

MADE A MESS OF IT.

(Continued from Fourth Page.)

have also been hampered by want of access to a large part of the records of the secretary's office. I here present you the results of my researches hoping that they be of great service to you in conducting your investigation.

In making these charges I have confined myself strictly to the conduct of Mr. Thompson. But I would remind the committee that in nearly all matters referred to J. Burrows, as an officer of the state alliance and a half owner of the publishing concern in which Mr. Thompson was a partner has been equally guilty with Mr. Thompson.

A GENERAL CHARGE.

The general charge that I have to make against J. M. Thompson (and the same is true of Burrows) is this. He has continually sacrificed the interest of the state alliance for personal profit to himself.

To state the matter more fully: Mr. Thompson has been secretary-treasurer of the state alliance during the years 1890, 1891 and 1892. The election of a member of our order to that office, and the acceptance of the office by the member is equivalent to a contract between the alliance and that member. The terms of that contract are that the member accepting the office on his part agrees to zealously guard, and work for the interests of the state alliance; and that the state alliance shall on its part pay the member a reasonable compensation for his services.

During these three years Mr. Thompson has been actively engaged in a printing and publishing business, a concern that has been run for the private profit of Mr. Thompson and his partners in business. The business interests of the state alliance and the business interests of this publishing concern have been to a very large extent directly in conflict.

My charge is that Mr. Thompson acting in a double capacity as an officer of both has continually sacrificed the interests of the state alliance to advance the interests of the publishing concern. He has betrayed the former and served the latter.

During 1890, and 1891, Mr. Thompson not only permitted but actually assisted this publishing concern to feed and fatten off the state alliance. As business manager of this publishing concern he charged the state alliance outrageous and extortionate prices for office rent, and for printing supplies, and as secretary of the state alliance he used all his influence to have these claims allowed and paid. He sold his time and energy to the state alliance and received pay therefor, and he then selfishly and treacherously gave that time and energy to the publishing concern and from it again received pay. This general charge is explained and supported in the following more specific charges:

PRINTING ALLIANCE SUPPLIES.

The constitution of the state alliance requires the state secretary to furnish printed supplies for county and subordinate alliances. The printing of constitutions, rituals, etc., has also been customarily left in his control. Thus the state secretary has had, at his disposal a very large amount of job printing. It is hardly necessary to state that in getting these supplies printed, it is the duty of the state secretary to have all work done at the lowest market price. To do otherwise would be to squander the funds of the state alliance.

I charge that Mr. Thompson as an officer of the state alliance invariably let this printing to the publishing company of which he and Burrows were the owners; that he never sought competition, nor tried to secure low prices, but that as business manager he charged and as state secretary he allowed and paid prices for printing these supplies that were outrageous and extortionate almost beyond belief. In proof of this charge I submit a table showing the prices charged by Burrows and Thompson and paid by Thompson for these supplies, and along side of them the market prices which he might have secured. The prices charged I have taken from the books of original entry kept by the Alliance Publishing Co. In ascertaining the fair prices which should have been charged, I have not relied on my own judgment, but have secured statements in writing from four responsible job printers in Lincoln showing the prices at which they agree to do work now. Inasmuch as prices for printing are as high now as during 1890 and 1891, I think that is a very fair basis. While it has been impossible for me to tabulate every item, I have aimed to be entirely fair. I have selected not only those supplies that were printed at the highest prices but those that were printed at the lowest, so that the average might show the true state of the case.

[NOTE: I have enlarged this table. The table submitted to the committee only included \$1581 of printing of which \$821 was overcharge. The present table includes all that was in the first and a good deal more. However it contains nothing but what was laid before the committee. After the committee's first meeting, bids on alliance printing were secured from three of the principal firms in Omaha. All the bids made by seven different firms were bona fide offers to do work by men who are in the printing business for profit. The following are two of the letters which will speak for themselves:

OMAHA, Neb., July 1, 1893. Gentlemen of State Executive Committee of the Farmers Alliance. We the undersigned agree to print your alliance supplies at the following prices:

Table with columns: Item, Number, Price. Includes items like Constitutions, Rituals, Alliance Acct Books, Membership Cards, Withdrawal Cards, Quarterly Reports, Blank Appl. for Membership, Application for Charter, Receipt and Order Books, Application for Charter, Application for Membership, Material, workmanship and type same as in samples shown.

FAIRBANKS PRINTING CO. AUGUST H. DRAGAGE. The above table shows the cost of printing a portion of the supplies at a cost of \$2765.55 which under competition ought to have cost the state alliance \$1349.50. The price charged was 205 per cent of a fair price. The overcharge was a 105 per cent. Or to put it the other way a fair price would have been only 49 per cent of the price charged and the overcharge was 51 per cent of the price actually paid.

Table with columns: No., Price. Includes items like Order books, Receipts, App. for Membership, Membership Rolls, App. for Charter, Withdrawal cards, Proceedings, Material and workmanship to be equal to samples shown.

TABLE OF OVERCHARGES ON PRINTING.

Table with columns: Item, No. of Copies, Price Charg'd, Fair Prices, Over Charge. Includes items like Constitution of 1890, Constitution of 1891, German Constitution, Ritual of 1890, Ritual of 1891, State Alliance Proceedings, Blank Appl. for Membership, Membership Acct Books, Withdrawal Cards, Member-ship Cards, Quart. Rpts. Sub-Alliances, Receipt and Order Books, Application for Charter, Membership Rolls, County Secretary's Report.

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Now if the same average overcharge holds good for the whole amount, the total cost of this printing should have been \$1896, and the overcharge was \$1982.

The only way to get at the actual total overcharge would be to tabulate the entire quantity of supplies. This I have not had the data nor time to do. Therefore to avoid all charge of unfairness let us suppose that the average overcharge on the items not included in the table was somewhat less, although in a great many items which I have examined it was not. Let us even suppose that the average overcharge on the whole amount instead of being 51 per cent of the total charged was only 45 per cent. 45 per cent of \$3888 is \$1749.60. This estimate I believe to be too low, but in the absence of complete proof as to the actual amount, I will present this as a safe estimate.

Let us look at a few of these items: Here are 20,000 quarterly report blanks, a small sheet printed on both sides on a poor quality of book paper for which Mr. Thompson paid to himself and partner, \$8 per thousand, 5 times a reasonable price. The cost of those 20,000 blanks should not have been over \$25, but Mr. Thompson paid \$120, thus transferring from the alliance treasury to the private treasury of his publishing company \$95 for which no equivalent was given.

Here are 20,000 constitutions printed in German that are charged up at \$14.85 per thousand. They could have been printed for \$7.25 per thousand or less than one half. The overcharge on this one item was \$152. Is it any wonder the Alliance Publishing Company threw under such miserly financial management?

Is there any possible reason why the constitution of 1890 should have been printed \$9 per thousand and that of 1891 at \$14.85? Why should the ritual of 1891 cost \$24.25 per thousand when that of 1890 only cost \$15.7?

In examining the books preparatory to filing these charges, I found many interesting facts which I can not mention now. But I wish to call attention to at least one: I found that on two occasions a large number of copies of the Farmers Alliance newspaper were charged up to the state alliance, and paid for by the state secretary. Of the issue of January 18, 1890, 6000 copies were charged. The only justification that can be offered for this was that the issue contained a report of the state alliance meeting. Of the issue of Aug. 16, 1890, 2,000 copies were charged. I examined that issue to see what matter it contained that could justify the charge. I found a column article clipped

from the Liberty Bell of Kearney. W. C. Holden's paper. The article was a rasha of Burrows' charges against David Butler. I am well satisfied that these copies were used to advance the personal interests of Mr. Thompson's partner in a personal political controversy, and the state alliance footed the bill. But this is not all nor the worst: These 8,000 copies were actually charged up at \$20.00 per thousand or \$160.00. The paper was then only a four page sheet and these were simply extra copies. \$8.00 per thousand would have been an ample and liberal price. The fact is I believe that \$160 was spent by

which I am unable to state, but I have good reasons to believe it was sufficiently large to amply pay him for his time and energy. Under the pretext of not being able to perform all the duties of his office as state secretary, Mr. Thompson has employed one or more assistants who have performed a large part of the duties of his office. He has charged up the time of these assistants to the state alliance, and has demanded and received pay for the same in the following sums:

Table with columns: For 1890, 1891, 1892, Total. Includes amounts like \$574.30, \$403.30, \$388.35, \$1365.95.

At the same time Mr. Thompson has demanded and received his own salary in full notwithstanding the fact that he was devoting a very large part of his time and attention to the business management of a private concern. His salary has been as follows:

Table with columns: For 1890, 1891, 1892, Total. Includes amounts like \$287.50, \$103.30, \$68.35, \$459.15.

I charge that Mr. Thompson has acted wrongfully and selfishly in demanding and collecting \$1803.05 for clerk hire, that in so doing he has betrayed the interests of the state alliance, and violated his contract with that body.

If Mr. Thompson had devoted ten hours per day to the faithful and diligent service of the state alliance he could have performed all or nearly all the duties of his office. But in order to be more than fair, let us suppose that he did need some assistance, on extraordinary occasions during 1890 and 1891, sufficient at a liberal estimate to cost \$100 each year. Deducting this sum from \$1803.05 we have remaining \$1703.05 every cent of which I charge to have been collected from the state alliance for clerk hire under false pretext. I charge further in collecting such sum Mr. Thompson imposed upon his alliance brothers who constituted the state alliance, and betrayed their confidence.

I will call the committee's particular attention to the fact that in 1891, Mr. Thompson not only received a much larger salary than 1890, but that he also demanded \$265, more for clerk hire although the volume of work in his office was much smaller than in 1890.

Mr. Thompson not only put in his bills for clerk-hire at the state alliance meeting, but during 1890 and 1891, he had already paid out the money for clerk-hire before the state alliance met and this he did without a shadow of right or authority under the constitution.

It is further charged that from April 1, 1890 to the close of 1891, Mr. Thompson had two clerks, and part of the time three, and that these clerks worked regularly part of the time on the paper although they were paid wholly from the state alliance treasury.

RENT AND FUEL.

The state alliance should pay rent for a suitable and commodious secretary's office. During the years 1890, 1891, and 1892, far more suitable and commodious quarters than those occupied by the state secretary could have been secured for \$10.00 per month; but to be liberal I will raise that estimate to \$15.00 per month. In that estimate I include either a large single room or two smaller rooms heated with steam and lighted with electricity. But during the years of 1890 and 1891, Mr. Thompson acting in a double capacity as landlord and tenant selfishly sacrificed the interest of our order by charging outrageously high prices for office rent, and that he paid the same.

[During the first three months of 1890, the office was in the Bohanan block and the rent was \$10 per month. Then the present alliance building was rented. In order to make the alliance pay as much of their rent as possible, Burrows and Thompson immediately raised the rent of secretary's office to \$27 per month. Mr. Thompson had a little corner boarded up in the alliance store for his office. Mr. Hartley also had his office in the same little pen. A more incommodious and unsuitable place could not have been found. The rent of this office should not have been over \$4 per month. Then his lady clerks had a little room on the third floor. Similar rooms on that floor rented for \$4; so that the total rent should not have been over \$8 per month and the actual overcharge was \$19 per month.

During 1891 Thompson occupied exactly the same quarters during most of the year yet he raised the rent to \$31.25 and charged for fuel and gas on top of that. October 20, 1891, he moved from the store to the second floor, and from that on till the close of '92 the rent paid was \$20 per month although the quarters occupied were at no time worth over \$10.]

The sums paid by the state alliance for office rent and fuel during the three years were as follows:

Table with columns: For 1890, 1891, 1892, Total. Includes amounts like \$251.36, \$91.77, \$126.41, \$469.54.

Now if we figure \$15 per month as the price of suitable and commodious quarters, the rent for three years should have been \$525, and the overcharge was \$314.17. If we figure the quarters actually occupied by Thompson at \$10 per month (which is more than they were worth) we have \$350 as the proper cost of rent and fuel, and the overcharge was \$489.71.

To sum up this matter, Mr. Thompson, in occupying these very inferior quarters, and in collecting these outrageous overcharges for the same was virtually taking money from the treasury of the state alliance to pay rent bills for the publishing concern of which he and Burrows were owners, for which overcharges the state alliance received no equivalent whatever.

FLAGRANT DISCRIMINATION.

Last year Secretary Thompson paid all salaries and other claims against the state alliance in full or nearly so, except the claim of Assistant Lecturer Fairchild. At the close of the year there was due him \$373.12. This Secretary Thompson had failed to pay although frequently asked to do so; and this he did although Bro. Fairchild worked most faithfully and industriously, and was greatly in need of money, being a poor man.

But near the close of the year Thompson took \$210.15 of the money which should have gone to Bro. Fairchild and paid it to Jay Burrows on a claim for salary as secretary-treasurer in 1887 and 1888, a claim of very doubtful character.

FALSIFYING A RESOLUTION.

The state alliance which met in Lincoln January 15, 1892, passed a resolution

providing that for the coming year "the secretary treasurer should receive a salary of \$700, and not to exceed \$500 clerk hire." This was the first time the state alliance ever made any appropriation for clerk hire. Thompson took this resolution and put it into the constitution as an amendment although it was never intended as such, and in order to make sure of the entire \$500 he falsified the wording and intent of the resolution, making it read as follows:

The salary of the secretary treasurer shall be \$700 per annum with an allowance of \$500 for clerk hire.

I charge that Mr. Thompson knowingly and willfully made this change to advance his own private interests.

OTHER CHARGES.

[NOTE:—In order to economize space I have condensed the remaining charges as much as possible.] Secretary Thompson last year entirely ignored a resolution of the state alliance, and without any proper authority selected Grand Island as the place for the state meeting.

At the meeting at Grand Island, last fall, a resolution was passed providing that the secretary should have no clerk hire unless the work of the office was greatly increased. In direct violation of this, Secretary Thompson went right on paying \$8 per week for clerk hire.

Mr. Thompson has utterly ignored the constitution of the state alliance in conducting the business of his office. He has made a habit of paying out large sums of money, without any warrant, and before the claims were passed on by any competent authority. In fact it appears that Thompson has always conducted the office according to his own notions regardless of any authority except the dictation of Jay Burrows.

THE SECRETARY'S PRESENT CONDUCT.

Mr. Thompson is at the present time acting as business manager of a publishing company. He is devoting his time and attention to that business to the great detriment of the state alliance work. He has allied himself with a man who has lost the confidence and respect of a majority of the alliance people. He has assumed an attitude of bluster and active hostility to the leading alliance paper of the state. He has again opened his office in the same room where other businesses are transacted, namely, insurance and publishing business. He has continued to employ a clerk and pay the same from the state alliance treasury.

By doing these things Mr. Thompson has wrought incalculable injury to the alliance cause, which he pledged himself to faithfully serve. And what is at the bottom of all this trouble? Simply Mr. Thompson's desire to engage in a private business for personal profit, and to prostitute his office for the advancement of that private business.

GENERAL SUMMARY. Bringing together the sums of money which the state alliance has lost through the betrayal of its interests by its secretary, we have the following:

Table with columns: Overcharges in printing for two years, Overcharges in rent for three years, Overcharges in clerk hire for three years, Total overcharge. Includes amounts like \$1749.60, \$49.17, \$603.05, \$2401.82.

Here we have a grand total of \$2401.82 which the state alliance has lost through the unfaithfulness of its secretary, and this does not include many smaller sums which I am satisfied a thorough investigation would bring to light.

In his conduct as state secretary Mr. Thompson has continually sacrificed the interests of the state alliance to advance his own private interests. He has continually imposed upon and betrayed the confidence of the good alliance people of the state.

He has continually violated the solemn obligation he took to "well and faithfully perform all the duties of his office." He has continually and recklessly disregarded the constitution and the resolutions of the state alliance. He has conducted the business of his office in a most unbusiness-like and reprehensible manner.

The facts indicate and clearly prove that Mr. Thompson's main object in securing and holding the office of the state secretary-treasurer has been to use the opportunities and the influence that office gave him to advance his own private interests; in fact to make the office a valuable adjunct to a private business in which he has been engaged.

The facts which I have brought to light forcibly remind one of a similar class of facts brought to light in connection with a penitentiary cell house and asylum in Nebraska, and this may be the reason why the paper now published by Mr. Thompson and his former partner has had so little to say in condemnation of those things. I am satisfied that if some old party officer-holder in Nebraska had been guilty of such conduct as I have charged against Mr. Thompson, the alliance people would have charged him with "steals," and set him down as a traitor to public welfare. Mr. Thompson's conduct will be a blot on the fair name of the order. It can not be satisfactorily explained. It can not be safely overlooked. It must not and can not be white-washed. The god of the order and the exigencies of the case demand that some action be promptly taken to arrest the evil effects produced by his course.

All of which is respectfully submitted. S. EDWIN THORNTON.

CHARGES AGAINST BURROWS.

The charges against Burrows covered the same ground. They were briefly as follows: During 1890, and 1891, Burrows was chairman of the executive committee of the state alliance. He was also a partner of Thompson in the publishing business. Being the senior member of the firm and very dictatorial, Burrows was more responsible for making the outrageous and exorbitant charges than Thompson. On the other hand being the chairman of the executive committee, and the resident member thereof, he imposed upon the confidence of his fellow members, made them believe the charges for printing rent and clerk hire were all right, and induced them to approve the claims. Burrows also managed to secure the lion's share of all the money secured by these overcharges as the books of the Alliance Publishing Company abundantly show. Burrows was an experienced printer, and was thoroughly posted on all matters wherein the over-

charges occurred, while the members of the committee knew very little about such matters. Hence they accepted his word and approved all claims. Then when the state alliance would meet, the secretary's claims would be rushed through without question or discussion, and the members of the alliance supposed everything was straight. In manipulating these things for his own personal profit, I charged that Jay Burrows was guilty of betraying the confidence of his alliance brethren, of sacrificing the interests of the order, and prosiding his position to base purposes.

CHARGES RULED OUT.

I also prepared charges and evidence to show the part Mr. Thompson played in the effort to wreck THE ALLIANCE INDEPENDENT and offered to furnish ample proof of the same. But to my surprise the committee refused to consider them. I also had prepared charges showing Burrows' treachery in trying to betray THE FARMERS ALLIANCE into the hands of W. C. Holden, a traitorous alliance with Holden, etc. and offered to prove them. But the committee ruled these charges out entirely. And neither Burrows nor Thompson, who were both present, objected to these rulings.

MEETING OF JUNE 6.

The committee met at the Lindell June 6th. Present B. F. Allen, H. B. McGaw, Allen Root and Capt. Barry. Absent, Clark Olds.

When I appeared before the committee I first asked to be shown the demand for an investigation. Mr. Thompson admitted that he had not demanded it. Burrows claimed he had written a letter demanding investigation, but the chairman of the committee would not acknowledge it. It then developed that the real cause for the investigation was that a great many alliances had sent resolutions to the chairman demanding Thompson's removal, and refusing to pay any more dues till some action was taken.

Having thus proven Burrows a falsifier, I read my charges through although frequently interrupted by Burrows. I then submitted the books of the Alliance Publishing Co., bids on printing and other evidence to substantiate the charges. I also demanded that the committee take charge of the books and all records of Mr. Thompson and examine them. When I sat down Burrows gave me the benefit of a tirade of personal abuse to which I paid very little attention. He then undertook to bluff and bulldoze the committee. He claimed the committee had met to conduct a trial, not an investigation. Allen Root said that was right. Capt. Barry objected to this, but without avail. The object of this charge was to relieve the committee from the duty of investigating for itself and throw the whole burden of proof on me.

Burrows' next move was to fight for delay. He demanded time to prepare a reply. The upshot of the whole matter was that the committee finally consented to an adjournment for a month. Before adjourning they demanded of me a pledge that I would publish none of the proceedings, until after the final hearing, and I gave it.

Thus ended the first scene in this farce.

MEETING OF JULY 6TH.

Three members of the committee appeared at the appointed time, but Root and McGaw failed to show up in time for a meeting the 6th. On the morning of the 7th all members were present. Thompson read his so-called answer. It was a complete failure. Aside from a slight mistake in my estimate on office rent, not a statement of fact was disputed. He tried to justify the extortionate charges for printing by quoting the prices paid for small quantities of supplies by his predecessor in office. He virtually acknowledged that he had based his charges for supplies in thousand lots on former prices paid for hundred lots! He finally said the committee knew all about these matters and he would trust their good judgment to decide fairly.

Burrows said the charges against him amounted to nothing; he had paid no attention to them, and prepared no answer. The reason of this I afterward learned.

I again laid before the committee books, records and papers to fully substantiate my charges, and again urged the committee to investigate for themselves.

A representative of Oak Valley Alliance appeared before the committee with a series of charges against Thompson, but they were never acted on. Finally at about 11 o'clock Friday morning the committee went into secret session.

MAKE UP OF THE COMMITTEE.

Just here I want to speak personally of the committee: B. F. Allen, the present chairman, has been on the committee continually for five years. He served three years under Burrows' chairmanship. He had approved every overcharge I pointed out. To show how well qualified he was to give me impartial treatment and to render a just verdict, I quote a letter which he wrote to Burrows a short time ago.

WABASH, Neb., March 13, 1893. HOK, J. BURROWS, Lincoln, Neb. DEAR FRIEND:—Even though the consequences indicated in my letter of the 5th inst. may ensue it will not deter me from following in the way I am convinced is right. I have known you too long and have been associated with you too long in the work of the alliance to doubt even for a single moment your loyalty to its principles or your honor as a man, and when such reckless and unwise attacks are made on you as have appeared in THE ALLIANCE INDEPENDENT, I cannot do less than to assist as far as possible to refute them. I therefore cheerfully sign the paper herewith enclosed. Assuring you as well as Bro. Thompson of my unshaken confidence and trusting that nothing may occur to mar our friendship. I am, Yours sincerely, B. F. ALLEN.

The italics in the above are mine. Would such a man be accepted on a jury in any civilized country? Allen Root has been on the committee for five years past with the exception of 1890. He has been a particular enemy of Jay Burrows, and the two have done not a little scheming together. Root showed throughout the trial a disposition to treat my charges with ridicule, and myself, with unfairness and insult. He openly professed that he cared very little for the facts in the case, and that his object was to

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