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R. H. COLLINS, T. D. BOWERS
EDITORS.

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1908.

Corrupt Practices Law.

We have in our possession a copy of the Corrupt Practices Act which has been introduced in the Maryland Legislature by Senator Harper, of Queen Annes, and to which the Democratic party is pledged in its platform, and which Act the Governor desires to see passed, as it is at present drawn. We shall publish each week the most important features of this Act, in order that the people may know for themselves just what it will mean if passed in its present form, and what will become of those, who, in general or primary elections, violate its provisions. The bill is now before the Legislature, and every effort will be made to pass it as it is now drawn. One of its most important features is found in section 171 of the bill which says :

Section 171. The following persons shall be guilty of corrupt practices and shall be punished in accordance with the provisions of this Act: Every person who shall, directly or indirectly, by himself or by another, give or offer or promise to any person any money, gift, advantage, preferment, entertainment, aid, emolument or any valuable thing whatever, for the purpose of inducing or procuring any person to vote, or refrain from voting, for or against any person, or for or against any measure or proposition at any election or primary election or political convention. Every person who shall, directly or indirectly, receive, accept, request or solicit from any person, candidate, committee, association, organization or corporation, any money, gift, advantage, preferment, aid, emolument, or any valuable thing whatsoever, for the purpose of inducing or procuring any person to vote, or refrain from voting, for or against any person, or for or against any measure or proposition at any election or primary election or political convention. Every person who, in consideration of any money, gift, advantage, preferment, aid, emolument, or any valuable thing whatsoever, paid, received, accepted or promised to the advantage of himself or any other person, shall vote, or refrain from voting for or against any person, or for or against any measure at any such election, caucus or primary election or political convention. Every person who shall, directly or indirectly, pay, give, contribute or promise any money or other valuable thing, to defray, or towards defraying the costs or expenses of any campaign or election, to any person, committee, company, club, organization or association, other than to a treasurer or a political agent; but this sub-section or paragraph shall not apply to dues regularly paid for membership in any incorporated political club or to any expenses for postage, telegrams, telephoning, stationery, printing, expressage or traveling and board incurred by any candidate for office or for nomination thereto, so far as they are permitted by this Act.

Every person who shall, directly or indirectly, by himself or through another person, make a payment or promise of payment, to a treasurer or political agent in any other name than his own, and every treasurer or political agent who shall knowingly receive a payment, or promise of payment, and enter the same or cause the same to be entered in his accounts in any other name than that of the person by whom such payment or promise of payment is made. Every person who being an employer, pays his employes the salary or wages due in "pay envelopes," upon which there is written or printed any political motto, device or argument containing threats, express or implied, intended or calculated to influence the political opinions or actions of such employes, within ninety days of an election or primary election puts, or otherwire exhibits in the establishment or place where his employees are engaged in labor, any hand-bill or placard containing any threat, notice or information that if any particular ticket or candidate is elected or defeated, work in his place or establishment, will cease, in whole or in part, his establishment be closed up, or the wages of his employees reduced, or threats, express or implied, intended or calculated to influence the political opinions or actions of his employees. Every person who, before, during, or after an election or primary election by himself, or by any other person, either directly or indirectly, gives or provides or pays wholly or in parts, the expense of giving or providing any meat, drink, entertainment or provisions to or for any person for the purpose of influencing that person, or any other person, to give or refrain from giving his vote at the election, or primary election, or to influence his vote in any other way therein, or on account of his having voted, or refrained from voting, or being about to vote or refrain from voting; and every elector who accepts the same, or any of the same, for any of the purposes aforesaid. Every person who shall be guilty of any corrupt practice as aforesaid, shall be fined not less than three hundred dollars, nor more than one thousand dollars, or be imprisoned for not more than one year, or both, and shall be ineligible to any public office, or public employment, for the period of four years from and after the time of the commission of such offence.

The Legislature Should Take Action With Regard to the Purse Net.

If the General Assembly of Marylann heeds the repeated warnings given to it in the columns of the Sun regarding the preservation of game and fish, it will not overlook the necessity for prompt action at this session in prohibiting the use of purse nets in any river or creek in Maryland. Indeed, men who are well informed on the subject declare that the purse net—a sort of trust-grabber of all the fish in sight—should not be permitted to operate anywhere in the State, for it has been proved that where this great machine of meshes does its work the entire fishing interest is ruined.

The purse net is a devise of great length and depth. When it is drawn around a school of fish it extends to the deepest bottoms, and its lower edge is drawn together by a gathering string. Everything in the radius of its cast is then imprisoned, and the fishermen at leisure empty their catch into the big schooners which form the headquarters of these fishermen's crews. About three years ago, right at Fort Carroll, one haul was made that brought out fishes, mainly rock or stripped bass, to the vale of $1,200. The captain of the schooner sent only one-half of this catch to Baltimore, because he knew he would glut the market. The other half he kept over until the first lot should have been sold. But these fish do not all come to Baltimore. Some are sent to Philadelphia and New York markets, and it is declared by observers that oftentimes the fish are taken to the fish factories along the bay, across the State line, and are ground up for fertilizer. It is also known that fish caught by ordinary seines, or by other means, that were too small to be sold legally in Baltimore and other parts of Maryland, and which could not be exposed for sale in this city because of the activity of the game warden, were put on trains outside of this city and sold freely on the Philadelphia market.

Our legislators must understand that the use of purse nets is not legal at present, and that those persons who operate them may come right up to the door of Baltimore with their nets. They have worked miles this side of Fort Carroll, have come nearly as far as River View Park, while a resident of Anne Adundel county has watched them clean out Curtis bay and creek. Many of these outfits are said to be owned by northern capital and to be manned by men who do not live in Maryland, and who, of course, care nothing about maintaining this State's famous supply of marine food. In consequence of this, there are persons who believe that even if pursenetting is to be permitted in the Chesapeake, it should be restricted to citizens of Maryland.

The State Game Warden, in his desire to abate the purse-netting evil, found that the netters might legally fish as far up the bay as an imaginary line drawn from Still Pond, Kent county, to Lego's Point, in Harford county.

But even if a law be passed to stop the wholesale destruction wrought by the purse-netters' trade, there is no means of preventing the abuse continuing, except by executive action and the outlay of sufficient money to equip the boats of the State's fishery police. It is the custom to lay up all of the oyster police boats in the summer season when there is no oystering. The employes of the force are not engaged for the season, but for the whole year. The State Game Warden has called attention to this and has asked that the police boats be kept constantly in commission during the fishing season, but the State has thus far failed to "grub the boats," as it is said; that is, to put food and general supplies aboard so that the police can keep at their work.

It is needful, then, that before the Legislature adjourns it should not only pass good protective laws, but should equip its police to enforce the statutes. The cost would be very small, but even if it were considerable, it would save many hundreds of times the amount to the citizens of the State in good, wholesome food of a high commercial value. —Baltimore Sun.

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