

The Nebraska Independent

Consolidation of THE WEALTH MAKERS and LINCOLN INDEPENDENT.

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY

Independent Publishing Co.

At 1120 N Street, LINCOLN, - NEBRASKA. TELEPHONE 538.

\$1.00 PER YEAR IN ADVANCE.

Address all communications to, and make all drafts, money orders, etc., payable to THE INDEPENDENT PUB. CO., LINCOLN, NEB.

General Weyler is still invading the United States via a typewriter in Southern Spain.

Notice is hereby given that Admirals Schley and Sampson are expected to live up to their suggestive names.

The Queen Regent of Spain is entitled to the same brand of sympathy which she has been meting out to the starving mothers in Cuba.

Spain howled for a chance to get hold of Americans so she could thrash us to a finish and now she is howling for Europe to help her let go.

Since the above was written it is reported that the Exposition managers had a meeting in Omaha yesterday and reconsidered their former action by agreeing to allow \$35,000 cash premiums for the live stock departments. This a wise and just decision.

May wheat in the Chicago markets touched \$1.80 per bushel on Tuesday, and July wheat sold for \$1.21. Both have gone down since and speculation is conceded to be the cause of the sensational advance. The farmers of Nebraska will not receive any such prices for their wheat.

Blanco has informed Havana that Spain has captured and destroyed Boston, Mobile and other coast cities and has given his army officers a banquet to celebrate the achievements of Spanish arms. As a dispenser of misinformation, he is almost equal to Col. W. E. Annin, of the State Journal.

The school fund now in the state treasurer's hands for apportionment among the schools of the state has already passed the \$400,000 mark and this splendid showing is causing much favorable comment. Honesty and economy in the administration of state business is bearing good fruit and the people of Nebraska are reaping the benefits. In state treasurer Meserve's office reform is practiced in fact as well as in theory.

One of the results of the war is a 25 per cent advance in print paper, with prospects of going higher. Sulphur ads used in making print paper - for bleaching purposes. Most of the sulphur comes from Mt. Aetna in Sicily. Spain has declared sulphur contraband of war and no sulphur laden ship can leave out of the straits of Gibraltar bound for America. Consequently sulphur has doubled in price within the past two weeks.

A handsome design for a monument to Congressman McKeighan, specially designed by a Boston firm, is on exhibition at Red Cloud. The monument, if built from this design, will be fifty feet high, and fourteen and a half feet square at the base, the estimated cost being \$8,000. It is said the McKeighan monument committee will meet soon and accept the design. It is to be hoped the committee will do nothing of the kind. William McKeighan was a plain man of the people. He lived in a sod house. He shared and suffered the poverty of the Nebraska frontiers. He fought the battles of the common people from the sod school house to the marble halls at Washington, but he never became anything but one of the plain people. If his lips, whose fire has so often melted the minds of surging thousands into one glowing purpose, could speak upon the proposition of spending eight thousand dollars of the common people's money upon a Boston designed monument fifty feet high to mark his last resting place in the Republican Valley—we may imagine what they would utter. It is fitting that his grave should be marked by a grateful people in whose cause he served. It is not fitting that eight thousand dollars should be spent for the purpose. Not while thousands of Americans are homeless and thousands of children are deprived of schooling by an iniquitous financial-social system which Congressman McKeighan fought as long as he had breath. We earnestly hope the committee will prefer to erect a modest, but durable monument near McKeighan's grave and that the balance of the money may be spent for the advancement of the cause in which he died.

KANSAS TAX VALUATION.

Down in Kansas the people have trouble over the valuation and tax business. Since the panic of 1893 property values in Kansas have shrunk prodigiously. Assessed values have shrunk even more and the time has arrived when something has to be done about it. Governor Leedy directed the labor commissioner to make an investigation of actual sales of real estate and assessed values of the same. It covered fifty counties for a period of six months. No account was taken of mortgages or sheriff sales, but only bona fide transfers of property. Over 7,000 of these sales were classified. The sales in ten average counties were taken for special examination. Upon these the labor commissioner's special report says:

"As the tax law contemplates that each parcel of real property shall be valued at its true value in money, the assessed valuation of the above 70,150 acres should equal their selling value, or \$1,199,447. Instead, we find that the assessed value of this property, as taken from the record and verified by the individual description and comparison of each transfer, for the total 70,150 acres is \$335,004, or 27.7 per cent of the real or selling value of the property. As the acre is the unit for taxation purposes, the average selling value an acre for the ten counties is \$17.09 and the average assessed value is \$4.73 an acre. The total amount of taxes charged against the above lands is \$10,859.89, averaging 15 cents and 5 mills against each acre. The range of selling values an acre is from a minimum average of \$4.05 in Comanche county to a maximum average of \$62.86 in Wyandotte county, while the per cent of valuation to true value ranges from a minimum average of 17.4 per cent in Wyandotte county to a maximum average of 41.6 per cent in Mitchell county. The average tax levy for the ten counties is 22.7 mills per dollar valuation, ranging from a minimum average levy of 24.3 mills in Mitchell county to a maximum average of 44.7 mills in Comanche county, while the minimum individual levy is 17.3 mills, found in Russell county, and a maximum individual levy of 58 mills is found in Butler county."

It would appear from this that the real selling value of land in Kansas is between three and four times the assessed value. In Nebraska perhaps a slightly higher valuation prevails, ranging from four to five times the assessed value. This shrinkage of values in assessment which has been so much denounced by writers on revenue is largely a matter of self-protection. The tendency everywhere is to go in debt for county, municipal, school district purposes. This pushes the tax levy everywhere to the limit—not only of the statute but of endurance. People have found themselves unable to pay taxes the last five years and public sentiment has everywhere forced assessments at lower figures. It has been simply a matter of self-preservation. The new revenue bill introduced and debated for two days in the lower house of the Nebraska legislature at the last session proposed to force the assessment of all property at actual value by means of strongest penalties. At the same time it proposed to cut down the limit of levy for state, general purposes from five mills to one mill. The trouble with it as a practical revenue measure was that reducing the limit of state levy was a self-enforcing measure while raising the assessed valuation is a matter of public opinion. If public opinion did not happen to act promptly the state would be left unable to pay running expenses.

Granting greater discretion to the state board of equalization is an absolute necessity for an equitable distribution of state taxes. At present nearly every county has engaged in the tax-shrinking business, making its assessment as low as it possibly can and get enough to pay county expenses. The people must elect state boards whom they can trust and give them enough discretion to correct these wrongs. A reasonable annual tax on corporations may be the means of deriving a considerable additional revenue for state purposes. No injustice would be done by requiring them to pay for their corporate powers guaranteed by the state. These two features ought to be the starting point for changes in our revenue laws.

TRUE PATRIOTISM.

It is highly patriotic and commendable on the part of the millionaire men and women of America who are offering their yachts and their wealth in \$100,000 lots to the government for the use of their country. It is also patriotic and commendable in the sons of our noted men to offer their personal services as officers in the army and all these various actions are deserving of favorable mention in press and pulpit. But when the eastern papers get through landing these people, what is there left to say of the plain American citizen who has no yachts or fortunes to give; who asks not for an official position worth thousands of dollars a year; but who gives his all by shouldering a musket and marching to the front to give life itself if used be, for his country's honor and its safety? Shall not his name outweigh the princely gift of the rich man who gives grandly and yet so little of his vast possessions. The Vanderbilts, Astors and Goulds deserve credit, but do they deserve as much as he who leaves a mother or a wife and children to face the problem of a precarious existence, while he offers up his life upon the altar of his country's honor, and to make

another people free? His name is legion and for that very reason the scroll of fame may not contain the record of his deeds, but none the less his is the true patriotism.

HISTORICAL ROMANCING.

Addie B. Billington in writing a sketch of "Old Fort Kearney," for the Chicago Times-Herald of May 9th, says that trees were planted about the fort in 1848 and that Arbor Day was later established by the governor, Sterling P. Morton. If the remainder of the article is equally accurate as this remarkable statement it will hardly be worthy of preservation by the state historical society. She further deposes and says that Nebraska people sympathized with the south during the rebellion and incited the Indians to outbreaks, and that the Federal troops waged war upon the Indians and had orders to kill women and children. In her romancing about the old fort she declares it was surrounded by a ditch and had a drawbridge, but she utterly fails and neglects to say whether the ditch was called a moat or whether they filled it with water hauled from the Missouri river in barrels. The fort was to have been rebuilt, according to this reliable author, but when Gen. W. T. Sherman made a tour of the west after the war and rode into Kearney City, he was greeted by hisses and yells from the rebels who lived there, and, the writer thoughtfully adds, it hurt his feelings. This latter day historian should be sought out and hired to quit imposing on innocent old papers like the Times-Herald. Of course it doesn't know whether Nebraska seceded during the rebellion, and if Addie says so it would consider the statement as sufficient, and yet, even the Times-Herald ought to know who founded Arbor Day and was afterwards Cleveland's secretary of agriculture, but was never governor of Nebraska. If the Times-Herald wants a real picturesque Nebraska liar it should open negotiations with W. E. Annin at Washington or Joe Johnson, of Lincoln.

ABUSED CLAIMS.

The war department at Washington has evidently secured the services of several expert press agents. As soon as news came of Dewey's victory, Secretary Alger rubbed his hands together and began to congratulate himself in a loud voice saying: "Behold the wisdom of the war department and give thanks that such wise men are set over you to rule."

The plain fact is that the department did not know where Dewey was or what he intended to do and the reason he accomplished such a desperate undertaking and achieved his remarkable naval victory was because he was acting upon his own judgment and could not be reached by contradictory and foolish orders from the war department. And now a board of strategy has been organized at Washington which will attempt to direct operations on sea and in the field by long distance telegraph and of course it will be a howling success. Such things always are, as for instance the McClellan campaign of unpleasant memory. But the exasperating feature of such things is that when a really capable officer gets beyond reach of the board and wins a battle he is robbed of the credit of planning the movement and the press correspondents at Washington send out columns of rot lauding the efficiency of war officials. Had Admiral Dewey been defeated in his desperate venture of sailing into an unknown bay under the guns of the forts and over the hidden mines of the harbor to attack superior numbers, does any one suppose that the board of strategy would have admitted that he was obeying its orders? Would it have shouldered the blame for a defeat as it claimed the credit of a victory? If that board of strategy has its way and its orders are literally obeyed it will come to be known as a board of tragedy before this war is settled.

The proposition to pass a postal savings bank bill is good, but it may be doubtful whether it would be immediately effectual as a war measure for raising funds. The quickest, cleanest and most effective way of providing funds for the war is to authorize the issue of \$100,000,000 in treasury notes. There isn't a man or a firm in America who will not gladly take these notes for anything needed to carry on the war. England herself uses these notes to meet extraordinary expenses. They bear no interest. They may be called in when the nation wills it. Nobody objects to them except the bond shark.

The INDEPENDENT has received a handsome portrait of Senator Allen through the courtesy of a well known attorney of Madison, who is an admirer of the Senator and a warm friend of this paper. The portrait is life size, done in India ink and water colors, by Mrs. Josephine F. Hull of Norfolk, and is not only a striking likeness but is the finished work of an artist. It is neatly framed and will honorably adorn the office in company with the portraits of Governor Holcomb and Hon. W. J. Bryan. The INDEPENDENT is under obligations to the donor and the artist and begs that they will accept its thanks for the favor conferred.

The stockmen of Nebraska are justly indignant at the action of the Exposition management in leaving their department practically without cash premiums and offering a lot of fifteen cent medals as a reward for all the trouble and ex-

pendse of making a creditable livestock exhibit. This is one of the material interests of Nebraska and in fact the entire Trans Mississippi country; in one sense our most material interest. Without our live stock, our grain products are worth but half as much as they now represent. And the expense of making a creditable live stock exhibit is much heavier than that of any other department. In the face of all this the board of directors have decided that cheap medals will be sufficient recompense for our stockmen who will spend thousands of dollars to make a creditable exhibit, while Rosewater will receive several thousand dollars for advertising his paper and his town and himself. Other papers are doing as much without a money consideration but the Bee must be extravagantly paid for booming itself and its proprietor. Another fifteen cent medal should be secured for the live stock department, and presented to Rosey as a reward for being the biggest hog on or off the grounds of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition.

COUNTY EDITION DISCONTINUED.

The Lancaster county correspondence has been discontinued and the county edition has been merged into the state edition. Paid subscriptions to the county edition of the INDEPENDENT will be credited on the state edition at the rate of 50 cents per year until their expiration. The present war with Spain is in part responsible for this change. Contributors of local news will be paid for their correspondences which has been printed, or the small amounts due them will be credited on subscription to the regular edition of the INDEPENDENT, at their option.

THE CUBAN CLIMATE.

In many a northern home this week there is deepest anxiety over the prospect of a campaign in Cuba. Many a Nebraska mother will read with trembling heart the news that Nebraska's soldiers have been ordered south. The fear is not so much of Spanish bullets as it is of swamps and yellow fever and the terrible "rainy season" in Cuba that is just beginning.

It is a matter not only of hope and comfort to aching hearts, but of reason and common sense based on experience to get the advice and opinion of one well qualified to speak on the subject. W. T. Hornady, chief naturalist of the Smithsonian institute, has spent several years in the jungles of India and Borneo and is authority on tropical climate. He says in regard to the climate of Cuba:

"All this talk of the danger in Cuba of the rainy season, yellow fever, etc., is greatly exaggerated, because the Spanish army has lost so heavily, many uninformed persons fear that the country would be as fatal to newly arrived Americans as it was to green Spaniards. The Spanish troops I saw were wretchedly fed and clothed, and absolutely no heed is taken to enforce the most obvious sanitary regulations. Then the food, clothing, medicines, everything the men should have to live upon, is furnished by contractors, who stand in with the officers, and simply starve the poor soldiers into disease and death. The Spanish women have a saying, 'When our sons go to Cuba or the Philippines they never return.' Many a Spanish mother whose son is coming near the time when he must do service in the army, is praying that Cuba and Porto Rico may be lost to Spain before her son goes away."

"After five years of living in the most malarial jungles on earth, in the midst of miasmatic swamps, drinking swamp water and often having to eat unaccustomed and badly cooked food, I only had one touch of jungle fever, and that only laid me up for six or seven days. I owe my excellent health to two or three precautions. I never slept on the bare ground, nor in the rain, and always under shelter. I always wore light flannels next to the skin, and never slept in damp clothes. Whatever else I might have to do without, two changes of flannel underwear, besides that I had on, were always at hand. Take from five to six grains of quinine every morning in a cup of hot coffee if you have it; if not, then in hot water. Have your shoes to fit you, even if you must buy them yourself, though the United States is furnishing its troops with an excellent marching shoe. With these precautions and a dose of some light laxative twice each week there need be no more fear of fever in Cuba than there is in Missouri."

Mr. Morillas, a Cuban born, and for some years an assistant surgeon in the United States navy, now in the Marine hospital service in the tropics, says: "The rainy season as it is called out of Cuba is to Cubans the most charming season of the year. It begins generally about the middle of May and lasts to the middle of September. It usually rains in the afternoon and sometimes the fall is very heavy and accompanied by such thunder and lightning as one never knows outside the tropics. It generally stops at sunset, which is unexpectably grand in its cloud effects. I rarely ever have known it to rain at night. It is this so-called rainy season that gives life and vigor to the growing vegetation and makes our sugar and tobacco crops what they are. By eating well

cooked food and eschewing over indulgence in the fruits of the country, usually tempting to strangers, always sleeping under some sort of shelter, and not on the bare ground, the green Yankee from New Hampshire hills may laugh at the bog of the 'rainy season' and the yellow fever. It is well for the unaccustomed man, the first three months of his stay, to take from three to six grains of quinine every morning, and a mild purgative, say, twice a week. You may be as wet as possible, if you are on the move, but when you stop, change your wet clothes for dry ones, socks and all. You will never have this fever if you follow these easily remembered rules."

ABSOLUTELY NO BONDS.

We print a communication from Geo. A. Abbott, of Falls City, one of the clearest headed populists in the state, upon the present bond situation. In this case, however, we think he is at fault in conceding the possibility of a bond bill passing congress. It never ought to be conceded for a single moment. There are enough senators on the anti-bond side of the financial question to beat the \$500,000,000 bond bill in the senate. They ought to do it. They ought to have their backbones strengthened for the fight by the people whom they represent. Letters ought to go from every state and congressional district to Washington demanding that the men there stand true to the people's cause. If there are any then who prove untrue let us know who they are.

There is very little use of splitting hairs over the distinction between bonds payable in silver dollars or gold dollars. This is a fight against bondage and against bonds. Let us be true to the main issue. So long as the corporation crowd rules at Washington the treasury department will pay their bonds in gold—"no matter what the contract is." We have President McKinley's own words for it. When populist principles prevail at Washington we shall pay in money—just as good money as the every day American gets and no better. This is all there is in this game. So long as bond holders rule this nation they will pay themselves in any kind of money they choose—regardless of contracts. They have done it and they will do it. The fight now is to cut off the perpetuation of the race of bondholders—to stop issuing bonds.

This is our fight. We must succeed in it. It overshadows the Cuban question as Pikes Peak overshadows the hill of the pis-mire. If we can prove that a great nation can go to war to free a struggling people and not add a single dollar to its bounded debt it will be greater than a hundred Manila bay victories. It will mark the opening of a new financial era. It will mean not only the bonds, but the end of wars. In such a fight as this there should be no such word as fail.

OUR TRADE WITH SPAIN.

When war begins commerce ceases. The ports of the United States were officially closed to trade with Spain on April 23d. Between war bulletins it will be of interest to know just what the extent of this trade is.

According to the official records of international commerce published by the United States Treasury department, the total value of the merchandise imported and exported by this country in our dealings with Spain during the fiscal year 1897 amounted to \$14,544,718. Compared with the returns for the fiscal year 1896, which were recorded at \$15,623,612, these figures show a decline of over a million dollars. This falling off is particularly noticeable because of the fact that during 1897 our commercial transactions with most of the European nations were materially augmented.

Our trade with Spain, although subject to minor fluctuations, appears to have been gradually shrinking for about fifteen years. It attained its maximum development in 1883, when the combined imports and exports reached a value of \$24,725,632, or more than \$10,000,000 in excess of the present figures. The returns for 1897, with the single exception of those for 1895, which fell to \$14,501,195, were the lowest recorded since 1878, twenty years ago. The average value per annum for the last five years, 1893-1897, amounted to \$16,240,588, as against \$18,305,404 for the five years immediately preceding.

The heaviest single article of importation from Spain has been the articles grouped in the custom house reports as "fruits and nuts." Our imports of these from Spain have fallen from \$2,466,804 in 1885 to \$957,438 in 1897. The reason for this is that the people of the United States have gone to growing their own raisins, oranges, lemons, figs and almonds. California, Oregon and Florida have crowded Seattle and Malaga out of the American market.

The importation of wines has fallen from \$733,491 in 1885 to \$523,418 in 1897. The importation of Spanish wines is of course mostly for the use of the American aristocracy who prefer spending the money wrung from the laboring classes of this country for bonded wines.

The iron ore imported from Spain has declined from a value of \$701,169 in 1885 to \$175,826 in 1897. The only

articles imported from Spain in which our trade has increased is cork, which has grown from \$253,442 in 1888 to \$529,392 in 1897; and goatskins which were valued at \$211 in 1888 and \$65,386 in 1897.

Cotton is our own principle export to Spain. Our shipments to her ports averaged \$8,000,000 a year for the past ten years and still remain at that figure. Spain is about the poorest country in Europe as a market for American breadstuffs—the total value of our exports in 1897 having been only \$225,477 and in 1888 \$1,290,788. In meat products we shipped to Spain in 1897 a total value of only \$7,412. Our export of wood (including lumber) and wood manufactures rose from \$703,710 in 1888 to \$922,940 in 1897.

The value of the merchandise we send to Spanish ports is nearly three times greater than that of the goods we receive in return. During 1897, for instance, our exports to Spain were valued at \$10,912,745 and our imports from that country at only \$3,631,973, leaving a trade balance in our favor of \$7,280,772, and practically the same relation of imports to exports is maintained each year. In the five year period 1888-1892, the average imports per annum amounted in value to \$5,271,257 and the average exports to \$13,034,147, while in 1893-1897 they fell to \$4,257,542 and \$11,983,046, respectively, showing that the decline in the value of the trade has affected imports and exports in about equal degree.

The result of Spain's policy in dealing with Cuba during the past years has been to almost entirely destroy the large and advantageous trade enjoyed with that island. The restoration of peace and free government to that island will beyond doubt lead to the development of a vast and natural trade, exchanging of breadstuffs and meat products of the western farmers for the sugar and tropical productions of Cuba. So far as Spain herself is concerned our trade with her is one of the smallest items in our foreign commerce.

PUBLIC HAS NO PROTECTION.

Members of the Nebraska legislature have received from the inter-state commerce commission a type-written letter from which the following extract is taken:

"If you are interested in the regulation of the railways by the government let me ask you to read the first 50 pages of that report by which you will clearly see that this commission is, owing to recent decisions of the supreme court of the United States, practically without power to enforce the provisions of the Inter-State Commerce Act, and will learn in what respects that act must be amended to carry out its original intent. So far as regulation of rates is concerned the public has no protection in the courts or anywhere else."

"In case you believe in these or similar amendments I trust you will use your influence in that direction and I shall be glad to hear from you personally to the end that I may suggest in what manner you can be of the greatest assistance."

Respectively yours, EDWARD A. MOSELEY, Secretary."

The last sentence in the first paragraph of the above extract deserves to be framed and hung up over the dining table of every western farmer: "As far as regulation of rates is concerned the public has no protection in the courts or anywhere else."

It has taken ten years of high salaried commissioners and appropriations for electors to find this out. How much longer are the people going to permit the corporations they have created and given powers of eminent domain to nullify the people's will? That's the question.

In 1896 Kansas populists endorsed the entire democratic electoral ticket and elected them. As a result the vote of Kansas was cast for Bryan and Sewall, Watson not receiving a single vote. The democrats of Kansas endorsed the populist state ticket which was also elected. As the time approaches for another state campaign in Kansas the democratic state committee issued an address to the populists saying that they did not believe that they can deliver the democratic vote for a state ticket this year unless they are given two places on the ticket. Compliance with the democratic address involves the withdrawal or turning down of two of the present populist state officers. It does not appear that any of them will withdraw so the convention will have to face the question of turning them down. The convention is called to meet June 15th.

It is said that Senator John P. Jones of Nevada holds the balance of power on the senate finance committee. If he says "bonus" the revenue bill will be reported back with a bond clause,—if he says "greenbacks" it will be reported for legal tenders. There ought not to be any question what John P. Jones will do in a case like this. No man on earth knows the money question more thoroughly than John P. Jones. No man has laid down the fundamental principles of money more clearly than Senator Jones of Nevada.

There is no need of the war taxing beyond the Fourth of July. And there is no need of bonds, either.