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Omaha-Where the West is at its Best

WHY PENALIZE DOUGLAS COUNTY?
Debate over the bill to change the election law for Douglas county is taking a peculiar turn. We should not lose sight of the fact that Douglas county has been singled out for special treatment in the election law. For some reason, not made entirely clear, a provision was inserted requiring "word of mouth voting" by those who require assistance in preparing their ballots in this county. Elsewhere in the state the voter may present a list of his selections, and have his choice so made registered by the judges.

To assume that conditions are so different in Douglas as to make it necessary to partly if not wholly to destroy the voter's right to full secrecy as to his ballot is decidedly unfair. Nothing in our recent experience justifies such discrimination. Senator Robbins, in his argument for the retention of the present law, says that to change the law would open the way for buying and selling of votes. He renews the charge that in certain precincts of the city the electorate is corruptible, if not corrupt. All that is old straw, threshed over many times. While the senator admits that no scandal has marked an election in Omaha for many years, ascribing this condition to the existence of the law that is asked to be changed, he gives little consideration to other conditions that have changed.

Reciting other special provisions for the control of Douglas that do not apply elsewhere in the state simply serves to emphasize the shame that has been foisted onto the people of Omaha. We are most heartily in favor of the registration system, of the administration of the office of election commissioner. But we have heard some bitter complaints about how affairs of that office have been handled. Not the fault of the commissioner, but because self-appointed guardians and would-be custodians of the public conscience have taken advantage of the provisions of the law and made a great deal of unnecessary trouble for voters.

The average of intelligence of the Omaha voter is high. Equally high is the standard of integrity. Corrupt or corruptible men may be found everywhere. Not all of them live in the lower wards of Omaha by any means. A great many foreign-born residents, as sincere and as honest as any citizen of the community, require help in the preparation of their ballots. They should not be regarded as potential criminals, but should have the same treatment they would get in Lancaster or any other county in the state.

In sincerity, and with every regard for the sanctity of the ballot, we ask the legislature to readmit Douglas county to the fold from which it is now shut out. Why should a voter be penalized for living in Douglas county? Subject to espionage and suspected of something he would be free from if he moved across the line into Sarpy, Saunders, Dodge, or Washington county? Repeat the "word of mouth" provision, and let us have the same election privileges that are enjoyed by Nebraskans everywhere but in Douglas county.

A HIGH TRIBUTE.

A Nebraskan whose business has made him familiar with each succeeding legislature since 1897, says of the legislature now in session:

"In my judgment it is the best legislature in more than a quarter of a century. It ranks higher in intelligence, higher in patriotism and higher in purpose. It is honestly trying to act in the best interests of the state without regard for political advantage. Its membership is not trying to rip business, nor is it appealing to discontent. It is business-like and busy."

That is praise indeed. Despite the fact that several very foolish bills have been introduced, and others that might be looked upon with suspicion as being offered for the sole purpose of being killed, the comparatively few bills, measured by the gnat presented to previous legislatures, are in the main worthy.

The legislature is not listening to the specious arguments of the political fixers. It is striving to meet the approval of all the people. Its membership is level-headed and its leadership founded on common sense.

It is easy, and very usual, to cast aspersions upon our public officials. No matter how earnestly they try, they are too often faced with sneers and jibes. The public official who tries to perform his duty—and most of them try to do that very thing—is entitled to praise.

The present legislature exhibits pleasing evidences of trying to work solely for the benefit of the commonwealth. It is entitled to commendation.

SUPERIOR QUALIFICATIONS.

There is every indication that George Alexander Parks will make good as governor of Alaska. Firstly, Parks was not an applicant for the position. Secondly, Parks has been content to work as a mining engineer in Alaska, leaving politics to others. And thirdly, Parks looks upon the governorship as a real job and doubts his ability to fill it.

The last indication is the most hopeful of all. Because he entertains doubts he will probably bend every energy towards making good. He has been in the government employ for several years, working in the Alaskan field service, and he is credited with knowing more about Alaska and its resources

than any other man. He has been content to do his work as an engineer, and doing it to the best of his ability. And that is the sort of thing that is needed in higher branches of the government service. Recognizing this, President Coolidge appointed Parks to the governorship.

Making good on the job in hand, fidelity to his superiors, thinking only of rendering service—well, that is the sort of thing the country should be looking for.

Governor Parks is going to make good in big things because he has made good in lesser things. His modesty is as refreshing as his ability is undoubted.

MARION LEROY BURTON.

When the announcement was made last spring that Dr. Marion Leroy Burton had been selected by President Coolidge to make the nominating address at the Cleveland convention, there was much buzzing. Who is this man Burton? He was not known to the public. Never sat in the councils of the party, and seemed as far outside as it was possible to go for anybody. The best information given with regard to him was that he was president of the University of Michigan.

His address to the convention enlightened the world as to the reason for his being given that task. It was not a flood of perfunctory oratory. It did not scintillate with gems of wit, nor resound with sonorous periods. It was a plain, matter of fact statement of the case for the republican party, for its chosen leader, and its bid for public favor. As a bit of rable-raising rhetoric, it was not to be compared with the effort of Pat Harrison at New York. Nor with the message Robert Marion La Follette sent to Cleveland. As the days went on, and people began to study the issues, they turned again and again to Dr. Burton's speech. Finding in it always something sound, something that could be depended upon. For once a leader had arisen who appealed to the calm sense of the American voters. The response was conclusive.

Another side of Dr. Burton's ability is shown by a story of the Michigan legislature. It is recounted that when the time came for him to go to the capital to secure an appropriation, he found the legislature organized against him. His reputation had frightened the men who were to decide the issue, and they agreed that Burton would get nothing. When the session was over it was found he had secured appropriations amounting to \$17,000,000 for the rebuilding of the university.

Now that Dr. Burton is dead many stories will come out to show how influential and active he was in the general cause of humanity. Acting through service to higher and sounder education, he did many things that will bear fruit through years to come. Quietly, attracting little notice to himself, but always setting ahead the cause. He did not go hunting with a brass band, but he did achieve results.

WILD MARRIAGE LAWS.

A lot of loosely considered talk has been indulged in connection with Nebraska's so-called eugenic marriage law. Most of this has been with little or no regard for the prime object of the law. Not so much to prevent marriage as to prevent hasty and ill-considered marriages. To forbid, if possible, the union of those who are unfit to marry. A marriage almost necessarily contemplates children. In this society is vitally concerned. First, because the children of public marriages are essentially a menace to society. Water does not rise above its source, nor will the offspring of incompetents be anything but incompetent. Some diseases are transmitted from parent to child, and these are also sought to be combated.

Publication of bans is a custom centuries old. Notice given that two persons contemplate matrimony is a recognition of the right of society to have something to say about a contract that may result in a burden to society. The Nebraska law has not been enforced long enough to warrant any conclusion as to its effect on divorce, but the assumption is not unfair that marriages contracted under it are more likely to last than those that take place under the go-as-you please practice the law supplants.

We know that it has been popular to cross the borders of the state to contract "bootleg" marriages under conditions easier than those at home. Some time these conditions will not prevail. Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming and South Dakota all are interested in the problem. Nebraska is a pioneer in a great movement. Marriage is not altogether a private matter, between two persons exclusively, but is something in which society in general has a large interest. Wild marriage laws are not for the good of anybody.

The North Carolina legislature was prevented from considering an anti-evolution bill because of a rush of spectators to the assembly chamber. Does not state whether the crowd was for or against.

A Kansas City mass meeting has decided in favor of the World Court. It will take more than that to move Senator Borah, who has determined not to go into the plan.

Senator Norris is opposing the proposed increase in pay of congressmen and senators. If he has his customary luck, the salary grab will go through.

An Arkansas prophet, who was to raise the dead, had to postpone his demonstration on account of his serious illness. Life is full of little annoyances.

Senators propose to inquire into the reason back of the hike in gas prices. Simplicity. Brother Charlie is no longer governor.

A Nebraska farmer sold his pigs at auction, and netted an average of \$64 a head. Does it pay to raise them? Looks like yes.

Homespun Verse

By Omaha's Own Poet—
Robert Worthington Davie

WHEN THE FARMER READS THE PAPER.

It kinda tickles me at times (I'm just a farmer, see)
The way the politicians fuss about dishonesty:—
One makes a great big statement that there's graft and crime galore
A-crawling through the keyhole of the other feller's door.
The second feller steps right up and tells what he has done,
And lays the guilt directly on the other honest one;
They rant and rave and kick up dust like a cyclonic gale,
And swing their fists and strain their lungs without the least avail.
I used to hitch my horses to a tree at five till ten,
And hasten for the paper and the current scandal ken.—
And hurry back and light my pipe and lean upon the plow,
And read the printed comments on the politicians' row.
I've kinda got a habit, now, of reading funnies first,
And then a-glancing over where the bombs in silence burst.—
But that's because the weather man gets on the front page, too,
And I must sort of figure on the work that's yet to do.

"Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow"



Letters From Our Readers

All letters must be signed, but name will be withheld upon request. Communications of 200 words or less, will be given preference.

Indeterminate Sentence Law.

Sidney, Neb.—To the Editor of The Omaha Bee: Your valuable newspaper had in it an editorial respecting a recent act of the legislature in killing a statute recommended by the county attorneys of the state for the repeal of the indeterminate sentence law of Nebraska. The statute which the County Attorneys' association asked to have repealed does not have anything in any way to do with the pardon or parole board so far as the text of the law is concerned.

Many years of experience in the prosecution of criminals has proven to me that the indeterminate sentence law is wholly wrong in principle. It is the one stable bulwark of ultimate defense of the ordinary criminal, because it sheds a ray of hope to him before he even commits the crime, as he knows that, regardless of the despicable nature of the crime he is about to commit, the revulsion of feeling of the people over its commission will be very largely set off as far as he, the criminal, is concerned, when he comes to get his sentence at the hands of a court for an indeterminate period, as fixed by the statute, and knowing further that he will go down to either the reformatory or the penitentiary at Lincoln, and will immediately be looked upon by a large and increasingly large body of well-intentioned but misdirected men and women who will immediately interest themselves in his behalf and attempt his so-called reformation.

We believe that the trial court who has conducted the case has observed the witnesses, has a perfect knowledge of the greater plot, has had occasion to study the defendant in open court, and has been placed in possession of many facts outside of the record as to the commission of the crime, or the antecedents and bearing of the defendant, is a vastly better judge of the time the defendant, if found guilty, should serve, than a politically organized commission, who at long distance can get only a superficial view point of the real circumstances of the case at bar. It is with

out question the theory of the law that punishment for crime is for two purposes. The first in importance is to deter others from the commission of like or other crimes, and second, which may be divided into two points, for the punishment of the individual, and second, to deter that individual from further commission of crime. This being true, and the fact that our legislatures have in their wisdom fixed different degrees of punishment for practically all crimes, indicates that such degrees were fixed to meet various and different grades of crime. That is, the commission by one indi-

vidual of a certain crime should receive a higher or more severe punishment than the commission of the same crime by some other individual, because oftentimes the one may be atrociously done, while the other might be in the heat of passion, or under extenuating circumstances that would carry a measure of consideration in the matter of punishment, but under the indeterminate sentence law there is no such distinction. The hardened professional criminal gets the same indeterminate sentence as the youth who makes his first mistake.

In fairness to the earnest endeavor of those who can hardly be charged with selfish interest in proposing the repeal of this law, we believe that it is entitled to a little bit more consideration than has been given by the sentimentalists of the state who have discussed it in connection with an-

Abe Martin



I wish Luther Burbank would invent some hotel peas that don't taste like a paper wad. Another whole month of the legislature, and we've got more laws than we kin break now. (Copyright, 1923.)

SUNNY SIDE UP
Take Comfort, nor forget,
That Sunrise never failed us yet,
Celia Thaxter

On occasion we have felt inclined to chide Nebraskans because of their failure to study or properly appreciate the wonders and beauties of their state. Dr. Condra's recent address on "Nebraska the Beautiful," impels us to undertake another little dissertation upon our commonwealth. The tourist season is rapidly approaching, when Nebraskans will board their autos and seek the beyond. Too many of them will seek for the strange and beautiful far beyond Nebraska's borders, but we have hopes that we will be able to persuade some who read this that they should first gaze upon what their own state has to offer.

The great trouble is that most Nebraskans in our stick to the main highways, and all they see is towns and cities and cultivated farms. If they would see wonders of nature they must get away from the main traveled highways. If Nebraskans have never seen the wonders spread by nature along the drives that follow along the Missouri bluffs, when the trees are in full leaf and summer is at its best, they have missed a lot. From Omaha to Hulo, winding through those great bluffs, now in roads where giant trees form an archway above, now looking out across the lowlands to where the Missouri is hurrying to the sea, and then past orchards covering the hillsides.

Many Nebraskans who talk much about the foothills of the Rockies, with their curious formations, have never visited the Pine Ridge country of their own state. They know nothing of the beauties of the Frenchman valley, nothing of the canyons of the Niobrara, nothing of the Bad Lands in the extreme northwestern part of the state. They have never visited the great fossil fields at Axtell, although scientists from all over the world gather there to study the early history of creation.

A ride up the North Platte river is a revelation to the stranger. Mother Nature in her most fantastic mood has carved strange figures from great bluffs that once stood upon the edges of a great river. Chimney Rock, Massacre Canyon, Court-house and Jail Rock, Battleship Rock, Dome Rock, Scotts Bluff. From the summit of Scotts Bluff one can see with the naked eye Laramie Peak 175 miles to the west. From the vantage point of the summit of Scotts Bluff—it is really a mountain—one may turn to the south, looking out over the Wild Cat range, and see nature in the primitive. Pine-clad peaks, darkening canyons, precipitous bluffs. To east and west stretches the most fertile and productive valley in America.

One of the prettiest scenic highways in the country winds its way over the Wild Cat range. Were it in Colorado or Utah, Nebraskans would drive over it by the thousands, and voice their wonder and delight. But it is in Nebraska, therefore Nebraskans know little or nothing about its beauties.

Take it from one who has visited these places time and again, and on every visit has seen something new, something more wonderful, something more inspiring, something that strengthens one's pride in one's state. Time enough to explore other states after you have become fairly familiar with your own.

Try "Seeing Nebraska" this summer. Forget the far-off places for they seldom come up to expectations. To the growing wonder that you have missed so much by not discovering Nebraska long ago, you will add the satisfaction of learning more of our own commonwealth. WILL M. MAUPIN.

other law that has no place with it. R. P. KEELY, Member of the Legislative Committee of the County Attorneys' Association.

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The Word of God fills up the measure of our wants, directs, controls, sustains and comforts through all conditions in life.

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"In a wider appeal to religion and to religious faith is to be found the answer to the growing tendency toward law violations which we see on every hand."
This is the judgment of a group of Omaha men and institutions, who have arranged for a program of appeals for church attendance. The appeal published herewith is third of the series.