

THE NEBRASKA INDEPENDENT

Publication of "THE WEALTH MAKERS" and "LINCOLN INDEPENDENT."

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The republicans in Lincoln have confessed that they are very corrupt. Two of their officials have lined their pockets and resigned. They seem to regard the pickups as more valuable than a continuation of the office.

President McKinley acted wisely in refusing to recall General Fitzhugh Lee, the American representative at Havana. Spain has withdrawn the request and made appropriate apologies.

How many sheets of paper of the thickness of that used in printing the Independent do you think could be stacked, all leveled out in single sheets, in a pile seven feet high? Measure one sheet and figure it out. That is the circulation of the Independent.

The grand jury in session in Lincoln has returned an indictment against ex-Auditor Eugene Moore, charging him with converting fees which he received under color of his office, to his own use. Another long-drawn-out trial comedy may be expected to follow.

Great credit is due to Senator Marion Butler for the defeat of the Loud postal bill. He secured the most of the information and led the fight that resulted in the defeat of that infamous measure. The populist party should be proud of Senator Butler and his devotion to his party and the common people.

The legislative investigating committee was in session this week preparing and completing its report to the governor which will be filed sometime next week. The committee will then adjourn sine die. It has done a large amount of work that has been and will be of great value to the taxpayers of the state.

At the intimation of President McKinley congress has passed a bill through both branches unanimously placing \$50,000,000 at the disposal of the war department for use in case of trouble with Spain. Party lines were all forgotten and every member in both the senate and house supported the defense fund bill.

The city administration is no worse than its creators. It is the creature of those who condemn it. It was as good when they adopted it as it is now, and it is as good now as it was when they adopted it. They condemn it now because it has reached the verge of the grave and can serve them no more. Like the man who is kicked out of the saloon when he is full to overflowing, the administration must make room for others of its habits.

The republicans are beginning to realize that their majority in the First congressional district is gradually dwindling away. They understand that at the coming election the chances are that the candidates of the allied forces will be elected. This is shown by their nervousness concerning the probable outcome. They have already constructed an imaginary fight between Auditor Cornell who comes from Richardson county, and George Abbott, a prominent populist who has been favorably mentioned as a probable candidate for congress from the same county. The Journal is overcautious. Nothing would please it more than to see a real battle of the kind it has described in such a novelistic manner. But it is doomed to disappointment. The populist leaders in this district fully understand the situation. They will devote their energies in whipping the enemy and not to quarreling among themselves. Journal reports to the contrary notwithstanding.

LAND GRABBING SCHEMES.

Since the terror northwest of the Ohio river became the property of the general government the land-grabber and his schemes have followed the federal congress as persistently as a middle-passage shark pursued a slave ship a century ago. One of the darkest chapters of jobbery in the history of the republic is the record of the land department. From the very start the land policy of the United States was ruled by the speculator and real estate shark, and the land was sold prodigally to the grabbers instead of reserved for the people's homes. This system reached its climax under the administration of Jackson, when millions of acres of land were robbed from the hardy frontiersmen by the sleek schemers, who paid their worthless shipplasters to Uncle Sam for his land until stopped by Jackson's specie circular.

After seventy years of ceaseless agitation by land reformers the homestead act was finally passed, and signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1861, and it seemed as though the dream of patriotic men was at last to come true and the rest of the public domain reserved for homes for the people. Vain hope. The passage of the homestead act, giving every man a farm for five years' residence, was immediately followed by the most prodigal and reckless extravagance in giving away the land, whole states at a time, to corporations. By the action of congress the settlers over an area in Nebraska comprising nearly half the state, were obliged to be content with 80 acres for a homestead, the other 80 being given to the railway corporations. Mrs. Lease summed the matter up concisely when speaking in Nebraska two or three years ago. She had challenged a large audience to name a single act of the republican party for the benefit of the common people. A republican rose and cited the homestead act. "Yes," said Mrs. Lease, "the republican party gave the common people the homestead law, and gave the land itself to the railroad corporations."

Between the speculator and the railroad corporation the bulk of good agricultural land in the United States has gone forever beyond the reach of the poor man. The white-sailed emigrant fleets that conquered five hundred miles of unbroken forest in the old northwest territory and a thousand miles of prairie beyond have broken their columns upon the foothills of the Rocky mountains. Our children will have their choice of the sandhill, the sage brush plains and the mountains for a homestead. But the land grabber does not intend they shall have even that. The very public estimation that the remaining land is unfit for farming is the main argument for the promotion of his plans. News from Washington and from Wyoming is that another strong movement is on foot for the granting of the remaining lands to the several states.

This is no new scheme. It has been pushed persistently at Washington ever since 1890. It has been partially successful already in securing grants of land to Wyoming and other states to "aid in irrigation." In every instance a few syndicates have jumped into the field, made a few miles of ditch and secured the allotment. The syndicate interests are back of the whole movement now. If they can once get the land out from under the homestead entry law and into the control of state officials, they will bring, sooner or later, the necessary local interest to bear for securing the land.

There are in round numbers about 500,000,000 acres of land in the western United States still subject to homestead entry. Most of it is arid, much of it is mountain. But, whatever it is, there is room upon it for over three million homesteads. The nation ought never to part with an acre of it except to a homesteader. The mountains and plains of western America may yet need to be the refuge of freedom upon this continent as they have been in Asia and Europe. They do not need to be syndicated in order to get water upon them. Let the acres remain until the actual settlers are strong enough to secure water or the national government is controlled by men who would rather spend money for irrigation ditches than war-hisps.

Nebraska has an interesting question of her own to deal with in connection with these remaining public lands. There are yet about 3,000,000 acres in this state, most of it in the sand hills. From time to time the point is raised that most of this land will not be homesteaded and that it ought to be offered for sale at a minimum price or disposed of in some way so that cattlemen can get control of it. About four years ago a number of "promoters" got up a plan to have this land ceded to the state and used in "aid of irrigation." They secured the assent of Senator Manderson and started out on a vigorous newspaper campaign for their scheme. But as soon as the actual settlers in the sand hill region found out the design they made the scheme so hot that Senator Manderson was glad to drop it. The project now on foot ought to meet the same fate. It ought to have the unrelenting opposition of

every populist member of congress and every congressman from the western states, regardless of party.

Few are acquainted with the demands made upon the state superintendent of public instruction, outside of his regular official duties. There is no officer of the state who has more calls for public addresses. He is in demand at all educational meetings of whatever nature, including commencement exercises of schools and colleges, teachers' meetings, and institutes, farmers' institutes, agricultural meetings, chautauquas, Sunday school conventions and all gatherings of an educational character.

Our efficient superintendent, Hon. W. R. Jackson, is making a record in this line of work which will set the pace for all future superintendents. No part of his official duties are neglected, yet he finds time to respond to the many calls from all parts of the state; to meet many of which he is, of necessity, compelled to be out all night. No complaint comes from him, for he is thoroughly imbued with the importance of his work, and in his desire to reach the youth of the state, often forgets his personal comfort.

The educational department of the Transmississippi and International exposition, for Nebraska, has been placed under Supt. Jackson's supervision, and this has added an immense amount of work to his other duties. In this connection it may not be out of place to say this feature of the exposition promises to be one of the leading attractions of that great undertaking. Space has been allotted to schools represented by more than 2,300 of Nebraska's leading teachers. This fact alone insures a splendid exhibit of work done in the schools.

When we remember that the state superintendent of public instruction is an officer who is in touch with so vast an interest as the public school, representing about 355,000 children of school age, presided over by nearly 9,000 teachers, having over 20,000 officers for the 6,741 districts, divided among the 90 counties of the state.

When we remember all this, we can readily understand that the amount of correspondence which reaches the office is immense.

Yet it all has prompt attention. It requires several thousand dollars to supply all the districts of the state with the necessary record books and blanks, for school district officers. These are prepared and furnished by the state under the supervision of the state superintendent. If officers were compelled to purchase these supplies, the cost would be many times as much as it is under the present plan. This plan is not only a great saving to the taxpayers of the state, but insures uniformity and a sufficient supply—two very desirable ends.

Economy is practiced in administering the affairs of the office, and quite a large amount of the appropriation for this department will revert to the state treasury.

THE MAXIMUM RATE DECISION

After five years of waiting the supreme court of the United States has nullified the maximum rate law passed by the Nebraska legislature.

After twenty years of agitation and organization for the regulation of railway freight rates the people of Nebraska are at the point they started, plus twenty years experience.

The decision, which was handed down Monday of this week, holds on its face, that the law of 1893 conflicted with the fourteenth amendment to the federal constitution. The fourteenth amendment provides that no state shall deprive any person of property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. The court holds a railway corporation to be a person, and then holds that the effect of the maximum rate law is to reduce the earnings of Nebraska railroads 25 per cent for the years 1891, 1892, 1893, which would have been in the judgment of the court depriving the railroad companies of their property without due process of law. After thus demolishing the law, the decision goes on to state that the state board of transportation which was five years ago enjoined from putting into effect the rates fixed by the maximum rate bill may apply to the federal district court for a removal of the injunction by showing that conditions of railroad business in Nebraska had so changed as to enable the roads to make reasonable profits under the rates prescribed by the maximum rate law.

The decision rendered has, of course, been the identical one long expected and foreshadowed in these columns months ago. There are some peculiar features connected with the court's action in this case, however, which deserve comment, before discussing the decision itself. In the first place why was the decision held back until now? It is known that it was agreed upon nine months ago. The only explanation offered for the long delay in making it public was that the court was framing a rule for the computation of reasonable rates. Now comes the deci-

sion, but nothing whatever regarding what in the judgment of the court would constitute reasonable rates. The prolonged delay in this case is certainly not calculated to produce the opinion that the supreme court is a body of men actuated solely by a desire to interpret the laws without fear or favor.

As to the decision itself two or three facts of mighty moment in the relation of the people to the public highways are made plain:

1. That the federal courts and not the state legislatures or state courts have the power to fix reasonable maximum rates on railways.

2. That with the power of injunction from federal courts and the evident bias of the supreme court towards corporate interests it is practically impossible to enforce any regulation of railway rates except such as the roads themselves will agree to.

3. That with the rule of "changing conditions" held by the court as the only hint of guidance in framing reasonable maximum rates it becomes impossible to frame any fixed schedule to control rates. "Conditions" are all the time changing. The court evidently holds that rates must change with them to be reasonable. But a legislative enactment cannot be changed continually with conditions and therefore any legislative act has an inherent fatal defect.

This summary of the situation is not at all hopeful for the producers of Nebraska who have struggled for twenty years to put in practice the provision of the Nebraska constitution which declares that the people of this state have the right through their representatives to control rates of transportation within the state. It is not hopeful, but it is the fact which must be faced. The federal courts have made themselves the final arbiter of the question. Holding their offices for life they are beyond the reach of the people. It is hardly necessary to say that in questions of doubt a majority of them will give capital the benefit of the doubt. It is hardly possible for any serious reduction in railway rates to be made about which the roads will not be able to raise a question of doubt. What, then, is the prospect for the people?

That this estimate of the federal courts and especially of the supreme court is not a prejudiced or partisan one let a few facts from the record satisfy. Twenty years ago the rising corporate interests of America were startled by the decision of the United States supreme court in the case of Munn vs. Illinois which affirmed that railroads were a public institution, that the companies operating them were only the agents or employes of the public and that the right of the people through the legislature to control them was supreme. Since the day of that decision the corporate interests have set themselves to secure control of the supreme court. How well they have succeeded let the single instance of Judge Brewer witness. In this very case of the Nebraska maximum rate bill Judge Brewer as circuit judge laid down the doctrine that the amount of stocks and bonds issued by a railroad company must be considered in fixing maximum rates—a proposition utterly repugnant to justice and common sense no matter what it may be in the law. Yet Judge Brewer was soon after promoted to the supreme court. And it nowhere appears in the decision so far as it has come to hand, that Judge Brewer's holding upon that point has been reversed by the supreme court!

There is no use trying to disguise the situation. The prospect for control of railroad rates through legislatures or commissions is not at all hopeful. The fight for such control will no doubt be kept up, but the ultimate effect of this decision will be to give a powerful impulse to the movement for absolute government ownership of the public highways. Transportation at cost instead of "reasonable maximum rates" will be the coming war cry of reformers.

Several reasons have been given to different persons by the chancellor of the university for the resignation of his private secretary. It is now known definitely that some of these reasons had nothing whatever to do with the case, that they were not true in fact; that they were slanders on very good friends of the young lady; and that the one true, good and sufficient reason for her resignation was an unwillingness longer to endure such intimate association with the chancellor of the university. His lack of business methods, his inconsiderateness his want of frankness verging on hypocrisy made her life a burden.

It has also transpired that the chancellor's views regarding the value of women in the university were correctly inferred by The Independent a few weeks ago. Soon after the resignation of his private secretary the chancellor offered the position to a young man at the same salary, but with only half the work (inasmuch as he proposed to relieve the young man of all stenographic work by the employment of a cheaper woman type-

writer, and further to relieve him of all assistance to the registrar by employing an extra assistant for that officer. Thus the work done by the former secretary would be divided among three persons at double the salary now paid. The refusal of the young man to enter into such an arrangement has resulted in the temporary employment of two young ladies to do a part of the work of the private secretary. The history of this case has brought out two characteristics of the head of the university—his low estimate of woman and his disagreeable personality which makes it impossible for him to retain the respect of his associates.

NEBRASKA'S EXHIBIT.

The paper that is reputed to speak for the state house officials makes a plea for the exhibition of an original Nebraska sod house at the forthcoming Transmississippi exposition. That is good so far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. While about it the Nebraska exhibit should include the populist cottage home, the democratic rooster, the republican eagle, the prohibition white rose and all the other newly devised political emblems. Top this off with a few sample ballots as prescribed by our new election law and exposition visitors may get an insight into the beauties of the ballot.—Omaha Bee.

The Independent aims to speak the active, progressive sentiment of populism in Nebraska, and not that of any officials anywhere. It voices the sentiment of the great mass of Nebraska workers when it asks for the placing of that old pioneer of the prairies—the Nebraska sod house—prominently in the exhibits at Omaha this summer. It asks the co-operation in this movement of every newspaper and every citizen of Nebraska loyal to the memory of Nebraska's early days. Let us not be ashamed of the foundations of our greatness.

There is no objection that we know of making an exhibit of the present Nebraska official ballot, nor for that matter of the Joe Bartley official bonds, nor of the Eugene Moore decision of the supreme court, nor of the republican campaign pamphlets circulated in this state during the campaigns of 1890-1-2-3-4-5-6, predicting the utter collapse of state credit and ruin of the state's interests as the certain result of populist triumph at the polls. While we think of it we don't know of a better object lesson in political ethics and a stronger rebuke to campaign lying everywhere than for the populist state committees of both Nebraska and Kansas to secure a complete collection of the pamphlets, speeches and editorials of the opposition during the past six years, and exhibit them in glass cases as the best samples of partisan malice and mendacity since the days of Tiberius Gracchus. The contrast between the lurid predictions of that literature and the present condition of both Nebraska and Kansas would do a great deal toward opening the eyes of eastern people who have had the people of those states painted in red and yellow colors by plutocratic pamphleteers and prophets.

Employees of the Omaha water department are obliged to submit to a shave of five to ten per cent upon their salary warrants. Employees of the state under republican rule had the same kind of experience. Now under populist management they get 1 1/2 per cent premium upon their warrants. It will be remembered that the people of Omaha elected a republican defaulter as mayor a year ago. Present appearances are that a dose of straight populist government is severely needed in Nebraska's metropolis.

The republican city council in the capital city of Nebraska is trying to impeach the republican mayor for practicing republican methods. It is a grand spectacle—a gang of boodlers and political shysters trying to impeach and convict one of their own kind. They are building a fire to attract the attention of the public from their own disgraceful records.

State warrants continue to sell at a premium of one and a quarter cents on the dollar. A populist is state treasurer.

Whose Property.

Once upon a time there were ten monkeys hunting together. They discovered a cocoonant across the stream. Nine of them form a bridge, the tenth monkey crosses over, secures the cocoonant, and claims it as his own. This is the claim of the modern capitalist. But how did the tenth monkey get the cocoonant? By walking on the backs of the nine.

Consider This

The Nebraska Mercantile Mutual Insurance Company has passed the two and one-half million mark and will soon be up to the three millions. This company operates strictly on a cash basis, and everybody pays just alike. February was the best month since their organization. When consideration is given to the fact that they commenced business less than a year ago, and have met their losses and all their expenses on what equals one-half the old-line rates, it seems a great thing for the insuring people of Nebraska. We can see no reason why a mutual company with 3,000 members is not absolutely safe.

HARDY'S COLUMN.

Traits—Auditor Moore—Constitutional Amendments—Home For the Friendless—Hawaii and Sugar—Strong Men—War—War Appropriation—Newbury Law Squelched—Garden.

When we feed a dog we expect he will do our barking. When we pay a state or county attorney a liberal salary we expect he will watch over the public interests. Away back, fifteen or sixteen years ago our state attorney went over to the other fellow and the state was cinched for \$50,000 or \$60,000. Mr. Marquette opened the case and had the judgment set aside. Our last county attorney ran Lancaster county into a hole. The taxpayers employed another attorney and the judgment has been set aside.

Ex-Auditor Eugene Moore is now about to sue Treasurer Meserve for the \$9,000 he paid in out of the insurance money he received. If the other \$23,000 he did not pay in was his, of course all was his. Lambertson or Cowin would probably take the job for half.

We must either call a state constitutional convention or contrive some way to remind voters of their duty at the ballot box. It was understood when the republicans submitted the last amendments, that if they provided a special box for the amendment ballots and over half of the votes put in were for the amendments the supreme court would declare the amendment adopted. But the republicans did not elect the two new judges, so the plan fell through. Now if the next legislature sees fit to submit an amendment they can provide that all the ballots for members of the legislature shall have printed upon them "for" the amendment, then if any voter wishes to vote against the amendment he can scratch off the "for" and write "against" the amendment. In that way every voter will be made to vote "for" the amendment unless he scratches off the "for." We are over-riding the constitution in several departments of state government.

The women who have so ably managed the home for the friendless are still left in possession of the institution by the supreme court. Inasmuch as the home is the only state institution that has not been charged with extravagance and thieving we think it best to let the women run it a little longer. There can be no other reason for taking the institution out of the present management, only to make it an avenue of boodle and party reward. We have said that when the men can manage one of the many state institutions as well as that has been run, it will be time enough then to take charge of that.

Senator Thurston thinks the annexation of Hawaii will make sugar cheaper. Then of course farmers will buy cheaper. Sugar at 25 cents is not as cheap as wheat at 25. The sugar makers will take bread for sugar.

We have not a single strong broad man connected with the head of our government today, not one. Gage will look after the interests of the eastern bankers and millionaires, and that is all he is good for. Sherman will help Gage all he can, in fact he never did anything for the great mass of common people. Further than that he is in his dotage. As for McKinley, it takes him and Hanna to fill the office of president. Tom Reed today is at the head of this government more than any other man living.

A war with Spain will help the silver cause for every ounce of silver in the treasury will have to be paid out before the senate will consent to issue any more bonds. And when bonds are issued they will not be gold bonds.

Every eastern speaker and writer declares twice a day that the silver question was settled by the election of '96, and that Bryan and his followers are unpatriotic not to acknowledge the corn. Just so they said the election of Buchanan settled the slave question, but it didn't all the same.

If the high protective fellows tell us the truth that the revenue does pay running expenses of government, then the appropriation of \$50,000,000 for defense can be paid out of the money received for railroads and no issue of bonds will be necessary at present. We hope the senate will make the treasurer pay out the silver in the treasury before any more bonds are issued.

The United States supreme court has handed down another decision in favor of rich corporations. The Nebraska maximum freight bill has been declared void after three years hard study. So after this no state legislature has any power to reduce railroad charges and there is no further use for our railroad commission, for if the legislature has no authority, of course the commission can do nothing. We can save five or six thousand dollars a year by letting the commission go.

We have been making garden. Lettuce, turnips, radish and beet seeds for early vegetables should now be in the ground. Early vegetables make good early eating. Seed for a few hills of early potatoes should now be sprouting in a warm place. So a little early York cabbage seed can be started and tomato seeds too. Go in for a garden. You don't know what good living is without a garden.

FOREST TREES. 30,000 American Elm, Linden, Ash and Soft Maple trees, for street and park use. Nursery grown, ranging in size from 1 1/2 to 3 inch caliper. ROBT. W. FURNAS, Brownville, Neb.