

IN THE REALM OF POLITICS

A very pretty contest is to be waged all over Nebraska this summer and fall for the control of the republican organization. A number of republican politicians who belong to what has been known as the Elkhorn and Union Pacific crowd have set out to accomplish the herculean task of capturing the organization from the men who have control now. It is no secret that the Burlington has for years been the dominant factor in republican politics in Nebraska. It has been able in a number of instances to defeat men it did not desire and to name men who were numbered as its friends. In the palmy days of the Union Pacific the management of that road was the political arbiter in this state, but with its financial decline its political fortunes waned. Its dying effort was to send John M. Thurston to the senate. Since then the Elkhorn has been recognized as the foremost rival of the Burlington, and more recently the rejuvenated Union Pacific, maneuvering for a place at the distribution counter, has joined hands with the Elkhorn fellows. They say that long control on the part of the Burlington has resulted in a disorganized and debauched condition of affairs. This they propose to reform, and the first step, they argue, is to smash the Burlington machine.

The railroads, as railroads, have very little interest in politics, save to prevent the passage of adverse legislation and guard what they already possess. Their dearest wish is to be left alone. The position of general manager, superintendent or attorney of a railroad company carries with it considerable power. An unknown and undetermined amount of money is appropriated by the railroad companies for political expenses, and this furnishes the sinews of war that are as necessary in politics as in actual conflict. These higher officials are only men, and being men they are very prone to exercise the power placed in their hands by virtue of their position. If they wish to favor a friend or reward a man they do not hesitate to use the influence their station gives them to attain that object. The pass is a great assistant in prosecuting a campaign on behalf of any favored fellow. The pass has been potent where money would be scorned. It has warmed the inner vest pocket of populists and democrats as well as republicans, and until it loses its magic power to sway human judgment and human action it will continue on its triumphal march. It enables the man who is plugging up a deal, who is working to attain a certain object, to travel about and see the men necessary to the accomplishment of the task outlined. It nestles in the pocket of the delegate and its absence has kept many a fellow from accepting a place on a district or state delegation. It is, in fact, the most powerful weapon in the armory of the railroad politician.

In every county seat town where the railroad touches an attorney, generally selected for his finesse as a politician as well as his success as a practitioner, is retained. In the larger centres of population the pass is used as a retainer with divers other attorneys, partly as an argument why they should not take damage cases against the road and partly as an intimation that they are expected to return the courtesy when the road requires their help. It requires but a few campaigns to sort out the men who may be depended upon, a few tests to determine how far they are inclined to reciprocate. In this way political machines are built up, and although they are not actually ad-

juncts of the road whose name they bear, the line of differentiation is well marked. Follow the line of the Burlington, Union Pacific or Elkhorn and you will find the existence of a well-defined organization of politicians, with common aims, since their orders come from a common center. Sometimes this power is used with proper discretion, other times it is not. There is the usual tendency to abuse power, a tendency that will always exist so long as men are weak and easily made drunk with power.

The complaint made by the Elkhorn-Union Pacific fellows is that the Burlington has used its power to exalt the less worthy, that it has made it impossible for the "big men" in the party to attain high place. This they propose to remedy. They hope, of course, to enlist the sympathy and aid of all the republicans who esteem themselves as "big men" who have not received recognition in the past, and with the aid



CAPTAIN P. JAMES COSGRAVE.

of the not inconsiderable element of the turned down and the easily disgusted, to overturn the Burlington crowd and install themselves in power. They assert that their motives are of the best and purest; that their aim is not to gain prestige and power for themselves, but to smash the Burlington machine and thus give the "big men" a chance to rise to the top. They affect to believe that they can easily resign power after having ousted the other fellows, and having retired the Burlington from politics to follow them into seclusion.

This movement was begun more than a year ago, and it is claimed by the men interested that the nomination of Judge Sedgwick was a victory for them, although not a pronounced one, as the issue was not then made up. It is in furtherance of this reform movement that the Elkhorn but lately entered Lancaster county politics by judiciously distributing annuities and that the Union Pacific stationed a transportation dispensing agent here. It is another step in this concerted action that a weekly newspaper has just been established here with the avowed purpose of purifying the party. Its founder has been identified in the past with the Elkhorn fellows, whose chief is R.

B. Schneider of Fremont, and its evident mission is to act as a bulletin for the country press, furnishing it what purport to be facts as a basis for editorial criticisms. The whole weight of newspaper experience is against success for any newspaper whose mission is that of a hell-raiser, and the man who embarks in that line is very unwise unless he accumulates a fair-sized bank account in advance or allows someone else the pleasure of footing the bills.

Lancaster county has in years past been the mainstay of the Burlington politicians. Without it, they would not rank ace-high in a state or congressional convention. The other fellows know this, and it is their hope and desire to unite all of the elements in the county opposed to the old organization for the purpose of giving it the throw-down. This accounts for the present stir and interest in local politics and presages something very warm in the future. The Burlington hold on the county organization, always strong by reason of its ability to carry primaries through the fact that so many of its employes reside in the city (a fact that in itself attracts the country delegations with axes of their own to grind) has been weakened in recent years through the making of unnecessary antagonisms, and the opposition is not without hope that it

control, with no assurance of any betterment. All of which indicates that there are very lively times ahead for those who indulge in politics in Nebraska.

The Burlington people say, too, that if it comes to tossing about responsibility, the Elkhorn will have to shoulder some of the opprobrium for bad nominations. That road has been in politics some in the past, and has two men to answer for—Joe Bartley and Eugene Moore, both of whom are from Elkhorn territory and both of whom were pushed by the Elkhorn railroad.



C. Y. SMYTH.

The Fremont postoffice fight has not yet been settled. Mr. Schneider was in Washington for some time and returned home with a promise from Senator Millard that no appointment would be made until Schneider and Richards got together. When Mr. Richards heard this he packed his grip and started for Washington. There he has been pouring his tale of woe into the ears of the senator, but with what result has not yet been announced. Schneider still hangs on to Hammond, and Richards is equally as loyal to Swanson. It is said here that Mr. Hammond is a little sorry that he spoke so hastily and fiercely about the governor's pardon of Bartley, as he afterwards learned that Senator Millard, the man who has the naming of the Fremont postmaster, was one of those most instrumental in securing the governor's clemency. It is certain that Millard will have to act soon, as Richards and Schneider show no signs of getting together.

Local politics is livening up and inside of a week the republicans of Lincoln will be in the midst of a fierce scrap over councilmen. Water Commissioner Tyler has made such an efficient officer that there is not the slightest hint of opposition to a third term. City Attorney Strode and City Engineer Campen are similarly felicitously situated, and the only general scrap will be over police judge. Only two candidates are in the lists. These are Capt. P. James Cosgrave and Walter L. Anderson, both young and popular men. The reckless abuse of power on the part of the council majority has aroused public resentment and there will be several lively brushes in the wards. In the Second, a strong effort is being made to bring ex-Councilman Schroeder out, and it may be successful. In the Third C. W. Chambers has been pressed into service, and it is quite likely that "Sandhill" Moore, who has been a candidate, will be pulled off. In the Fourth it is quite generally conceded that Councilman Bacon is done for, and it is a question as to whether it will be John S. Bishop, C. Y. Smyth or M. Weil, all of whom have strong support from the business men. In the Fifth some opposition has been sprung on Councilman Frampton, but his record is much better than the average councilman, and unless some interests take an active part his re-nomination seems certain. Councilman Fryer of the Sixth ward is another man who

can administer a defeat. It has an up-hill task, however, but its motto is evidently, "nothing ventured, nothing won."

The Burlington fellows are very acutely alive to the situation and they say they are not at all alarmed. They insist that the history of politics for the past fifteen years proves that the big men have been fairly recognized, and they deny that republican politics are in a very bad way. It is admitted that power breeds abuse, but point to Nebraska as being in a very much better condition than Iowa, Ohio, New York or Pennsylvania where the republicans are strongly in the dominance, in an independent, moral sense. It is natural that corporations exert wide influence on politics, because of their public character and the fact that if they do not go into politics they are at the mercy of the men who would either injure them financially or shake them down by threats of adverse legislation. If power is abused retribution will follow, especially where the people have the weapon of vengeance so absolutely in their own hands. They insist also that the opposition is led by self-seeking politicians who would not relinquish power if they once secured it, that it would simply be a change of