

PICKED UP IN PASSING

at going into the merits of the controversy between Councilman Pentz and Councilman Pentz, it is evident that the exhibition in the council chamber last Monday is further evidence of the fact that the city is suffering from too much politics and too little business. While councilmen are quarreling over who is to blame for this, scores of people are suffering from typhoid fever, hundreds of families are inadequately supplied with water, the danger of fire is growing greater, and the water supply, good or bad, is not keeping pace with demands.

Somebody is to blame for this condition of affairs. But who? That is the question, and it seemingly can not be answered. Blame is shifted from one shoulder to another, and the long-suffering taxpayer has no remedy under existing conditions because he can not fix the responsibility. Every day adds new proof that Lincoln ought to adopt the commission system in some form or other. We are not particularly concerned as to the kind, just so it will make it possible to fix responsibility for such a disgraceful condition of affairs as now exists.

Of course Councilman Meier's opposition to the commission system as provided under the Banning law will not stand analysis. Nor will his opposition, under the circumstances, count for much, even if well founded. Just now the opposition of any present member of the council to the commission plan of government will have little if any weight with the people.

Time and again Will Maupin's Weekly has endeavored to point out what it believes to be the fatal error of those having the management of the water system in hand—the idea that the municipal plant should be so conducted as to return a profit to the city. That should be the last thing sought for in the management of any municipally owned plant. Not until every needed extension is made, not until every possible customer within the city is supplied, and not until the supply is adequate for every need, should the city take any profits from the water plant. Every cent of revenue over and above maintenance, should be put into extensions and improvements. When all these have been made it is possible to make, the rates should be lowered. The whole trouble is that each succeeding commissioner and chairman of the council water committee is trying to make a record for economy in administration and return in net revenue. Let us have done with the idea of "net revenue" and demand service instead.

Here we have been going along secure in the idea that we had a water system wholly adequate, supplying the purest of water. Suddenly we wake up to the fact that the system is wholly inadequate and the water impregnated with disease germs. And when we complain those responsible for the condition say we are "unreasonable," and we are advised to "keep still, else you will give the city a black eye." And this is asked of men who watch their loved ones wasting away from disease and falling into the sleep that knows no waking. What does that man care about "municipal black eyes" who has followed his baby to the cemetery, victim of typhoid brought on by the use of impure water pumped into mains by a municipally owned plant?

And how can we in good conscience expect men thus bereaved to sit patiently while councilmen indulge in personalities and reprimands instead of getting busy and correcting the existing evils. There are a score or more cases of typhoid fever in Lincoln today, and the scourge threatens to grow. Yet councilmen put in their time reading personal attacks upon their fellow councilmen, and other councilmen sit and wait for a chance to "get back."

Mayor Armstrong is doing all he can to correct existing evils, but the plain truth of the matter is the mayor has little power in the premises. But suppose Mayor Armstrong was charged directly with the responsibility of managing the municipal water plant, and subject to the recall in case he did not measure up to the duties of the office—how long would he remain in charge under existing conditions? There you are. The men responsible are able to shift the blame, and even if it were definitely located the people could do nothing but sit around and swear. This is why Will Maupin's Weekly is in favor of going to the commission form of government, and going with the least possible delay.

MEN AND MATTERS (Continued from Page 1)

fering Lincoln would, if he were alive today, go about breathing threatenings and manslaughter? We much fear that Governor Stubbs has not read up on the life of Lincoln.

About two years ago Ethel Croker, daughter of the Tammany boss, eloped with her riding teacher, a man named Breen. We heard a lot at that time about the "romance" of the elopement. Miss Croker fell in love with Breen because he was handsome and knew the game. Mr. Breen doubtless loved "the very ground Miss Croker walked on." She has quite a bit of it in her own right, you know. Well, Mrs. Ethel Croker Breen is suing for a divorce, alleging infidelity, non-support and several other things. All of which confirms us in the belief that a hickory switch well and properly applied to the right portion of the anatomy will very often cure such cases. And that's better than two or three years of suffering and finally the divorce court. The marriage tie is becoming entirely too much of a joke in this republic of ours.

Once again—Will Maupin's Weekly is not worrying a whole lot about whether it is to be Taft or LaFollette with the republicans, or Clark, Wilson, Harmon or Folk with the democrats. It has its preferences, of course, but just now it conceives that the most momentous question before the people is that of good seed corn. We are worrying a whole lot more about next season's corn crop than we are about the year's crop of politicians. Test your seed corn first—then take time to test your office-seekers.

We doubt if Mr. Bryan expected to succeed in his efforts to oust Guffey of Pennsylvania from the democratic national committee, but the fact that Guffey ought to be ousted because he is a political crook in Mr. Bryan's estimation was sufficient for the Fairview statesman. After ousting its Guffeys and Sullivans and Taggarts democracy might not be able to command so large a campaign fund as usual, but it would be able to command more public confidence, without which it can never hope to win a national election.

There are democrats who will deprecate Mr. Bryan's actions as calculated to disturb "party harmony." But they are in the same category as those republicans who denounce La Follette as a "disturber." So long as the Sullivans and Guffeys and Taggarts control democratic party affairs, and such men as Aldrich and Lorimer and Cannon control republican party affairs, just so long will the people be getting it where Cora wore her beads. A democratic victory with Sullivans and Guffeys and Taggarts in control of the administration would be an almighty hollow mockery to genuine democrats.

Governor Wilson has learned a lot since he emerged from his library and began learning from public life instead of from books. As a result he is bigger and broader than he was while discussing subjects from the viewpoint of an academician. Therefore we are not surprised that he should regret having written a letter asking how Mr. Bryan might

be thrown over the transom of the democratic temple. Wilson the university president was opposed to trades unionism, to Bryan, to the initiative and referendum and to the recall. Wilson the politician and man of public affairs has changed his mind on all of these questions.

Without knowing Labor Commissioner Guye's opinions upon the single-tax question we are led to wonder if he saw the logical results of his recent bulletin in which he made plain a relation between jobless men and manless land. Whether intentionally or not, Labor Commissioner Guye's acreage bulletin of recent date is quite worthy of being used for propaganda purposes by the single-taxers of Nebraska.

By the way, speaking of the single-tax, it is entirely within bounds to assert that the man who pretends to be a student of affairs and is not studying this method of taxation, is a mere pretender. The single-tax, or tax upon land values, is rapidly becoming the burning issue. It is no longer an academic question. Men of thoughtful and inquiring mind have long since come to the conclusion that it will require far more than tariff reform or currency reform to cure the ills to which this nation is subject, and these same men are turning in large numbers to the support of the reform pointed out by Henry George.

The crime and confession of Rev. Mr. Richeson will, of course, result in the usual attacks upon the church and upon Christianity. Let a minister of the gospel go wrong and immediately a lot of men will declare that it is conclusive proof that all ministers are "leeches upon society," all professing Christians "hypocrites," and religion merely a cover for crooked work. This, of course, does not prove anything save that the men so declaring are talking nonsense. We readily, though sorrowfully admit that the church is not doing its whole duty, that all ministers are not perfect, or anywhere near perfect, and that religion is often used to cloak devilish work. But one fallen minister does not mean that all ministers are wolves in sheep's clothing, any more than one defaulting bank president proves that all bank presidents are thieves. And a little investigation will disclose that there are a blamed sight more hypocrites outside of the church than inside.

THE TELEPHONE MERGER.

The telephone, like water works and street railway service, is a natural monopoly. Therefore the news of a telephone merger in the southeast Platte country is welcome. Under state regulation of rates and service it is possible to prevent the monopoly from unduly oppressing the people, either by extortionate charges or inadequate service. The people of any city are foolish to admit a second telephone company unless the original company refuses to give service or attempts to exact unreasonable rates. Lincoln welcomed the competing company because the Bell company, secure in what it thought an ironclad monopoly, gave little heed to the complaints of the public against excessive rates and miserable service. The dual telephone system has been expensive, but it was worth all it cost because it compelled both companies to give service. Now the competing companies are consolidated, but there is little or no danger of a return to old conditions. The state railway commission is empowered to regulate the rates and to command adequate service.

It is not unlikely that an immediate move will be made to increase the rates. The telephone is unlike any other public service. If one citizen has city water in his house he is not discommoded if no other citizen has it. But no man would give a penny a year for a telephone in his house if he couldn't use it to talk to some one else. The greater the number of phones to which a phone renter may talk, the larger the expense of maintenance, therefore the large rental that must be demanded. But any re-

quest for increasing the rates will have to stand scrutiny, and no arbitrary increase will be submitted to. Having tried out the dual system once and finding it a good thing to compel good service and reasonable rates, the people will not hesitate to do it again if they become convinced that the monopolistic corporation is trying to gouge them.

WHAT'S THE SCHEME?

Several days ago Governor Aldrich received a letter dated at Trenton, Nebraska, and purporting to be a story of destitution written by the wife of a tenant farmer in Hitchcock county. Investigation disclosed the fact that the letter was a forgery, and that no such destitution as described existed in that county. Will Maupin's Weekly is in receipt of the following letter:

Madrid, Nebr., Jan. 2.—Dear Sir: It is quite difficult to me to write you or some one. We all alike out here. There seems to be no money any place. We bought 480 acres here in Perkins county near Madrid. We have had two crop failures so we can't pay our interest that has to come in March the first. Will you see that we get \$240 and we will pay you well. We look for good crop in the spring. C. F. MILLER.

Is there a concerted effort on foot to discount western Nebraska? Or is some one merely amusing himself? There is no particular reason why Mr. Miller should write to the editor of this newspaper—and many reasons why he should not waste his time that way. Mr. Miller's letter has been turned over to other parties for investigation.

NOT "JIM" DAHLMAN.

Just now the Omaha Bee is intimating that there has been "graft" and "crooked work" in the matter of excise law enforcement in Omaha, and in the same manner the Bee is rather hinting that Mayor Dahlman has been in on the deal. We'll have to be shown—and shown mighty conclusively—before we'll believe that "Jim" Dahlman has played the game crooked. This newspaper is not in accord with Mr. Dahlman on some policies, but it has never doubted that he was sincere or that he was as straight as a string. With characteristic candor and brevity Mayor Dahlman has invited the closest scrutiny of his acts while mayor, and the chances are that somebody is going to be badly nipped in their efforts to show that Mr. Dahlman ever handled a dollar of "graft."

WHAT DID THEY EXPECT.

William J. Bryan and Robert M. LeFollette met in the lobby of a Washington hotel the other day, shook hands in friendly fashion and withdrew to a secluded corner and held a short conversation. Whereupon the people wondered and the reporters framed up stories of political intrigue and saw awful visions of plot and counterplot.

Now what did the people expect. William and Robert to do when they met? Did they expect to see William clench his good right fist and poke it into the facial orifice of Robert, while Robert inserted his thumb in William's optic and gouged it out? Did they expect to see these two worthies grapple and go to the tiled floor of the hotel, William's ear between Robert's teeth and Robert's fingers clutched around William's throat? We did not expect anything of the kind. We expected them to do just as they did—act like gentlemen who, although differing somewhat on matters political, could still be friends and gentlemen. There is a whole lot of silly rot being dished up to us by the daily newspapers, and which we are asked to believe is news and mental pabulum worth while.

IT IS TO LAUGH.

The oil trust and the tobacco trust have been dissolved. They are no longer violators of the Sherman anti-trust law.

That's a huge joke!

Each of these trusts has been dissolved into its constituent corporations. These constituent corporations are owned by the very same men who owned the trusts before they were dissolved. They have the power to do

simply and legally what they did collectively and illegally—and they'll do it, too. Only they'll have the excuse of higher cost of production for hoisting the prices.

Think this over a bit, and maybe you'll see the stupendous joke.

WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

The "American Economist," subsidized organ of the tariff barons, says that the "only effective way of reducing the price of sugar is to encourage the production of beet and cane sugar through the protective tariff." We don't believe it. In the first place we haven't got and do not want the kind of labor necessary to compete with the cane growers of Hawaii and Porto Rico. In the second place we've been fining ourselves \$200,000,000 a year for a generation, and today we are not producing in the United States enough cane and beet sugar to sell for that amount. It would seem that if thirty years of high tariff on sugar will not enable us to produce more than 30 per cent of the sugar we consume, it is high time to cease fining sugar consumers and try something else.

CURRENT COMMENT.

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up in a love feast by a long ways. The coming Baltimore convention may break up in a row, but we hope not. The republican party has no Lincoln now to step in and make things straight—not by a great deal.

Of course if Col. Charley Fanning caused that Bryan presidential petition to be filed as a "sharp trick," he deserves to have handed to him the little vice presidential joker that was sent him. Col. Fanning is ambitious to be the democratic national committeeman from Nebraska, and it is a laudable ambition. By the same token he would be an able member of the committee. But it is not in the cards this year. Dr. P. L. Hall is the logical man, being now vice chairman and having a record of efficient service behind him. We do not believe the charge made that Col. Fanning attempted a "cute trick." Having known the colonel for twenty years and more we feel warranted in saying that when he can not play the game square he sits out.

A year ago last November the Seventh Kansas district elected a republican to congress by upwards of \$4,000 majority. At a special election held in the district last Tuesday a democrat was elected by 1,500 majority. There is in this result just cause for democratic rejoicing. By the same token it is sufficient warrant for a lot of almighty hard thinking on the little handful of "stand-patters" who met in Lincoln recently and emulated the tailors of Tooley street by adopting resolutions to the effect that "we are the people."

The death of Prof. William Jackson, deputy food and drug commissioner, brings a loss to Nebraska. Prof. Jackson devoted most of his life to school work, and whether in the school room or officiating as state superintendent of instruction he served his community and his state well. As head of the pure food and drug commission he performed splendid work, and did it without fuss or feathers.

Floyd Sebolt of Geneva admits a willingness to be nominated for state treasurer on the democratic ticket. He has been a successful banker in Nebraska for more than twenty years. Mr. Sebolt was appointed bank examiner in 1909, but he never acted in that capacity, being prevented by the injunction against the guaranty law.

We are not inclined to take seriously the candidacy of the gentlemen who asks for the republican nomination for state treasurer against Sir. Walter George. Mr. George has earned a re-nomination at the hands of his party, and by the same token he will get it if he asks for it—and we presume he will. Nebraska is a close state politically—especially this trip—but if the democrats hope to beat Sir Walter they'll have to pick an almighty good man capable of sprinting to beat the record.