

FRANK LAWLER'S HUMOR.

THE HOUSE SQUELCHES THE MEMBER FROM THE EIGHTH WARD.

His Efforts Apparently Not Appreciated in Congress—Government Engineers Find Some Creeks Not Worth Including in the River and Harbor Bill—The Dearborn Park Project—To Preserve Old Fort Chartres—Various Western Matters at the Capitol.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 6.—[Special.]—Frank Lawler is making a nuisance of himself. He has taken it upon himself to display his unfriendliness to the oleomargarine legislation of the last Congress. Twice before today the House sat down heavily upon him, but he bobbed up serenely again today with another scheme to do away with the legislation he regards with so much displeasure. In fact he had two schemes today. One was to impose a tax of \$500 a year on wholesale and \$1 on retail dealers in butter and requiring the packages to be labeled "good sweet wholesome butter," but added a clause providing for the payment of a bounty of five cents a pound on such products. By this provision Frank intended to be sarcastic, but the acme of Eighth Ward humor was reached when in the next section of the bill the Chicago member imposed a punishment of fine and imprisonment upon those who sell inferior butter for oleomargarine. The other bill of the Second District humorist was intended to repeal all internal revenue taxes except those on whisky and tobacco. This was only another way of repealing the oleomargarine tax, and was thus covered up to fool the House. Lawler wanted to send the bill to the Committee on Ways and Means, which he supposes is friendly to his scheme, but the House gave him a squelching that will at least last until next Monday and sent the measure to the Agricultural Committee. This is the third time Lawler has attempted to sneak in a bill repealing the tax on oleomargarine through the back door, and unless those who are interested in the product want to get the House so disgusted that it will put on an additional tax they had better give Frank a hint to quit making a nuisance of himself.

There is a common belief drawn from the River and Harbor bill that the army officers of the Engineer Corps never find a creek or stream which is not worth spending money for improvements in the interest of commerce and navigation. That this is not altogether correct is shown by the letter of the Secretary of War giving the places thought unworthy of improvement by the General Government. Illinois seems to have only one such. This is Farm Creek. Concerning this stream Maj. Handbury says:

I have the honor to report the following facts and conclusions as the result of a preliminary examination made by me of Farm Creek, Illinois, with a view to changing its course:

Farm Creek is an ordinary and rather insignificant township run, about twelve miles in length, in Fond du Lac and Washington Townships, Tazewell County. It has the usual characteristics of such streams in this section—dry or nearly so during dry weather, in the rainy seasons overflowing its banks where it can and bringing down from the bluffs considerable quantities of gravel and sand, which it spreads out over the bottom lands. It empties into Peoria Lake near its lower end and opposite the City of Peoria. Its present low-water mouth is perhaps a mile above the lower end of the lake. As there are no navigation interests to be subserved in this locality the benefits to the general commerce of the country to be derived from changing the course of Farm Creek are not apparent. From the facts developed during this investigation I conclude that the proposed improvement is not necessary in the interests of commerce and is not worthy to be undertaken by the General Government.

Michigan has a dozen places not worth improving. About one of them the engineer writes as follows:

I have the honor to submit herewith a report in regard to each of the following localities, and an expression of opinion in each case as to whether it is worthy of improvement by the General Government. . . . North River, Michigan, between Essex and North Bridges. After diligent inquiry I have been unable to ascertain the location referred to. A point of so little general importance as to be unknown to the persons consulted is, in my opinion, not worthy of improvement by the General Government.

Senator Dolph, from the Public Lands Committee, today reported a substitute for the Dearborn Park bill. It differs from the measure introduced by Senator Farwell only in striking out the preamble and in changing the language so as to read that "the United States hereby consents" that the Public Library and the Soldiers' Memorial Hall "may erect" the buildings on the park site as heretofore described. Senator Dolph said the purpose of the committee in thus altering the bill was to provide merely for a diversion from the original granting act so that the park could be utilized for the Public Library and the Soldiers' Home, as the people of Chicago desired, but to leave all local questions to be settled without Congress mixing in. To this end, the consent of the United States to a diversion of the original act was all that was necessary. The changes made in the measure are satisfactory to the Chicago delegation. Senator Farwell said he had no fault to find with the substitute bill, as it would answer every purpose. He did not think there would be any trouble about the abutting property-owners, yet, he had seen to it that John P. Stafford was notified in time to appear before the committee if he so wished, but no one had turned up in behalf of the Academy of Design or to make any objections to the bill. It is thought the bill as it now stands in the Senate will meet the objections of Mr. Dibble of the House, who wants a provision requiring the consent of the abutting property-owners. In its present shape the courts would be left to determine who are abutting property-owners and what their rights are.

Since the Agricultural Board of Illinois was guilty of the folly of locating the State Fair in Olney for two years that town has been putting on airs. Its present ambition is to have a \$75,000 post-office building, and a bill for this purpose was introduced in the House today by Mr. Landes. No one supposes the bill will pass. Even Landes does not think it will, but its introduction will please the Olney people and may bring the Congressman a vote or two next fall. Olney is in the same position that many other towns are. They are all anxious to have the Government erect post-office buildings. There never was a time when so many propositions for public buildings were pending before Congress. They range in price from \$25,000 to \$1,500,000, and if one-half the pending bills should be passed the surplus would be wiped out and the revenues would have to be increased. Defeated schemes of past sessions have all been revived and new ones added until it looks like an organized raid on the Treasury. If the members who have proposed appropriations for public buildings should pull together they would have a combination almost as strong as the one which pushes through the River and Harbor bills.

Mr. Mason has been interviewed by a *Critic* reporter on "trusts." "These combinations," said Mr. Mason "are dangerous, and threaten the welfare of the community. They not only fix selling prices, but purchasing prices also. Take the sugar trust for an example. The producers are placed at the mercy of the combine. If the production exceeds the consumption, they close up the refineries, and thus control the supply and demand, and the tariff fails to accomplish its purpose. I hope that the agitation of this question will result in some legislation that shall ultimately break up these combinations. I am a firm believer in private enterprises, and want to see them encouraged, but when they deviate from their legitimate purpose to the detriment of the people it's time to call a halt and Congress ought to do it."

Two of the most historic spots in Illinois are at Fort Gage, near Kaskaskia, and old Fort Chartres, twenty miles above on the Mississippi River. At the former George Rogers Clark, acting under a commission from Patrick Henry, made his celebrated attack upon the British garrison and took possession of the North-

west Territory in 1780. By this act Fort Chartres came into the possession of the American Government. This fort is connected with all the history of the exploration and settlement of the Mississippi Valley by the French before the country fell into the hands of the British. Today Jehu Baker of Illinois introduced a resolution asking the Secretary of War for information upon the advisability of purchasing the old fort so intimately connected with early explorations. It was the largest work of the kind in this country, covering four acres. It is now showing the signs of decay incident to an existence for 107 years, and Mr. Baker wants the Government to purchase and preserve it because of its historical associations. He will soon present a proposition to purchase old Fort Gage at Kaskaskia and for the erection of a monument in honor of George Rogers Clark.

The mixed lard men who charged that the representative of the pure lard interests was likely to submit "doctored" samples to the Agricultural Department for analysis are not likely to be pleased with the independent investigations of the department. It is said that the chemist got a dozen samples in New York from different dealers and analyzed them. Of this dozen only two were pure. The remaining ten varied in the amount of adulteration, but most of them showed a variety of compounds which would hardly add to the reputation of the article. Congress places more trust in the analysis of the Government chemists than those coming from either side of the controversy. In the Senate Mr. Allison presented the memorial of the Iowa Legislature in favor of pure lard. The legislation favored was such as would require the nature of the compound to be plainly stamped or labeled.

Congressman Mason today received a letter from Superintendent Bailey of the Chicago Federal Building inclosing another from T. A. Bowden, Superintendent of Surveys of the Chicago Fire Insurance Underwriters' Association, in which the latter says the rate of insurance will not be increased upon the proposed Appraiser's storehouse even if an alley only twenty feet wide be provided for. Usually a forty-foot alley is required for a public building, but it is believed that this concession by the insured men will prove satisfactory to the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds.

The following pithy petition was presented in the Senate by Senator Cullom today:

The undersigned, residents of the State of Illinois, consider the salaries of the Judges of the Circuit and District Courts in this circuit as inadequate. The position requires men of the highest ability and the duties are arduous and responsible. In our opinion the salaries should be increased and we beg to ask that your influence be exerted to bring about this result.

It was signed by N. K. Fairbank, Jesse Spalding, Franklin MacVeagh, O. W. Potter, Henry Field, H. F. Earnest, Henry W. King, Norman Williams, A. Cowles.

Mr. Plumb of Illinois today demonstrated that all the schemes for increasing pensions have not been exhausted. He introduced in the House a bill to grant every soldier who was wounded more than once a pension equal to the total of all the sums now allowed for each class of injuries sustained.