

# CAPITAL CITY CHAT

NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE GETTING DOWN TO REAL WORK.

## JOINT RAILROAD COMMISSION COMMITTEE

Gets into Action and Discuss Best Methods of Regulating the Transportation Companies—Other News of Interest.

How to proceed in the joint committee to draft railroad legislation is the question that now agitates the members of that body. The committee has held several sessions at which the problems were gone over in some detail and in which several propositions were made by individual members. Suggestions were listened to from the newly elected railway commissioners, with the exception of Robert Cowell of Omaha, who was not there.

It appeared that there is little sentiment in favor of a flat two-cent passenger fare, though a measure of some sort reducing the passenger fare, perhaps to 2½ cents, will be agreed upon. That this sentiment exists in the house was shown by the action of the house railroad committee in recommending for postponement a two-cent passenger fare bill by Representative Whitman of Johnson. It was drawn, however, to provide a one-cent rate for children under twelve, which would have included all young children.

The committee realizes that it is confronted with a multiplicity of problems. There is first the question of what general plan to follow in empowering the commissioners to regulate rates—whether to give them power to make rates in the first instance or not. This once settled, there is still further the question of how to settle this power upon them. Some members thought best to make several bills so that in case the courts failed to sustain one, there would be others on which to fall back.

As to the number of bills to be enacted, some believed one clear, comprehensive and concise law was sufficient. Others thought possibly one on the powers of the commission and the method of procedure and another fixing the compensation and organization would be enough.

### To Bring Constitution Up to Date.

Senator Aldrich, of Polk, has introduced a joint resolution, senate file No. 149, the purpose of which is to secure the full and complete amendment of the constitution and make it an up-to-date instrument. The resolution provides for the appointment by the governor, within ten days, of a constitutional revision commission of five members, to be selected from the citizens of the state and not more than three to belong to any one party. This commission shall meet at the capitol within one week, and after examining the constitution, shall formulate a series of amendments which shall cure defects and make the constitution conform to existing conditions. No amendment shall be accepted except by the unanimous vote of the commission. The commission shall report to the governor and legislature as soon as possible and submit amendments to be submitted to the people for adoption or rejection. The pay of the commissioners shall be \$25 per day for not to exceed twenty days and the clerk shall be paid \$10 per day and stenographers \$5 per day each.

**Child Labor Bill.**  
The Clarke child labor bill is bringing out much discussion. It would have been recommended for passage the past week but for the fear that it might lead to trouble in the country where there is a habit of working young men under sixteen years of age rather regularly. Mr. Clarke asked the house not to endanger a good law and one that was needed in the cities of the state for some rather imaginary difficulty. Speaker Nettleton and Representative Farley were not opposed to the bill but they raised the objection as did Lee of Douglas that there might be some families who would depend on the support of children under sixteen. These Mr. Clarke said were extremely few. It was stated in the farming communities it would be possible for one farmer to cause another trouble by causing his arrest if he worked his boys too hard. Rather than insist on the measure at that time, Mr. Clarke moved that further conference be had on the bill.

**State to Buy Bonds.**  
Having been authorized by the board of educational lands and funds to purchase \$117,000 of the Mississippi state bonds as an investment for the state school fund, State Treasurer Brian stands ready to deliver the money for the bonds. He has received considerable money during the first two weeks in January and now has funds to take up the proposed purchase. The bonds are to be bought at a rate that will net the state 3.75 per cent interest.

## Shall We Have Commission?

Shall Nebraska have a state elective railway commission? This question is to come before the supreme court of Nebraska February 5. It is considered to be one of the most important legal questions that has arisen in the past twenty years, when an appointive railway commission was created. This commission was declared unconstitutional about ten years later by the supreme court, that body having decided that the title of the bill creating it had been changed some time during the progress of the bill from one house to another.

In the present test suit in the supreme court the railroad attorneys are privileged to appear as "friends of the court," to present their side of the case, in the event they desire to combat the constitutional amendment.

## Dairymen Want a Commissioner.

The dairymen of Nebraska, believing that their industry has become a powerful factor in the material prosperity of the state, and that the state is therefore enriched by the addition of millions of dollars, will ask the legislature to give them a dairy commissioner. It will be asked to make such an appointment and attach a salary for the commissioner and inspectors. The dairymen want a more rigid inspection of dairy products.

They say that in testing milk and cream for commercial purposes it shall be made unlawful to use any methods not laid down by the dairy commissioner and fully endorsed by the professor or animal husbandry of the state agricultural institution who shall prescribe and furnish the food commissioner's most accurate and practical methods to be used in testing milk and cream, and rules and regulations governing the same.

Second, it shall be unlawful to sell any milk, cream or dairy product to be used as food that has been put in any pail, separator, vessel, churn or other implement which is in an unclean and unsanitary condition at the time, or operate in the manufacture of any dairy product in any creamery or factory any implement or vessel which is in an unclean and unsanitary condition.

Third, it shall be unlawful to sell or offer for sale any milk or cream from diseased or unhealthy cows, or from cows kept in filthy and unsanitary manner.

## Want a Board of Examiners.

The Nebraska Optical Society is interested in a bill providing for the appointment of a board of examiners in optometry. The bill defines the powers of the board, which shall make such rules and regulations not inconsistent with the laws as may be necessary to the proper performance of its duties. The bill provides that persons desiring to commence or continue the practice of optometry after January 1, 1908, be required to take an examination before the board to determine his qualifications. There is at present no law governing or regulating the practice of optometry, and the design of the bill favored by the society is the protection of the public from the practice of those who engage in optometry who are not qualified to do so. The public will understand better what is meant by the term when it is explained that optometry is what is practiced by opticians.

## The Price of Railroad Fare.

Several bills relating to the rate to be paid for railroad fare have been introduced, the rates named varying. Senator Phillips, of Holt, has one in which he names 2½ cents as the maximum charge. He has also introduced an anti-free pass bill, or a bill intended to give publicity to the names and addresses of persons who receive free transportation for persons or property. His plan is to require the railroads to file an annual statement with the county clerk containing the names of all persons within the county who have received free passes for persons or property and the reasons such passes were given.

## No State Fair Levy.

The house overwhelmingly voted for the resolution of Tucker of Douglas that all appropriations shall be made in specific amounts and not in mill levies. This means that the state fair management must ask the legislature for a specified sum and can not have the one-eighth mill levy it desired.

## U. of N. Charter Day.

Preparations are being made at the state university for the charter day exercises, Friday, February 15, when a crowd of several hundred visitors are expected in Lincoln. The program will be the best ever presented and the students at the big school are manifesting much interest in the plans for the exercises.

## Adultery Bill Passed.

Bills on third reading have been reached in the senate. S. F. No. 12, by Root of Cass, making a lighter penalty for adultery and defining the crime to consist of a single offense instead of a continuous offense, was read the third time and placed upon its passage. Twenty-eight senators voted for it and it was declared passed with the emergency clause. McKesson of Lancaster voted in the negative.

## NEWS ITEMS IN NEBRASKA

The Burlington has begun work on the new depot at Minden.

The new Methodist Episcopal church at Edison has been dedicated.

The ice harvest, a very satisfactory one, is proceeding in all directions.

Fire destroyed the house of Peter Kohler in Burt county. Nothing was saved.

Seward citizens are considering the matter of holding a chautauqua there the coming summer.

The county commissioners of Washington county estimate that \$90,000 will be needed to run the county the coming year.

John Sams, while shelling corn near Arnold, had his right hand ground up in a horsepower so that amputation was necessary above the wrist.

Oliver G. Myers and Mrs. Carrie E. Carpenter were found dead in bed in a room at Lincoln. Death was caused by asphyxiation by fumes from a gas stove.

The state of Washington has accredited the Peru Normal certificates, thus permitting normal graduates to teach in that state without further examinations.

C. C. Hughes, former assistant general superintendent of the Northwestern railroad on its Nebraska-Wyoming division, will probably locate in Fremont.

A telegram has reached Fremont from Washington stating that President Roosevelt has nominated Daniel Swanson for reappointment to the position as postmaster of Fremont.

A number of firms and families in Auburn are now burning Nemaha county coal. James Hayes, owner of the mines located on Honey creek, between Auburn and Peru, shipped the first carload last week.

The trout pools of northern Nebraska will have a considerable addition to their population this summer when the eggs which have just been received by the state commission are hatched and the fry distributed.

At the request of the members of Russell post, Grand Army of the Republic, Fairbury, Congressman Hinchshaw has secured from the war department the donation to the post of one of the cannon captured in the Spanish-American war, which will be placed in the city park.

Some forty prominent property owners have petitioned the board of county commissioners of Cass county, protesting against the action of the board in reappointing Anderson House as superintendent of the poor farm. They charge corrupt practices and extravagance.

Copies of a petition are being circulated at Ainsworth to be forwarded to Congressman Kinkaid, asking that the service pension bill be amended in the house to provide pensions ranging from \$10 at the age of 60 to \$25 at the age of 75, and to do away with all boards of examiners.

Adjutant General Culver of the State National Guard, in his biennial report just issued, advocates a plan for building permanent armories for all the companies of the guard. His plan calls for the organization of an association to collect funds and build memorial armories at each guard station, to be dedicated to the great soldiers of all wars of this country.

John Samuel Jay, who was caught in the shafting of the sugar factory at Grand Island, while leaning over the same to clean some windows, and who was terribly injured, after several days of intense suffering, succumbed to his injuries. His clothing was caught, he was whirled about the shafting and to the floor, and many bones were broken and internal injuries caused.

Congressman Hitchcock has received a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Henry Doorly, his son-in-law and daughter, dated Kingston, January 12, giving him and his family the assurance they already felt of the safety of the Omaha tourists in the earthquake district. They were to leave Kingston that day and are supposed to have gotten away before the shake occurred.

The Nebraska Volunteer Firemen's association elected these officers: President, J. V. Hyder, York; first vice president, Mark Mortenson, Fremont; second vice president, Bert Galley, Columbus; secretary, E. A. Miller, Kearney; treasurer, Henry Graff, Seward; board of control, George Howe of Fremont, J. F. McNece of Kearney, R. N. McAllister of Grand Island, R. H. Reynolds of Norfolk and John McKay of Blair.

The Union Pacific has asked eight passenger conductors running into North Platte to have their photographs taken to be used in an advertising pamphlet that the company will issue. The feature of these eight conductors is that their combined weight is 2,090 pounds, or an average of 261¼ pounds each. The conductors to be represented in this group are: Mooney and Layton of the Wyoming division, and Madden, Wallace, Powers, Clapper, Shoemaker and Keene. They are a bunch of big ones, and every ounce of them represents gentlemanly qualities and efficiency as employees.

Henry Oltman, aged 70 years, has been arrested at Madison on the charge of incest. He is charged by his 18-year-old daughter with being the parent of a child to which she is about to give birth.

The exhibit of the Nebraska Corn Improvers' meeting in Lincoln last week is said to have been the best ever seen at an association meeting. A. Shamel of Chicago, who has been judge of the Nebraska corn show for the past five years, said that it surpassed anything which this state has heretofore exhibited.

# The SHAKER COMMUNITY NEARING ITS END

New York.—Up in the Berkshire Hills there is a vast estate, containing many thousands of acres, in one of the most beautiful regions of America, and which belongs to a small community of which the large majority must soon pass away. Seven miles this estate runs along the country roads. Spurs from the Berkshires cross it and lovely valleys lie between.

In one of these valleys clusters a group of houses which have slowly accumulated during a hundred years and more. Good houses they are, well-built and large, filled with every convenience and comfort, and surrounded with trim gardens, shaded drives and deep fruited orchards. It looks like a little paradise in summer. The place would be suitable for a great charitable or educational institution, a sanitarium or summer boarder enterprise. There are many rich farms in the great estate. In the hands of those who knew how to manage it the whole would form a holding of great value. As it is, the title rests in a community of about 80 persons, of which the majority must in the course of nature die within the next few years, and into which no new members are entering.

Who is going to become the final owner of the great Shaker property at Mount Lebanon, N. Y.? Which of the younger women of the community will be the last survivor of an organization formed more than a century

high type of character and intelligence. Indomitable workers, the proceeds of their toil put into a common treasury made the community rich, although the members possessed no individual property. The buildings and grounds to-day are full of comforts and improvements which have been added by the busy, skillful hands of one generation after another.

It would seem as if plenty of people, who live in neither comfort nor plenty outside, would be thankful to enter this peaceful retreat and know they were provided for life, with no harder work than they would do anywhere. But they do not come. The Shakers are anxious to get new members. They do not want the sect to perish from the face of the earth. Its dwindling numbers are a matter of distress to them. It is for this reason that they have within recent years adopted a more liberal policy. In former years the world was never permitted to enter their gates except for strictly necessary business. Two years ago they took the unprecedented step of calling a peace convention, which attracted many distinguished speakers and visitors. They serve dinners through the pleasant weather now, and the automobile folk from Lenox and Stockbridge find these an agreeable goal. Last summer, for the first time in history, one of the families took summer boarders.

These activities have been profitable, but more than profit the Shakers

her. Eldress Anna would read all letters she sent or received, and she would ask the eldress's permission for every act of her life, as a child does its mother. At the end of six weeks she left to begin her struggle with poverty again, preferring that to prison life.

Mother Ann Lee, who founded the Shaker sect, was a remarkable woman, says the New York Press. Like most founders of religions the sublimity was on top in her, and she saw visions and dreamed dreams. Powers were claimed for her which correspond to what are known as clairvoyance and healing by suggestion nowadays. She had a career which shows her to have been a strong character, and probably had her followers lived the ordinary family life the sect would have been a flourishing church to-day, replenished in each generation with the children of the members.

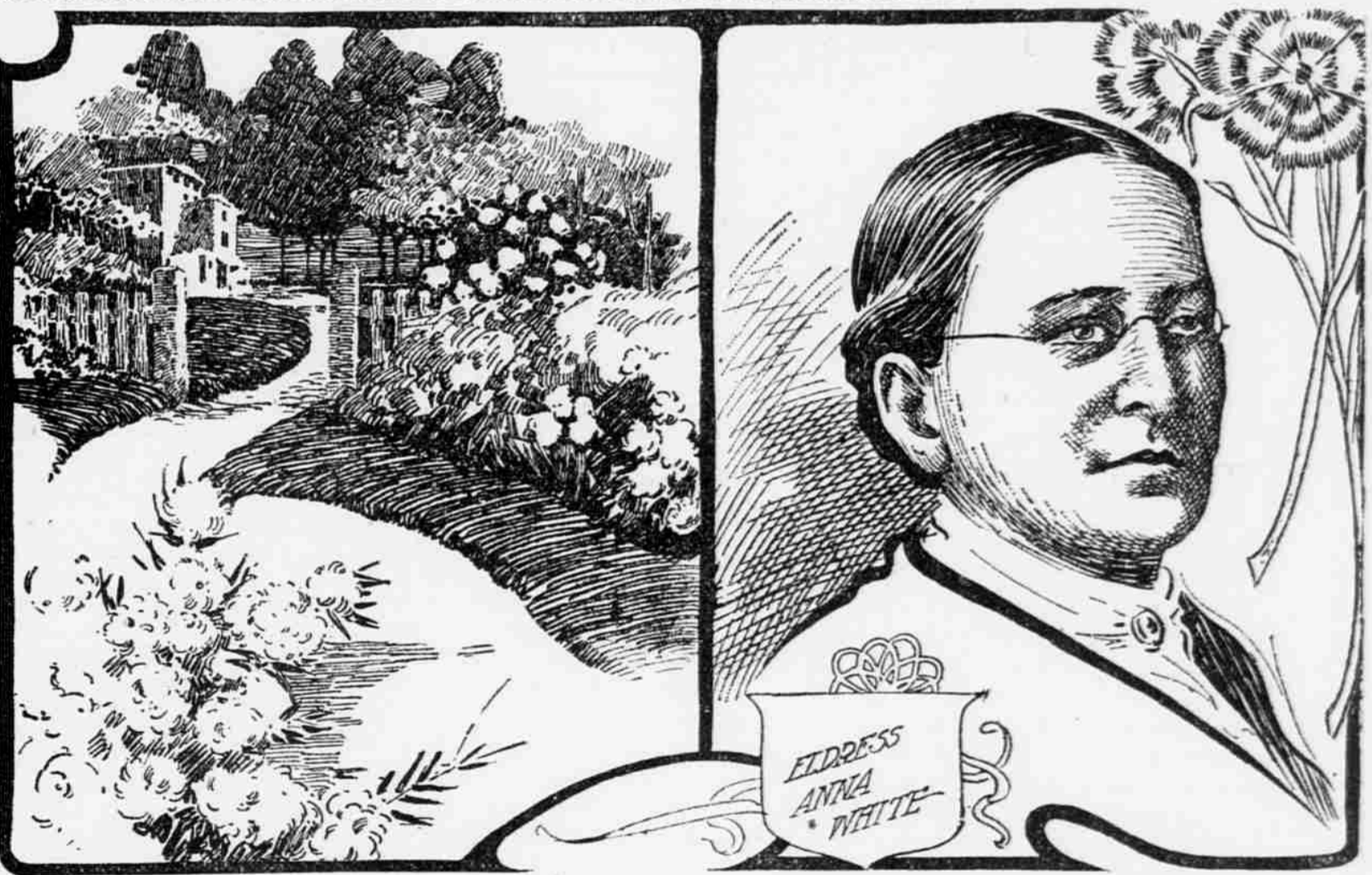
Mother Ann had some very advanced ideas for her day. For instance, she believed in the absolute equality of man and woman, and Shakerdom has always been conducted on that basis. But democratic government was not known in her day, and she made the rule of her communities despotic, through an elder and eldress at the head of each family, appointing their own successors, and with no check on their authority.

Eldress Anna now holds the reins with a hand of iron in the North family. She is of the type of the born priest. Her face is that of the ascetic and the devotee. She is able, conscientious and profoundly religious, but she is an autocrat.

## One Scandal in Community.

There was one scandal at Mount Lebanon once, just once, but it is still whispered with bated breath. One brother, now in his 60's, entered the community at 13, bringing \$4,000 with him. With the flight of years he was made elder, being a most able and devoted member. A few years ago, after the brother had spent nearly 50 years in service of the community, a new sister entered. She was a stranger, young and fair, but most exemplary in her conduct and obedience.

To the horror of the whole family



ago; and what will she do with this vast, deserted place when by law it passes into her hands? For no new members are entering the Shaker community to remain permanently. The community is slowly but surely dying out.

## Survivors Will Be Women.

The last survivors will undoubtedly be women. The great majority of the members are now women, about 65 out of the 80. The younger members are all women. These younger women are mostly in the fifties, although the remarkably youthful appearance of all Shaker women makes them look in many cases at least 15 years younger. The great majority of all the members are aged women, ranging from the seventies well along toward the nineties.

Eldress Harriet Bullard, who is at the head of all the Shakers in the United States, is well over 80. So is Eldress Anna White, the head of the North family, the most distinguished family in Shakerdom. These old women are marvels of activity and achievement for their age, like all Shaker women. Yet they can hardly live many years longer; and considering the large number of them of about the same age there must within the next few years be a marked diminution of numbers.

How will the few who remain manage this great place, already too vast for the survivors? Miles of Shaker territory lie unoccupied and unproductive. One great house in the valley, with its big barns and outbuildings, stands vacant. Its family died out within a few years past and it is quietly falling to decay.

Nobody joins the Shakers now. People enter from time to time, stay a few weeks or months and then go away. The Shakers have taken children from time to time to raise and have raised them well. But when they were grown these children nearly always slipped quietly away into the big world outside.

## Rich and Prosperous

Yet a hundred years ago that valley at Mount Lebanon was a busy hive of industry, inhabited by hundreds of hardy, thrifty New Englanders of a

sought new material from which to replenish their dwindling numbers.

## Conservatism Triumphed.

This policy seemed good at first. During the summer of the peace convention seven new members entered the North family. By winter all were gone. The history of two of them is an example of the rest. Both were men in the prime of life; one an American who had been the financial editor of a big daily paper, the other a London merchant. Both belonged to that small but persistent percentage of the population to whom communistic life is attractive. Otherwise there was nothing to take them to the place, for no Shaker receives any personal emolument. All goes into the common treasury.

These two men saw possibilities in the place. They advanced various plans for making it more profitable. They entered with enthusiasm into the idea of modernizing the whole organization, bringing it in touch with the present day world, getting in fresh blood and building up a strong, growing organization once more. They were allowed to do nothing. Everything they proposed was vetoed by those in authority, and they became conscious of an unspoken but acute jealousy.

Gradually they saw they were to be reduced to simply two pairs of hands, doing the manual tasks that were ordered, like little boys. Their brains were not wanted, their new ideas were not wanted, and they had to take orders from men who were mentally their inferiors. Then they went away, and by winter the rest of the seven had followed them.

## One Woman's Experience.

A young woman went to Mount Lebanon last summer, thinking, perhaps, she might join. She had a dreamer and an idealist. She had had a hard and poverty-stricken life for a few years, and she was penniless. The life attracted her, the work was congenial, she liked all the material conditions. But she found that should she become a member she would never again have a moment's privacy. Working or sleeping, another woman would be always with

it awakened one morning to find Brother Ephraim and the new sister gone. Worse yet, Brother Ephraim, who handled the banking business of the family, had taken not only his own \$4,000 but \$6,000 more, being every cent of the family's ready money. Rather than betray its shame to the world the family made no sign and never strived to recover its \$10,000.

One morning, all wet with sleet and cold as ice, Brother Ephraim came creeping in and told his tale with sobs and tears. He followed the authority of Adam strictly and laid it all on the woman she had bewitched him, he said. He could not resist her, but just as soon as the money was gone she had left him, and then he sobbed again. He brought back not one dollar of the \$10,000. It had flown with wings, for they lived high. After 50 years of celibacy, Brother Ephraim had gone on one grand "bust."

The crime was one even more detestable to the Shakers than to ordinary folk. But Brother Ephraim was so useful a man that they had been at their wits' ends to get on without him. So they took him back and set him to work, and he lives a chastened and humbled man, and a firm believer in the superman.

## End Must Be Soon.

That is the only scandal Shakerdom ever had. They are clean, honest, hard-working people, who live the simple life, with plain living and high thinking. None of the vices of the age are theirs. Yet year by year there are more of those strange, silent Shaker funerals, when by night, without music, flowers or weeping, they carry out a rough plank box to a nameless, unmarked grave. Nobody comes to fill the vacant chair, and soon a picturesque, historic experiment, the only experiment in American Protestant monastic life, will see its end. The only question is which of the Shaker sisters will be left the last possessor of that seven miles of land and the group of great empty houses with their century old memories.