

## LOCAL AND OTHER MATTERS.

Attorney General A. C. Bishop transmitted Thursday to Nels Jensen, county attorney of Box Elder county, the following opinion respecting the extent and manner of taxation of consolidated school districts of varying financial standing:

Sir:—I have before me your favor of August 24th in which you recite that Brigham City now constitutes four school districts, separate and distinct, one having an indebtedness of \$4,000; another \$3,000; another \$1,800; the fourth being out of debt with perhaps a little money in the treasury. You state that the people of Brigham City are desirous of consolidating these districts, and you ask to be advised, if the districts are united into one by the board of county commissioners, will the taxpayers of what is now the fourth district, which is out of debt, be obliged to help pay off the bonded indebtedness of the other districts, or will the taxpayers of those districts which are bonded be obliged to pay off their own indebtedness?

I am of the opinion that section 39, page 478 of the laws of 1896, fully answers your question; it provides:

"The board of county commissioners of any county may create into a school district any territory not already so created, or may create a district out of a part or parts of one or more districts upon being petitioned to do so, by so many residents of such territory as have the care and custody of not less than twenty school children of school age residing therein, or upon the recommendation of the county superintendent. The board of county commissioners may change the boundaries of, divide and consolidate existing school districts. Whenever the board of county commissioners shall divide, consolidate or change the boundaries of existing school districts, said board shall have the power, as an incident to such division, consolidation or change, to equitably adjust the property rights and burdens of the several districts affected thereby, by apportioning existing school property and debts and by modifying or reapportioning taxes already voted, in such manner as the justice of the case shall in the opinion of such board demand. To accomplish such adjustment the board of county commissioners may direct special taxes to be levied and collected on particular areas of districts so changed."

Under this section, it is clear that the whole question of adjustment of property rights and burdens and the apportionment of existing school property and indebtedness would be vested in the board of county commissioners.

The board would also be empowered to reapportion the taxes already voted; in short the board of county commissioners would be a tribunal to determine all questions in relation to property rights and indebtedness in such manner as the justice of the case would in their opinion demand.

I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,

A. C. BISHOP,

Attorney General.

Anent the death on the 19th inst. of Elder Andrew Bjorkman, who was performing missionary work in Sweden, Elder Arthur F. Barnes, who was called at the same time from the same quorum, block and ward, said today: "Elder Bjorkman was tendered a farewell party in connection with myself. Before going he expressed a strong desire to take his burial robes with him. I thought the notion a very queer one and prevailed on him to abandon it but the idea was given up reluctantly. Whether he had any presentiment of death I cannot say."

Continuing Elder Barnes said that the deceased has a brother living on Troop street, Brooklyn, New York. This brother is in the wood-carving business and is in a prosperous condition. At the request of Elder Bjorkman Elder Barnes visited the brother and his family by whom he was most pleasantly received. They regrettably expressed themselves that "Uncle John" had not called on them on his way to Europe. The latter announced his intention of doing that on his way home.

St. George Union: A little 3 year old daughter of Charles F. Foster's met with a serious accident, on Monday last, by falling about ten feet off the top of a stairs in the barn, striking on a box containing a lump of rock salt, which bruised her up considerably, but she is now improving nicely. Last Saturday afternoon, August 15, lightning struck a cottonwood tree standing about three rods from the southeast corner of Rufus C. Allen's domicile, tearing out quite a strip of wood about eight or nine feet in length and tearing off the bark in a strip about six inches wide. As the tree was a gnarly, winding one the pieces are torn out with the grain of the wood, and some pieces were hurled a distance of several rods. The bark was also torn off the base of the tree three or four inches. There are a number of families living in the vicinity and they think the lightning struck plenty close enough.

Wednesday afternoon the property of Skelton & Co., (Incorporated) consisting of a stock of books and stationery, was levied upon under execution in favor of the Provo Commercial & Savings bank on a judgment for \$157.90; this was followed by another levy in favor of Hurst & Co. for \$49.87. An attachment was then filed by Hurst & Co. in a suit for \$49.87, and John Skelton levied under an execution for \$687.65. The stock is in the hands of the sheriff. It is not known whether the company will be able to pay its indebtedness in full, although at present it is believed this can be done.

The manager, Mr. Robert Skelton, has the sympathy of all who are acquainted with him, as he has worked most energetically to extricate the company from financial losses sustained through the failure of others in 1893, and his many friends hoped he would be successful.

A wooden model of a life-saving, automatic car-coupler, the invention of James Pierce, a Utah man residing at 318 south Seventh West street, was brought to the News editorial rooms Thursday, and its operations explained. The invention is simplicity itself, and like many other ingenious contrivances, it causes one to wonder why it was not thought of before.

To a News man Mr. Pierce said it was the result of three years of study and work. He now believes it to be the best coupler in the world and the only one that absolutely removes all danger to the brave fellows who follow railroading for a livelihood. As stated the coupler is automatic and easily operated either from the top or side of the car. In using it there is no occasion or necessity for stepping between the cars at all. It consists of a falling tongue, the weight of which is fifteen pounds and possesses of a strength the five times greater than the ordinary coupling link, a pocket-like receptacle and a slide and top bar by which it is dropped and raised. It adjusts itself to a high and low car as readily as it does to those of equal height, and has all the requisite "play" for starting trains or rounding curves. Altogether it seems destined to become an important factor in railroading and in lessening the dangers that pertain thereto. Numerous railway men have already pronounced it a marvelous and valuable invention. A patent has been applied for and allowed.

A home company will shortly be organized for the purpose of putting the coupler on the market. As soon as that is done Mr. Pierce will go east with it and explain its advantages to prospective purchasers. The claim is made for it that it complies with every Congressional requirement, looking towards the safety of railway employees.

Does the NEWS, or any of its readers, know of the whereabouts of Mr. John Davis, who lived in New Town, Ebbw Vale, Monmouthshire, South Wales? He was a member of the Baptist church before joining the Latter-day Saints. He left Europe for Utah in the early fifties, and would now be about 80 years old.

Any information regarding this Mr. Davis would be gladly received by Mr. E. D. Powell, Ontario, San Bernardino Co., Cal.

James B. Pemberton of the Fifth ward died yesterday forenoon at 10:30 o'clock. He had been confined to his bed since Saturday from malarial fever and has been so seriously ill that his family have not expected him to live for several days. Mr. Pemberton was 57 years of age and served in the civil war in the 21st Illinois infantry. He was a prisoner in Andersonville and has never recovered from effects of his imprisonment.

Tuesday morning a 13-year-old boy, Isaac Shepherd of Benjamin, fell from his horse in Spanish Fork canyon, where he was helping his father herd sheep. He received internal injuries and died in about half an hour after the accident. His father carried him on horseback fifteen miles to the railroad at Clear Creek station, from which point the body was shipped to Santaquin.