New Orleans Bee

Office, 78 Chartres Street.

NEW ORLEANS, FRIDAY MORNING, JULY 7, 1865. Vol. XXVII—New Series. Vol. XVII—Whole—13,485.

Assessment of Municipal Taxes.—The assessment lists of Algiers have been received from the Assessor, and the Collector is now engaged in collecting the taxes. The assessment lists are very well made up, and the Collector informs us that the assessment is a fair one, and that the property is assessed at its true value. The Collector will be at his office in Algiers every day, Sundays excepted, from 9 A. M. to 4 P. M., for the purpose of receiving taxes. The assessment lists will be open for inspection at the Collector's office for the space of ten days, during which time any person who may feel aggrieved by the assessment of his property can have the same corrected by the Assessor.

Four Months Mail per Wyanoke Packet.—The favorable passenger packet Magnolia, Capt. Wagner, Mr. Copeland clerk, will leave for Manila past the coast navigation plants from Lakeport on Saturday at 4 P. M., 8th instant, weather allowing.

For particulars and terms see advertisement.

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Messrs. W. S. Foster and W. G. Sedam Clerks of the steamer John Millspaugh, will accept our thanks for a manifest of the boat's cargo and pilot favors.

Personal.—Among recently returned citizens we observe the names of Capt. R. B. Walton who left the city with the 7th Regt. as command of the Washington Artillery, and Col. Marshall J. Smith who left in 1861 at the head of the Crescent Regiment. Mr. Wm. H. Seymour, son of the lamented Col. Seymour, of the N. O. Commercial Bulletin has also returned, and expects, we understand, to revive that excellent journal with, which his own and father's name so long and honorably associated.

How to Encourage the Levees.

Much reasonable concern is directed to the question of enhancing levee protection along the borders of our great river in the States of Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas. It is a gigantic problem, as regards alike means, to be employed and results to be attained. Associated with it are the hopes of the most magnificent agriculture, the most imperial commerce, which the world has yet seen. If no efficient remedy is to be had for the ruinous state in which the war has left the levees, vast stretches of land, the most fertile on the face of the globe, must relapse into a waste as wild as adventure ever trod, as dreary as fancy ever fatigued.

If it easy enough to suggest remedial measures, to see them in practice is the only difficulty. State funds or State credit could effect the work, if the States interested had either credit or funds available for the purpose. So would a sufficiently large tax on plantations, but to attempt such a tax would be simply wholesale fraternization with no certainty of results to the required amount. A loan from the Federal Government is also suggested. It is proposed for Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, to improve the help of Congress, with all the eloquence of mendicancy. But how long and wearily might they have to wait in that humiliating attitude, before the solicited charity should at last dribble from the mill of a slow, niggardly and perchance unsympathetic, if not currishly, legislature? Assuredly many floods would pour accumulated disaster over the Mississippi Valley before that had arrived. Another plan is to borrow money from private hands on the hypothecation of the proceeds of the swamp lands.

The most serious difficulty connected with the enterprise arises from the present condition of labor in the South. The war has not only ruined its forces, but it has shattered the whole agricultural fabric in the lower Mississippi Valley. It has left industry there in chaos, and not thousand profound and prescient minds can foresee in what precise forms the elements of the seething cadence may at length crystallize. Formerly the levees, the agricultural interests of that region constituted a part of one vast system. The values of the agricultural products benefited the mechanic and secured the prosperity of the levees, and it was the enormity of the latter that sustained the value of the agriculture. Inchoate to this system was the demand for hand-industry, upon which the score of cities, precisely as swamplands, of unsurpassed fertility by nature, and opened to cultivation by any because of the wide and more palatable, and at higher and higher prices in proportion as the levees and increased security and agricultural enterprise extended its area." Each part of the system was essential to the vitality of the whole and each one of the parts, as we have seen, has been set upon its mortality, damaged. To restore the old labor in its previous form is out of the question. The most that can be hoped is to convert it into some other system, and whether the form or replace it will be such as to justify the condition we perceive in every are to hope. Indeed, of the exigencies of health and the necessities of the planter, the former will be the more imperious. Labor will be compelled to follow the capital that employs it, and the capital will follow the health. Hence the position was quite natural that the Governor of Mississippi during their sojourn in Washington, should suggest that, if any special provisions are to be accorded to freedmen labor, that a similar regard may be derived from the plan proposed towards the same class, and with marked success, to some of the French Islands. According to this plan every freedmen was required to carry a little book containing his name, the age and his occupation, certified by the signature of his employer. Next, there was a system of disciplinary or professional labor in which vagrants who bore no certificate of employment, and delinquents designated by their employers as refusing to comply with their contracts. Here put to labor on public works, or for the benefit of the Government, without wages and under official control. After certain periods the laborers could return to their employers, or contract for employment if before without any.

Might not a similar plan be adopted here? It certainly could if the authorities, or those who control the authorities, should so elect. No expense need attend the collection of labor beyond that of subsistence to the laborer. In a few days, if applied to the construction of levees are great and obvious. The same number of hands could then be profitably employed by collecting the negroes on the levees, while closer contact with their owners, or renters on plantations only to be, through lazy and refractory habits, a burthen to their employers. Subjected to a quasi-military discipline in its strictness and wholesomeness in efficacy, the freedmen would be found a docile and useful laborer when he returned to the employment. Blacks would no doubt work and paid labor on the levees, and they would be valuable and useful laborers for the public, and they would be gradually, placing at several thousand dollars per hand, but their subsistence might be a first portions of their work being paid for by the women, children, all of them industry and dispensed to them.

More of reasonable concern is directed to the question of labor in the Southern States. Misgivings and apprehensions in regard to the future of labor in the South are universal. Many of the planters have no confidence in the reliability of freed labor. And there we found