LANG SCORES POYNTER.

Says He is Helpless to Resist the Demands of Politicians.

Statements Concerning the Poynter Administration That Are of Keen Interest to Tax Payers.

Omaha, Oct. 22.—Dr. B. F. Lang, who has just retired from the superintendency of the Home for the Feeble Minded Youth at Beatrice, is among those of the fusion faith who openly declare that Poynter is unfit for governor and should be defeated. Speaking on this subject yesterday Dr. Lang said:

"From the very commencement Governor Poynter has been dominated by the politicians. They have dictated many of his appointments to places in the various state institutions and the result is that there is scarcely an institution that has not suffered more or less with this curse. Out at Beatrice, a man who had been booked for an ordinary position, such as deputy oil inspector, or the like, was transferred to the institution as bookkeeper and steward without any consideration as to his qualifications.

"The different institutions today are supplied with that class of employes, in some instances three or four of one family are holding down positions without any qualification whatsoever. There are any number of people holding positions in the state institutions who are notoriously unfitted for public duty. The fault is not with the superintendents of these institutions, but with Governor Poynter, who has permitted ring leaders of the fusion party to dictate to him who should be appointed. No better example can be cited of the imposition of obliging the superintendent to accept employes who are incompetent and unfit than that of a Mrs. Thomas, mother of Oil Inspector Sprecher, who is now holding the position of matron at the Beatrice institute. I make this statement without any qualification, that she has no merit either physically or mentally to recommend her to such a position. I refer to this case simply to show to what extent Governor Poynter has abused the appointive power. There are many other cases like it. Mrs. Thomas, ever since she has been matron, has refused to perform the duties incident to the position and has persisted in drawing her salary from the state without rendering corresponding service. She has kept her daughter with her at the state's expense ever since has been at Beatrice. Indeed, it seems to be quite the common thing since Governor Poynter assumed office for his appointees to gather their relatives around them and feed and shelter them at the state's expense. I know of one of his appointees at Beatrice who lived at the state institute with a family of six, all of whom were provided with bed and board at the expense of the tax payers. All this comes from the weakness of Governor Poynter. He lacks the courage to stand out against the unreasonable demand of the politicians and their political friends. The terrorizing influence of these political pie-hunters seem to have originated more among the Democratic end of the fusion party than any other. In fact, many interesting letters may be found among the governor's correspondence showing his weakness in being unable to withstand the political pressure brought to bear upon him, an example of which is a letter from the Democratic chairman of York county, who, in asking recognition, stated that he had been able in the past to turn down many of the fusion leaders, among them the Hon. Edward Bates, former district judge, and others of that political faith, and he was ready now to lay Dr. Lang on the shelf and even his excellency, if it need be, to have the recognition he asked. The letter had the desired effect, obliging the governor to make way for one of the employes who had been discharged for disloyalty and incompetency, the same being a brother of the York county man. Another example of the hold up in York county is that of the Cochran family who have been nursed at public expense for several years and who still use their influence to enforce recognition. Outside of this family the Populists today in York county are utterly ignored.

"There is no reason to hope for any improvement or change in conditions under Governor Poynter. I know whereof I speak when I say that at this very time, in his efforts to obtain support, he is peddling out promises of appointment indiscriminately and he will either have to violate his word or keep faith at the cost of crippling and impairing the service more than ever. It is certainly a sad condition of affairs that the unfortunate people of the state should be exposed to the ignorance, blunders and cruelty of incompetent employes. And it is also unfortunate that the tax payers have no legal way of protecting their rights against ravages and spoliation except through the instrumentality of the ballot box.

"I believe that no one factor has had more to do with disorganizing the management of institution work than the disregard the governor has shown for his word and promises to those seeking employment. There have been many changes in the institutions made for no other reason than to satisfy some politician with a pull or to keep some campaign pledge. At Beatrice there was absolutely no occasion for interference by the governor, though the past year at that institute has been one of turmoil, strife and disorder. The cause of it all was to fulfill a campaign promise, no matter at what sacrifice. Governor Poynter had on more than one occasion expressed confidence and satisfaction in and with my management of the Beatrice institution, so there could have been absolutely no reason for making a change other than to discharge a campaign pledge or placate certain politicians who were loudly demanding recognition.

"The affairs at the Beatrice institution are very much unsettled. Only a few days ago one of the children from Douglas county was taken away because its parents believed that it could not be cared for properly with the change and consequent inexperience of new employes. The parents of another child from Dakota county visited the institute a few days ago and found their child in such a condition that they were constrained by parental impulse to take it away.

"The people of Nebraska can not afford to let such disgraceful conditions continue. It is a crying shame that helpless and defenseless people should be made to suffer simply that the demands of politicians may be fulfilled. It certainly presents a spectacle to the unbiased voter which should move him to register an emphatic protest. I have no concern in the matter other than for the public good when I say that Governor Poynter should be defeated. In the past he has been unable to break away from the political wire-pullers and there is no reason to expect anything different should he be reelected. In many of the institutions at this very time the employes are wondering what the future has in store for them and are devoting more time to their political cares than to their official duty.

"The custom of levying an assessment on officials and employes of these various institutions has become quite general under the Poynter administration, and it is needless to say that it has done much to take the authority out of the hands of the Governor and place it in the hands of the politicians, thus greatly demoralizing the service. After an employ has been compelled to divide up his salary with the politicians and having knowledge that the governor, who appointed him to his position, knows that that division of salary was made, he feels as if he is under no further obligations and is at liberty to perform his duties as he sees fit. This has taken the authority to maintain discipline and keep things in their proper working order out of the hands of the superintendent, and the result is that each employe is authority unto himself. Nothing but demoralization has, or ever can, result from such conditions.

"I am thoroughly familiar with conditions as they obtain in nearly all the institutions of the state and I say, without fear of contradiction, that there never has been a time when the public service was more severely crippled than at present, and there never has been a governor who has shown less respect for the public welfare than the present incumbent.

"Certainly under such condition of affairs no progress can be made either in improving the conditions of the inmates of these institutions, reducing expenses, or in perfecting the public service. I think the figures will bear me out when I say that Governor Poynter's administration has been a very expensive one to the tax payers. Properly managed, the institutions could be maintained at much less cost and the benefits could be made much greater. It is folly to expect that you can use positions in these institutions, from superindent down, as legal tender for the payment of political debts without incurring much additional expense and at the same time destroying efficiency.

"I base my statement on what I know of my own personal knowledge while superintendent at Beatrice when I say that there has been much corruption practiced under the present state administration. I remember at one time that a large amount of groceries and provisions were shipped to the institute at Beatrice from Lincoln without ever having been ordered by any one in authority. The first I knew that such a shipment had been made was when I received notice from the railroad company that there was a consignment of goods for the institute at the depot. I had placed no such order, but upon investigating I found that the shipment was instigated by the governor's agents. The goods remained at the station several weeks and there was considerable waste from destruction by rats and exposure to the weather. When notified by the agent that a large amount of goods had been shipped there, I had no knowledge concerning where the goods came from and was inclined to reject them, but after some correspondence the steward was requested by certain members of the state board to accept the same and we complied with their request. Much of the supplies was of such poor quality that we were obliged to return considerable as unfit for use.

"After considering these facts one can easily understand why there is a large deficiency in public funds at this time variously estimated at from $90,000 to $100,000. Large as this amount is, it will surprise no one who has been in a position to know just how Governor Poynter and other state officials transacted the public business. The interests of the tax payers have been preyed upon, the state institutions have been preyed upon and the appointees have been preyed upon, all in order that the ring leaders may live in luxury and prolong their hold upon the state government."

A Board of Control.

Should the Republicans succeed in electing their candidates for governor and a majority of the legislature, many much needed reforms will be inaugurated at the next session.

One of the most important of these reforms is the enactment of a law creating a non-partisan state board of control, whose duties would be to exercise superintending and managerial control over all the state institutions.

The State Campaign.

The pathway of the fusionists is beset with many embarrassing obstacles. The one hardest to overcome is the administration of Governor Poynter. Poynter has played fast and loose with the public institutions and there are many fusionists who refuse to excuse him or condone his offenses, even on the ground of partisanship. The manner in which he has managed the state institutions is gradually coming to light, and it is a continuous story of shameful incompetency and fraud. Nor should Governor Poynter be permitted to escape righteous retribution. He has persisted in interfering with the management of each institution and he therefore becomes jointly and directly responsible for the evils thereof. When it is said that his administration is distinguished from all the rest for incompetency, discord, retrogression and dishonesty, it is saying a great deal, and yet it is merely a dispassionate statement of the facts.

This distinguishment, however, does not apply to Governor Poynter alone, but extends in scope so as to include the various state departments. Thus far reports of fraud and incompetency have been confined to the executive department, in so far as that department was connected with the management of state institutions. Subsequent reports, after the state institutions have all been reviewed, will deal with the other departments, all of which will be of keen concern to the electors of Nebraska, irrespective of partisanship.

It may be depended upon that the fusion campaign management will resort to every possible scheme to divert the attention of the voters from the real issues. They will seek shelter from attacks on the record of the state administration behind such false alarms and bugaboos as "militarism" and "imperialism." They know that they can offer no defense, so far as Poynter's administration is concerned, nor can they hope to achieve success, in the face of unexampled prosperity, by making an open issue on party principles. Their guarantee of continuous prosperity, in the face of the terrible distress and suffering under Democratic rule will hardly be accepted as being in any way substantial, and the only thing they can do is to resort to some scheme to divert attention and lead the voters astray from the real questions involved. It is highly improbable, however, that public credulity in Nebraska has reached that point where everybody can be so easily duped. This is a campaign in which the voters of Nebraska are likely to do their own thinking, and, assuming this to be true, the bugaboos and schemes of wily politicians are not likely to prove much of a restraint to a free and intelligent exercise of the right of franchise.

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS.

State of Nebraska, }
Webster County, }
In the County Court of Webster county.

In the matter of the estate of George W. Ralston, deceased.

Notice is hereby given to all persons having claims and demands against George W. Ralston late of Webster county, deceased, that the time for filing claims against said estate is six months from the 2nd day of November, 1900. All such persons are requested to present their claims with the vouchers to the County Judge of said county, at his office therein, on or before the 2nd day of May, 1901, and all claims so filed will be heard before the said judge on the 3rd day of May, 1901, at 10 o'clock a.m., and that said administrator is allowed one year from the 29th day of September, 1900, in which to pay the debts and charges allowed against said estate and settle the estate.

JAMES DUFFY, County Judge.

Dated, October 16, 1900.