

# TALKING OF MEN AND THINGS

The Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Tribune asks this pertinent question: "If Lincoln, Nebraska, is satisfied with an Armstrong for mayor, could Cedar Rapids do better than to elect Brother Sam to a like position?"

It is not our privilege to know "Brother Sam," but if he is anything like Brother Alvin, who is now mayor of Lincoln, we would advise Cedar Rapids to go to it. Mayor Armstrong has shown evidences of a determination to transact the municipal business of Lincoln along the same lines that have proved so successful in the management of his own business. We are reliably informed that "Brother Sam" is a successful business man, and if our information is correct Cedar Rapids could not do better. We have congratulated Lincoln upon securing the services of such a man as Alvin H. Armstrong for mayor, but while doing so we have expressed our condolences with and for the gentleman who has shouldered a big burden, the reward for which is pretty sure to be a lot of "kicks" and grumblings and "knocks." But it is a pleasing sign when we see successful business men shouldering civic responsibilities. It is such a relief from the usual custom of having politicians thrust upon us.

It is to be regretted that so able a gentleman as John W. Cutright has found it necessary to resign from the public library board. But if, in presenting his resignation, Mr. Cutright will have sufficiently emphasized the pinch-penny policy of the city council to force it to act properly, the resignation will not have been in vain. The spectacle of a city owning its own lighting plant and then failing and refusing to light one of its own buildings, preferring to patronize a private concern—such a spectacle is not at all edifying. Mr. Cutright has given splendid service as a member of the board, but it is only natural that so progressive and independent a gentleman should become impatient of the petty restrictions thrown about those who consent to give freely of their time and ability to the public service.

Merely in passing we desire to remark that the editor of Will Maupin's Weekly, who has been a member of the Commoner editorial staff for over ten years, is about to publish a volume containing the verses he has had in the Commoner during the past six or eight years—not all of them, but what he deems the best. The title of the book will be "Kiddies Six," because most of the verses have been inspired by the writer's six children—just the average happy, noisy, rollicking, happy kiddies. The book will be printed on hand made paper, bound in cloth and contain upwards of 200 pages. The price will be a dollar, and there will be just enough printed to supply the advance orders. Incidentally, it may be remarked that with

just a couple of notices about the book in the Commoner more than 300 orders have been received. This indicates, as the writer is proud to believe, that his humble little verses have pleased a great many people. If you want a copy just drop a card to Will Maupin's Weekly and say so. Do not send the dollar. You can send that when you are notified that the book is ready.

"The operator at McCook failed to deliver an order." That is the explanation of the awful wreck near Indianola. Faithful servants of a corporation, innocent passengers—all sent into eternity without a moment's warning, and because an operator failed to deliver an order. But wait a minute! A million dollars worth of property and two hundred lives all in the hands of an operator. Think of that for a minute. Then bear in mind that the man who bore this responsibility probably received the enormous wage of \$60 a month, and worked like a slave for ten or twelve hours a day for it. Of course that negligent operator is responsible for the awful disaster. But what about the moral responsibility of the managers of the great corporation who compelled that \$60 a month man to shoulder so much? Before you take a train with your wife and little ones, just pause a moment and think that you are risking your life and the lives of your loved ones, not in the hands of a well paid engineer, not in the hands of a well paid conductor—but in the hands of a telegraph operator who may be on duty ten or twelve hours a day and drawing the magnificent sum of \$60 a month!

If John E. Miller will consent to accept the nomination for regent the people ought to jump at the chance to have such an enterprising, able and successful business man assisting in the management of the state university. But will they? Will they gladly avail themselves of the services of such a man, or will they take chances on getting some political cheap skate by allowing partisanship or petty jealousies to sway their judgment? We've seen the state's business jeopardized so often by just that sort of thing that we are inclined to be a bit pessimistic. The pay of a regent amounts annually to about as much as a month's wages of the average mechanic, yet the regents must look after property worth upwards of two millions of dollars, attend to the expenditure of three-quarters of a million and safeguard the wellbeing of 3,500 young men and women. Men capable of managing such a big business as that can find jobs at \$10,000 or \$20,000 a year without any trouble. The people may have a chance to get just such a man for nothing by electing Mr. Miller. But Mr. Miller is such a good man for the place that we are afraid the people will refuse to take him. This fear is based on political happenings in the past.

"If you want to get rid of a dog, tax it; if you want to get rid of a home, tax it." That is the very succinct way Mr. Fels states the case for those who advocate the land value tax. This is the season of the year that Nebraskans engage in their annual perjury contest. In other words, the assessor is going his rounds. The thrifty mechanic who has his little all invested in a modest cottage and its contents, is soaked to the limit—fined for being thrifty. The speculator in land pays a nominal tax on his vacant property which is daily being made more valuable by the enterprise and thrift of the homebuilders. The speculator gets the unearned increment, and the men who make the value for others are fined for doing it. The state takes from those who make values and gives to those who seize values without making return.

Rev. John P. Brennan, editor of a religious publication called "The Cleveland Magazine," is opposed to the single tax. We have read his argument against it and are puzzled to know why he is opposed thereto. He asserts that the single tax would remove all incentive to industry—an assertion so ridiculous as to excite only laughter. The greatest incentive that could be given to industry would be to guarantee to the worker that he be allowed to retain the product of his labor. No such assurance exists today. Guarantee to the thrifty man that he will be given his fair share of the value he creates and he will work with a light heart. This is guaranteed by the single tax, for under that system the community made values are shared by the community, not by individuals. The trouble with Rev. John P. Brenna is that he gets his economic argument from his imagination and his facts from the same unreliable source.

Ardent protectionists are invited to study Pennsylvania's little scheme to put a tax of 2 1-2 cents per ton on all coal mined in the state. Who will pay that tax? Well, doesn't the protectionist adhere to the doctrine that "the foreigner pays the tax?" In this case the Pennsylvania miner is the "foreigner" and if Nebraska consumers of Pennsylvania anthracite think that the "foreigner" is going to pay that added tax—well, all we can say for those who so believe is that it would be hopeless to try and convince them that the tariff is a tax.

Mr. Bernard McNeny of Red Cloud, for whose ability Will Maupin's Weekly entertains the highest respect, ventures the opinion that Woodrow Wilson is "preaching a doctrine which tends too much towards populism to meet with the approval of the bulk of the democratic party." Mr. McNeny should bear in mind that the brand "populist" is no longer a stigma. During the last ten or fifteen years the people of Nebraska have adopted quite a number of principles that were