

NEBRASKA HOUSE

PROCEEDINGS OF LOWER LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

A Condensed Resume of the Work Accomplished During the Past Week—Action on Bills Etc.

Thursday, February 3.

In the house yesterday forenoon a petition was presented asking for a law prohibiting the killing of quail or any birds except English sparrows, etc., for five years.

A new rule was adopted that committee reports, unless for indefinite postponement are to go on file without debate.

The special committee appointed to investigate the postoffice of the house reported as follows:

"That the letter was written by one member to his own wife but was through error and good intention directed to the wife of another, by some person connected with the postoffice of the house and not by the writer, nor the husband of the recipient; that the lady who received it knew it was not written by her husband nor to her, but was intended by some other man than her husband and for the wife of the writer."

"That this should be a warning to all the persons who are supposed to be connected with the directing of this letter to the wrong person not to do it again, and is also intended to compliment the sound good sense of the lady who received the letter not intended for her."

The report caused a hearty laugh, especially the "warning" portion. Mr. Easterling thought it a Scotch verdict of "not proven." Report adopted and committee discharged.

House roll No. 114, by Wilcox, to extend the time when supreme court commissioners may be appointed to serve, received only sixty-four votes, and a call of the house was ordered. After a hard struggle the necessary sixty-eight votes to pass the bill with the emergency clause, were secured.

Judge Skipton having again defied the house in failing to produce the Fillmore county ballots, was adjudged in contempt and ordered to be brought again before the bar of the house.

Fisher of Dawes moved that it be the sense of the house that Nebraska representatives in congress be asked not to vote for aid for exposition. Made special order for today.

The members by a majority of two voted down a resolution asking Wm. J. Bryan to speak on electing senators by direct vote.

Friday, February 3.

The special in the house at 10 o'clock yesterday morning was Swan's resolution calling upon Nebraska congressmen to oppose aid for Omaha exposition. It being explained that no appropriation was asked for, the resolution was tabled.

A number of bills were reported by special committees.

When the house convened after the noon recess, the sergeant-at-arms produced F. Skipton, county judge of Fillmore county. He further announced that Judge Skipton had brought the necessary ballots. On being given an opportunity to purge himself of contempt, Judge Skipton said the ballots had already been turned over to the committee. On motion of Fisher of Dawes, he was declared purged of contempt and allowed to go.

The house then went into committee of the whole with Evans of Adams in the chair, and house roll 33, by Smith of Saline was taken up. It provides that insurance companies delaying the payment of just claims be required to pay 25 per cent interest pending settlement. Several were of the opinion that the supreme court would declare it unconstitutional. Others contended the bill was a proper one. After a very spirited debate as to its merits and its defects, the bill was finally recommended for passage in the following shape, by removing from the original bill the word "penalty": "If a fire insurance company delays the payment of a just and lawful claim due under a contract of insurance beyond the time allowed by law for the settlement thereof, and thereby cause suit to be brought to recover the amount due, the insurer shall be required to pay 25 per cent per annum upon the amount due under said contract from the time the claim became due."

The house accepted the report of the committee of the whole without debate and then adjourned.

Saturday, February 4.

The house passed resolution in the morning and agreed to bills in the afternoon yesterday with an energy which the members were quite proud. Quite a little business was gotten out of the way thereby and very general good feeling resulted.

A bill providing for a survey of a north and south railroad was killed, against the strong protestations of Representative Leonard. Mr. Leonard in the afternoon fought exceedingly hard to get the members to consent to a bill permitting the electors of a school district to select a teacher where the board was so divided that one member would not sign the papers to give the appointee of the other two members the place. This measure was thought to contain too many possibilities which would have a bad influence upon the public school system.

In committee of the whole in the afternoon, the house killed a bill providing for the destruction of sunflowers and cockle burrs and recommended a bill for passage providing for a state board of examiners in embalming.

The house refused to adjourn over today till Monday and will meet this morning as usual at 10 o'clock and will ballot on United States senator's noon.

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The section which the committee wishes eliminated makes it unlawful for a railroad company or express company to carry within the state or transport out of the state any of the game described in the act. The Gong-ring game law passed two years ago made it unlawful for railroad or express company to carry certain game within the state or carry it out of the state, but the penalty clause applied only to the offense of carrying game out of the state. The penalty was a fine of \$25 for each animal or bird carried out of the state. Attorney General Smyth gave it as his opinion that the penalty in the old law related only to the offense of carrying game out of the state.

The committee on finance ways and means recommended the passage of Talbot's bill reducing the interest on state warrants from 5 to 4 per cent. The bill was placed on general file.

Schall of Sarpy offered a resolution declaring that United States senators should be elected by popular vote. A motion to suspend the rules and consider the resolution was defeated 19 to 13. An effort by Canaday of Kearney to make the resolution a special order for 10:30 today was abandoned when the point of order was raised that the resolution had to lay over one day and therefore was not yet the property of the senate.

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W. H. Pool, engrossing clerk, has had the duties of enrolling clerk added to his functions and was by the senate allowed \$1 additional pay per diem, making it \$4 a per diem.

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The free high school bill was considered the second time by the committee of the whole. The bill was further corrected and perfected by Reynolds of Dawes, who changed the language of section 4 of the bill to read as follows:

"The expenses contemplated by this act shall be paid from the general fund in each county and the county board of any county may annually include in their estimate a sufficient tax to meet the purposes of this act, not to exceed 1 mill on the dollar of assessed valuation of said county for the preceding year, to be levied and collected in the manner provided by law for levy and collection of other taxes."

With one or two minor changes in the language the bill was recommended for passage.

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Standing committee reports and bills on first and second reading occupied nearly the entire day, with the exception of a half hour spent at ease while waiting for the time to arrive to participate in a joint convention.

Perhaps the most exciting event of the day was a little discussion as to whether a man should be allowed to keep more than one dog. As a result of this discussion the senate decided that a man ought to be allowed to keep as many dogs as he is able to care for, but that in cities and villages the authorities shall have a right to pass ordinances imposing a tax of not less than \$1 and not more than \$10 for each dog. The only change in the present law is a reduction of the minimum tax from \$3 to \$1. A bill to create a board of examiners of embalming without expense to the state, was recommended for passage in the committee of the whole.

House roll No. 171, the bill providing for a one-mill levy for the benefit of the state university, was placed on general file by the committee on universities and normal schools, with a recommendation that it be passed.

Printed copies of the university bill were not before the senators. Several members indulged in what one termed a "roar" against the failure of the house to comply with a senate resolution calling for printed copies of all bills introduced in the house.

The senate refused to adjourn over Saturday.

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Senate file No. 81, by Senator Owens, amending sections 1 and 2, article 9, of chapter 14, compiled statutes, was passed. It provides that titles of the second class shall be those having more than 5,000 and less than 10,000 inhabitants, instead of more than 3,000 and less than 5,000, as at present.

Senate file No. 82, by Senator Fowler, amending section 1029 of the civil code was passed. It provides that when the appraised value of property taken under writ of replevin exceeds \$500 the same shall be transferred from justice court to district court, and in case the

property is appraised at less than \$500, but found by the jury to exceed \$500, the case must then be transferred to district court for new trial.

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After the joint session the senate adjourned to Monday at 11 a. m.

Tuesday, February 7.

Chaplain Cressman, in the senate, prayed that the blood shed at Manila might be heard at Washington in the interest of humanity and freedom.

Senator Spohn moved that the flag be half-masted in respect for Nebraska's dead. It was so ordered.

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Canada of Kearney asked about the resolution requesting the secretaries of the board of transportation to ascertain whether railroad rates could be reduced on coal, lumber, grain and live stock, under the supreme court decision in the maximum rate case.

President pro tem Talbot said the resolution had been sent to the secretaries and no doubt they would reply to the same in a few days.

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THE MAIN QUESTION.

Editor Independent:

At the end of my communication in your last issue you ask me to "tell us how it is that in all the history of the world, in seasons when prices are stable or rising, the distribution of property is always more general, and in seasons when prices are falling the tendencies are always to concentrate in a few and still fewer hands? What is wanted is the equitable distribution of property."

You say: "Every trust would disappear within five years upon a rising market. The only practical way of killing trusts is to get control of the volume of money. It is not competition that makes trusts. It is falling prices."

I take it for granted that you, like all reformers, are anxious to discover the real cause of complaint against present conditions under which the multitudes suffer untold misery in a land of plenty. Hence I ask your careful consideration of certain facts. If they do not support your conclusions, I trust you will try to reach the conclusions which the facts support. You are claiming that the money question is the main question, and particularly the free coinage of silver feature of it. This I deny. Hence the issue is clearly drawn.

At this time I will not present a full consideration of the free coinage question, with your permission I will do so in the near future, and if I do I promise to present some views of it not yet presented by any freer silver advocate and to answer some questions propounded by the goldites that have not yet been satisfactorily answered. I will only say now that had not the mints been closed to silver in 1873, there is no reasonable probability that prices of commodities in the great commercial nations would now range more than 25 per cent higher than they have been during a year past. Were free coinage now restored here and in Europe there is no reasonable probability that prices would generally rise more than 25 per cent.

With you, I think the evil of falling prices is far reaching and tremendous. By its competition constantly becomes more crushing until the little fish are all eaten up by the big ones. But a more crushing influence than falling prices has for years been operative in the civilized world and is still operative with increasing power. This crushing influence is organized or co-operative capital in the hands of a few.

You say rising prices will kill trusts. Yet, according to the New York World, in 1898 over one hundred trusts and combines were organized in this country having a capital of \$2,71