

## ROBBING THE BLIND.

Results of the Investigation at the Nebraska City Institute.

### FLAGRANT FRAUDS FOUND.

Details of Some of the Worst Rascality 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 Plattsburgh, 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. Parmaile, 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. Rakestraw 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 downtown, 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 compelled 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 prescriptions 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 Rakestraw (Governor Boyd's appointee) 104 prescriptions amounting to \$110.55 and under Professor Ebright (appointed by Governor Crouse) 406 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, 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. Hundley, 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 sum 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. Truestell, 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 Truestell 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 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 back 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. If 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 prosecuted 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 1st.

**Removal Sale of Shoes, 1-2 Price, Webster & Rogers, 1043 D 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 assortments 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, 89c, \$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, 89c, \$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.

### 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.

### 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 Chimeres, handsomely trimmed with embroidery and lace. Corset Covers large variety of styles, finest cambric, lace and embroidery trimmed—any of these, each, 50c.

Ladies' Perfect Fitting Corset Covers, each..... 10c.

### NEXT WEEK'S SPECIAL GROCERY OFFERINGS

FLOUR—Despite the sharp advance in wheat, our prices on Flour have rather decreased than advanced. Thus, in order to more thoroughly introduce our special brands of Flour, we will, for one week, give

#### ABSOLUTELY FREE

to every customer purchasing one or more sacks, a 1-pound can of baking powder of the same grade & brand.

#### VELVET PATENT—Best Minnesotta flour, and a 1-lb can Velvet Baking Powder.

\$1.45

#### SILK PATENT—Best Nebraska flour, and a 1-lb can Silk Baking Powder.

\$1.40

SATIN—Best second grade F'r and a 1-lb can Satin Baking Powder.

\$1.30

ROLLER BAKER'S—Best 3d grade flour, and 1 lb bulk baking powder.

\$1.20

Corn Meal, white or yellow, per Sack

7c.

Oat Meal, per pound.

2c.

Beans per pound.

2c.

Best Japan Head Rice, per lb

7 1-2c

California Evaporated Peaches

4 lbs for 25c

California Evaporated Apricots

3 lbs

Apricots

25c

California Prunes

6 lbs

Prunes

25c

Muscatel Raisins

6 lbs

Raisins

25c

Pail Lard, Silver leaf 3 lbs 22c; 5 lbs 33c; 10 lbs 66c; 50 lbs \$3.

Silver Leaf Lard, bulk, per lb

6c.

Lard, Compound, bulk, per lb

5c.

19 lbs best Granulated Sugar

\$1

21 lbs Clarified Sugar for

\$1

Gold Dust, 4 lb. package

15c

Soap Powder, 5c package

3c.

Whole Zanzibar Cloves per pound

12 1-2c

Best Shot Pepper, per lb

12 1-2c

Bruce or Beantree Tomatoes, 3 cans

25c

Blair Corn, 2 cans

15c

Parlor Matches, package

9c.

Butterine, Swifts or Armour's, 2 pound rolls, per pound

10c.

In 10 pound lots, per lb.

9c.

Potatoes, per bushel

50c

### Half Block

Half Block . . . . . Herpolsheimer & Co. Lincoln, Nebraska.