REPENT AND REPEAL. After some years of defeat and retirement, logically brought about by the extravagance, mismanagement and dishonesty of officials whom it had elected to high and responsible positions, the republican party in Nebraska has again a majority of the members of the legislature. That majority has other and more essential functions to discharge than merely naming a United States senator to succeed William Vincent Allen.

It has a great field in which to show works of repentance and repeal. During many years the republican party in Nebraska was creating unnecessary offices in which to place its camp-followers and political rustlers. Boards of this, and that, and nearly everything, were devised in order to make salaries and livelihood for unscrupulous and unworthy men. And from railroad commissioners, state oil inspectors and numerous other place-holders the state, the tax-payers, suffered great loss, to say nothing about defalcations of auditors and treasurers and the mismanagement of the school lands and their rascally sales to favorites at minimum prices.

And now is a good opportunity for the reinstated republicans to show that the party has repented of its former extravagant and wasteful methods. But in no way can repentance be shown to better advantage and with more practical utility than by the abolition of scores of unnecessary offices.

The oil inspection is a farce. The people get no better and no cheaper oil with it than they did without it. And this is only one of many reforms and reductions of expenditures which a repentant republicanism can bring about, in the interests of the public weal. by acts to repeal former unwise legislation.

Let repeal begin with the next session of the legislature and the taxpayers of the commonwealth will rejoice that signs of sincere repentance are manifest in the republican organization of this state.

THE TORRENS LAND TITLE.

Nothing, probably, has been reported in the papers for a long time, that will cause more satisfaction in certain circles and be productive of more wide-spread good, than the decision of the Illinois supreme court affirming the legality of the "Torrens Law." This is the name given to a system which originated in Australia, and which is so called after its inventor. Its purpose is to enable one who wishes to buy a piece of land, to be sure that when he has paid the price of it it will be his property. Illinois has been experimenting with an adaptation of the Australian plan for nearly ten years; the law which has just been pronounced valid is the second one that the legislature of that state has passed, the first one having proved to contain flaws which occasioned its being turned down when it came up for testing before the supreme court.

Any one who wonders that legislation should be required to secure the modest and reasonable object mentioned above, is simply not familiar with the facts in regard to the methods of land transference now prevailing throughout this country. They are the same as our ancestors brought from England, where they had been followed with little change since the Norman conquest. When you buy a piece of land, you can only buy what the present supposed owner has to sell; all he has is what his grantor had to give him, and so on back, in this country to a patent from the government, which to be sure is not very far back in Nebraska.

Now, the party from whom you propose to purchase gives you a writing in witness of the transaction; this writing is called a deed, and may be of either one of two kinds; a quit claim deed, in which he merely turns over to you whatever rights he has in the property, which of course leaves your title open to all the winds that blow; or a warranty deed, in which he promises that he is the owner of the property, and that if any one with a better right to it should appear and take it from you he will make it good to you; or that if he should be dead, his heirs shall do so. In either case it is evident that you cannot be sure that you will remain in peaceful possession of your property; yet this is the best that can be done for you, under existing laws. It is true that statutes provide that after a certain number of years your title becomes fixed in you, by virtue of occupation; but this will not prevent a claimant, years after, from bringing suit against you, and at the least causing you expense and trouble, with always a chance that his lawyer may find a way to put you out.

As stated, it is not possible at present to buy real property and know that it is then yours; you can buy a piano in security, but not a house. By way of precaution, you have the party you are dealing with give you a statement as to when and how he acquired the land, where his grantor got it and so on back to the beginning. This is called an abstract of title, and is for the purpose of enabling you to judge whether or not he is in a position lawfully to sell it to you; if you do not feel yourself competent to judge, you take the abstract to a lawyer or abstractor, and he, after supposedly due investigation, gives you his opinion in regard to it. He charges you so much for examining each transfer, and each must also be paid for separately when you take it to the court house to get it entered on the books. The cost of thus satisfying your mind—remember, it secures you nothing—amounts commonly to from one-tenth to one-third of the value of the property. This is one of the beauties of the present system.

Now in regard to the value of the abstractor's researches, let us take the word of the late Judge Cooley of Michigan. In the preface to his edition of Blackstone's Commentaries, he gives a sample abstract of title, containing only five conveyances: the simplest possible chain, complicated with no mortgages, wills, administratorships, sales for taxes or anything of that kind; then he goes on for four pages, enumerating things that ought to be looked up in regard to it, and any one of which, if overlooked, may prove to contain a flaw rendering the title under it utterly worthless. "These few hints," says Judge Cooley, in leaving the subject, "will suffice to show how utterly insufficient and misleading are the ordinary abstracts upon which so many purchasers rely." An abstract proves nothing whatever, and has no standing for instance in court; how many farmers who have paid their farm purchase money for a deed and an abstract, know this?

Such as they are, however, these abstracts are not to be made in a day, and this brings to light a third beauty of the system under which we hold our homes, farms, stores, shops and factories; namely, the delay attendant on accomplishing a transfer of real estate. The details of an important conveyance of land may require months or even years, for their observance.

Now, what improvement has the Torrens system to offer, in these matters of security, cost and delay?

Under the Torrens system, when it is adopted in Nebraska (as it certainly should be) if you want to buy a piece of land, you will go to the court house with the owner of the land, or with a printed form duly filled out by him, and there you will get a certificate by which the state of Nebraska absolutely guarantees that you are henceforth the owner of that land until such time as you want to get rid of it. This certificate will cost you a dollar or two, and you can take it home with you that same afternoon; and if it gets burned up it does no harm, for the books at the court house will show the same thing, and you can get a new certificate for a new dollar or two.

Which is the better plan?

There is need of more reading, in the homes of the American people, of economics. There is need too of study of civil government in the household of every good citizen. Boys and girls in this republic, when they arrive at adult age, ought to understand the duties as well as the privileges of citizenship.

We note, as a matter of possible interest to our neighbors in the Iowa Bottoms, that Webster defines a jag as a "ragged protuberance; a denticulation."