

# THE EVENING NEWS.

GEORGE Q. CANNON,  
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

Tuesday, March 22, 1897.

## THE ASSESSOR OF INTERNAL REVENUE BEFORE THE GRAND JURY.

UNITED STATES INTERNAL REVENUE,  
Assessor's Office, District of Utah,  
Salt Lake City, March 21, 1897.

Editor of the Evening News:—My attention has been called to your article entitled "Retractions." Permit me to say that your information concerning my testimony before the Grand Jury is entirely erroneous.

I stated that body that the villainous attack made upon me several weeks ago was a private affair, and that I did not think it necessary for them to inquire into it. I further stated I hoped to be able to meet the villain and would then settle it. I have never attempted to circulate a malicious story about an attempted assassination, but in every instance when asked about it, have always given what occurred and the reasons (as I believed) for which the attack was made.

We received the above letter from Dr. Taggart this morning. As will be seen it refers to a small local article which appeared in yesterday's issue of the News, on the subject of the "ridiculous story about an attempted assassination" of which Dr. Taggart was the object. It is not a new subject to the public. Every one has heard more or less about it.

One evening, towards the latter part of last January, Mr. Jno. P. Taggart, U. S. Assessor of Internal Revenue for this Territory, by some means had the sleeve of his coat torn and the skin of his arm abraded or broken. Immediately the report went out, by telegraph and written correspondence, that an attempt had been made by some person or persons to assassinate the Assessor of Internal Revenue for his zeal in attending to the duties of his office. Who the author of these reports was we do not know; but we have been credibly informed that before twenty-four hours had elapsed the reputed victim had told at least two different versions of the torn coat and abraded arm.

To one party he said, if he had been correctly informed, that he had been attacked and struck by a villain, who had thrown a blow had been aimed at him with a knife, and that in warding it off his coat and arm had been injured. To another party he said, that he had been playing in the Post office with a bull pup and the animal had seized him by the arm, broken the skin and rent the coat sleeve, and that was all there was of it.

Among the citizens, "Mormons" and "non-Mormons," the story of this "attempted assassination" has been looked upon as an excellent joke. We have not met a man who believed for one moment that the story was anything but a hoax. The Assessor, however, has we have reason to believe, been anxious to have it go out that he has been a victim to official sin. It was a case of getting fame. How could he expect a case of an officer's faithful service to the Government to have three villains (we have never seen the number reported) attack him, with a view to kill him, because of his determination to execute the duties of his office without fear or favor? And, then, it is no mean thing for a man to have courage to face the attack of three armed desperadoes determined to assassinate him? Few men have such courage and few men have such a high opinion of themselves.

Whether the Assessor was anxious to have the story of the attack credited, or not, the public must judge for itself. But it looks as if that was the feeling from the fact that about the time he reached the East, the following article was published in the Internal Revenue Record, and has never been contradicted:

"The Mormons seem to be following the example of their brethren in the Territory of Utah, who have recently appointed United States Assessor for the Territory of Utah, was attacked by three ruffians near his residence, Salt Lake City, and received a severe wound in the arm from a knife. It was the night of the 21st of March, and the attack was made quite dark at the time, but the doctor fortunately was called in and the victim was taken to the hospital. It is believed that the attack was made by three men, who were known to the Assessor, and that the attack was made for the purpose of preventing him from performing his duties. The Assessor is now recovering from his wounds, and it is hoped that he will be able to return to his duties in a short time."

We now come to the letter which Dr. Taggart has written to us, and which appears at the head of this article. It appears from it that he has been summoned before the Grand Jury, and that he has been interrogated by the body in relation to the attack upon him. It is under the circumstances, was eminently proper. Whether the Assessor of Internal Revenue publishes circulation the stories which he told, or the makes the little difference. They are in circulation, and he was the proper person to interrogate respecting the truth or falsity of them. The community has a grave charge made against him, and it is

said that the people of Salt Lake City, offended at the Assessor's fidelity to the interests of the Government, have prompted an attack upon him with intent to murder him. It is a charge of so serious a nature, involving not only the character and reputation of the community, but of every individual in the community, that it could not be ignored. But, if we may credit the Assessor of Internal Revenue's letter, he stated to the Grand Jury that the attack made upon him was "a private affair," and further that he (Dr. Taggart) did not think it necessary for them to inquire into it. Now, either the Assessor of Internal Revenue has not given us the exact language he used on that occasion, or the Grand Jury signally failed in doing its duty. We can not think that any Grand Jury would look to an Assessor of Internal Revenue for instructions as to what was necessary for the members to inquire into and what was not. That has not been the custom in the past, and we can not suppose that it is at the present. As we understand the law, it was the duty of the Grand Jury to ask John P. Taggart any questions that might be necessary to elicit the whole truth upon this subject and such other questions as they might think it necessary to ask. It should not have been tolerated for a moment. These questions every witness, as we understand the law, is bound to answer, provided they do not implicate criminally himself. And if a witness refuse to testify, it is the duty of the prosecuting officer to bring the witness before the court, and compel an answer to the questions propounded, or in case of refusal, the witness be committed for contempt until he shall abide the order of the court. The questions that were necessary to propound to the Assessor of Internal Revenue we can scarcely imagine would implicate him; he, therefore, according to his own showing, stood in defiance of the Grand Jury, and virtually said that it was none of its business what had been done; he intended to settle that matter on his own account.

He adds in his letter: "I further stated I hoped to be able to meet the villain and would then settle it." What are we to understand by this? Are we to understand that this model officer, this mentor, this pharisee of the pharisees, whose righteous soul is shocked at the wickedness which prevails in this Territory, and who, in the excess of his zeal for these things, has checked, rushed off to Washington to be before the Committee on Territories, that he contemplates private revenge? This is the only construction that can be put upon the language of his letter. If he made this statement, as he himself says he did, to the Grand Jury, he became the duty of the prosecuting officer to bring him before the court for the purpose of entering into bonds to keep the peace. We know not where the Assessor of Internal Revenue has acquired his ideas of settling wrongs; but in this country, and in all civilized countries, the mode by which wrongs are settled is by the courts, and not by private vengeance. It is not permitted to have had one private settlement already, the odium of which attempts have been made to fasten upon this community. We do not want another such case. Dr. Robinson was deceived when he took the night and was struck down. This was a case where some man or men settled their own real or imaginary wrongs. We do not want such an occurrence.

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## By Telegraph. AFTERNOON DISPATCHES.

### WASHINGTON, MARCH 21.

House of Representatives.—The House of Representatives today took up the bill for the relief of the Indians. The bill was introduced by Mr. Tamm, and was read twice. It was then referred to the committee on Indian Affairs.

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drawn; and, at noon, the jury chosen entered the box and were sworn. As soon as these formalities were completed, the accused prince was brought into court, attended by the Captain of his guard. The utmost silence prevailed; the scene was most solemn. The griffin read the accusation to the prince, who waived the reading of his rank and title. The usual interrogations were addressed to the accused, who replied with great self-possession. The articles tending to prove his criminality were laid on the table before the prisoner. They consisted of a pistol, a hat and two cards. The president of the court delivered an eloquent address to the jury. The first witness examined was Boileau, commissioner of police, who testified to taking the deposition of the prince immediately after the shooting. The secretary of the commission was the second witness. He corroborated the testimony of the first. The third witness was Urie De Fourville. His testimony was listened to with the deepest attention; and he was subjected to a rigid cross-examination. Poschal Groussset was the next witness; he was brought into court in charge of two gendarmes. His replies to the questions asked were so irrelevant and his conduct so defiant, that the court refused to hear him further, and he was pronounced guilty of gross contempt of court in his language, and on the requisition of the procurator, was remanded to prison. His deposition was read in his absence. The conduct of Groussset is generally condemned. Fourville seemed too greatly excited to testify properly; but his behavior gains favor in comparison with that of Groussset. La Parie is assured that a reply of the papal government to the note of Comte Darn has been received here and admission has been refused to the French representative to the Council.

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For cash I will sell Lumber, Shingles and Lath, as cheap as they can be imported, at the Ninth Ward Lumber Yard and Office.  
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SALT LAKE BILLIARD ROOM,  
STAYED OR STOLEN,  
UTAH CENTRAL RAILROAD,  
JOHN SIMMONS,  
HOOVER ELDREDGE & CO.,  
BANKERS,  
JOHN O'CONNOR & CO.,  
THE ARMS,  
BETHEN'S ARTICLES GENERALLY,  
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HENRY TREES,  
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