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OBSERVATIONS.

The New Fire Chief.

Since Mayor Winnett assumed the office of mayor he has been searching for a competent fire chief. Chief Wiedman who has held the office until now is an honest industrious man who has the respect of all who know him intimately. But he lacks the peculiar power to control and organize men so necessary to the chief of a fire department. Lacking the magnetism and energy which can inspire fifty men to work as one, Chief Wiedman has not been able to organize the department into the unit it should be for effective service. Mayor Winnett has visited Denver, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Kansas City, and Omaha. Until lately he has not been able to find a capable man who would come for the salary of the Lincoln fire-chief. Private individuals from their own income have been asked to guarantee an extra three hundred dollars. The success of the petition which has been circulated, and the promise of one responsible citizen in particular warrants Mayor Winnett in securing as chief a competent captain of one of the fire stations in Omaha. He is a man with a brilliant reputation as a fireman. The mayor does not know to what political party or to what church he belongs. He was secured entirely on his record as a fireman and captain. All who know Mayor Winnett's astuteness in the selection of men to perform certain specified functions and his absolute purity of motive are willing to greet the new chief from Omaha with certainty of his ability and strong character.

The fire department of Lincoln is

disorganized by changes and rumors of changes. The firemen are few in number, undisciplined and at times disorderly. In building up the department into an efficient fire fighting machine the chief should have the cordial co-operation of the city officers, the council, and the citizens in general. With returning prosperity the time has come to begin to desert the old loose village organization and to establish the department on an efficient cosmopolitan plan.

The city has lost more in taxes the last three years by the burning of fine buildings, than four times the cost of the present fire department. And with an efficient fire-chief and a well organized department many buildings besides the Richard's block and the Methodist church could have been saved.

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The Paving.

There is just about enough in the city treasury, lacking sixty dollars, to pay for the intersections already undertaken. In spite of the need of new pavement on P street I hope that the council will not order paving it has not the money to pay for. If the street car compromise had been allowed to proceed the city would have had, after paying the paving bonds, about \$14,000 for the intersections. As it is the assessment is not sufficient to do any more paving in the current city year which began the first of September.

Dead and gone councils have ordered paving and other city improvements without considering at all the sums on hand to pay the contractors with. The present council, together with the citizens whom it represents have just passed through five very lean years wherein the extravagance of their predecessors has borne heavily upon them. All thoughtful citizens are hoping that the lessons of adversity have been learned by the council and that it will not vote paving that there is no money to pay for. However wretched and uncomfortable the condition of the streets, there is something worse, and that is bankruptcy and the imposition of burdens on the succeeding decade. The clamor in the daily newspapers for paving is but clamor, and there are no serious consequences from ignoring it. On the other hand the consequences of over drawing an account and borrowing money that is not actually needed and which there is no prospect of paying are writ large in the biographies of all spendthrifts whether it be a spendthrift city or a spendthrift heir. Bankruptcy and a poverty ten times more bitter than that which the loan was contracted to prevent are inevitable. Besides the spendthrift council who borrows expects that an entirely different council will be called upon to pay. The recklessness of mouldering councils has driven Lincoln to a poverty which has prevented and will prevent her from enjoying to the

full the new era of prosperity which has dawned full upon more conservatively and economically administered towns.

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The Official Organ of the N. F. W. C.

The presidents of about sixty women's clubs assembled at York last week passed a resolution that The Courier be adopted as the official organ of the Nebraska Federation of Womens' Clubs. This resolution which was more in the way of a recommendation was ratified by the delegates of the federation on the following day.

Considering the imperfection of all earthly things, considering that no flower, of all the billions that bloom, is perfect, I do not believe that the club women of Nebraska will be entirely satisfied with The Courier as an organ. The department of clubs will be conducted by Mrs. Ricketts, the state chairman of correspondence, who has been the able editor of that department for a year. I hope every club secretary in the state will send her the current club year book so that she may become familiar with the object and occupation of each club. These year books will also aid in the compilation of the calendar which is published at the head of the club department of The Courier.

At the sessions of State federations the object and result already accomplished by women's clubs and by the State and United States federation is more apparent than in the fortnightly meetings of the component clubs. To one who has attended the five annual meetings of the State Federation the growth of the bond of union which exists between the clubs in different parts of the state, the development of sympathy and of understanding and of friendliness between them is the most satisfactory result of the federation. At the first and second meeting of the Federation the desire to be acquainted and to work together was apparent. But it was then only an aspiration. The five year's association has familiarized every attentive club woman with the plan of work and the personnel of every club in the state, from the Zetetic of Weeping Water to the Woman's Club of Omaha. Acquaintance, co-operation and unity must precede any evolution of the sort the women's clubs were organized to accomplish. That it has been effectively accomplished in five years is a commentary on the breadth of view and charity of Nebraska women.

The clubs need an official organ to keep alive the interest so unmistakably manifested during the state federation meeting. Whether The Courier can be of value to the clubs of the state depends quite as much upon the members of clubs as upon the editors of the paper who are pledged for a year to serve the interests of clubs to the extent of their ability and knowledge. But it is a

subject which has two ends and however high this end be lifted, the other will remain prone upon the ground unless the club women of the state co-operate with the publisher of The Courier. Letters written by the President of the Federation to the membership will fail to reach their address unless the membership of the state take the paper and the calendar will not be valuable unless it be a complete record of the work the clubs of the state are doing.

At present not more than a fifth of the circulation of The Courier, so far as a publisher can judge, take it on account of the club news and comment. It depends entirely upon the club women of the state whether the club department of their official organ shall be enlarged and made an adequate expression of the needs and achievements of more than three thousand Nebraska club women. Their subscriptions, reports and interest will make it a paper noted among the state official organs of this country as they themselves supply inspiration and examples of the best type of club women to the General Federation. But unless the club women do take an interest in The Courier and contribute their subscriptions and reports the title, Official Organ of the Nebraska State Federation of Women's Clubs is an empty one and after a year's trial if the results are unsatisfactory to the club women the publisher will be unwilling to wear it longer without deserving it.

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Dewey's Victory.

Philosophers who deprecate, exaggeration are insisting that the battle of Manila Bay should not be classed among the great battles and victories of history. They insist that it was an aleatory victory and that the achievement showed no greater genius than Commodore Sampson's or Schley's battle in the Atlantic ocean. Temperate, reasonable folk said the same thing about General Grant's first victories. Afterwards when the number of battles he won destroyed the theory of chance the audience who stayed at home for the purpose of explaining the campaign to simpler people with enthusiasms, admitted that General Grant was a military genius.

Now the victory of Manila Bay was preceded by systematic target practice and drill. Every man in the fleet was under the direct inspiration of Commodore Dewey and every ship in the fleet maneuvered according to his plans. Between him and the captains and crew of every ship there was a complete understanding. The captains understood the general plan of action in case of an engagement and the crews understood that the Commodore knew the capacity of every ship and had ordered the drilling and target practice of the sailors and marines in order to accomplish a definite purpose. As a fighting