

The Nebraska Independent

Consolidation of THE WEALTH MAKERS and LINCOLN INDEPENDENT.

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War is not an unmixed evil. The crop of spring poetry is very short this year.

Every time a thunder shower comes up the New York papers hear heavy cannonading off the New England coast.

According to the daily papers Spanish war vessels are thicker along the Atlantic coast than sea serpents were last summer.

The board of Strategy at Washington has been aptly described as a board of Legarthy and the last name seems to state the case without prejudice.

The press censorship is very lax. Rumors of awful battles which never occurred, continue to get through the lines and keep the people awake at night.

Admiral Dewey has been nominated for president by the Iowa State Register. Sampson and Schley are hopelessly out of the race unless they do something soon.

Where is that new battleship, the O'Higgins? The name is all right but the crew is surely not Irish or it would have been cracking Spanish heads before this.

Grave fears are entertained in some quarters that the supply of majors and colonels will soon be exhausted. There are still a large number of citizens who are willing to go as privates.

Every time one of our war vessels does little practice shooting the newspaper correspondents announce that a big battle has occurred and about a dozen Spanish ships have been sunk.

How would it do for some of the republican editors in this state to raise a volunteer company or join Mr. Bryan's regiment as privates? That would be a good way to practice what they preach.

The managers of seaside summer resorts will have to come out to the Exposition to make a living this year. The fear of Spanish gunboats overcomes the desire to watch for sea serpents just now.

The report came yesterday that Sampson's and Schley's fleets had met the enemy and that our entire squadron was lost. The report is true except that they did not find the Spanish fleet. Sampson is evidently lost in the Sea of Doubt while Schley is wandering about in the Ocean of Uncertainty.

When the rumor came a few days ago of a terrible battle near Cuba in which Spain's entire fleet had been sunk, a number of Nebraska towns had wild demonstrations. Bonfires were kindled, bands played, cannons were fired and the people shouted themselves hoarse. Their Fourth of July celebration was a trifle early but we'll let it go at that.

Representative Wright, of Nuckolls county, was a visitor in this city Wednesday. He was one of the modest, yet effective members of the last house. He reports the people of his county without regard to previous political affiliation, as well pleased with the change in administering state affairs and will give a good majority for the populist ticket this fall.

Mr. Bryan is being harshly criticised by republicans for offering to raise a regiment of volunteers. Of course he expects to go as colonel; most men do who raise regiments. In fact the desire to be a colonel is not confined to any one political party. It seems to be quite prevalent just at present, even giving the men a hard chase for first place. It may have been spread by the recent rainy season in Nebraska.

Amusing things happen sometimes in unexpected places. The recently elected captain of Co. A, Third Nebraska Volunteers, has resigned because he fears the regiment is only a political scheme engineered by Colonel W. J. Bryan. He evidently overlooked that point when he was hustling for the captaincy, but as he is a very young university graduate he will probably live long enough to find out how little attention he attracts. As he resigned just previous to the last call for 75,000 volunteers it is hinted that the prospect for active service had something to do with his sudden desire to get out.

COST OF KILLING.

It costs money to kill Spaniards. So far we have killed perhaps 400 of them. To do this has cost \$50,000,000 special credit voted by congress after sinking the Maine—all of which has been spent. Besides this there is a general deficiency of \$35,000,000 and a naval deficiency of \$22,000,000 both of which arise from the war expenses. This makes a total of \$107,000,000 spent and only 400 Spanish mothers, sisters, or wives made desolate. This is at the rate of \$267,500 per Spaniard which certainly is a very costly figure to pay and one at which most Americans in their right minds would not care to keep on transacting business.

It may be said that these figures are unfair and the quotation of the current price for Spanish corpses unreasonable because we have spent this amount of money in getting our plant established and in operation and that from now on we shall be able to secure real bargains in dead Castilians and furnish grief and woe at cut rates for the homes of the common people of Spain whose sons are fighting in the Spanish service.

Not so. We have not got our killing machine into operation as yet. We have only gathered some of our material together, and as for expense we have only just entered upon it. The war is already costing us one million dollars a day. Senator Allison, chairman of the senate finance committee announced on Monday of last week that the committee had secured careful estimates from both the army and navy departments and that they would require a total of at least \$379,192,000 to pay the expenses of the war from the present time until the first of July, 1899, not taking into account any emergency expenses that might arise at any moment. The total amount, Mr. Allison thought, would be rather above than below the sum he had indicated.

The estimate of the war department is based upon the call for 125,000 volunteers now being filled. And already the wires from Washington are freighted with news that president McKinley is seriously considering another call for troops. If this is done the expenses of the war will be enormously increased.

And all this for the purpose of adding to the importance of military chiefs who have had no occupation in the United States for the last thirty years, for the purpose of fastening great military and naval establishments upon the people of this country, the purpose of making a bonded debt to match the military and incidentally making a few thousand widows and orphans among the poor people of Spain who are already smashing windows to get bread which they are unable to buy.

This is written in no unpatriotic spirit. God grant it be written and received in the truest spirit of American patriotism—the spirit that believes America has a better destiny than running an international slaughter house or setting her feet in the foot prints of Rome and Babylon. There is a danger in the time, in the glory of foreign conquest, in the opening up of colonial empire, in the measured tramp of men away from the walks of production to the tented camp of idleness and destruction, in the creation of new national ideals which like the pictures of the desert, have beckoned nations on and on from one field of fame to another until their bones were left bleaching on the sands. Already the word is strongly pressed that we must take not only the Philippines, but Hawaii and the Caroline group as a war measure for "cooling stations."

This is a good time to summon people who have sober senses back to their senses. The purpose of this war, the only purpose, is the freeing of the Cubans from intolerable outrage and starvation. It is a month since we started on this mission. Cuba is seventy-five miles from our shores. While we are planning expeditions to the Philippines the Cuban reconcentrados, the very people for whose lives we are shedding our own blood and spend our own means, are starving. Reliable intelligence from Havana is that most of these miserable refugees around that city are already dead. Havana is blockaded and threatened with famine. The Spanish army has naturally taken possession of all food. The Cubans, the women and children to whom Nebraska has given a train load of provisions, are left to perish. This war ought not to last sixty days longer. We have enough troops under arms now to drive the Spaniards out of Cuba in thirty days. There has never been a time in two hundred years when soldiers of the Anglo-saxon race have not beaten soldiers of the Spanish race with odds in favor of the latter. In the Mexican war we met the same class of men and drove them out of outclements where they outnumbered us two to one. We can drive every Spaniard out of Cuba before the 4th of July. That is what we began this war for and when we have done it we ought to be ready to quit, come home and go to farming. The men who prolong this war and pile up debt and foreign possessions for America are doing it all in inducement to the American people.

It is a stimulus REFUSE FRENCH GOODS. So American ladies in all parts of the country are holding meetings and circulating resolutions against the purchase of French goods on account of the friendship of France for Spain. The women are not only refusing to buy goods bearing a French brand but they are notifying merchants that they cannot expect their trade if the stores continue to import stuff from France. The French manufacturers will be given a practical lesson in this way which will have more effect than any amount of long-winded argument.

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IN FAIR NEBRASKA.

While the busy wires are bringing news of desperate battles on the seas, and a famine and bread riots in other lands about the world, let us spare an hour at least and look for that short time upon the waving fields of grain, the orchards decked in bloom, the meadows rich with emerald green, the fattening herds upon a thousand hills, the peace and plenty everywhere in fair Nebraska. As in the olden time all roads led to Rome so now all roads lead to Nebraska, save only those which serve to carry her tremendous crops to all the needy nations of the earth. Nebraska farmers are not going back to visit her folks in this year of grace; the white topped prairie schooners are no longer headed for the east. Her folks now come to Nebraska and feast upon the fatness of a land whose smiling face is crowned with nature's best endeavor. Emigration is coming west once more and is stopping short of Colorado. The deserted farms are tilled again and bounteous crops reward the careful husbandman. Even away out on the high prairie lands the once lonely houses show signs of life and hope and love. Merry children play about the door yard and the sunshine streams through cheery windows and splashes walls and floors with ruddy gold. The fields give promise of abundant harvest and the plowman sings at his task from out the fullness of his heart. The prodigals have all returned and eaten of the fattened calves and adorned themselves with new rags. They have girded up their loins and started once more to build anew their shattered fortunes in a land where nature's lavish hand can blot out with one grand sweep the memory of failure and misfortune. Where is the state whose sun-kissed hills and valleys oftentimes yield a crop that pays in one season for the land on which it is grown? For these things come to pass in fair Nebraska.

EDWARD BELLAMY.

The death last Sunday in his Massachusetts home of Edward Bellamy in his 49th year is an event that claims the attention and sincere grief of every true populist and social reformer.

Ten years ago this spring the story, "Looking Backward," appeared from an eastern publishing house. Perhaps it is too much to say the book created an era in our national life. It was part of an era and part of the advance guard. Ten years ago this spring the republican party was firmly entrenched in Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado and all the Trans-Mississippi states. That very spring Jay Burrows founded the Farmers Alliance newspaper, predecessor of the INDEPENDENT. That year John H. Powers and the early pioneers of the Alliance movement were busy establishing its lodges in the school districts of Nebraska. But the Alliance had not gone into politics. Most of its members were still republicans. A strong social unrest stirred the depths of the American heart east and west and from the abyss issued the farmers alliance in the west and "Looking Backward" in the east—the one an idea equipped for battle, the other an army organized to fight for the idea. For it must always be remembered that the underlying idea in the farmers alliance movement was not the free coinage of silver, nor yet government banks and paper money. These were mere details. The fundamental principle was industrial equality—the very thing set forth in Bellamy's book. It is one of the remarkable evidences of the untutored and great popular movement that without any pre-arrangement or plan the book should appear in Boston and the organization on the plains of Kansas and Nebraska at the same time.

The success of "Looking Backward" was instantaneous and complete. It sold over half a million copies in English and was translated into nearly all the languages of Europe. Since that time there have been scores and hundreds of books and pamphlets upon the social situation produced in this country—many of them conspicuous for ability and force. Yet it may be truthfully said that none of them have eclipsed the little volume of Edward Bellamy. It first gave voice to an idea. That idea was the abolition of poverty and competition and the guarantee of absolute industrial equality to every citizen. The idea persists today. It is the foundation thought by all real social reformers—that just as every man in America has the same political rights as every other man so he should have the same material possessions and privileges, that all should work for the common good instead of each for himself. To some this still appears a dream, but "the dream that nations dream come true," and the modest man who passed from this earth of sorrow and selfishness last Sunday carried to his latest consciousness the certainty of having been the greatest factor in the social revolution now going on.

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL FINANCES.

Wages in Kansas schools have been going down for a number of years. In the country districts which ten years ago paid \$40 to \$50 per month the range is now from \$20 to \$35, with a few only paying \$40. Several causes are assigned for this decline. The really potent cause is the law of competition acting in hard times. The operation of competition as a wage-reducing force is very easily observed in a country school district. Most of our readers are entirely familiar with its processes. Here is a district with twenty-five or thirty scholars. A capable, experienced teacher will require \$40 or \$50 per month to take hold of it. But a young man who needs money to carry him through college or a law course will teach it for \$30 and a girl whose home is near by and will not have to pay for her board is willing to take it for \$25. With hard times pressing the district, as has been the case in most western states the past ten years, the result uniformly is that whoever gets that school does so by scaling wages down toward the bottom figure.

It is plain that good ability cannot be had in the school teacher's chair at \$25 or even \$35 per month—hardly as good pay as a farm hand receives—with all the additional expense of books, clothing, etc., that the teacher must meet. The best teachers push out of the country school districts to the towns where they can get \$50 to \$100 per month, or into other callings.

Numerous remedies are proposed for bettering the conditions of the country schools. One way is to abolish the competitive system under which one man bids for the privilege of taking away another man's job. A good many readers of the INDEPENDENT are enlisted in that movement. Its fulfillment seems sometimes like a star of hope—near off—and sometimes almost at hand. As yet, however, it is not here. One present way of securing better country schools is by consolidating three or four districts into one and providing for the expense of transporting scholars from the distant parts of the new district. A law passed by the last Nebraska legislature provides for this plan when adopted by the districts interested. This gives the district enough money to maintain a good school with strong teachers for eight or nine months in the year.

The Kansas statistics show that the average number of months taught in country districts is five and that it costs \$1.30 per month for each scholar to maintain the school. In towns the average number of months school is eight and the cost per month for each pupil is \$1. So that in spite of the lower wages paid in country schools it costs more money to run the country schools than the town schools.

The country schools are the sheet anchor of the republic. The conditions surrounding the life of the child there are more natural, more attractive, more helpful than those in town. The most noted scholars, statesmen, mechanics and soldiers of America have received their early training in the country school house. It is plain to any observing man of today, however, that the country school must progress with the age or it will lose its power. This is a scientific age. Applied science makes the difference between the civilized man and the savage. The country school must be made the nursery of scientific scholars. The great world of natural science camps all about it. Botany spreads her carpet in the front yard, chemistry does her daily work in the adjoining fields, geology opens her records in the rocks of the hillsides and in the revelations of the spade and well-auger, the beetle and the butterfly tempt the child-mind to fathom the mystery of their creation, Mother Nature musters her minute-men at the doorway and invites the child to enlist. But the drill master must be there in the person of the trained teacher and equipment must be present in the form of laboratories, microscopes and tools or the young soldier will never be disciplined. The country schools must be equipped with these and that requires more money than the average country district can afford. There must be a consolidation of school districts, permanent teachers by the year and transportation of the children to school from distances too great to be tramped on foot. One thing more the country voters of Nebraska can secure for their schools just as soon as they will send the right men to the legislature and enough of them—that is an equal division of the fines, licenses and railroad school taxes of each county among the country school districts. The present system of turning over all these funds to the towns and a few fortunate districts along the railroad track is utterly opposed to every populist principle as it is to justice and common sense. The present Nebraska constitution provides that all fines and licenses shall go to the schools within the county where they arise. It does not provide that they shall accrue exclusively to the towns. So with the railroad taxes. The people of all the county or state support the railroads. Whatever revenue they pay for school purposes should return as nearly as possible to all the people. Here are two important means of improving country schools for the next legislature. Shall they be secured?

Red Cloud is in the throes of a newspaper war. Editor Walsh of the Nation feelingly refers to a hated rival as follows: "The patent medicine ginslet down the street edited by that stood-on-end tape worm who has never written an editorial since he came in possession of the plant seems to be terribly elated over the suspension of the publication of the Morning Nation." Mr. Walsh further deposes and says that his contemporary is a "poor pusillanimous pup" and a "sneak-eyed lizard." The rival editor can beat this he is a genius. Meantime the people of the state are waiting with ill-concealed anxiety for the outcome of this bloodless battle on the banks of the Republican.

Postage stamps for the United States will be printed at the bureau of engraving and printing of the treasury department instead of by private contractors during the next twelve months. The government can and does print them cheaper and better than the contractors. The total value of those to be printed the coming year is \$62,500,000. The ordinary postage stamps will be furnished at 5 cents a thousand, postage-due stamps at 11.4 cents a thousand, newspaper and periodical stamps at 6.05 cents a thousand and special delivery stamps at 11.4 cents a thousand. The contract contemplates a total of 3,063,633,885 ordinary stamps, 1,346,330 special delivery stamps, 5,544,229 newspaper stamps and 19,573,160 postage-due stamps.

The annual production for American labor is \$230 for each man, woman and child according to Mulhall's statistics as quoted in this paper last week comparing the United States and Spain. Reckoning the average family at five persons this is \$1150 per family produced each year. Who gets it? Certainly not the producers.

Let us try the proposition experimentally. Nine-tenths and more of the INDEPENDENT readers are producers, most of them producing material things that are eaten and worn, the necessities of life. Let those who are deeply interested (as most of our readers are) in testing the justice or injustice of our present system of distribution take an inventory of their income the past year or the present year and write us the result. Names will not be used if the request is made not to use them. What we desire is facts free from bias and gathered at first sources regarding the actual incomes of the wealth-producers in the western United States. Let those who desire to aid in the investigation make a statement of their family, the number who are producers and who are not. Let them credit themselves, if living upon a farm, with the farm products eaten upon the family table and produced by the family. Let us find out in short whether Mulhall tells the truth when he says the American people produce \$1150 per family each year and if it is the truth who gets it.

Lies are said by a student of the subject to be divided into three classes, lies, —lies and statistics. Every man who has had an occasion to make original investigations himself in the field of politics and social science has discovered doctored statistics. The figures of the circulation of currency in the United States gravely handed down from the treasury department at Washington year after year as though they were the tablets of stone from the summit of Mount Sinai are known to be utterly false in certain particulars and are in fact admitted to be by those responsible for them. It may be that the figures on the productive capacity of America as figured by Mulhall have been tampered with by a real estate agent. There is certainly room for analyzing and investigating them. The INDEPENDENT promises its readers an early investigation and account of the sources of Mulhall's figures and asks its readers in turn to make individual investigations and send in the result.

One thing is certain. The income of the average family within our knowledge is a great deal less than \$1150 per year. It is a great deal less than \$1000 per year. If Mr. Mulhall is lying to us we ought to expose him. If he is telling us the truth—if we actually do produce \$1150 per family each year—who gets it?

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The largest number of any one denomination to be printed will be two-cent stamps, the total being 2,726,769,525; of the one-cent stamps, 1,344,526,650 will be printed. The smallest number of any one variety will be 4,420 \$50 stamps which are used for postage upon newspapers mailed in bulk. The number of \$100 stamps to be printed will be 12,915.

Ten years ago the annual value of postage stamps printed was \$38,298,141 and the cost was more than now. Those who continually assert that the government cannot run railroads or do business may make a note of the postage stamp business.

About the time war broke out Chicago made a desperate effort to attract attention by claiming to have elected several honest councilmen. The story was doubted at the time, and the following from the Times-Herald seems to justify the doubt. "It seems almost incredible that a city containing the wealth and intelligence to be found in Chicago should have at the head of the financial committee in the city council John Powers, a saloon keeper convicted on three charges of maintaining gambling devices and under indictment for keeping a gambling house."

WHO GETS IT?

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THE EXPOSITION OPENING

In the midst of war's alarms it should not be forgotten that the Trans-Mississippi exposition opens June 1st. Governor Holcomb has requested that this day be made a holiday for the state and that the exposition be given such a send off by our people as to assure its success. It is generally conceded that it will be second only to the world's fair at Chicago and the exhibits and people from all parts of the world will be equal in educational value to two or three years of travel. As the various rail roads have announced a rate of one cent per mile for the opening day the INDEPENDENT would be glad to see an immense crowd take advantage of the favorable conditions. An elaborate program has been prepared which includes speeches by Governor Holcomb and other prominent citizens; a monster parade; a grand illumination and decoration of Omaha and the exposition grounds and buildings; and a telephone message from McKinley formally announcing the opening and congratulating the people of the west upon their enterprise and progress.

The present war should have no effect upon the Trans-Mississippi Exposition. Let us unite to make it a splendid success.

Some of Mr. Bryan's friends seem apprehensive lest his regiment will be immediately called to the front and very much exposed to yellow fever and Spanish bullets. They seem to think this would be an easy solution of the presidential problem in 1900. He not alarmed, brethren. President McKinley will not sacrifice American citizens to satisfy political ambition. Vol. Bryan will take his chances against yellow fever along with the other Nebraska boys, he never was very partial to yellow fever. As for Spanish bullets—well, we predict that the Colonel will give a good account of himself on the field of battle, and that he will lead the boys wherever it is necessary for them to go. He may not be a military man, but we did not have many military men in '61, either. We had plenty in '65, though—both north and south—and we have plenty of that good old American blood and brains to make them out of again. The man who could organize and carry on the campaign of '90 as W. J. Bryan did ought to be able to master military tactics and successfully organize an army. As for leading it—when he rides to the front on that black Kentucky thoroughbred and shouts, "Come on boys," we know what the result will be.