

TO COUNTY CLERKS

The Independent desires to thank the county clerks who so kindly responded to its letter of inquiry regarding the standard of assessment used last year. The information is valuable and is now being used in preparing statistics in support of the idea of home rule in taxation. The county board is the proper body to make the railroad assessment in accordance with the standard used in assessing other property. No state board can know the facts so well. Yet the state board is the proper body to ascertain and determine the fair cash value of Nebraska railroad property and franchises—but it ought not to make the assessment. With a constitutional limit of 15 mills for county taxes—which the legislature can neither raise nor lower—the assessment of property at full value is simply an iridescent dream in counties where, at full value, a levy of nine-tenths of a mill would raise as much county revenue as the present levy of 10 mills does on a fractional valuation. The law now requires property to be assessed at its "fair cash value"—and is not obeyed. Is it reasonable to suppose that the new law will be obeyed any better?

Besides, it makes not the slightest difference what fraction is used if the state board applies the proper rate of levy to equalize the taxes. And this can be known by permitting the county board to assess railroad property.

The Independent must insist that anonymous communications cannot be noticed. This will inform "Anxious Reader" that we can give him no information regarding the private affairs of the persons he inquires about.

A government of Methodists, by Methodists, and for Methodists, seems to be Governor Mickey's idea.

Governor Mickey told the conference of charities and corrections that his heart bled at the conditions prevalent at the penitentiary. For the three hundred criminals in the institution, there were only sixty-five cells, and in each of these narrow iron boxes three men were crowded. Well, whose fault is it? Didn't republicans negligently let the penitentiary burn down? And haven't they had nearly two years to change the "conditions prevalent?"

The State Journal tried to discredit the Star's report of what Governor Mickey said about the state university at the conference of charities and corrections—and both the Bee and World-Herald cut out that part. The Star maintains that it gave a true report and without coloring—which is doubtless true.

News of the Week

The city council of Chicago has voted unanimously in favor of the municipal ownership of gas and lighting plants. The city already owns the water system and the great drainage canal. The expectation is to utilize the water power connected with the canal to operate the city lighting plants and ultimate to heat the city and furnish some of the power. When the populist party was first organized and advocated such policies, the daily paper of that city devoted much of its space to denouncing populism as wild-eyed, woolly, insane and anarchistic. Today that press is pursuing the same method in regard to present reforms.

Slason Thompson, who has been the chief editorial writer on the Chicago Record-Herald since its reorganization and previous to that on the Times-Herald, has resigned and taken a position offered him by the railroad managers' association as the head of a sort of information bureau and statistical office. This is an acknowledgement of the efficient work that the Record-Herald has done for the corporations while it has posed as an independent newspaper, wholly devoted to the public welfare.

The threatened strike of train men on all the southwestern lines has been averted by an advance in wages from 12 to 15 per cent. The Union Pacific strike of shop men is still on.

They are fearing a flour famine in New York on account of the inefficiency of the "merged" railroads to handle the usual amount of business. It is either that, or another squeeze arranged between the railroad trust and the milling trust. A New York dispatch says: "There is a note of alarm in the reports received from the west, and especially from Minneapolis, of the difficulty experienced by the shippers to get flour to New York

and other seaboard cities. The situation grows more acute each day, and those competent to judge declare that a bread famine may result unless the railroads provide at once better facilities for the transportation of flour."

Reports from charity associations all over the United States show a large increase in the numbers of those who must have aid or perish. That state of affairs is what every economist knew was coming. Next winter it will be much worse than this. It is impossible that the workers should pay interest on watered stock and not suffer. The prices that are charged for the necessities of life are increased so that dividends can be declared on stock that is often watered three or four hundred per cent. Then the tariff enables the trusts to furnish large amounts of goods to foreigners for which they get forty per cent less than they charge the hard working people of America and still make a good profit on them. One in charge of charity work in South Omaha, where there has been largely increased demands for aid, says: "Now, it is an easy matter to understand that any man working in the packing house for \$9 per week or such a matter cannot afford to be sick a minute. If he does, he can't pay for coal and groceries. Such cases as these are deserving of attention, and proper attention, too, for many such families are among the very best of unfortunate people. Sickness creates the demand for charity, as a rule." The meat trust that continues to pile up its millions of profits keeps its workers just on the verge of starvation. When sickness or any other thing makes an extra demand upon them, then the charitable have to contribute, so that the man may be put on his feet again and help add some more dollars to the meat trust's net earnings.

The anthracite coal strike commission finished taking evidence last week. As written out by the stenographers it makes 9,200 typewritten pages, or 2,400,000 words. Five days have been allotted for arguments, three for the operators and non-union men and two for the miners. After that, the commission will take the matter under advisement for no one knows how long. The commission has already sat fifty-five days.

It seems what congress proposes to do about trusts is to divide them into two classes, the good trusts and the bad trusts. The former are to be fostered and the latter squelched. A good trust is one that contributes liberally to the Mark Hanna campaign fund and the bad trust the one that does not hand over as much as Mark thinks it ought to.

The dailies have endeavored to get up a great scare over the fixing of the price of mining coal in the bituminous fields during the coming year. The Independent let them fret and fill their columns with rot under big scare heads without protest. It never had a doubt that there would be an amicable settlement just as there has been for the years since the operators stopped their arrogance and agreed to meet the miners and talk the matter over face to face like men. The miners secured an advance of 10 cents a ton.

In 1548 when some Englishmen formed trusts to raise the price of food, the English parliament didn't go after them in the mild manner adopted by Elkins and Littlefield. It passed a law that said: "That as of late divers sellers of victuals, not content with moderate and reasonable gain, have conspired to sell them at unreasonable prices. . . . If after the first of March next any butchers, bakers, fruiterers conspire to keep up these unreasonable prices, they shall for the first offense forfeit 10 pounds sterling or twenty days' imprisonment on bread and water; for the second offense 20 pounds sterling, or the pillory, and for the third offense 10 pounds sterling and the pillory, with the loss of one ear." Besides that it provided for the abolishment of the charter of such corporations.

The several legislatures now in session in different states nearly all have bills before them to regulate the practice of medicine. The Independent has the highest respect for the educated and highly trained physician and a horror of quacks, but it holds that any attempt of a legislature to define what kind of medicine a man shall take is as much as interference with his personal liberty as to prescribe what kind of food he shall eat. The efficient physician wants no medical trust formed by law to give him a monopoly of dosing people. His standing in a community is not given

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TOP NOTCHERS.

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117-BLACK PERCHERONS, BELGIANS & COACHERS-117

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and cannot be conferred by law. It is his character as a man and his acknowledged learning.

The republicans have turned another trick in Washington which they hope will stop the criticism of their fake anti-trust bills. They announce that Rockefeller has been sending telegrams to senators denouncing the anti-trust bills and imperiously demanding that they be suppressed. Any man who would be fooled by such stuff is fit to become a gold brick victim. Rockefeller is not that sort of an idiot. That is not the way that he has managed the senate and house for the last twenty years. Any man who knows anything about legislation in Washington will only smile at such a story. It is a fake pure and simple. If Rockefeller sent any such telegrams, they were sent at the request of the senators who received them.

The anti-trust bill which passed the house requires corporations "hereafter organized" to furnish returns and give particulars concerning their capitalization, actual amount of money paid in, etc. The big trusts already established are to be let alone. Perhaps it was that section that made Rockefeller so mad that he sent threatening telegrams to the senators.

A great deal is being said in the dailies about the withdrawal of Addicks from the senatorial contest in Maryland. But that withdrawal had a string to it. It was on the condition that the republican members of the legislature should get together and elect two republican senators, a thing that they have not done. So we may have Addicks again.

President Roosevelt refused to arbitrate the question of whether England, Germany or Italy should have preferential treatment over other nations in the settlement of Venezuela's debts and that question will go to The Hague. The rest of the time for the week has been occupied in arranging "protocols" concerning the details of the settlement. It is the opinion of The Independent that the talk of Germany wanting to get territory in South America is of English origin, while that government is engaged in trying to annex a large part of America in Alaska which has been in the undisputed possession of this country since the civil war and belonged to Russia before that time.

Mrs. Effie Kelsey, Baker's Crossing, O.: Go ahead and call them mullet heads. We have them in bloom in Ohio the year round. I would like to ask Bro. Smith if he ever heard a republican speak who did not call the democrats every bad name he could get out of the alphabet. Some good Samaritan sends me The Independent, which I admire very much; also thank the sender.

Lincoln Hide Market

The Lincoln Hide & Fur Company, 929 R street, Lincoln, Nebraska, successors to S. J. Dobson & Co., quote the following prices, f. o. b. Lincoln, until further notice: No. 1 green salted hides, per lb., 6½c. No. 2, 5½c; bulls and side branded, 5½c; green hides 1c lb. less than salt cured; horse and mule hides, large, each, \$2.35; small, 75c-\$1.50; green sheep pelts, each 40-75c; dry pelts, 5-8c per lb.; dry flint butchered hides, per lb., 12-13c; dry fallen, weather beaten and murrain hides, per lb., 5-10c. Our classified fur list, together with little booklet telling how to trap, skin, stretch and handle furs and hides to obtain the best results, will be mailed free to all upon request, also write for tags and general information any time.

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