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OBSERVATIONS.

The people of Lincoln are taking what some members of the city council call an unwarrantable and aggressive interest in the weekly doings of that body. A concrete example of that interest is the 1,500 votes which was the difference between Mr. Trompen and Mr. Woods' count in the last election. Mr. Woods' defeat was not a democratic victory but an expression of permanent and deep republican dissatisfaction with the city legislative body of which Mr. Woods is a member.

The conviction that members of the council are willing to take advantage of their positions to make the city pay for the legal services which secured them the offices which they now hold, is the reason of the opposition to the employment of Judge Reese and Judge Webster to assist the city attorney in the street railway cases. If members of the council, who now hold their positions in consequence of the able services of Judge Reese in defeating the charter, desire to remunerate him for his labors they should settle with him by taking from the store of their own private savings rather than by compelling the city to employ him for a service which the city is already paying a man to do. Mr. Mockett, in his letter to the *Journal* last Saturday morning, ignores the real reason for the employment of extra help for the city attorney. Yet Mr. L. C. Burr, in the *Evening News* of November 27th, says that Mr. Mockett said when he

asked him if the councilmen were not trying to pay a personal debt which they (the councilmen) owed these attorneys, "Yes, but the council does worse things than that almost every day." It is not the expenditure of a thousand dollars by the city for the city that the constituents of these councilmen object to. It is the well-grounded suspicion, confirmed by Mr. Mockett's confession that members of the council are thus endeavoring to pay off a personal obligation in city funds.

The eighty-two signers of the protest addressed to the mayor are just as much opposed as any member of the council to the remission of the street railway taxes by the city. If extra attorneys are employed it should be on the recommendation of the city attorney and lawyers should be selected, not forced upon the city.

The management of the Trans-Mississippi exposition has made a tactical error, which it is not too late to remedy, in allowing the state at large to get the impression that the exposition is for the benefit of Omaha alone. What promises to be a glory to the whole state ought to be aided and appreciated by the whole state. If the directors of the exposition wish to receive an evidence that the citizens of the smaller towns in the state believe in the exposition, let them invite the well-to-do of Lincoln, Beatrice, Kearney, Grand Island, York, Crete, Seward and Plattsmouth to take stock in the exposition, and when merchants from these cities apply for exhibition space let the officials receive them with cordiality and accord them the same treatment extended to the merchants of the metropolis.

Expert Helbig's claim of twenty-five dollars per day from the legislative executive committee, is high even for an expert, whose value, rated by themselves, has no basis other than the amount of money in the possession of their employers and their need of "expert" skill. The degree of excellence necessary to pass from the professional class into the "expert" class can not be determined. There is probably many a faithful and accurate accountant in Lincoln who lacks only Helbig's nerve to graduate himself into something called an "expert." The popular awe of expert knowledge and methods has been somewhat dissipated by their contradictory and fallible testimony in trials. The heresy has percolated through the court rooms, reached the newspapers and been spread upon these minutes which are never lost and which cannot be changed—a peo-

ple's memory. At twenty-five dollars a day, Mr. Helbig's bill for 182½ days is \$5,475, but in consideration of having had his sympathies touched by the committee and their dislike to spend the people's money, Mr. Helbig is willing to make it an even four thousand dollars. The governor and the auditor are in a curiously embarrassing situation. Neither of them has had the right, since the legislature adjourned, to authorize the spending of a dollar of the appropriation. By doing so they have broken the law as willfully, though perhaps more ignorantly than Ex-Treasurer Bartley and Ex-Auditor Moore. Since *THE COURIER* called the attention of the public to the law restricting the amount which a member of the legislature can draw from the state and to the law which specifically declares that it is illegal for a legislator to hold over and draw pay after the adjournment of the legislature, the employes of that committee have hastened to draw their pay. Two weeks ago, when I inspected the account of money expended by the committee, a little over a fifth of the ten thousand dollar appropriation was all that was left. Consequently, however good his claim may be, Mr. Helbig is not apt to be paid four thousand dollars for his over estimated services.

It is said that Secretary Porter enjoys the advertising the hog killing episode has given him. It has been written up by the patent inside penny a liners and in this way has reached nearly every farmer's house in the country. The funny men on the city papers have been able to crack many a joke at Nebraska on account of the *coup de grace* which the secretary of state and his clerks gave to 16,000 pounds of hog a few weeks ago. When a green countryman with scant ideas of dignity and none of law, is elected to an administrative office, he is very apt to disgrace the people who are responsible for his nomination and election. When a green countryman with traditions of breeding and inherent mental integrity and personal dignity succeeds to an office, he is likely to shed upon the office and the people who elected him, the lustre of a great character. Washington, Lincoln and Grant were countrymen. But between them and the hobble-de-hoy, blundering, stupid, officious countryman who breaks the laws of the city and of the state with assurance and conceit, there is no likeness. Most great men come from the country. Brought up in the solitude of whispering pines or sibilant corn and wheat, their minds grow steady and straight, without the vulgar in-

terference of the street, the saloon and the loafers that fill them. When a man like this comes in contact with the world—behold a genius! He brings to the consideration of social and political questions an unjaded intelligence, trained, unlike Secretary Porter's, by the masters of literature and law. When he makes a speech the pure English of Shakspeare and the classicists of our tongue charms and inspires his hearers and in turn takes a unique place in literature for the study of the next generation of "countrymen."

From his first appearance in the city the unfortunate secretary has shown an indifference to the laws of the language, the laws of Nebraska and the laws of the city. All of these are institutional. The language, whose plurals and past and present tenses he confuses in brassy and bellowing tones, has been made by Celt, Saxon and Latin and cannot be changed by a century of learned doctors, and the laws, born of the Roman, strengthened and formed by the constitutional struggles of our English forefathers—thank God for them—transplanted into America and freed from a monarchical executive, have become the basis of the revised statutes of Nebraska and of every state in the union. They are not to be broken by the secretary or by any official without receiving the indignant protest of every intelligent citizen. Our Roman, Norman, Celtic, Saxon inheritance, made worthy of transmission by centuries of resistance to hereditary officials who had no regard for the law of the people, is in no danger now because our Roman, Norman, Celtic, Saxon blood will not stand any such foolishness.

Scribner's Christmas number has covers in the latest expression of the poster artist's ingenuity. Three little serving boys in the stiff ruffs and draperies of the Elizabethan period, with black, crisp, shoulder-long hair and red cheeks, bear upon three salvers a plum pudding, a bowl of fruit and a Christmas pisset. The advertisement on the back cover is just as satisfactory in color and drawing, but newspaper advertising reserve prevents any description of it. The number is remarkable for illustrations. The letter press, except in the story of "Squire Kayley's Conclusions" and "The Workers," by Walter A. Wyck off, fail of especial interest. Even Kipling's poem—"The Feet of the Young Men,"—is too deep for most of us. It celebrates the return of the young man to the jungle where his transmigrated soul first became human, where the original beast hunted

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