

The Frontier

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THE LEGISLATURE.

Lincoln, Neb., Feb. 15.—(Special to the Frontier.)—With the week ending on Feb. 13th, the present session of the legislature is half dead—that is, it has consumed now one-half of the sixty-day session, and, if it is to accomplish anything of real value to the state, the work must be done in the thirty days to come, or the members remain without pay and serve the state for glory.

That there is little hope for legislation of importance is indicated by several unmistakable signs, among which, perhaps the most important, is that in addition to the failure to accomplish anything in the time already passed, the democratic majority shows signs of internal division to the serious extent that during the past week on the floor of the house in open debate, the accusation of "liar" has been passed between leaders of the majority party.

This serious rupture, which exhibits to the public wounds that may not be healed during the present session, took place between Taylor of Custer and Clark of Richardson, both of whom were unsuccessful candidates for the speakership and both of whom have been leaders of a certain section of the party in the house. Taylor of Custer was engaged in opposing an amendment to the Sink bill, which limits freight trains to a length of fifty cars. The amendment opposed by Taylor was made by the railroads committee and proposed to place the whole subject under the jurisdiction of the state railway commission, giving it the right to prescribe the length of trains and the size of train crews. Clark of Richardson favored the amendment and was opposed to Taylor's proposition for a flat fifty-car law, and asserted that the railway operatives of the state did not favor the law as supported by Taylor and desired other legislation, the bills for which the railway men's organizations had drawn and placed in Clark's hands. This drew fire from Taylor, who launched into a scathing review of the attitude of Clark on measures of the character under debate. He asserted that Clark's course before the ways and means, railroads and judiciary committee had not been in line with what Clark had advocated when he was running for election, and broadly intimated that all of Clark's motives were questionable. Clark interrupted the speaker on a question of personal privilege, denied the imputations of Taylor, and in a burst of impassioned oratory characterized all that Taylor had said as "a d— lie." The house was immediately in an uproar and cries of "sit down" filled the chamber. The presiding officer restored order and Taylor continued, his only apology being to say that he had only been speaking of his observation of events and that if his observations were mistaken he begged a hundred pardons. The incident practically closed with this and Taylor had the satisfaction of seeing his contentions win over Clark's opposition, but the fact remains that the little outburst discloses a deep-seated division among the majority members of the House, which will not be adjusted during this session, and its influence on legislation will no doubt be seen in the final result which will show that legislation of real importance has been neglected, while minor matters and personal ambitions for leadership have been fought out to the detriment of the people.

One item of legislation that is by

no means being neglected by the democratic patriots who own and operate this session of the legislature, is the matter of increasing the number of state offices and commissions whereby additional members of their party may be hooked onto the public pay-roll. Every legislative week so far has shown numerous proposals of this kind, and the past week is no exception to the rule. Of course, the proposal to increase the offices is always hooked on to some proposition that looks fairly good on the surface, and is thereby calculated to receive some public approval, but the fact remains that the prime object and intent of 90 per cent of these measures is to provide places at the pie counter in the hope of strengthening the party in the future. Among the measures of this character dropped into the legislative hopper during the past week may be cited the bill by Bowman of Nuckolls, appropriating \$50,000 for a "seed wheat commission," to handle which commissioners are provided at a salary of \$3 per day. Wilson of Polk has an innocent little measure for an assistant dairy commissioner at a good salary, which practically means a division of the pure food bureau which has heretofore been successfully and easily handled by one man. Fogarty of Greeley provides for a state live stock commission, of which the governor shall be state veterinarian, and shall appoint three assistants who are interested in live stock. Of course, the commissioners draw pay. Bates of Cass offered a bill reorganizing the State Printing Board, replacing the state treasurer, with the governor, and giving him authority to appoint the secretary of the board, another salaried job for a waiting democrat. Mr. Bates is himself a printer in his private capacity and in order to overlook nothing, while the opportunity offers has quietly dropped in a little bill requiring the treasurer of every school district in the state to print once a year a financial statement of all the transactions of his office. As the number of school districts is large, this in itself will provide a piece of democratic patronage of no small dimension.

So the dance goes merrily on from week to week, and if the people do not obtain legislation which they desire and need, they may find satisfaction in knowing that a large crowd of democratic office-seekers are being carefully provided for in the laws that are on the road to enactment.

It was freely charged in the last political campaign that the railway corporations of the state looked with a friendly eye on the candidacy of Mr. Shallenberger, and that their valiant support had much to do with the success of his political aspirations. If this was true, it might be reasonably concluded that some return favors might be expected from the neighborhood close in and about the democratic governor. No one can say positively that these obligations are in process of being discharged, but straws show which way the wind blows, and the reasons for some proposed laws may be guessed from whence they come. It may be a mere coincidence, but during the past week a bill has been introduced in the House by Representative Snyder, of the county of Harlan, from whence comes also Mr. Shallenberger. This bill proposes to repeal the terminal tax law passed by the last legislature, which permits local assessors to assess all railway property within the corporate limits of the cities and villages of this state for the purpose of levying thereon municipal taxes. This law added millions of dollars to the valuation of Nebraska railways for taxation and has been highly objectionable to the railway corporations for that reason. While in some of the smaller towns, it reduced the village taxes paid by the railways in those towns, the total municipal taxes paid under this law last year were vastly in excess of the taxes paid by the roads for these purposes at any time in the past. This is the law and these are the results which Representative Snyder's bill seeks to repeal. The question is pertinent—are the railway corporations about to get some valuable recognition for their work in the last campaign?

The guarantee of bank deposits is grating on the nerves of the democratic legislators, and they are beginning to realize that it is a ghost that will not go down. During the campaign democratic orators told the people how easy it would be to guarantee deposits without injury to any other business or interests. They are reaching the conclusion that the solution of this problem is at least extremely difficult if at all possible as a practical working business measure. Judge Albert of Columbus was employed for \$300 of state money to draft a guarantee bill after the democrats of both House and Senate had fallen down in the effort, has been working on the measure, and rumor says it is completed, but for some good reason the bill has not been introduced up to the end of the week. The rumors that abound explain this in some degree, and are to the effect that, while Judge Albert has done his

best, the rough draft of the bill, as prepared by him has not been satisfactory to either the governor or the sub committee, charged with its framing, and the apparently interminable labor of framing this bill still proceeds. Sections of this measure, which have been given newspaper publicity during the past week are not authentic and are the guesses of the correspondent. It may positively be stated that at the end of the week the measure had not received the approval of those having it in charge. It is possible, however, that in desperation the subcommittee still offer some sort of a bill during the early days of the coming week and thereby get off their hands a most disagreeable duty.

Neither house of the legislature has so far shown any disposition to favorably consider proposed legislation for the restriction of the liquor traffic in any degree, or for the advancement of Woman's Suffrage. In every instance, where legislation, bearing on these items, has as yet come before the House, it has been summarily dealt with and extinguished. During the week, the Senate killed Miller's constitutional amendment providing women with the ballot on the same terms as men and then went farther and also killed Randall's bill to give women the ballot in municipal affairs and school election. It has been asserted and not denied, and in support of the assertion, a senator, himself a member of the Constitutional Amendments committee of the Senate, has been quoted as admitting that the Constitutional Amendments committee had been selected for the purpose of heading off and killing all anti-liquor legislation and all that relating to the extension of the suffrage to women. Under these circumstances, the chances for progressive legislation along either of the lines named seem very small indeed, and should anything of this character, by the merest chance, pass in the House, it would apparently with certainty receive its death blow in the Senate.

Nebraska will be represented at the Alaska-Yukon exposition, but in a rather meager way. The appropriation for this purpose passed the House during the week and carries a total sum \$15,000. \$3,000 of this sum is set aside to pay premiums on Nebraska exhibit at the exposition. This feature was put into the bill at the request of some Nebraska cattle breeders, who desire to exhibit their stock and feel that Nebraska should arrange a premium list, which would in some degree assist in defraying the expenses of their long trip to Seattle.

Senator Ollis and Miller have introduced a bill which presents a new idea of taxation in Nebraska. It proposes a constitutional amendment which will permit the raising of all taxes for state purposes by levies applying exclusively to the corporations of the state. This result will be arrived at by the classification of property by kind and character instead of by valuation as heretofore. It is not to be presumed that the railway corporations will look with favor on this legislation. A good index of the disposition of the senate on corporation questions may be determined from its eventual treatment of this measure. It may be interesting for all people to watch the course of this measure.

Both houses of the legislature have begun to weed out the apparently trivial proposals to enact new laws by the process of indefinite postponement. During the week nearly twenty-five measures were indefinitely postponed in the senate, and almost an equal number were similarly treated by the house. A good many new members come to their first session with a desire to settle some neighborhood contentions by the enactment of a new law, or an amend-

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ment of an existing statute. This leads to a multiplicity of trivial bills and about the third or fourth week of the session they begin to fall by the wayside from the frost of indefinite postponement.

A trick of the "peanut" of variety politics was tried in both senate and house during the week when Scheele in the house and Fuller in the senate introduced reports signed by members of the committee on Soldiers' Homes, reflecting seriously on conditions in the homes at Grand Island and Milford, and the treatment alleged to be given the old soldiers living there. The chairman of both senate and house committee had not seen or signed either report which had been prepared for political effect only and in the house four of the six members whose name was attached withdrew their signatures when they heard the report read saying they had signed without reading and under a misapprehension of the contents. The reports were identical in both houses and were based on rumors and gossip alone. The house wiped it off the record when the truth came out and the senate sent the report back to the committee on soldier's homes as did the house also. Scheele tried hard to get the report adopted in the house and Fuller the same in the senate, but both were knocked out and the trick failed.

The present legislature bids fair to be the most expensive ever held in the history of Nebraska by over one million dollars. With none of the big appropriation bills yet in sight bills are before the house calling for over one and one half million dollars which added to the lowest possible estimates for the general state government, state institutions, salaries, claims, deficiencies, etc., as represented in the regular appropriation bills, will run the total to a sum only a little short of two and one-quarter million dollars. The total appropriations of the last legislature were a little more than four and a quarter millions, making the present outlook for spending state money about a million in excess of any previous record—and this was to be an "economical" democratic legislature and save the taxpayers money.

Some little scraps of news from the legislature this week are these: The senate was "frozen out" Tuesday by the blizzard and adjourned for the day; Senator Klein was blown against a tree and severely injured about the head; Lincoln's birthday was observed in the senate by addresses on the life of Lincoln; the democratic house

killed the bill to give the farmers free cholera-serum for the prevention of hog cholera; a bill to prevent Japs and Chinese working beside citizens is in the house; one-fifth of the bills relate to new jobs for democrats on the state pay-roll; county stock inspection by brands to prevent "rustling" passed the house; the law to subtract the mortgage from the value of the real estate for taxation passed the house; there is a bill to aid weak school districts to have six months school and appropriates \$115,000

The following bill was introduced during the past week by Henry of Holt:

H. R. 527 by Henry of Holt—Provides for the establishment of two additional normal schools, one in the Sixth Congressional district, and both located where ten acres of land have been donated for the school. Appropriates \$125,000.

BANK VAULTS.

Precautions For the Purpose of Foli- ing the Cracksmen.

Many banks, especially those in cities, have their vaults protected by an elaborate system of concealed wires connected to a central office not so far away, so that the least tampering with the combination lock or any attack upon the door or walls will give the alarm at the central office, where men are waiting day and night to run to the rescue. The exact method and devices that are used are kept rather secret, for fear the burglars themselves might learn too much about them, but it may be explained that one part of the apparatus is an extremely sensitive relay located at the central office. This delicate instrument closes a local circuit which sounds the alarm the moment there

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is the slightest disturbance of the hidden wires at and near the vault, so that a gang of burglars could hardly get to work with their drills and their nitroglycerin before the officers of the law would be upon them.

In addition to protecting vaults and safes from the direct attacks of robbers, electricity affords another safeguard by furnishing light which floods the premises with its searching beams. Indeed, many banks, stores and warehouses rely mainly upon the electric light, without which the thickest walls and the strongest and most complicated locks would be useless. They turn it on at night and leave their window shutters wide open, so that the interior may be in full view of the policeman or watchman passing the windows all night. This makes it practically impossible for lawbreakers to work unseen.

To protect the money windows of banks the teller behind the window has a concealed push button at hand, oftentimes placed under the counter where he can touch it unobserved. If any one tries to steal any money, the teller can call an officer instantly in this way. The circuit is sometimes arranged to close the bank doors also by an electrically operated mechanism before the thief has time to get to them and escape.—Harper's Weekly.

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