

EDITORIALS.

MUNICIPAL INDEBTEDNESS.

Of late years there has been a vicious rage for incurring public debts in this country, and these public debts are of a quadruple nature in the United States—federal debt, State debt, county debt, and city debt, which in the aggregate make an alarming total, and very seriously increase the rate of taxation, for one thing is certain, if public debts are created the people must pay the debt or repudiate it, neither of which is a very pleasant thing to contemplate. To pay a public debt, or the interest thereon, requires increased taxation, and this is what has been going on for a number of years past in various parts of the Union. The far too prevalent rule has been—more debt, and consequently higher taxes, until the more thoughtful of the public are beginning to ask where all this is to end.

Municipal indebtedness the last eight years has increased to an alarming extent in the States east. The city auditor of Cleveland, Ohio, in his last report, just issued, says—

"The immense increase of municipal indebtedness, throughout the entire Union, since the close of the civil war in 1865, is justly a constant source of anxiety and alarm to the careful observers of its rapid progress, and to those who must eventually become responsible for its payment.

"In thirty-two leading American cities, including Cleveland, the aggregate of their municipal debts, as reported in the census for 1870, was \$198,895,718. In 1875, or five years later, only, this amount had swollen to the enormous volume of \$525,632,728—an increase of \$326,737,010; or nearly 165 per cent. The general bonded debt of Cleveland, at the former date, 1870, was \$2,101,255. At the close of 1875, this had been augmented to a total of \$5,160,000; an increase of \$3,058,745, or 145 per cent. Hence, Cleveland fairly rivals her sister cities in the race for incurring debt for supposed necessary public improvements. The result, as a whole, is startling. If this same ratio of increase in their indebtedness should be continued by these cities, not including many of lesser note, whose showing is even worse, till the year 1900, nearly all of them would be irredeemably bankrupt. Hence, in the interest of municipal solvency and public safety, there must be, necessarily, a cessation, or at least a suspension, of this apparently reckless expenditure. We may pay too high a price for even the highest advantages and the best facilities which a municipal government can afford. The tax-payers of Cleveland ought to remember that to their public debt is chiefly due their high rate of taxation."

Boston has a debt of \$43,000,000, New Orleans \$22,000,000, St. Louis \$16,500,000. Within eight years the debt of Alleghany City has increased 500 per cent., and the tax levy nearly four times as much. Albany's debt has increased 250 per cent., taxation the same; Baltimore's debt 69 per cent., taxation nearly 100 per cent.; Chicago's debt trebled; Detroit's debt doubled, taxation nearly trebled; Louisville's debt doubled, taxation increased 12 per cent; Milwaukee's debt two and two-thirds, taxation two and a half; Newark's debt more than doubled, taxation doubled; New York's debt quadrupled, taxation increased 50 per cent; Philadelphia's debt doubled, but, for a wonder, taxation reduced one half; Portland's debt trebled, taxation increased about 10 per cent; Providence's debt multiplied by seven and taxation by two; Richmond's debt doubled, taxation increased 30 per cent; Rochester's debt quintupled, taxation two and a half times as great; Pittsburgh's debt multiplied by four and a half, and taxation by four and a quarter.

The New York World comments in this way upon the above—

"In the aggregate, and allowing \$50,000,000 for convertible and merchantable assets that belong to the separate cities, we find that the net indebtedness of these nineteen cities, which, with deductions made, was not quite \$100,000,000 in 1867, has grown to \$330,000,000 in 1875, a net increase of \$230,000,000,

or 230 per cent. The average interest paid by these cities on their loans is in excess of 7 per cent., so that the permanent addition to their annual taxation aggregates \$10,000,000."

Utah has the consolation that her municipal affairs have been in the hands of men who have striven, and with satisfactory success, in avoiding rather than seeking to involve the various cities of the Territory in enormous indebtedness, a policy which it is hoped will continue to be pursued.

LANDING EMIGRANTS AT NEW YORK.

The recent decision of the United States Supreme Court, that the New York State law empowering emigration commissioners to collect head-money is unconstitutional, has thrown emigrant matters in New York into confusion. The Cunard Company accordingly landed their next company of emigrants (55 steerage passengers) at their own wharf, and transported them to the Erie and Pennsylvania R.R. depots, although the companies are liable to a fine of \$50 a head if they land emigrant passengers anywhere in New York harbor, except at Castle Garden, and \$500 in each case for allowing any persons to go on board before landing the passengers at Castle Garden. Everything was done properly by the Company in landing and disposing of these 55 emigrants, and they were fully protected by the Company's men from runners. It is said the Cunard Company intend to do away with the emigrant travel on their ships. The Commissioners don't know how far they would be justified in pressing the law and the fine.

Some of the steamship companies are satisfied to pay the head money (\$1.50), while others will not. Some think the State ought to aid in the expense, but they are willing to co-operate with the Commissioners in protecting immigrants and maintaining an immigrants' landing point, while other companies think that the immigrants can be as well protected at their own wharves as in Castle Garden.

The New York Sun says—

"At this moment the Emigrant Commissioners for the State of New York are practically defunct, smitten to death by the United States Supreme Court. By a unanimous decision the tribunal of last resort has pronounced unconstitutional the species of head money levied under an act of our Legislature on every emigrant, or rather on the steamship which carried him. Now it is emphatically true of commissions, boards and public functionaries in general, that you take their lives when you take the means whereby they live.

"Of course the steamship companies will not pay another dollar, and will probably seek to recover the moneys hitherto extorted by improper legislation. Meanwhile, the functions of the Commission are arrested for want of funds, and the elaborate and on the whole praiseworthy system devised for the reception, safe keeping, and safe conduct of emigrants must needs collapse. The hospitable doors of Castle Garden will be closed, and the bewildered emigrant henceforth abandoned to the mercies of the ticket swindler and the boarding-house shark.

"This deplorable result must inevitably follow the judgment of the Supreme Court unless the Legislature now in session takes immediate and judicious steps to meet the exigency. No time is to be lost. In one way or another funds must be provided for the Emigration Commission, or we shall see the suffering and plundering of an earlier day immensely broadened and aggravated, until the tide of emigration is decisively checked, or at all events diverted from the port of New York.

"Whether the present Commission shall be continued and its expenses defrayed by the State, or whether a new board shall be created, to be named and supported by the city of New York, is a question of secondary importance. But it is of vital consequence to the city, State, and country at large, that this Legislature should not adjourn without taking thought for the well-being and protection of emigrants during the current year.

"If our friends in Albany are not yet alive to the urgency of this measure, we will add one word in their ear. Should they dally and dicker too long over the business, Congress may take it into its own hands. We beg of them to save us from the incubus of another batch of Federal officials."

The Commissioners are now satisfied that they have no right to demand or collect head-money, and, according to the New York Herald of March 24, "they have decided, therefore, to extend to all agents and officers of steamships and sailing vessels arriving at this port with emigrants the full privileges of Castle Garden, including the reception and care of the sick and destitute, the forwarding of those desiring to proceed out of the State by railways, the sale of railway tickets, interchange of money, and to continue the correspondence bureau. No change will be made in the working of the Castle Garden bureau excepting the omissions to collect head money."

That paper further says—

"It seems to be the impression among agents of leading lines that the passengers can be landed at any of the wharves or at Castle Garden, and the passengers cared for properly at a greatly reduced expenditure of money. The Commissioners seem to be willing to have such a change made, but ask what will become of the 700 or 800 sick, disabled and insane patients now under their care at Ward's Island if the text of the decision declared all action of that Commission illegal. The cost of the maintenance of those patients is about \$150,000 per annum, and if they are sent from that hospital they must become a charge upon the taxpayers of the city and State."

"We cannot look forward with any complacency to seeing the care of the thousands of immigrants arriving at this port turned over to the steamship and railroad lines. Emigration from Europe has fallen off considerably, and we do not care to have the rate still lowered by allowing the report to go abroad that the peasant who comes here will be handed over to the harpies of our cities as soon as the steamship lines have done with him. Congress should take hold of this matter at once and provide for a continuance in some shape of a system which, in spite of some faults, has worked well, giving the poor immigrants breathing time and a fair chance to get started in the New World without first paying a heavy royalty to the predatory classes that flourished long ago in the First Ward."

"At a meeting of the steamship agent held last week it was resolved to increase the rate of passage for westward bound immigrants from English ports to \$30 and \$32, to take effect May 1."

It was rumored that some of the steamship companies were inclined to propose an offer to be made to the Government from the steamship and railroad agents of lines terminating in New York to assume control of Castle Garden as a landing and forwarding place for emigrants, to delay all expenses arising from its operation, and to conduct its business the same as at present, under the supervision of a superintendent of immigration, to be appointed by the State or city authorities.

The New York Herald of March 26 says—

"So far as the poor emigrants are concerned, and they are the only ones who can suffer from the change in the system of receiving emigrants at this port, the edict has already gone forth, and organized bands of thieves, confidence men and other swindlers are prowling through the streets adjacent to Castle Garden and the steamship wharves. The policemen and the agents of the several railroad lines, notably those of the Pennsylvania Railroad at Battery place, are actively engaged in driving off the 'landsharks, baggage-smashers and scalpers,' but, during the dangerous interim before the reception of the United States Supreme Court decision, it is the wish of the steamship and railroad agents that Superintendent Walling should aid their efforts by detaching a few expert detectives in the locality and save the emigrants from changing greenbacks for glass \$20 counterfeits, by arresting the well known confidence men now working on Broadway, Battery place and West street."

MASQUERADES.

The following is from the Beaver Enterprise of March 25—

"What?—We learn that at Mr. Flores' dance on Thursday night, after the presentation by Mr. Swift to Mr. F., of a purse which had been made up, the latter made a few remarks, in which he referred to a certain school teacher in Beaver, who had said that no decent person would go to a masked ball. In view of the fact that in Salt Lake City such balls are gotten up by such persons as H. B. Clawson, Esq., and attended by members of such families as Prest. B. Young, Wm. Jennings, Wm. H. Hooper, &c., we think that that teacher had better talk about something he knows something about, if he knows anything at all. Who is he anyway?—COM."

The evil of many things is not intrinsic, it is not inherent, it comes with the using. There is nothing absolutely evil in wearing a mask, in dancing without a mask, or in dancing in a mask. The masquerade is supposed to have been derived from the Roman Saturnalia, or festival of Saturn, a pagan institution, originally a sort of "harvest home," but subsequently observed with greater latitude, and is most notable in connection with the carnival (Shrove Tuesday, the day before Lent) of Catholic countries, when fun, frolic, wild indulgence, misrule, and licence prevail. After the frolic of the day masked balls ensue at night in the theatres, etc.

The carnival has sometimes been prohibited by authority. Masked balls are prohibited in some of the States. In New York such was the case, but recently we believe there has been a relaxation of the law.

Masked balls are not necessarily impure, though they may readily become so, and perhaps are frequently made the opportunities of impurity. Under judicious regulations masquerades may be made innocent and pleasant diversions. But promiscuous assemblages for dancing, and especially for masked dancing, may and sometimes do speedily degenerate into very demoralized exhibitions of human folly and frailty. Such mixed assemblages, therefore, can not be commended by any decent citizens. Many excellent people never attended a masked ball, and in all probability never will.

Correspondence.

Earthquakes—Deaths—Long Winter—Feed Gone—Stock Dying.

MOUNT PLEASANT,

March 27th, 1876.

Editor Deseret News:

We have had several shocks of earthquake in this place recently. The first warning of it occurred about the 22nd of this month, and two more the next day, if I remember correctly. Some of the citizens felt them so distinctly, and were so frightened, that they vacated their houses for a short time. It is also rumored here that two dwellings were badly cracked by the shock in Moroni, one of our neighboring towns.

We have had several deaths within the last three weeks. One, Sister Peel, from consumption. She died about the 12th of this month. She was well respected by all who knew her, and was followed to her last resting place by a large number of people.

Sister Ann Coats, another faithful handmaid in the Kingdom of God, and a respectable citizen, departed this life on the 16th inst., very suddenly. She was clerking in her son's store, as usual, that day, apparently in good health. She returned home that evening, retired to bed to rest for the night, and was soon after seized by an overflow of blood to the heart, or at least that is the supposition, and died in a few minutes after. Her loss is deeply felt by her large family and many friends. She was aged 59.

The infant daughter of Bro. Oscar and Sister Emmeline Barton died on the 22d inst, aged about two days. The child's mother, who is the daughter of W. S. Seely, bishop of this place, has been very low, but is now improving rapidly.

The daughter of Brother and Sister Young died on the 25th inst., of dropsy, aged about thirteen years. We have had a long and hard Winter. Feed is about all gone.

The people hardly know what to do to save their stock. Some have died already, and a great many more will die unless Winter soon abates. It is the most severe Winter we have had for many years. The people will be very late getting in their crops, on account of the snow remaining on the ground so long.

Very respectfully yours,
J. T. HENINGER.

Wants to Gather—Meetings—Thunder and Lightning—Madison—The Capitol—Baptisms.

VIOLA, Richland Co., Wis.,
March 7th, 1876.

Editor Deseret News:

Since my last correspondence for the NEWS we have visited Dane County, where we met with a kind reception, meeting with four families who have friends in Utah, namely, Henry and Peter Atkin, Thomas and David Isom, and an aged lady and her son named Elwood. They were formerly from England, and they all have friends in "our mountain home," who send them some of our papers, among them the NEWS. Allow me to say here that wherever we find people who receive a copy of the NEWS, they always receive and entertain us with the greatest kindness. Therefore I would urge upon our brethren in Utah who have friends east, to send them copies of the Weekly NEWS, Woman's Exponent and Juvenile Instructor, as they are silent yet powerful aids in spreading the truths of the Gospel.

While in Dane County we held several meetings, which were well attended, and several expressed their belief in the gospel, but were not then quite ready to go into the waters of baptism.

Since our return here we have received a letter from Mr. Henry Atkins, informing us that he has sold his farm, and is desirous of gathering immediately with the Saints, and asking us to visit them again, which we will do as soon as convenient. Thus the Lord has overruled our visit there for good.

Since that time we have been up to "Green Bay," in the northeast part of this State. There we were kindly received by Mr. Leiret. We held meeting at Greenleaf, Sunday evening, Feb. 27. The attendance was good, and we were invited to visit them again. While returning from meeting, we witnessed one of the strangest sights I ever beheld. There was about eight inches of snow on the ground, and the large feathery flakes were still falling, when the thunders of heaven began to roar, shaking the earth like the discharge of a thousand pieces of heavy artillery. The vivid lightning danced in forked streaks through the air, making it as light as day, so that together with the snow upon the ground, the light became so dazzling that we involuntarily put our hands before our eyes, in order to regain our sight. This continued for about one hour. In the morning the snow was about one foot deep. At this time of year, in a northern climate, such a storm is unprecedented, and such was never witnessed here before by the oldest inhabitant.

On our return we visited Madison, the capital of this State. Madison is the most beautiful city we have seen in the north-west. It is situated centrally between four fresh water lakes. The capitol is located in the centre of the city, on a very high hill, in the midst of a small but beautiful park. The building has four main entrances. The columns at the entrance are of the Corinthian style, the dome is high and well formed, and the design altogether is equal to any I have seen in America. The cost of the building was about one half million dollars. The iron fence around the park, together with the gate ways, cost forty thousand dollars. The interior of the building is very beautifully finished, the senate and assembly rooms being well ventilated, well carpeted, and well seated. We spent one evening in the Assembly, while they were in session. They appear to be a well regulated body, who seem to dispatch business very rapidly, although one of the speakers made a desperate attempt to be witty at another member's expense, but failed so signally that he brought the laugh of the House upon himself. Probably it was his first attempt; if not, it certainly ought to be his last.

Mr. Eugene Brown, who is state watchman, was very kind and courteous to us. We informed him that