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TALK OF THE TOWN

Nothing has ever transpired in Lincoln that has created such a social and business furore as the failure of the Capital National bank, which was announced last Monday morning. To leading bankers of the city it was certainly no surprise. At least it was known for some time that the bank has been in danger, but perhaps none of the bankers have realized the inward rottenness now being uncovered. It is fair to presume, however, that the large list of depositors had no suspicion as to the stability of the bank and to hundreds of them the news of its suspension came with crushing significance. Hundreds of people, rich and poor, were caught, and many of the latter are now writhing in fear that all they have is gone forever. It is experience that few residents of Lincoln have ever met face to face. They have read of such things in works of fiction and in the newspapers, but the experience has never been brought home to them before. They have never seen their neighbors by the score plunged into despair and anguish by a panic of apprehension least their savings from years of toil had been swallowed up in a maelstrom of ruin. None who did not take pains to observe the scenes enacted around the Capital National bank corner during the past week can realize the despair and misery precipitated by such an occurrence. Men and women have mingled their tears and lamentations daily upon the stone steps of the closed treasury. It is to be hoped that the assurances tendered by capitalist that the assets will be sufficient to reimburse all creditors, will prove true and that the official speculations suspected have not been of the magnitude that most people ascribe to them. The government investigation is now progressing and until that is completed nothing definite as to results can be ascertained, hundreds of rumors to the contrary notwithstanding.

C. W. Mosher, president of the bank, has shown a commendable determination to stay and face the consequences of his acts, and a sensational exemplification of the principles of justice is anticipated. That he will be punished there is hardly any doubt, but that the punishment will be severe there is every reason to doubt. Mosher is but a creature of the modern system of politics. He has been the one reliable confidential disbursing agent of the legislative lobby and it is suspected that he has disbursed more than any other one man for the corruption of legislators and the control of elections thereof. To a friend Mosher recently said that it had cost him \$150,000 to retain the contract for penitentiary convict labor and that most of it went to the corruption of legislators. It is said that he spent \$25,000 during the election last fall in endeavoring to secure the election of men whom he knew he could handle. He was a genial, clever and companionable fellow, and spent money in legislative circles as if he never knew its value. The secret of his great liberality is now apparent. It was the money of others, so it now appears, he was spending to further his own schemes, a work in which he has received valuable assistance from many leading politicians of the state.

There is a movement on foot among leading local business men to induce the directors of the stranded bank to make some provision for relieving the washerwomen, servant girls, crippled workmen and a few of the very poor people whose savings were lowered in the failure. When the matter was first presented to some of the directors they demurred, intimating that it was the duty of the public to look after the needs of these people, but they will probably realize that the public takes an entirely different view of the matter as the public is in no way responsible for the failure of the bank. And if, as is claimed, this bank will ever pay out dollar for dollar they will lose nothing by buying up the claims of a few of the very needy depositors, the loss of whose money would be a lasting disgrace to every person connected with the bank. It is said that \$6,000 or \$8,000 would do it.

Trusts and combines are the order of the day and now the makers of type are in it with the whisky trust, the sugar trust and all the other contemptible monopolies that go to defeat honorable competition. This trust was formed about two months ago and now the combination of twenty-one type foundries are sending out circulars and price lists in which they have the nerve to assert that they present a reduction and that they propose to share the benefits(?) of consolidation with publishers and printers. Did anyone ever hear of such liberality before? In looking over their so-called "reduction," with the aid of paper and pencil, one will soon observe that, considering discounts, prices now allowed for old metal, etc., that the new beneficiaries(?) of the printers and publishers demand considerable more for their type than formerly. It is pleasant consolation, however, to know that three houses are not in the pool and will, it is said, protect the trade, being satisfied with making a reasonable profit. They are Barnhart Bros. & Spindler

of Chicago, Farmer, Little & Co. of New York and another New York house whose name the writer cannot at this moment ascertain. The trust claims to control 90 per cent of all the type faces that are now being made, which the above trio denies, claiming that their respective foundries represent more than one-half the production claimed by the pool. There are some strong houses in the trust, but this combination to extort extra money from their patrons should be repulsed on all sides, and every favor possible shown the foundries that are not in the ring. Barnhart Bros. & Spindler are represented in Omaha by the Great Western type foundry and in this city by the Lincoln Newspaper Union, while the State Journal company are western agents for Farmer, Little & Co.

The subject of street sweeping is an apt one for discussion just now, when the pavements are covered with the thawing and festering accumulations of the winter season. There is no denying that the city authorities pay entirely too little attention to street sweeping. During the most favorable season only a few blocks of the downtown streets are cleansed of their accumulations of filth, and these not nearly as often as the conditions warrant, while miles of paving away from the business centers are left to the occasional ministrations of wind and rain. The consequence is that many of the paved streets are but little more inviting to pedestrians than are ordinary country roads. Even the central streets in the midst of summer are often almost impassable in damp

weather and the sources of clouds of dust in dry weather. It does seem as if this city ought to be able to keep her paved streets in more presentable shape than she does. Street crossings ought at least to be made passable. It is true that the amount spent annually for cleansing the pavements is insignificant when compared with the sums spent by other western cities of half the population. Lincoln must, as a rule, be an exceedingly badly governed city, for it seems that every year taxes are levied to the full per centum allowed by the law and yet there is never enough money to do anything as any other city does it. There is always the same old cry of lack of funds no matter what is proposed and the treasury appears to be eternally empty. The public health demands a little more cleanliness in the matter of street sweeping and means ought to be devised whereby the people can secure it.

Shortness of funds may be cited again as an excuse for the two dastardly assaults recently committed on defenseless women in the very heart of the residence portion of the city—the one of two weeks since on North Sixteenth street with Mrs. Kingman and her sister as its victims, and the one of last Saturday evening on South Sixteenth street with Miss Anna Tibbets and Miss Kate Morrissey, teachers in the public schools. In each instance one of the ladies was brutally knocked down and robbed. The city authorities are directly responsible for a state of affairs that permits such disgraceful and exasperating things as these. The

present police force is notoriously inadequate and it is a fact that not a thought or semblance of protection is afforded anyone outside a few square blocks in the business center. Even these few blocks are not given the protection they should have, as the corporal's guard of policemen are kept humping themselves to hastily patrol the large territory assigned them. They have no time to ferret out and watch the movements of suspicious characters. THE COURIER has protested vigorously heretofore against this condition of affairs, but the city authorities are deaf to all protests. Every time a man or woman is knocked down and robbed, however, by a footpad a few more people are added to the list of those who will make a howling protest some day that will be distinctly heard from the city limits to the city hall. There is reason to believe that there will be a demand for an increased levy for police purposes next year and there will certainly be a demand for an increased police force which it will not be entirely safe for any set of city authorities to ignore.

People who are partial to the observance of prescribed laws, especially in the matter of temperance in the use of intoxicants, need not lose sight of the fact that an element which entertains but little respect for those laws is deliberately laying its plans to capture and control the city government next year, and exponents of that element are daily practicing a little more laxity in the observance of the plainest provisions of the liquor law. The city authorities have grown wonderfully,

almost painfully, shortsighted in this respect. There are some saloons in this city that never close until the barkeepers are all too tired to work any longer. Day and night, week day and Sunday, the latchstring is out to all comers. Time was when it required the services of a guide to pilot one to an irregular hour potation, but now it would take a derrick to steer the crowd away from available Sunday or after-hour drinks. Sunday drunks are more numerous than those of any other day, as guzzlers have more leisure and the drinks are just as accessible as ever. It may be proper to remark, also, that some of the downtown drug stores are doing all they can to weaken the popularity of the saloon and it would be difficult to find one that does not maintain a well-equipped bar behind its prescription case. It is wonderful to note the number of men who step innocently behind the screen upon entering a drug store and put up their own prescriptions. Ladies whose hands go out between acts and come back swimming in an aroma of cloves or other pungent odors may readily conclude that they have been behind the nearest prescription case and put up their dose of medicine with the facilities there supplied for accurate three-finger measurement.

Senate file No. 92 to award the discoverer of natural gas in Nebraska a \$20,000 cash prize ought to make some distinction between the legislative halls and the rest of the state, or the money is a dead easy prize for the first prospector. (Additional Talk of the Town on 4th Page)



MRS. POTTER PALMER, CHICAGO.
Chairman Lady Board of Managers, World's Columbian Exposition.

LEGISLATIVE DOINGS

The legislature has it within its power to materially increase the Nebraska fish crop. If it adopts the law to prevent public officials from riding on passes and the one providing for the free passage of fish, there will be a great crop of suckers developed after every election.

Representative James's bill to require owners of hedge fences to keep them trimmed is evidently a precautionary provision to give the wind a show at the pedestrians' whiskers. Now if he will only require owners to graft a crop of strawberries or huckleberries upon their hedges and shear them of their thorns it will pass with a whoop.

Representative Johnson of Hall county has caught the inspiration of a movement that is growing in all of the progressive states of this union, a movement for better country roads. It is claimed that this question is one of greater moment to farmers in the saying of dollars and cents than is the question of railroad transportation rates.

Death has again, as it did two years ago, entered the ranks of the legislature and closed the lips of one of its ablest members. Senator John M. Farrell of Dodge county has been called hence and a seat in the senate which the distinguished gentleman had been permitted to grace for but two or three days during the session is draped in the symbols of the sorrow his death has occasioned among his fellow-members.

The bill introduced by Representative Lockner designed to prevent public officers from having their names printed upon the stationery used in their offices, might, if adopted, and enforced, prevent a great waste of public funds, as it might enable newly elected officials to use up stationery on hand when he steps into office. On the other hand it might enable an officer so disposed to make a few fat deals with printers by ordering enough to supply a good many of his successors, unless such a proceeding were prohibited in the bill.

Representative Barry's bill for the establishment of a convention hall on the state University campus for the accommodation of the numerous incorporated agricultural, horticultural, stock breeding, educational, and industrial societies, with their records and collections, ought to receive generous support. No other public building, not excepting even the penitentiary and lunatic asylums, would accommodate so many people. It provides for the expenditure of about \$30,000.

February 25th will be a day of momentous import in the Nebraska legislature, being set apart as the day upon which Senator Harris' bill to punish public officials for riding on railroad passes will be made a special order, and it will then probably be definitely settled whether newly elected members from the pioneer districts walk to the capitol every two years or stay at home. It falls on a Saturday, however, at 12 p. m., when the senate will probably not be in session, wherefore this important question may never be settled to the entire satisfaction of the state board of railway secretaries and a few others who are deeply interested in the pass question.

The general appropriation bill provides for an expenditure of \$1,003,288 during the coming two years, a net \$1,639,832 for the past two years. This does not include the salaries of state officers or employees in state institutions, nor appropriations for the state board of agriculture, historical society, dairymen's association, national guards and other absorbers of public revenue. The allowance for nearly every office in the capitol is cut down materially. The appropriation for the Lincoln asylum is increased almost \$11,000 while that for the penitentiary is cut down almost \$56,000 and that for the home for the friendless is reduced \$25,000. The reductions are due to the fact that no new buildings are included this year.

It begins to look as if the legislature has encountered an all-winter job in the election of a United States senator. Last Tuesday the balloting in earnest began and John H. Powers, the leading populist candidate, opened the matinee with fifty-four votes of the required sixty-seven. He has held his own during the week and doesn't seem to be dying off very exuberantly in favor of McKeighan. Senator Laddock has hung around the lower tiered briefly, just long enough to create a flurry by retiring, but Tom Majors' blue shirt waves in the breeze over about a dozen adherents. The democratic strength has been playing tag among the several candidates. And yet, if the democrats so will it, they can force the election of a democrat unless the populists prefer a republican, or vice versa. By voting their full strength for a democrat until it becomes apparent that neither of the other parties can elect they can submit their candidates to the populists and permit them to name the democrat they will support, and both can elect him. Unless the populists prefer to see a republican appointed by the governor after adjournment they will pick their democrat and vote for him.