

THE WAGEWORKER

Published every Friday by The Wagerworker Publishing Company, 1705 O Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

WILL M. MAUPIN, Editor

E. L. GRUBB, Manager

COMMENT OF THE TIMES

The present campaign in Nebraska presents more complications than all previous campaigns combined. It is at once the dirtiest, the most unfair, the most uncalled for and most ridiculous of all the campaigns in the forty-seven years of Nebraska's statehood. It is not for us to locate the blame for the present unfortunate condition, although we have our own ideas about that matter.

The charge is made that because Mr. Hitchcock forced from the republican ticket in 1901 a man who had borrowed money of Joe Bartley, he should now retire from the ticket himself, it having been shown that Mr. Hitchcock borrowed money of Bartley. Merely for the purpose of keeping the record straight let it be here made known that Mr. Hitchcock had absolutely nothing to do with forcing Gould from the ticket—in fact knew nothing about the case until he saw it in his own paper. The editor of this paper knows something about that whole transaction.

In the first place, Gould was not exposed because he had borrowed money from Bartley, but because, after borrowing it he was ingrate enough to stand up in the republican state convention and vote for a resolution condemning Governor Savage for having paroled Bartley. If there is one man lower in the scale than a yellow dog, it is the man who will accept favors and then turn against the man who granted the favor. That was just what Gould did, and it was his ingratitude that brought about his exposure, not the fact that he had borrowed money from Bartley. "Dick" Metcalfe, E. P. Hunt and the writer of this article know something about that particular case. Hitchcock knew nothing about it whatever.

And what if numerous men did borrow money of Bartley and repay it eventually? Even if it is true that Bartley defrauded the state of a half million dollars—which we have never believed—it is vastly more true that he saved the people of this state untold millions by so using the state's funds—illegally, perhaps—as to bolster up scores of weak and tottering banks and enable them to pull through the horrible panic years. There are scores of Nebraska banks prospering today simply and solely because Joe Bartley saved them by the use of state money. And we have always believed, and believe now, that if Bartley had been left alone instead of being hounded for political effect, he would have made good every dollar of that shortage. He was decreasing it every day from the day he left the state treasuryship up to and including the day of his arrest. And in our humble opinion Joe Bartley today is a far better man than the men who borrowed money of him and then cursed Ezra P. Savage for exercising clemency. We are not so much interested in knowing whether Hitchcock borrowed money of Bartley as we are in knowing that he repaid it if he did borrow it. And we opine he did, if he ever borrowed money from Bartley. If all the bankers of the state were lined up on O street today and every one who borrowed money of Bartley during 1892-95 asked to step one pace to the front, either there would be a pretty general stepping forward or a lot of prevaricators standing still.

It is our firm belief that it is time to drop the Bartley business as a political issue. Bartley suffered to make the republican party strong, and was shoved forward as a political asset by the opponents of the g. o. p. Let those who remember how Bartley saved many a bank from going to the wall at least have enough of human kindness to give him credit for the good he did before damning him for political purposes.

That's a pretty nasty story that they have sprung on Mr. Aldrich. And it was not saved up and sprung on the eve of election, either. There is plenty of time to refute every point that is not well established. Nor is it sufficient to say that even if it is true he has reformed. If we remember rightly the fact that Mr. Dahlman has led a fairly good life since he resumed his own name was not allowed to carry any weight in the minds of those who are so bitterly opposing him. As for us if we had to make choice between a candidate

who shot the seducer of his sister and the candidate who bought false testimony in order to help a designing woman to get rid of the husband of whom she had tired—if we had to make choice between two such candidates we'd be out working like a nailer for the man who killed his sister's seducer.

We frankly confess that our failure to warm up to Mr. Dahlman's candidacy is not due to Mr. Dahlman's personality. Personally we love the man. We cannot, however, warm up to his candidacy on account of the interests that forced his candidacy upon the people. That is the whole thing in a nutshell. Yet we believe that Dahlman is going to be elected.

We have pretty good reason for entertaining that belief, too. The interests that are backing the Dahlman candidacy are working night and day. They are leaving no stone unturned, and they'll get out their full vote on election day. The people who are opposing him are too much given to adopting resolutions, praying without working and neglecting to go to the polls on election day. If Dahlman is such a bad man how comes that he has twice been elected mayor of Omaha? Simply because he polled all of what some people are pleased to term the "vicious element" vote and about half of the so-called "church vote." You simply can not beat that sort of a political combination. It elected Frank E. Moore's mayor of Omaha three times. It elected Dahlman mayor twice—and it is going to elect him governor of Nebraska. The people leading the opposition to Dahlman will pray and sing and shout and exhort—and then forget to do the practical political work that means votes in the ballot box. But the other fellows will not neglect that part. They will do very little singing and perhaps no praying, but they'll be there with the votes on election day—and votes, not prayers, win elections. We may have the wrong diagnosis, but if we have it will be the first time the diagnosis failed in similar cases.

And to think that all this trouble now weighing upon the state was brought about by people too impatient to wait a little longer for a rational solution of the question. It took us thirty years in Nebraska to get a railroad commission worth the name. It took us ten years to get the Australian ballot. It took us fifteen years to get a freight rate law and a reduced passenger rate law. But just because we failed to get the initiative and referendum the first time trying, we were plunged into this county option fight at this time instead of exercising a bit of patience and settling it in practically record time by means of the initiative and referendum. And the result is the dirtiest, nastiest political campaign the state has ever seen. Families are divided, friends of a lifetime separated, business stagnated and the families of good husbands and fathers humiliated by the storm of abuse and vilification hurled at them.

We do not care a fig whether county option does or does not prevail. If it does prevail, however, the liquor interests of the state will have no one to blame but themselves. Their utter disregard of law, of ordinary decency and of civic rights has brought upon their heads the present storm of protest. Had they even half-way obeyed the Slocumb high license law which they now hold up as the best liquor law in the world, they would not now be pushed to extremes to save themselves from utter annihilation. There is only one good feature about the present situation, in our opinion. If county option prevails it will be giving the brewers and distillers a punch that they have had coming for a long time. If it does not prevail this time the mere fact that it was such a menace, and a continuing menace, will have the effect of making the liquor men, for a time at least, pay some heed to the Slocumb law and refrain in a degree from flaunting and flouting public opinion. We'll get some good out of this dirty campaign anyhow.

But while excited somewhat over the county option question, and milling around a bit over the personal records of Dahlman and Aldrich, and wondering what will happen next in the Bartley business, let us not forget that there are several candidates for state office who have not yet been attacked, and who are deserving of consideration. Does anybody know of any good reason why Silas A. Barton should not be re-elected state auditor? And hasn't Grant Martip demonstrated that he would be a mighty good man to promote to the attorney generalship of the state? And hasn't Prof. J. W. Crabtree time and again demonstrated that he is the best possible man to put in charge of the state's public school system? And could you find a more capable or more deserving man to elect to the office of secretary of state than Charley Pool? Having seen political lines "shot all to hell," as our old friend Bud Lindsay says, let's act sensibly this year and throw aside all partisan bias and vote for the best men for the various offices.