to report at a regular session, hence a special session of the Council had to be called one day previous to the regular Tuesday evening session, in order to get in any tax levy at all for the year. This explains the sudden action of last evening.

When the matter came up before the Council, an ordinance was introduced by Councilman Callister fixing the rate the same as last year. This was followed by Councilman Stewart introducing an ordinance raising the rate to eight mills. Mr. Stewart presented figures in support of his claim that it was a necessity to increase the rate. This was resisted by Mr. Callister, who was uncompromising in his opposition to higher taxes, and had sufficient backing among the other members to gain his point; hence the tax rate in the city is the same this year as last.

The first contest over the question took place in a caucus held previous to the meeting, at which it was announced that the Mayor and city attorney advised a 9 mill levy—an increase of two mills to be made. The opposition caused a reduction to the 8-mill proposition, which was also lost, as stated. It was recognized that at the lower rate the city would have a pretty close shave to get through, since the former Council ran about \$80,000 into this year's funds. It was also recognized that the figures furnished to Mr. Stewart did not accurately represent the situation, being made out to show a greater necessity for a high rate than actually existed; for instance, the estimate of \$300,000 as being required for the different departments being nearly \$100,000 too high.

In this action of refusing to increase the burdens of the taxpayers needless absolutely compelled to, even at the prospect of "planching" for a month or two, the opponents of the higher rate deserve commendation. The burden is already sufficiently heavy in the additions it has received from other sources. Besides, the policy of raising the city taxes would be disastrous both from an inside and outside point of view. The inside is as stated—the property owners cannot afford to pay more for the benefits they receive. From the other standpoint—investors cannot be expected to come in under a steadily increasing tax rate, and efforts to secure outside capital would be rendered futile by such a procedure.

The city is now at its full limit for the general fund—five mills; and that limit is sufficiently high. The levy to defray the expenses of controlling the waters of the city is more than is required for that department, and is merely one way of covering a larger amount into the general fund. Under existing conditions the taxpayers probably will not raise any protest, since most of them will recognize the need for the amount now asked. But the proposed increase would not have met with such a favorable reception in the present and prospective financial situation. The Council acted wisely in keeping the city tax levy down.

#### ABOUT LEPROSY.

According to a French newspaper the loathsome disease known as leprosy is far more common in the world than is generally supposed. Eminent specialists fear that it may become as common in Europe as it was during the middle ages and as it still is in some Asiatic countries. There are in Paris at least 150 persons afflicted with the disease. They are under no restraint whatever. Twelve are in one hospital among the other patients, or even employed in the hospital service. In other parts of France, notably near Nice and Marseilles, there are numerous cases.

Leprosy is found in Spain and Portugal. In Italy it is so frequent that a special hospital has been erected at San Remo. It is extremely common in Turkey and in the Greek islands. In Crete alone there are 500 lepers. Nearly everywhere in Palestine, near the cities, the unfortunates can be seen sitting by the roadside soliciting alms of passers-by. Norway has no less than 800 lepers. Here, however, they are cared for by the communities and kept in separate hospitals. They mingle to a certain extent with the public and even receive visits from friends and relatives, but not withstanding this, the disease does not seem to be spreading, and it is supposed to have reached its high water mark in that country. In Sweden, where leprosy was almost unknown some years ago, 462 cases were reported last year, causing great alarm.

The countries most seriously affected in Asia are Hindostan, India, China and Japan. The lepers in Hindostan are estimated at 100,000. On this continent lepers are found in the West Indian islands, Mexico, Guiana, Venezuela, Brazil and Paraguay. A great num-

ber go to France in order to seek a remedy for the affliction, and the Paris physicians apprehend that before long a condition will prevail similar to that of 500 years ago, when the whole of Brittany was a vast hospital for lepers.

Concerning the cause and nature of the disease, opinions are much divided. Some authorities held that its origin may be traced to the consumption of unwholesome food, meat, fish and other substances in a state of putrefaction. This supposition would seem to be supported by the fact that the disease generally affects the poorer classes of the people who cannot always select their food with special regard to its wholesomeness. That leprosy is hereditary is tolerably certain. But the new-born infant does not always show signs of being tainted with it. The child may grow up apparently healthy, only to find some day at a mature age the white-blue spots in the skin that reveal the presence of death in the system. From then on the progress is comparatively rapid. Tubercles of various sizes appear, especially on the face; the hair falls off; the voice becomes hoarse; ulcerations appear and the limbs fall off, one by one. The patient often lingers for years before death puts an end to his sufferings.

It is extremely doubtful whether the dreadful affliction is contagious except perhaps through contact with the ulcerated matter of the patient. Physicians who have studied it closely do not so regard it. As for any remedy, none has as yet been suggested. The only treatment is the isolation of the patients, for the purpose of preventing the propagation of the disease. The leprosy for the treatment of which certain provisions were made by the Mosaic law seems to have included several varieties of skin disease, some of which were curable and contagious, while others were not. But the genuine leprosy seems to be a mystery in every respect. It still remains for some ambitious physician to discover the microbe that causes the sickness and the poison that kills the microbe.

#### ALUM AND TEETH.

The subject of care of the teeth has been freely discussed for years, and medical authorities have come to the conclusion that much of the trouble with this important part of the human body is in the bolted flour used by many people. While there is no doubt that unbolted flour or meal is far superior to superfine white flour in sustaining the structure of the teeth, yet its use is not a complete preventative of decay, hence efforts are continued to find out something that will preserve the teeth in fair condition to old age.

The recent investigation of a writer in Popular Science gives some results that are interesting at least. The investigator was struck by a statement that Horace Walpole, though living to an extreme old age, had a perfect set of teeth at the time of his death. He attributed this to the habit he had of dissolving a very small piece of alum in his mouth three times a day. The recipe was given him by a Mrs. Grosvenor, in her day a celebrated beauty, who also retained a flawless set