

NEBRASKA'S DISGRACE.

Penitentiary Bottleneck Aired at Last. A Thrilling Episode in the House.

NEARLY \$20,000 BOODLED AWAY.

State Officers Take a Junketing Trip and Pay Their Expenses From the Cell-house Fund.

They are Denounced for Neglecting and Jeopardizing the State's Interests. Dorgan's Methods.

Thayer and Boyd Censured.

"There is something rotten in the state of Denmark."—Shakespeare.

The reports of committees are usually dry and tedious. But the report of the committee which has been investigating the penitentiary affairs made to the house on last Friday afternoon was a notable exception. In fact the reading of that report and comments thereon constituted the most dramatic episode of the session. The committee had been at work quietly for nearly two months examining witnesses and collecting evidence. That its work was well done was amply shown by its report. Representative Davies of Cass county, a republican member of the committee, was chosen to deliver the report. He is naturally an eloquent and powerful speaker. He had carefully prepared himself for the effort. As he read, he frequently stopped to make explanations which threw additional light on the subject. Under the sound of his ringing voice the house was for once absolutely quiet, except when his most telling points brought forth rounds of applause. Never before did republican state officers receive such a castigation in the house of representatives. The ring-leaders present sat and squirmed and looked anxious to drop through the floor. It is impossible to describe the thrilling effect of Davies' eloquence. It captured the house, and made the acceptance of the report a certainty. The following is the report:

To the honorable House of Representatives of the State of Nebraska: Your committee appointed to investigate the state penitentiary submits the following report:

The last legislature made an appropriation of \$40,000 for building a new cell house by days work. The evidence taken has been almost entirely in reference to the expenditure of this money. This cell house abuts on the main building and is about 218 feet long by 44 feet wide; its west wall is the east wall of the main building; its north and east walls the north and east walls that surround the penitentiary grounds, and its south wall a new one entirely. This work, under the laws of the state, was under the direction and supervision of the board of public lands and buildings, consisting of the land commissioner, secretary of state, treasurer and attorney general. On or about the 1st day of May, 1891, the board appointed W. H. Dorgan its superintendent with full power to employ all labor and purchase all material and to oversee generally the erection of this cell house at a salary of \$50 per month. At this time and up to February 1, 1892, one C. W. Mosher was his manager, and had full charge of all his interest at the penitentiary, including sub-letting of convicts to third parties. On the 7th day of May, 1891, Dorgan entered into a bond in the sum of \$10,000 for the faithful performance of his duties as the representative of the board.

Regarding Convict Labor. The method adopted in expending and accounting for the money was this: The board would allow an estimate in favor of Dorgan prior to any outlay on his part for a certain sum, as \$5,000, and Dorgan would make reports to the board of his expenditures. In conformity to the plan Dorgan drew \$32,100 of this money and made five reports, which are now on file in the office of the secretary of state. The amounts charged for labor and stone constitute by far the largest items over free labor. Of \$11,699.17 charged for labor by Dorgan, \$9,064.80 was for convicts and only \$2,634.37 for free labor. This convict labor is charged at the rate of \$1 per day while the average price paid by others who sub-contracted for convicts is only a rate of forty cents per day. But Dorgan, as the representative of the board of public lands and buildings, contracted with Dorgan, as the representative of Mosher, the prison contractor, with the above results. Again, there were days when the convicts could not work on account of the weather or lack of material, yet a charge is made as same as if they had. The most striking instance of this kind is from January 21 to January 31, 1892.

After the Rocks. Dorgan purchased all stone for the construction of the building of S. H. Atwood & Co. of Plattsmouth. The stone was shipped from Cedar Creek, where Atwood's quarries were located, and from Nemaha county, this state, a part coming from Johnson, from the quarry of one John W. Zook and the balance from Auburn from the quarry of Van Court & Road. Dorgan paid the freight in all instances. On all stone from his own quarry Atwood's price was by the hundred pounds, viz: Ruble, 6 1/8 cents, dimension 10 cents and 1/2 inch 16 cents, and was sold by weight. This stone weighed 165 pounds to the cubic foot. The evidence shows that same kind of stone was about one-half of the above figures. On the stone from Nemaha county Atwood paid for the dimension 4 cents per 100 pounds, and it is to Dorgan at 16 cents per estimating only 100 pounds to the

process of reasoning the board could expect an honest disbursement of the money. The prices paid for material indicate his total unfitness for the trust reposed in him, or his utter lack of business integrity or honesty, and in a somewhat milder form, the same is true of the present superintendent.

Action of the Authorities. Members of the board had a very imperfect knowledge of the matter, some of them intimating, when questioned by the committee, that they were too busy with other duties to give attention to this. It appears from the evidence that the board, as such, and the individual members as well, utterly failed to exercise any supervising care over the building, or restraint over the superintendent, establishing a condition of affairs that made waste and collusion inevitable; and while the members of the board spent \$800 or \$900, drawn on Dorgan's check against the cell house fund, in a trip to other states, made ostensibly for the purpose of enabling them to improve on our prison management, the convicts have not had the advantage of the most ordinary rules in regard to sanitary arrangements, as evidenced by the filthy condition in which your committee found the cells. It is the opinion of the committee that justice would compel Governor Boyd and ex-Warden Mallon, ex-Governor Thayer and ex-Warden Hopkins to share the blame with the board for this condition of affairs at the prison. We are thoroughly convinced by the circumstances which have been brought to our attention during this investigation that the public service is being demoralized and the public interests jeopardized by official neglect and carelessness which merit the severest censure, and it is recommended that the authorities take immediate action to recover the amount corruptly diverted from its proper channel.

From February 1, 1892, Dorgan was the prison contractor, Mosher having assigned the contract to him on that date, but Dorgan has never entered into any bond as such contractor. From that time to March 15, 1892, he, as a representative of the board of public lands and buildings, contracted with himself as prison contractor for all convict labor employed during that period, and as prison contractor kept the time of the convicts. On March 15, 1892, Dan Hopkins was appointed superintendent in place of Dorgan, his compensation being at the rate of \$5 per day. He seems to have followed the general policy of Dorgan. He continued to purchase stone and sand of S. H. Atwood & Co. at the same exorbitant prices. He did adopt a policy of keeping the time of the convicts, but charges for such labor were made, and the committee is aware, when they were made.

Vouchers. In case of Dorgan's statements there are two items, one for \$500, expense of board and the other, \$500 to Dan Hopkins for which there are no vouchers. The first was used on a trip taken by the secretary of state, attorney general, the land commissioner and the then warden of the penitentiary, Dan Hopkins, to inspect other prisons as to methods of ventilation, etc. There is no pretense of a statement as to the actual expenses paid out by these gentlemen, and it is in evidence that they had transportation except for a very short distance. The second was used on a trip taken by the then warden (Hopkins) and the then chaplain (Howe) to a prison congress held in Pittsburgh, but there is no itemized account of their expenses, nor is it apparent to your committee how this fund could be used for such a purpose.

In the first instance the money was paid to the secretary of state, J. C. Allen, and in the second to Dan Hopkins, and in each case prior to the trip being entered upon. And Walls Fell. Within a few months after Hopkins became superintendent a portion of the south wall that surrounds the prison yard fell in and it became necessary to repair it. Although Mr. Hopkins has not filed any reports with the board of public lands and buildings he submitted to your committee an itemized statement of his expenditures up to January 1, 1892, on the south wall as well as on the cell house. There is one item of \$1,624.25 for stone, being twenty-one car loads, all of which, with the exception of one piece of coping, was used in the cell house, that is charged to the south wall. This, Mr. Hopkins stated, was done on the authority of the board to balance a like amount of labor (estimated) that was actually performed in building a stockade around the open space where the wall had fallen in and which had been charged to the cell house. The attention of the house is called to this to indicate the loose manner in which this whole matter has been conducted. According to the books in the secretary of state's office, there is yet on hand of the cell house fund \$1,709, but something like \$1,100 of debts for work and material are yet outstanding, and then when the above item of \$1,624.25 is charged there it belongs it will be seen that the fund is more than exhausted. As above indicated, Mr. Hopkins has not filed a single voucher with the board to enlighten that body or any other. How he has disbursed the money entrusted to him, Mr. Dorgan has filed a number of vouchers, but he fails to return any for \$5,151.77, which he claims to have spent.

It is the opinion of the committee that this work ought not to have cost over \$22,000. Who Should Pay. A receipt attached to one of Dorgan's statements shows 5,500 lbs brick, costing \$208, and six barrels of fire clay, costing \$84. This material was used in setting some boilers that belonged to the state. These boilers, with others, are used to generate steam to heat the penitentiary buildings (including the new cell house when complete) and to furnish power to run the machinery. Your committee is of the opinion that under the contract with Mosher, the prison contractor should bear all such expenses himself. In this case the state not only furnished the boilers and material but the labor also and all is charged to the cell house fund.

The Committee's Lectures. Your committee, after hearing the testimony of ex-Treasurer Hill, Commissioner Humphrey, Secretary Allen and Attorney General Hastings, is compelled to believe and report to this house that the interests of the state were not guarded by even ordinary care. Instead of throwing every safeguard which honesty and business methods would suggest around the appropriation and its expenditure, the way was left open for extravagance and corruption, which expanded and grew more rapidly than did the walls of the cell house. To begin with, Mr. W. H. Dorgan, who was chosen superintendent of construction, did not sustain that high character for honesty which is a prerequisite in such a position; but had that not been true, he was disqualified because of the fact that he was agent or foreman for C. W. Mosher, whose interests constantly came in conflict with those of the state. Under such circumstances, we are unable to comprehend by what

stripes or sections of eight acres each. The roadside fence and the division fence dispensed with would more than equal half a mile of fencing, worth at the lowest price of the cheapest fence more than \$100. The land released from domination of weeds and fence corners exceeds half an acre, and the labor saved in not having to cut an annual crop of weeds and briars, added to the expense of annual repairs on the fences I have no doubt, equals the taxes on the whole thirty-two acres. In cultivation there is no raking of whiffle trees against fence corners; no projecting or scattered rails to wreck the binder; no fringe of briars to garnish the outer row of sheaves. A line of Euclid separates adjoining crops, and the first furrow of one section lies against the last furrow of the adjoining one instead of resting barren and weed-covered against the cornerstones of an ancient fence. The mice, ship-monks, weasels, woodchucks, rabbits, snakes, catbirds and robins that once found congenial homes in the old fence-rows have gone elsewhere, for a condition and not a theory confronts them; a condition of neatness, thrift and economy, so at variance with the very existence of the whole "warmint" tribe. Pretty as this picture is, however, it is not possible to reproduce it on every farm. Paddock and pasture—inclosures for one purpose or another—must exist, and like an incurable disease, mitigation must take the place of removal. The first step is to construct a fence of the narrowest possible width. This is found in the various wire fences dangerous to the team than others. A wire fence sufficiently high from the ground to permit mowing beneath the bottom wire affords least protection to vermin and weeds, and takes the least land. But whatever the character of the fence, it should be kept free from stones, logs and other obstructions, and the removal of such things in the first step toward a tidy fence-row.

Members of the board had a very imperfect knowledge of the matter, some of them intimating, when questioned by the committee, that they were too busy with other duties to give attention to this. It appears from the evidence that the board, as such, and the individual members as well, utterly failed to exercise any supervising care over the building, or restraint over the superintendent, establishing a condition of affairs that made waste and collusion inevitable; and while the members of the board spent \$800 or \$900, drawn on Dorgan's check against the cell house fund, in a trip to other states, made ostensibly for the purpose of enabling them to improve on our prison management, the convicts have not had the advantage of the most ordinary rules in regard to sanitary arrangements, as evidenced by the filthy condition in which your committee found the cells. It is the opinion of the committee that justice would compel Governor Boyd and ex-Warden Mallon, ex-Governor Thayer and ex-Warden Hopkins to share the blame with the board for this condition of affairs at the prison. We are thoroughly convinced by the circumstances which have been brought to our attention during this investigation that the public service is being demoralized and the public interests jeopardized by official neglect and carelessness which merit the severest censure, and it is recommended that the authorities take immediate action to recover the amount corruptly diverted from its proper channel.

THE FARM AND HOME.

THE PROBLEM OF PROTECTING HAY STACKS.

A Variety of Covers—Fences and Fence Rows—Five-Banded Bees—More Clover—Farm Notes and Home Hints.

Protecting Hay Stacks. Forty-five years ago, in Illinois, I was covering stacks with slough grass. Thirty-five years ago I was doing the same in Page county, Iowa, writes W. E. Laughlin in Coleman's Rural World. Have driven many stacks and leaned up many poles in the almost vain attempt to keep the gales from taking the tops off the stacks of hay and grain, or from so displacing them that the rains found any access.

Some years since Professor Sanborn sent out cards asking a great many Missouri farmers as to their estimate of what per cent of the value of the hay that was stacked out of doors was lost by the weather. These estimates he averaged. I have not his bulletin at hand, but feel sure that the loss was not less than twenty-five per cent.

For a long time I had been wrestling mentally with the problem of how to protect stacks. Had sent for documents to two parties advertising stack covers. Their covers were all heavy and quite costly. There is not the least doubt but they would have protected the stacks, but whether being heavy they would have lasted at all in proportion to the price, is with me still doubtful. Whether water proofing them with some preparation or other would tend to preserve them is yet an experiment.

Last summer I concluded to try covering one stack of clover hay with muslin costing five cents per yard, a small rick containing four and a half tons. I built my stack carefully and made it quite sharp on top, the cover was put on the hour the stack was finished. That night it rained three-fourths of an inch; the cover did so well that a little later I placed the same kind of covers on two other stacks of the same size.

Mr. A. A. Berry, farmer and stock raiser, agricultural editor of the "Clarinda Herald," and observer for the signal service, has furnished me with an itemized statement of the rain fall here, which shows that since my hay was stacked, and before the great snowstorm of December 7, we had a little more than twelve inches of rain. In one night there fell two and a half inches.

Except in two places where the covers were misplaced by the wind, my hay is in perfect condition, just as good as if it had been in a barn. Two of my stacks are standing untouched. I invite anybody who wishes to examine them. The covers have paid me up to date at least as much as their cost, and seem but little the worse. This time I fastened on my covers by tying to them as weights stones and fence posts. For the next hay crop I shall sew on each cover ten pockets of good material, each large enough to hold say fifteen pounds of stone, gathering the cover where each pocket is sewed on, except at the corners, so it will fit the stack closely, then the wind cannot get hold under the covers and they will stay right there in any gale; the wind can get no hold on the hay, and the stack will stand in shape till the gale shall be strong enough to push it over bodily.

Mr. Editor, this is only a report of progress, I expect to continue the experiment. How many more will try it carefully and report?

Fences and Fence Rows. I often pass a thirty-two acre field, says L. B. Pierce, in N. Y. Tribune, which has had no roadside fence for years, and although it lies along a very public highway, the loss from encroachment of passing cattle has not, I think, amounted to a single dollar. On the other hand, there has been positive gain of a good many dollars by removing the worm fence and their accompanying nursery of evils. This field is framed in four

stripes or sections of eight acres each. The roadside fence and the division fence dispensed with would more than equal half a mile of fencing, worth at the lowest price of the cheapest fence more than \$100. The land released from domination of weeds and fence corners exceeds half an acre, and the labor saved in not having to cut an annual crop of weeds and briars, added to the expense of annual repairs on the fences I have no doubt, equals the taxes on the whole thirty-two acres. In cultivation there is no raking of whiffle trees against fence corners; no projecting or scattered rails to wreck the binder; no fringe of briars to garnish the outer row of sheaves. A line of Euclid separates adjoining crops, and the first furrow of one section lies against the last furrow of the adjoining one instead of resting barren and weed-covered against the cornerstones of an ancient fence. The mice, ship-monks, weasels, woodchucks, rabbits, snakes, catbirds and robins that once found congenial homes in the old fence-rows have gone elsewhere, for a condition and not a theory confronts them; a condition of neatness, thrift and economy, so at variance with the very existence of the whole "warmint" tribe. Pretty as this picture is, however, it is not possible to reproduce it on every farm. Paddock and pasture—inclosures for one purpose or another—must exist, and like an incurable disease, mitigation must take the place of removal. The first step is to construct a fence of the narrowest possible width. This is found in the various wire fences dangerous to the team than others. A wire fence sufficiently high from the ground to permit mowing beneath the bottom wire affords least protection to vermin and weeds, and takes the least land. But whatever the character of the fence, it should be kept free from stones, logs and other obstructions, and the removal of such things in the first step toward a tidy fence-row.

Notes of Five-banded Bees. I will tell you what I like about the five-banded bee, says a writer in the American Agriculturist:

They are a large, strong, healthy bee. They are very industrious and can carry a good working gait when the wind blows so hard that all the other species of bees that I have cannot venture out. They enter the sections just as soon as they are ready, and will climb right up and fill all that they can get the honey to do it with. They show but little disposition to swarm, as only one out of the six colonies that I had, offered to swarm the past season, and what they may do is to be learned later. They cap their honey the whitest of any bee that I own. They are as gentle as butterflies. They are perfect beauties.

I have no interest in any particular kind of ree. The bee that pays me best for my labor is the bee 'or me. My business in producing honey, and not the sale of bees or queens. The five-banded bee did this for me the past two seasons: The first gave me 132 pounds of honey; the next best, ninety-nine pounds; the next, sixty-six pounds, and the least gave me fifty pounds and cast a swarm. This was nearly all from clover, as basswood was a failure, and all was secured from June 20 to August 1.

More Clover Sown. The best sign we know of that a farmer is waking up to the need of better farming is to see him prepare to sow more clover seed. It costs little and pays more for the money than any other farm implement he can make. Therefore it should be always the first step. It will half furnish the money and the fertility of soil necessary to take longer and more expensive future steps. We hold that clover should be sown with every grain crop, even though the stubble is to be plowed under the next fall. Often the clover catch will be so good that the farmer will think it a pity, as it surely is, to destroy it. Then the gain will be all the greater, but the growth that clover will make between March and September is worth far more for manure than the cost of seeding. It is as much richer manure than most weeds which it will displace, and has the further advantage of getting most of its fertilizing properties, except the mineral, from the air, and not as weeds, always draw them from the soil. For this reason clover among grain so far as we know never injures the grain crop, and we have thought it often helped it.—American Cultivator.

Farm Notes. It is a mistake to spread manure over too much surface. Use good oil with machinery when and where it is needed. Excessive fat is more or less detrimental to breeding animals of all kinds. Thick seeding is the easiest way to overcome the principal objections to orchard grass. An item in profitable stock feeding is to have stock adapted to the wants they are to supply. Farming, fully as much as any other line of business, is constantly attended with cost. Home made manure is the best that can be used and every farmer can make more or less of it. On the majority of farms the acreage to grass and clover can be materially increased with benefit. One of the principal causes of failure in securing a good stand of grass is in failing to use plenty of seed. Large yields nearly always cost the most to produce but they generally return a better proportionate profit. Subscribe for THE ALLIANCE-INDEPENDENT.

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