

DESERET NEWS:

WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

WEDNESDAY, - MAR. 6, 1878.

TO THE CLERKS OF STAKES

WE respectfully request the clerks of the various Stakes of Zion, in making out reports of the quarterly conferences for publication in this paper, to condense their minutes as much as possible. The general public are not interested in learning the particular hymn sung or the name of the Elder who prayed at any of the meetings, nor in the oft-repeated fact that certain speakers "felt well in meeting with the Saints." They should understand that we receive conference reports twice a week, and therefore cannot insert such long accounts as are frequently forwarded. It requires considerable labor to boil down, as we are often compelled to do, particulars spread over sixteen or twenty pages of foolscap into a few paragraphs embodying the principal features of meetings reported. If the clerks will forward to us a brief, pointed sketch of each conference we shall be pleased to publish it, but cannot fill up the DESERET NEWS with matter which has only a local interest. The discourses delivered are no doubt generally valuable, but to give them anything like a fair report would occupy the paper to the exclusion of all news, local and foreign. Give us the essence of the matter, only, and we and the public will be grateful for the change.

OBITUARIES.

THE DESERET NEWS has always inserted death notices free of charge, and will continue to do so, in reason. But lengthy obituaries containing particulars which, however interesting to the immediate friends of the deceased, are not at all entertaining to the general public, are becoming too common, and we must decline inserting them except in the form of advertisements. The demise of a public official is a subject of general interest, and therefore a matter of news. But detailed accounts of the life and travels of men and women with whom the public have been unacquainted are not attractive reading to the majority of newspaper subscribers. We therefore announce to our correspondents and the friends of deceased persons that we will insert brief death notices as usual, but lengthy obituaries will not be published hereafter unless paid for at regular advertising rates.

THE NEW REVENUE LAW.

WE publish to-day the act to provide revenue for the Territory of Utah, &c., as passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. This is a good bill and in many respects a great improvement on the old revenue law. The total amount to be assessed for territorial, county and school purposes is 1.20 per cent. This, with the provision repealing that portion of the school law which empowers trustees to assess a tax of one-fourth of one per cent., makes the general tax a trifle less than under the old statute. The advantages to school districts of the new arrangement are these: First the amount obtained for school purposes will be greater in the aggregate than before. Second, its distribution will be equalized. Under the old law poor districts, in which the greatest need of aid from taxation was felt, collected much smaller amounts than the richer districts; also the revenue obtained from railroads in many instances fell to the lot of districts much better capable of self-support than others which obtained no benefit therefrom. Under the new law the school tax,

collected from all sources, will be divided, with the exception of the five thousand dollars annual amount for the Deseret University, among the school districts according to the number of children of school age therein, and expended for the payment of district school teachers according to the number of average daily attendance of pupils. This will be a great help to the cause of education, and with the law which permits a maximum tax of three per cent. for school purposes in any school district on a two-thirds vote of the qualified voters therein, makes ample provision for all present school requirements.

The usual exemptions from taxation are made in this bill, and in addition "debts due and owing by the party assessed" are to be deducted from his taxable credits, and mining claims, products of mines and ore in the mines are also exempted. The latter is a very sweeping provision, and no matter what may be thought of it by other sections of the community, the mining classes should feel that their interests have been specially protected by the bill. How any objections can be raised against this feature of the law by the professed champions of the mines is a dense and clouded mystery, unsolvable and impenetrable, unless we conclude that as in the case of the election law, they are mad because all they professed to want has been granted, leaving nothing tangible for them to protest about and misrepresent.

The offices of assessor and collector are separated except in counties where the annual revenue does not amount to more than \$20,000. These offices are made elective but vacancies between elections can be filled by appointment from the county court. Property is to be assessed at its cash value on the first day of April, the assessment must be completed by the first Monday in June, taxes will be due on the first day of July and become delinquent if not paid by the 31st day of October. The collector must fully settle with the county court by the 31st day of December.

Property may be seized and sold for unpaid taxes and provision is made by this law for the conveyance of title to real estate thus seized and sold. Two years' time is allowed for the redemption of the property on payment of the taxes, the costs and one and a half per cent. per annum interest.

The county courts may only remit taxes in certain specified cases, and then only to the amount of five dollars in each instance. The county treasurers are made sub-treasurers of the Territory to whom the collectors are to pay all funds collected, monthly.

There are many other good provisions in the bill but these are the chief changes made from the old law. We advise our readers to study it carefully. It is far better to understand a law than to depend upon another for information. Every taxpayer as well as every public official should become acquainted with the details of this Act and all should govern themselves accordingly. Payment of taxes is generally obnoxious, and otherwise honorable people will often try to shirk the responsibility of supporting the revenue which the ownership of property entails, or to escape a full and fair assessment. But duty to the State should put selfishness into the shade, and in so lightly taxed a community no one has any valid excuse for evading the assessor and collector.

We believe that the new law will work well, and though much valuable property which most people think ought justly to be taxed will, under its provisions, escape assessment, that the revenue of the Territory will be increased in proportion to the requirements of the times. Let all honest people comply with its requirements, and let those who will not be made to understand that there is power to enforce as well as wisdom to enact laws in the Territory of Utah.

TWO MORE ACTS.

THE bills extending the jurisdiction of Justices of the Peace and amending the charters of incorporated cities appear in this evening's NEWS. The first extends the jurisdiction of Justices of the Peace to cases in which the penalty does not exceed six months' imprisonment,

or a fine of less than three hundred dollars, or both. And it brings within their jurisdiction a number of petty offenses which the higher courts here ruled to be beyond their powers. The Justices are now clothed with authority greater than has ever been entrusted to them since the organization of the Territory. We hope they will use it wisely.

The second empowers the City Councils to pass ordinances to compel persons to keep their sidewalks free from obstruction; to construct waterworks and levy taxes on such districts as are specially benefitted by such works. It provides that fines accruing from convictions for misdemeanors, when the arrest was made by a city officer, shall be paid into the city treasury and the imprisonment shall be in the city jail. Also that city recorders, treasurers, marshals and assessors and collectors, who heretofore have been appointed by the City Council, shall hereafter be elected by the people.

As the law now stands, with the rulings of the higher courts, city Aldermen, who are Justices of the Peace by virtue of their office, in taking action upon cases of misdemeanor, (including petty larceny, assault and battery, &c.) must proceed under the territorial statutes instead of the municipal ordinances, the fines going into the city treasury. The courts have ruled that City Councils have no authority to pass ordinances in relation to crimes which have already been passed upon by the Legislative Assembly. This is curious law and contrary to the express powers conferred by the Legislature and specified in the City Charters. City Aldermen acting as Justices will have to be careful that such cases as the above-named are prosecuted by "The People of the United States in the Territory of Utah" instead of proceeding in the name of the City.

We had hoped to see several important changes in the last named act, affecting the rights and powers of municipalities, but we understand they did not meet with the approval of the Executive, so had to be stricken from the bill. So far as they extend, both the laws are good and will have a beneficial effect.

"LIBERAL" DESPOTISM.

THERE has been a great deal of nonsensical talk about despotism in Utah. Priestly tyranny and the bondage of women have been represented as the prevailing characteristics of social life in this Territory. They have formed the stock in trade of the newspaper correspondent, the political office seeker, and the peripatetic preacher, seeking for dollars to aid in Christianizing the "Mormons."

But there has been no actual tyranny in Utah which is at all comparable to that exercised by a portion of the so-called "Liberal" party. Neither has there ever been among the supposed servile members of the "Mormon" Church anything like the slavish submission and surrender of manhood, exhibited by certain revilers of the "Mormons" under the lash of their self-appointed censors and dictators. This tyranny has for some time past extended not only to political matters, but to social intercourse and private affairs. The unfortunate "Liberal" must vote as the clique dictates, must sign all memorials and petitions to Congress however ridiculous and contrary to his sense of propriety they may be, subscribe to all funds started by them in aid of crusades against the "Mormons," support all the monstrous tirades culminated from a blackguard press or the platform at mob assemblies, and sneeze when the clique takes snuff, or be branded with the terrific name of "Jack-Mormon," and suffer the abuse of literary scavengers and the plottings of unprincipled adventurers.

If in official position he must not be seen speaking to a "Mormon," much less entering a house where any "Mormon" resides, and if brought into business contact with any of the people who made the Territory he must treat them with discourtesy or supercilious contempt. Failing in such a course he may expect the vengeance of the clique and look out for plots to effect his removal from office.

Men of education and previous respectability have been unmanly enough to submit to this, and to bow down in the dust under the yoke of these "Liberal" vagabonds; and yet they will talk about the bondage of the "Mormons" who have braved the world for the sake of principle, and who when they yield to authority do so from choice for the accomplishment of objects which are dearer to them than life.

The howl that has been raised during the past few days against Governor Emery for simply discharging the duties of his office, show to what lengths these "Liberal" dictators will go to keep up their degrading despotism. Is it not time that the best portion of the non-Mormon element should cut entirely loose from these galling bonds and practice a little of that freedom which they prate of to the "Mormons?" The epithet "Jack-Mormon" with which they are threatened seems to paralyze them with terror. The fear of abuse from a licentious press seems to take all the stiffness out of their back-bones, and men who have been brave in the face of whistling bullets and gleaming steel become the veriest cowards at the shadow of the "Liberal" whip. They should be ashamed of such pandering to the creatures who have assumed to control them, and be determined to bow no more to their unprincipled masters.

We hope to see the respectable portion of the non-Mormons of Utah make a stand against the disreputable clique from which most of the abuse of the "Mormon" people has emanated, and while contending against anything which they honestly consider improper or untrue, have the manhood and the candor to endorse measures or principles which are for the public good, even if they are brought forth by the malignant and unpopular "Mormons." Until they do so they should never open their lips about "despotism in Utah."

THE JUDGES AND THE JURY LAW.

IN another column will be found a communication, signed by the three Judges of the Supreme Court of this Territory, in relation to our jury system. The object of the document will be perceived by calling the tenth paragraph; it is to effect a change in the law so that a jury may be filled up with talesmen, that is such persons as may be standing around the court room.

The reasons given for desiring this change are that the two hundred names comprising the jury list are sometimes so nearly exhausted by the fourth term of the courts, that some cases have to go over till the next year; that many of the jurors do not reside in the vicinity of the court, and therefore delay is frequently caused in filling up the panel after challenges; that the present law places it in the power of one man—the Probate Judge—to say whether there is to be a jury at all in his district, because he might refuse or fail to furnish the one hundred names required by the statute; and that under the present jury law it is impossible to enforce the anti-polygamy Act.

Let us briefly examine these reasons. First, the number of names on the list. Would it not be an easy matter to change the law so as to increase the number to three hundred or four hundred, if so many are necessary? Second, the distance of some of the jurors from the places of holding court. Would it not be for the benefit of the Territory if the courts were not confined to the present places, but authorized to hold some of their terms in other localities in their respective districts? The Third District extends northward to Cache, Rich and a portion of Bear Lake Counties, from sixty to one hundred and thirty miles distant. Third, the power of the Probate Judge. Is not this evenly balanced by the power of the Clerk of the District Court? Has there ever been a case of failure, neglect or refusal on the part of the first named functionary? Or is not the point raised purely imaginary and altogether far-fetched? Fourth, the failure to enforce the statute against polygamy. Would the enforcement of that law be easier if a

jury was summoned from the bystanders than if empaneled as the law now provides? And if so why so? Must not the answer be, "because a jury can by this means be packed to convict?"

And this is the reason why such a manner of obtaining juries is objectionable. It must be remembered that the present mode of empanelling juries is that provided by the so-called Poland bill, over which the opponents of the "Mormon" people went into ecstasies upon its passage. It is an Act of Congress and was framed upon the clamorings of lawyers and Judges and other Federal officials in this Territory. It provides for the placing on the jury list of an equal number of "Mormons" and non-Mormons, the latter forming only a tenth or less of the population. Yet this is not enough for them. They want the law so arranged that by repeated challenges and other technical objections, by which it can be made to appear necessary, a jury in any given case, say a charge of polygamy, may be summoned from bystanders specially placed within call, who will be sure to return a verdict as desired by the prosecution.

The Judges say that the persons whose names compose the lists are "very properly scattered all over the district." We endorse that view of the matter, and are therefore opposed to the filling up of juries by persons happening to be in and around the court room. If the lists are "properly" made up in the way stated, the plan proposed will be necessarily "very improper." It must be remembered that a peculiar condition of affairs exists in this Territory. The Federal officials are generally arrayed against the masses of the people here, and are already entrusted with extraordinary powers. If the prosecuting officer, the Judge on the bench, the Marshal who executes the orders of court, are all arrayed against a prisoner charged with polygamy, and to all this is added a jury chosen by the latter officer from bystanders equally prejudiced, what kind of trial by jury would the defendant obtain, and how much impartiality could he expect?

All the objections to the present law mentioned by the Judges can easily be remedied without the plan they propose, and it is to be hoped that Congress will not be baited and badgered into patching and changing the laws of this Territory, every session, just to suit those who are anxious to punish by undue measures a social practice which cannot be reached by fair and due process of law.

The statement in regard to the territorial laws comes with a very bad grace from at least one of the Judges who signs it. The laws enacted by the Legislature against lascivious cohabitation, adultery and seduction, were repealed by the passage of the penal code, which was passed at the recommendation of the principal members of the Salt Lake bar, and under the assistance and supervision of the gentleman referred to. And thereby hangs a tale which we have neither space nor inclination to unfold at present.

It is bad enough for Utah to be cursed with schemers who make it their business to plot against the majority of its citizens. But when the Judges of its Supreme Court lend their aid to those adventurers, the magnitude of the evil is immensely enlarged, and it is time to cry out. We trust that every enlightened Congressman will see through the thin pleadings of these judicial correspondents.

THE VETO.

THE President of the United States in vetoing the bill "to authorize the coinage of the silver dollar, and to restore its legal tender character," offers nothing new by way of argument to sustain his position. The subject has been fully discussed in both Houses, and the decision of Congress was the will of the great bulk of the people.

In identifying himself with the bondholders and gold speculators, Hayes has damaged his influence without accomplishing any good. The measure was called for by the public voice, it is strictly constitutional, it was thoroughly debated, and was not crowded through Congress at the close of the session, but was passed with the thorough con-