

a public officer may do under the explicit instructions of a State law. The one under consideration leaves no doubt as to what are the duties and powers, in respect to the jury list, of the county officers named.

HAMMOND'S CASE.

The announcement that the authorities of Transvaal have sentenced Hammond, an American citizen, and his associates in the so-called reform committee, to death has naturally caused surprise and excitement on both sides of the Atlantic ocean. Were they induced to plead guilty of treason, only in order to deprive their respective governments of all technical grounds for interference in their behalf, leaving their property and lives entirely to the tender mercies of the executive of the Boer republic? Hammond's case is to some extent another Weller case. Transvaal justice might have been content without exceeding in severity the decrees even of a French court martial.

It is generally felt that the sentence will not be executed, and there are many weighty grounds for this supposition. Yet, it is plain enough that among the friends of the condemned men, there are grave fears and much anxiety. They do not wholly trust to the clemency of President Krueger, whose defiant attitude is but too apparent in his refusal to accept the invitation of the British government to come to England and discuss the affairs of his country. They know that their petitions for pardon must be well supported in order to produce any deep impression. The real question at issue is whether Great Britain is prepared to assert her claims to suzerainty over the Boer republic or not. Krueger has politely torn Chamberlain's quasi-ultimatum to pieces and followed this up with the dramatic ending of the trial of the reform committee. It is almost a challenge to England. Will she accept it? If not, her prestige in South Africa must be considered lost.

The situation is critical. Germany has never withdrawn her protest against foreign encroachment on the independence of the Transvaal. The Dutch of the other African republics would join the Transvaal people in the defense, and so would many of the natives, until possibly the whole coast from Cape to Egypt would be in arms against British invasion. The problem which Lord Salisbury has to solve is by no means an easy one.

But that does not affect the matter, when regarded from a purely humane point of view. The offense of Hammond and fellow prisoners was not such as to warrant their execution—not in any country with a civilized jurisprudence at least. And they should not be sacrificed to the pride of the Transvaal, or any other imaginary idol that may thirst for their blood. The United States has often been slow in imparting to some of the nations of the world a much needed lesson in respect for American citizenship. This seems to be a case for prompt and judicious interference. Hammond may have been led into a rash act, but he is no criminal. The conditions of Transvaal must bear part of the blame

for the revolutionary movement. Old Glory should protect his life, if not his property; for the influence of the principles of which that flag is a beautiful emblem should be felt wherever it is unfolded among the nations of the earth.

STATE EXAMINERS LAW.

In today's issue we print the law relative to the Board of State Examiners. To those having claims against the State this is a most important measure, as all such claims must go to the State examiners to be passed upon. Matters of that character which heretofore have been disposed of by the Legislature in many instances now go to the examiners. This body also contracts for all supplies for the State.

We have requests for a number of other laws, such as those relating to fish and game, estrays, etc., some of which do not go into effect till June 1st, while others are now in operation. These we will give at an early date.

THE FRENCH SITUATION.

The trouble in France, which has resulted in the resignation of the Bourgeois cabinet, is really a conflict between the conservative element, represented by the senate, and the radical and socialistic factions, whose aim is constitutional changes and control over the senate. The most important number on the program is the income tax law, proposed by the cabinet and opposed by the senate. But the latter body avoided the fight on this point and dealt its opponents a telling blow by deciding to postpone any appropriation for the occupation of Madagascar until the country should have an administration that enjoys the confidence of both houses of the legislature. The senators counted on support among the people in this matter, for the reason that the Madagascar program of the government is rather unpopular.

The conflict is now on between the two chambers, and the question is which of them shall be supreme. That this brings the country to the verge of another constitutional crisis is evident. If the deputies insist on the right to govern the affairs of France without the senate, the latter will naturally be forced to appeal to the country.

According to those who have observed the situation the immediate outlook is not particularly encouraging. Public opinion is becoming restless. Parliamentarism has lost some of its charms, and a change is hoped for. The retreat of Casimir Perier from the presidency caused the people to lose confidence in the stability of the highest authority in the country. The Madagascar campaign, financial scandals and efforts to hush matters up were not calculated to restore tranquillity.

It is asserted by outspoken French journals that the time has already come when many influential men are willing to follow any strong and daring leader that may arise. The increasing popularity of Henry of Or-

leans is regarded with alarm in some quarters, as it is considered that such popularity may any time be used for political purposes. The prince has just returned from the orient. He has been decorated with ribbon of the Legion of Honor and there is some talk of giving him the rights of a citizen, withheld from other princes, all of which is looked upon with suspicion by the republican party.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT PROPOSITION

We received, too late for last evening's NEWS, a communication from Mr. James Moffat, of the Salt Lake and Ogden Gas and Electric Light company, on the subject of municipal and private operation of electric light plants. Mr. Moffat takes issue with the showing made in an article published in a cotemporary, but which did not appear in the NEWS; hence it will not be necessary to publish his communication at length, as it makes reference to figures and statements that were not given in our columns.

The gentleman's communication takes the position that a private company can erect and operate an electric light plant more cheaply than a municipality can, and the figures he gives are made to support his argument on that point. With his showing the NEWS has no disposition to take issue. It has been, and still is, our view that an undeniable proposition is that men acquainted with the electric light business and capable in financial affairs can operate an electric light plant at the lowest cost attainable—perhaps much lower than a municipality, especially where the latter is liable to have some inexperienced men among its officials, and does not apply as strict rules to some of its employees as do private corporations whose existence depends largely on rigid compliance with rules of economy. Hence the gentleman and his company will not feel that we are denying or restricting them in any showing, since we agree with their main proposition.

The real question at issue between the municipal and the private lighting policies is not, however, the matter of which can produce light the cheapest; but which will give it to the public at the lowest price. When a private corporation is in the lighting business, it is there for profit; hence to the cost of manufacture is added the profit charged, and the sum of the two represents the price to the consumer. When a municipality owns its plant, the cost of lights to the city is the cost of production; there is no added sum for dividends and profits. If a private corporation will furnish lights to a city at a lower figure than it costs the municipality to produce them with its own plant, then the private furnishing would be the cheaper one; but if the cost of municipal production is less than the other with added profits, the people get the advantage. As a general proposition it would appear that the difference in cost of operation against a municipal plant is not so great as the profit which a private corporation expects to make; hence it would seem cheaper for the city to do its own lighting than to buy from others.