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MEN AND MATTERS

For the sake of Nebraska and her progressive democracy we hope that the rumor of Richard L. Metcalfe's removal to Chicago is without foundation. For Mr. Metcalfe's sake, we hope that if he sees in such removal an advantage to himself that it is well founded. And if the progressive movement now on wants a fearless and able champion of its principles, then it could not find a better one than this same Richard L. Metcalfe. As a writer he has few equals and no superiors; as a student of political affairs he is the equal of the best; as a champion of the rights of the people he is unexcelled. If Mr. Metcalfe does decide to remove to Chicago it will be because he believes it will enlarge his opportunities for usefulness in the cause of the people, not because it will be advantageous to himself.

As between the findings of Prof. Howard of the State University and the findings of Frank Odell, who is not a professor, merely a man who travels around and sees things as they are, we will take the word of Odell. Besides, we don't take a back seat for any university professor when it comes to knowledge relative to the productivity of Nebraska. The college professor says that Nebraska did not raise a certain stated amount of apples last year. We know one apple buying firm that shipped from two Nebraska stations more apples than the college professor credits to the entire state. And we rather guess that there were some apples shipped from other stations. We still assert that in 1911 Nebraska raised more apples than the boasted apple states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Colorado combined.

Every day something new concerning the resources of Nebraska turns up. We have long been accustomed to hearing the assertion that Nebraska has no mines, but now we are prepared to deny it. Nebraska is mining precious gems, and don't you forget it. T. Draper of Humboldt, Richardson county, was in the office of Will Maupin's Weekly with a handsome collection of tourmalines and rubies, all taken from Nebraska soil. Mr. Draper, who is an old miner, owns some land near Humboldt. He noticed a peculiar black sand, such as gold is found in, and proceeded to wash out a few pans. He found slight traces of gold, but not enough to warrant further search for the yellow metal. But he found something else. He found that this sand and gravel bore precious stones. He took out a few and had them cut, and today he is the proud possessor of some beauties.

Scientific examination shows this particular section to be rich in the gems mentioned. The rubies are small but of a wonderful lustre, and the tourmalines are as pretty as any found anywhere. Mr. Draper has examined the field and is sure that it is worth millions. No, Mr. Draper is not organizing a mining company. He hasn't any stock to sell. He is merely showing the people that Nebraska can produce something besides agricultural products and live stock. But there is a big fortune for the men who will develop this great field that Mr. Draper has discovered.

It is becoming a daily occurrence for Railway Commissioner Hall to disagree with his colleagues, Winnett and Clark. The trouble with Brer Hall is that he takes himself too darned seriously. And if there is anything on earth calculated to arouse general hilarity—and disgust—it is the spectacle of a man of just ordinary ability taking himself so seriously that it sours on his stomach. We rather like Commissioner Hall, but somehow or other his anxiety to pose as the only simon pure champion of the dear people and defender of the faith rather palls upon us.

The "jay driver" is to be condemned, but what about the "jay pedestrian?" There are too many careless and incompetent drivers, and the thing of allowing immature boys and girls to drive autos because it looks smart and precocious, ought to stop. But while we are teaching auto drivers how to drive, what's the matter with teaching pedestrians what to do? The man or woman who walks in the middle of the road or street is not where he or she belongs. Standing on the crossings is not the proper thing, for crossings were made to go over on, not to stand on. If pedestrians will exercise a little more common sense there will be fewer auto accidents.

Will some please explain it is us? You go to a bank, borrow some money, put up security and pay the legal rate of interest. That is the way the banks make their dividends, by loaning money. But after you have put up the security and paid the interest demanded, the banker speaks of the incident as an "accommodation." Why? We want to know, for we have been "accommodated" so often.

Well, you don't just have to eat meat. In fact, you'd be better off this hot weather if you did not eat so much, meat or anything else. Try cutting out the meat for a while. Eat some cereal in the morning, together with some buttered toast and good coffee. Then a bowl of soup, some vegetables, good bread and butter and a cup of tea or coffee at noon. For the evening meal have potatoes and tomatoes and green corn and macaroni and cheese and apple pie and iced tea or coffee. There's more nourishment in a pound of cheese and a box of macaroni than there is in meat costing twice

as much. And if you just must have meat, try some of the cheaper cuts instead of the T-bones and tenderloins and sirloins and rib roasts. But better cut out the meat diet altogether until after the first frost.

A couple of Huntsville, Mo., democratic editors got into a newspaper row, but instead of filling their papers with billingsgate and vituperation, thus loading their scrap over onto their readers, they met on a public street and shot it out. Both were wounded. We commend this course to some of our newspaper friends in Nebraska. By following it they would confer a great favor on their readers.

Nebraska's corn crop is assured. We are not worrying about it any more. In fact we never did worry about it, for we have such faith in Nebraska soil and climate that worry is foreign to our minds. But what we mean is that Nebraska is assured of even a better corn crop than the most optimistic of us counted on three months ago. True the crop will not be as big as some we have raised, measured in bushels, but when measured by the good old iron dollars it will be a record breaker.

* **Our state is rich in natural resources not yet developed,** *
* **a condition due to the lack of public knowledge of such** *
* **wealth. We therefore, favor a liberal appropriation by the** *
* **legislature for the purpose of giving publicity to the state's** *
* **resources.—From the Nebraska Democratic Platform.** *

A truly religious worker at the Epworth assembly berates the soft drinks commonly sold at soda fountains; sweet cider is declared to be harmful, and generally we are advised to limit our diet to dry hucks and our drinks to cold water. Will some truly good Christian tell us the difference between drinking cider and chewing up apples, swallowing the juice and spitting out the pulp? What's the difference between drinking the juice of apples and the juice of grapes? And if we remember rightly the Nazarine drank grape juice. Noah planted a vineyard, raised grapes, made wine, fermented it, drank it and got drunk. Wouldn't that have been a good time to put a blight on grapes?

* **We favor the creation of an immigration agent and public** *
* **liquity bureau, to the end that our vast areas of tillable land** *
* **in the western part of the state may be brought to the atten-** *
* **tion of the landless people elsewhere.—From the platform of** *
* **the progressive Republicans of Nebraska.** *

A lot of would-be reformers make us weary. They waste so much time on fool things and spend no time at all attacking real evils. We are willing to wage a pretty penny that the good women at the Assembly who threw fits over cider and wine all wore lingerie made by their starving sisters in the sweat shops of the East Side in New York—garments into whose every seam was sown blood and tears and heartaches. But what does that matter so long as these truly good reformers can get the aforesaid lingerie and shirt waists at "bargain prices?" We hold that underpaid labor is responsible for more unchastity and drunkenness than any other one thing.

Taxation reform is the most pressing need of Nebraska right now. The present system is both a farce and a menace. About 13,000 autos have been listed for taxation. There are upwards of 25,000 autos in Nebraska. Less than \$5,000,000 of "cash in bank" has been returned for taxation. There is upwards of \$200,000,000 on deposit in the banks of Nebraska. Farm land in one county is returned at \$60 an acre, and equally good land in an adjoining county is returned at \$50 an acre. Under the present iniquitous system the men best able to bear the tax burden escape with the least, while those least able to bear it carry the most.

Some of these days we will realize the folly of trying to raise revenue by taxing those things that can be removed or hidden, thus putting a premium on perjury and an added burden on property that can not be removed or hidden. Some of these days we will realize the idiocy of taxing private enterprise to pay community expenses while community made values go to enrich private individuals. And, again, some of these days we will learn the wisdom of compelling those corporations owing their very existence to the state to pay all the running expenses of the state government that makes it possible for them to do business.

Any lease by the state of water power privileges must be based upon the revenues possible to the leasing companies. The same result could be achieved by regulation of rates, and regulation of rates is now possible. The proposed leasing system is all right in its way, but to wait for its adoption and enforcement means years of delay in the development of our natural water powers, and the thing most to be desired is their early development.

CURRENT COMMENT

On divers and sundry occasions Will Maupin's Weekly has urged the calling of a constitutional convention for the purpose of giving Nebraska an up-to-date constitution. Always the reply has been that the expense would be too great. Yet we are at this time spending \$50,000 to secure five patches on the aforesaid constitution, and during the last twenty years we have spent almost if not quite \$100,000 in securing a few patches. This amount would much more than pay the expenses of a constitutional convention which would give us a modern document in place of the present patched-up affair. And until we do get a new constitution we must keep on spending money for patches.

It is argued that there is danger of the corporations getting control of a constitutional convention. However, that argument is peurile. In the first place, any constitution drafted by a convention would have to be ratified by a vote of the people. Again the people would elect their own constitution makers. Here we have two safeguards against any danger from corporation sources. And if the people, with these, sit idly by and let the corporations get the best of it, then the people are entitled to the worst of it. But Will Maupin's Weekly is confident that with the present temper of the people there is every reason for confidence in such a convention doing the right thing.

The federal court at Chicago has enjoined the Western Newspaper Union and the American Press Association from forming a combination that would be a monopoly of the "boiler plate" and "ready print" business. If this injunction is strictly enforced we must have government ownership of the "boiler plate" and "ready print" business. The court says that the injunction is meant to put a stop to a "ruinous competition." Doubtless a layman will be excused if he admits that these contradictory court decisions confuse his mind. First the courts declare that there must be no combinations in restraint of trade, then they turn around and declare that competition must stop. Somehow or other this newspaper has never worried itself over this so-called "ready print" monopoly. Monopoly it may be, to be sure, but its existence depends entirely upon the suffrage of publishers. If it does not give satisfactory service there is not a publisher in the land who is compelled to patronize it. Ninety per cent of the publishers who get out newspapers worthy of the name could get along without the "patent insides" if they had to, and still continue in business. The Western Newspaper Union has built up a wonderful business because it has given a splendid service which, if not profitable to the users thereof, is merely an indictment of the intelligence and business ability of the "country publishers."

Personally we believe that there is a lot of tommyrot in all this complaint from publishers. They do not have to use patents carrying advertising, and they can demand and secure any kind of matter they see fit. The kind of service they get, if service they demand, is just what they order or will stand for when sent to them. The editor of Will Maupin's Weekly has used "patent insides" a whole lot during his thirty years of newspaper experience, and he usually got just what he paid for, and always just what he asked for.

But this Chicago injunction against these two great newspaper service establishments makes us laugh. We wait impatiently for that court to fix the price at which the W. N. U. may sell its plates and the A. P. A. its ready prints. When the time comes that the court is able to fix the price of such commodities it will be able to fix the price of beef and clothing and flour and wheat and such like things.

We would call especial attention to the following plank of the Nebraska democratic platform adopted at Grand Island: "Nebraska's awkward and inequitable taxation system should be replaced by a twentieth century method. We favor, therefore, taxation reforms by separation of the sources of the state and local revenues, thus giving to counties and towns the privilege of enjoying the taxes from purely local valuations. Land held for speculative purposes and without improvement ought to carry a larger share of taxation than it now does. To this end we promise to submit to the vote of the people a proposed constitutional amendment enlarging the powers of the legislature with respect to the enactment of the taxation system, and then provide for the selection of a commission whose business it will be to investigate and report for the consideration of the legislature its idea of the taxation system suited for Nebraska's peculiar needs."

There is at least one plank in the Roosevelt platform that will appeal, and that is the one relative to a "white man's party." And it is high time that the negro voters of this country get wise to the fact that they have been the playthings of the republican leaders ever since their enfranchisement. Just as soon as the negro begins thinking independently and voting intelligently, instead of worshipping a political fetic, just that soon will he become a real power in politics. He will never get anywhere politically acting as he does now. This is a white man's country, and always will be, every section of it.