

ROBBING THE BLIND.

Results of the Investigation at the Nebraska City Institute.

FLAGRANT FRAUDS FOUND.

Details of Some of the Worst Ras-cality Yet Discovered in State Institutions.

Facts From the Report.

It is still the style in certain republican and democratic circles to make light of the legislative investigating committee. In some respects it may seem that the findings of the committee are too severe, as for example in holding officials of state institutions personally liable for money spent without authority of law from the cash funds of their institutions. It must be remembered, however, that the committee is required to take notice of things as they find them, that the expenditure of money unlawfully, even though honestly expended for the good of the various institutions, is an abuse that ought to be remedied and the quickest way to remedy it is to point it out emphatically.

There is no occasion for argument with those who are harping on the one fiddle string of the ten thousand dollars appropriated for the work of the committee. An argument will not reach their case. But no amount of harping and no quantity of ridicule will obscure the rank evidences of fraud found by this committee in some of the state affairs. The facts will speak for themselves and it is part of the mission of the INDEPENDENT to publish the facts and let the intelligent people of Nebraska draw their own conclusions. As the latest sample of facts unearthed by this committee, we take the evidences of fraud found at the institute for the blind at Nebraska City, which have been carefully examined in the preparation of this article.

The examination at Nebraska City was made by J. N. Wise, an expert accountant of Plattsmouth, and Senator Mutz. The accountant finds in the first place that the absence of ledgers, journals and cash books for a great part of the period investigated and the cutting out of 180 pages from one of the day books remaining have made the work difficult. Up to the termination of the term of Prof. J. B. Parmalee, as superintendent, which occurred Feb. 15, 1892, it appears that the administration affairs had been honestly administered, although some of the expenditures were not authorized by law. From that date up to the coming in of the appointees of the present administration there are the most astounding revelations of rascality, which may be grouped under these heads:

- 1-Fraudulent drug bills for the employees of the institution and citizens of Nebraska City, charged and paid for by the state.
2-Fraudulent charges for clothing purchased for students, but paid for by the students themselves.
3-Duplicate bills of the same clothing charged and paid for by the state twice.
4-Fraudulent charges for persons on the pay roll who were never paid the money alleged to have been due them for services.

One of the first things that struck the investigators was the extraordinary spells of sickness that befel the institution under the superintendency of Prof. Lakestraw and Prof. Ebright compared with conditions now. The old vouchers contained charges for hundreds of prescriptions furnished the institution. Sometimes there would be ten or fifteen prescriptions in a single day. These charges would be in the following form: State of Nebraska-Dr., Jan. 1, 1895 to prescription No. 580-75c.

The committee started out to find who got all this medicine. Getting the old prescription files in the drug store down town, they found that scores of these prescriptions were for the officers and teachers of the blind, who were of course paid salaries and expected to settle their own bills. But worse than that, they found that hundreds of the prescriptions were for prominent and wealthy citizens of Nebraska City, some of them known over the state. There they were, with their drug bills charged up to the state of Nebraska and paid for out of state funds. A list of them was carefully made out by the accountant. Armed with this list in his pocket Senator Mutz called upon Dr. Watson, who was physician to the institute during Mr. Ebright's administration. Dr. Watson is a nephew of Ex-speaker John C. Watson, and a rigid republican. He received Mutz with the frozen hand and when the latter told him that he had called to get aid in explaining the drug accounts of the institution, he told him that he had no time. He was asked for ten minutes when he broke out: "See here, Mutz, I have no use for you or your party and I haven't the ten minutes to waste." He was immediately informed that unless he would voluntarily give his assistance he would be subpoenaed and finally consented to go to the drug store. He was given a prescription number and looked it up-"why, that's my prescription, I wrote it, but those people are the best people in the city-they pay their bills, that never should have been charged to the state."

He was given another with the same result, and still another until he became angry. Finally he was given one, looked it up and threw down the prescription in disgust. It was for Mrs. Watson, herself, duly signed by him, charged and paid for by the state of Nebraska. "That's the rottenest mess I ever got hold of," said he. "It is downright robbery of the state."

On this downright robbery the committee found under Professor Lakestraw (Governor Boyd's appointee) 104 prescriptions amounting to \$119.55 and under Professor Ebright (appointed by Governor Crouse) 466 prescriptions amounting to \$242.15. The bills for the prescriptions were made out by H.

N. Shuman, druggist, O. K'd. by the superintendent and allowed by the state board of public lands and buildings, Shuman's drug store has changed hands, but the old prescription files remain and thereby the committee were enabled to expose the fraud.

In the matter of fraudulent charges for clothing the committee's attention was directed to voucher 85,541 sworn to by S. Goldberg, a clothing merchant of Nebraska City, on March 31, 1894. The charges in it were for Ira Heckler, clothing, \$3.50 and J. Johnson, suit of clothes, \$13.50. Both these persons are students at the school. Both have parents who are well off and who promptly pay their bills. When examined by the committee they testify as to the time when this clothing was bought, that they received money orders from home to buy the goods, that they gave the money orders to Supt. Ebright who went with them at the time the goods were purchased and, as they believed, paid for the goods with the proceeds of the money orders. The young men were profoundly mortified that they should be made to appear as unable to pay their own way when they have always prided themselves on meeting their bills.

This discovery caused the investigators to dig deeper into the clothing accounts. They were rewarded by finding Voucher No. 92,182, sworn to by S. Goldberg on Nov. 30, 1894. The charges in it were as follows: Henry Schroeder, suit\$17 50 E. Handley, suit 16 25 D. L. Arnold, suit 13 10 H. Schroeder, suit 18 15 This voucher was audited and paid and the warrant therefor secured by Goldberg.

There was some surprise therefore, when Voucher, No. 98,463 was unearthed, sworn to by the same Goldberg, on June 30, 1895, and having exactly the same items and dates and charges, with exception that Schroeder is charged with clothing, \$20.25. This duplicate bill was also audited by the superintendent and the state board and paid. It appears further that one of the clothing charges was for a janitor, who was not entitled to have his clothing bought by the state. Max Voss, another student, figures in another voucher with a suit charged to the state at a cost of \$17.50. His father is a wealthy cattleman in Montana, who has always sent him money for all expenses. Voss swears that he gave the money to Supt. Ebright to pay for the suit. He is still a student at the institute.

Under the head of fraudulent pay rolls the committee discovers that another blind student, Lena M. Truesdell, had been placed on the pay roll as matron from Jan. 1, 1895, to June 1, 1895, and her salary had been drawn for the entire period-a total of \$350. Miss Truesdell was found and solemnly swears in an affidavit that she never received the money, that she signed the voucher without knowing what it was and that the only work she did was a few odd jobs for which she received not to exceed \$20.

Following this the committee found that Fred Hollingsworth, another blind pupil, had been placed on the pay roll from January to June, 1895, as an "assistant" at \$25. per month. The money for this period was drawn and Voucher No. 96,310 and 98,509. Hollingsworth swears that he never got the money and was never employed in any such capacity. He further swears that just before Supt. Ebright went out he called him (Hollingsworth) into a room and told him that he wanted him to sign a receipt for \$150, that as superintendent he had paid out considerable of his own money and the only way he could get it back was by Hollingsworth signing the receipt. The blind boy said he couldn't do it as he never had the money and after long argument Ebright got him to sign the receipt by paying him \$150. He then took the receipt and the \$150.00 bank before he unlocked the door. All of which is covered in affidavit.

Further than this Samuel O'Connor and Horatio T. Claxton make affidavit that they paid Superintendent Ebright \$14.00 each to get for them two copies of the bible, in the blind or point letter. The books were obtained from the Pennsylvania Bible Society in April, 1895. After the present management came into control the society sent a bill for the amount, \$28.00, to the state and later an affidavit that the account had never been paid, but the goods had been sent on an order from Superintendent Ebright to be charged to the state. The bill is still unpaid, but probably the state will have to pay it yet.

There is another curious transaction in connection with the case of Curtis vs. the state of Nebraska. After Governor Holcomb came into office he removed Ebright and made a new appointment. Ebright and his friends were resolved to hold on to their places and went to Judge Hayward of Nebraska City for legal counsel. After looking the law up Hayward advised them that the whole matter rested on the question whether the institution was a school or an asylum. It was an asylum Holcomb had the right to appoint, otherwise not. On Hayward's advice an action was brought in the name of one of the students, Mr. Curtis to test the point. The case was taken to the supreme court where the attorney general appeared for the state. The final decision affirmed Governor Holcomb's view of the matter and Ebright was obliged to step down, before he did so, however, he paid Judge Hayward \$300 attorney fee out of the state's funds in his hands, arising from the sale of brooms, etc., made in the institution. The singularity about his transaction is that a law suit should be started, without any authority of the state, and presented for no other purpose than to enable office holders to hold on to their jobs and the state be stuck for lawyers' fees on both sides of the case.

Besides these there are numerous smaller findings made by the committee, not necessary here to enumerate. The disclosures given above are enough to give the people of the state an idea whether the investigation of the institute for the blind has resulted in anything or not. Superintendent Ebright was arrested last week. Judge Hayward and Senator Murphy, of Beatrice, appeared as his attorneys and at their request his preliminary examination was continued until March 18th.

Removal Sale of Shoes, 1-2 Price. Webster & Rogers, 1043 O St.

The date at which your subscription expires is marked on this week's issue of your paper. Take notice and if you are in arrears you should make a payment at once.

Herpolsheimer & Co.



THE ANNUAL SALE OF Ladies' and Children's Muslin Underwear. SALE BEGINS SATURDAY FEBRUARY 5th.

Here is a list of the daintiest Lingerie of the season at prices lower than you usually pay for the ordinary kind, every garment made of the best materials, finished in first class style from the very latest patterns, perfect fitting and finished with the very best of workmanship. The goods are displayed on tables and assorted according to price, thus you are enabled to immediately find the grade of goods desired. Mail orders given immediate and careful attention.

Marguerites and Long Chemises of the finest materials, well made, perfect fitting, prices range 50c, 80c, \$1.00 and up to \$4.50 Ladies' Fine Cambric and India Linen Skirts trimmed with ruffle, Valenciennes lace and insertion, full width, each 98c. Large assortment of novelty lace skirts at 98c, \$1.25, \$1.85, \$2.50 and upwards to \$7.50. Novelty gowns at \$2.50, \$3.50 and upwards \$7.50. Bridal suits, full sets \$7.00. Ladies' gowns, beautiful styles, best of trimmings, made of soft finish cambric and muslin, special, each 69c, 80c, \$1.00 and \$1.25. Above goods are full sizes, extra full sleeves, run in sizes from 14 to 17.

25c Table Ladies' Gowns, Mother Hubbard style, umbrella drawers in muslin and cambric, trimmed with deep ruffle, embroidered, common style drawers; Tucked Skirts; Chemises, corded and Embroidery trimmed; Corset Covers of fine Cambric, V and square neck, trimmed with embroidery, pearl buttons; any of these, each 25c.

50c Table Ladies Gowns in many styles, such as Empire, V and high neck, Mother Hubbard, etc., all handsomely trimmed in lace and embroidery. Drawers in latest and common styles, lace and embroidery trimmed, muslin and cambric, with fine lawn ruffles. Umbrella Skirts, ruffles trimmed with embroidery and lace, also tucked ruffles. Long and short Chimeses, handsomely trimmed with embroidery and lace. Corset Covers large variety of styles, finest cambric, lace and embroidery trimmed-any of these, each, 50c.

Children's Table Very important to mothers-Garments upward from 10c All sizes in plain and trimmed Drawers, all sizes in plain and trimmed gowns. Children's twilled waists. Large assortment of Children's White Dresses, sizes 1, 2 and 3, each 25c.

Ladies' Perfect Fitting Corset Covers, each 10c.

NEXT WEEK'S SPECIAL GROCERY OFFERINGS

Table listing various grocery items and their prices, including flour, sugar, and other staples.

Half Block Herpolsheimer & Co. Lincoln, Nebraska.

AN INFAMOUS MEASURE

Senator Butler's Protest Against the Loud Postal Bill.

SOME OF ITS PROVISIONS.

Enormous Sums Now Being Paid For Rent of Cars and Hauling Mail.

Would Create a Newspaper Trust.

Last week the senate committee on post offices and post roads, by a majority report made a favorable report on the Loud postal bill. Senator Butler opposed the bill in toto, and gave notice that he would prepare a substitute for the bill and make a minority report. The chairman of the committee on post offices and post roads referred the bill to the senate, presenting the majority report favoring the bill, before Senator Butler could get his minority report ready. Whereupon Senator Butler rose in the senate and entered a protest against the bill as follows:

Mr. Butler-Mr. President, I would not detain the senate now, at this late hour, were it not that this majority report has come up from the post office committee, of which I am a member. I am opposed to the bill. I do not concur in the report made by a majority of the committee. I am preparing a minority report. If that report were ready and ready to go into the record on the same day with the majority report, I would be content to wait till this bill should be taken up for action. The minority report will not be ready before to-morrow. I cannot allow the majority report to go into the record today without stating briefly some of my objections to this mischievous measure. The real purpose of this measure do not appear on its face. Its real purpose, or at least its effects, if it should become a law, are far-reaching and dangerous. The gold-rod, the monopolies, and trusts already control the avenues and agencies of rapid communication

and intelligence. They filter and control the news that appears in the daily press each morning. They now seek through this bill to close up, as far as possible, the only avenue left free and open. This bill is seeking to run the gauntlet of congress under false pretenses.

The friends of this bill, known as the Loud postal bill, come to congress under the guise of reform and economy, and ask you to pass a bill. A bill that will do what? A bill that will cut out of the mails a larger part of the literature that the people of today receive, desire to receive through the mails as second-class rates. A bill to do what? A bill to deprive the people who live along the star routes of one-half of the privileges which they today receive from the postal system of this country; a bill intended, if not intended, that would be the result-to cut out from the mails all standard works now published in cheap form with paper covers, that is, the works of Dickens, Scott, Hawthorne, Washington Irving, and hundreds of others which are now being published in cheap form and are going through the mails, as second-class rates. Even Webster's Unabridged Dictionary today goes to people out in the country in cheap form with paper cover.

"Civil's Financial School" and books of that kind have gone through the mails to possibly every post office in America, and more are going. This bill cuts all these books out of the mails. Is that the purpose of those who favor this bill? The man who lives in a city can buy them at a news stand. The man who lives in the country and who relies upon the postal system to bring him in touch with civilization, is dependent upon the mails to give him the benefits that the man who lives in a city or who rides frequently upon a train is not so dependent upon. The professed reason for this bill is reform and economy, but those who come and ask you to pass it in the interest of economy are those who vote for more subsidies, and those who vote to take more millions out of the treasury of the government than any other class of men in the senate and in the house. And yet, in the name of reform and in the name of economy, they come here and ask you to pass a bill that robs the people of half the benefits they today get from the postal system.

Mr. President, the bill would be infamous in its results if it should pass. If the people of this country knew what is in the bill, there would be such indignation from ocean to ocean as has not been seen for twenty years. The American people will never tolerate such a measure when they know what is in it and what will be the results. I will present a minority report to-morrow, and if those who profess to

want reform, mean reform in the interests of the general public; if those who profess to want to stop the deficit in the post-office department mean that in good faith, I can point them to a way to accomplish that result. I can show how the post-office department can save from \$10,000,000 to \$12,000,000 a year by simply paying the railroads for the mail actually hauled and at the contract price and no more. The government pays the railroads for a great deal more weight than the roads really haul. It is the fault of the government that is entirely too high. During the last twenty years freight rates have been reduced about 40 per cent, yet the government is now paying about the same rates that it did twenty years ago. Why do not those who are so much concerned about the deficit in the post-office department turn their attention to these big leakages and gross abuses? Let those who profess to favor economy and reform help to correct these abuses.

Mr. President, we today not only pay the railroads nearly \$30,000,000 a year to haul mails, but we also pay them rent for the cars in which the mail is carried. We pay rent for cars when we pay freight charges? Besides, the rent we pay for the cars each year would pay for the cars in a year or two. Why not own our cars and pay the railroads a fair price to haul them? These are the reforms needed. They will stop the deficit and not rob the people of any of the blessings they now enjoy from the postal system. These changes would result in such economy that the post office department would have a surplus instead of a deficit.

But, Mr. President, if the people must be robbed of one of the greatest benefits of the postal system to stop a small deficit of \$8,000,000, then, I say, let the deficit stand. There is no way that the money could be expended that means so much for the general public. Think of it-\$32,000,000 paid to the railroads each year for what mail they carry, while the whole mail star route system of the country costs only a little over \$5,000,000 a year.

Mr. President, enough can be saved on what is paid the railroads in two years to buy every telegraph line in the country and establish a postal telegraph in connection with the post-office system. If you want reform, if you want economy, if you want to make both ends meet and at the same time benefit the public, that is the way to do it. The facts are too plain and positive to be doubted or even questioned. A postal telegraph would mean that all the avenues and agencies of information would be open and free to all alike.

of the senate-will close down many enterprises, like the republicans say a reform tariff bill. The bill will close down legitimate enterprises that are today in operation. It will throw people out of employment. It will put the book business in the hands of a smaller number than those who are now in it. How can any man who says he opposes the reduction of the tariff because it throws labor out of employment favor this bill unless he can show better reasons for its passage than are in it?

Mr. President, it goes further than that. This bill will bear hard upon the country weekly newspapers. The bill robs the editor of the country newspaper of his only chance today of advertising his paper and increasing circulation. It robs the man who wants to start a paper and compete with those that are already established. There are plenty of money behind this bill robs them of the sample privilege, which today is the main resource that the country editor has to advertise his paper and extend his circulation. I dare say that if the bill passes, your newspaper, the Silver Knight (turning to Senator Stewart), will be crippled. You have built up your circulation chiefly by sending out sample copies. The profits from your paper would not justify you in putting a man on the road, to pay railroad fare and hotel bills to get subscribers for your paper. You must depend upon sample copies largely.

Mr. President, the bill will create a newspaper trust, as well as rob the people of half the benefits today that they get from the postal system.

The Co-operative Land Co. mentioned in this paper last week is making arrangements to open an office in Omaha and will soon be ready to receive descriptions of farms, ranches, raw lands, town and city property. A handsome catalogue will be prepared by the company, containing a complete description of all lands and other property for sale. It will be ready for distribution about the first of June, and will be placed in the hands of all home-seekers who visit Omaha at the coming exposition. For these notices will appear in this paper.

Rubbers 1-5 off at Webster & Rogers. In spite of protestations from men every party President McKinley is seated on. McKenna of California, is the supreme head. It is a bit of irony of fate that the first matter submitted to this trial of the trust should be the constitutionality of the tax anti-trust law.