

THE WAGEWORKER

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CURT CURRENT COMMENT

Governor-elect Aldrich has begun shaking the "plum tree," and as a result a large number of aspiring patriots are cock-sure the government is going to the deminution how-wows, while a comparative few are prepared to avow and aver that there never was such a wise governor-elect as the gentleman from David City. It all depends upon the point of view. There is but one viewpoint, however, for the man whose interest in the upbuilding of Nebraska is greater than his interest in the success of narrow partisan ideas, and that is that the spoils system is a relic of the dark ages. As long as it exists, however, it is only fair and right that an official should proceed upon the theory that only men of his own party affiliation should be in office.

Under the present system men are appointed because of their ability to "play politics" and not because of their ability to discharge the duties of the various offices to the best advantage of all the state. For this reason the state seldom gets the services of the best men in appointive office—and only now and then the services of really capable men in the elective offices. In the latter case, however, Nebraska has been unusually fortunate during the last decade. This is due to the glorious fact that the independent voter is becoming more numerous—and may his tribe rapidly increase.

The spoils system is responsible for the displacement of Warden Tom Smith, whose services have been remarkably efficient. It puts the Institute for the Feeble Minded at Beatrice in the hands of a country doctor instead of leaving it in the hands of an experienced and successful superintendent. The same game of politics leaves the Kearney Institute in the hands of a man who has shown no particular fitness for the position, either as an educator or as a disciplinarian. Every two years for the past decade changing administrations have kept the state institutions and the several departments in a chaotic condition, and as a result the taxpayers suffer, the wards the state suffer and only politicians profit. All talk about economy in the administration of state affairs will be worse than idiotic until the spoils system is relegated to the rear.

Adjutant General Hartigan steps down and out the first of the year, after making a record of which he and the state may well be proud. The only pleasant thing about General Hartigan's retirement is the fact that so good a man as Major Phelps is appointed to succeed him. General Hartigan has whipped the Nebraska National Guard into some semblance of a military organization instead of a heterogenous mass of incompetents. He should have been left in to complete the work so well begun. But a better successor than Major Phelps could not have been selected, and Governor Aldrich may count himself fortunate in having a Phelps at hand.

Of course the incoming democratic legislature will do just as all former legislatures have done—load down the pay roll with a lot of useless appointees, and thus make the state at large pay a lot of political debts. There will be first lord of the cuspidors, a couple of first assistant lords of the cuspidores, and three or four second assistant lords of the cuspidors to do the work. There will be useless doorkeepers, and gate keepers and superintendents of cloakrooms, and superintendents of closets, and doorkeepers for the galleries, and assistants for all of them. There will be 133 legislators, and twice that many appointees, all on a healthy per diem, with lots of idle time. Any business firm that would load itself up with so many idle and useless clerks and assistants would go into bankruptcy in mighty short order. Yet the state will keep up that sort of foolishness until the end of time.

For instance, there are the enrolling and engrossing committees of house and senate. The law insists that all bills shall be engrossed in pen and ink, and as a result these two committees will eat up

about \$100 a day. Two expert typewriters in each committee could do the work a whole lot better and with vastly greater promptness. But that would make it impossible for a lot of 2x4 legislators to pay political debts—at the expense of the taxpayers. A session of the Nebraska legislature costs the state just twice as much as it should, and the results are less than half what they should be if business were conducted on a business basis.

Everybody around the state house will rejoice that Mr. Husted, executive clerk in the governor's office, has been retained by Governor-elect Aldrich. Mr. Husted has been in that position for ten years, under three or four administrations. It is to be hoped that he will be a fixture therein for many years to come, unless something better shows up for him. There isn't a man around the state house who is more popular, and it is because he is always ready to accommodate, always on duty, and always willing to render a service.

Louis V. Guye, who succeeds the writer as deputy labor commissioner, is a union man of Omaha, and has been identified with the labor movement for years. If the incoming legislature provides as it should for the Bureau of Labor Census and Industrial Statistics, then the writer will congratulate Mr. Guye; if it does not, then Mr. Guye will have the writer's heartfelt sympathy.

Governor Shallenberger puts his finger on the real meaning of the insurgent movement when he says that it is vastly more than the mere reformation of the house rules. In doing this Governor Shallenberger took a rap at Congressman Norris, whose address at the recent teachers' banquet would naturally lead the public to believe that he took insurgency's whole aim to be merely the reformation of the aforesaid house rules. The voters of the country did not revolt against the house rules. Their revolt was against the absolute betrayal of their confidence by the republican party; against the whole rotten system of taxing the public at large to enrich a few manufacturers combined into rapacious trusts; against an autocracy that has made a farce of our boasted democracy. A mere change in the house rules would amount to nothing if "insurgency" stopped there.

The American Economist, a high protective tariff organ maintained by the beneficiaries of the protective tariff, remarks that when Abraham Lincoln was asked his views regarding the policy of protection, he replied:

"I do not know much about the Tariff, but I know this much; when we buy manufactured goods abroad we get the goods and the foreigner gets the money. When we buy manufactured goods at home we get both the goods and the money."

We defy the American Economist to prove that Abraham Lincoln ever said it. That quotation is not to be found in any of Lincoln's printed speeches or public documents. We do not believe he ever said it, for the reason that it is not a true statement. It is a false assumption, so long reiterated that many people believe it, and which has cost them untold millions in tribute to the eminent and wise gentlemen who maintain the American Economist as a medium for the dissemination of their falsehoods.

Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, has been called hence. Much has been written of this woman in recent years, a great deal of it unkind, more of it unchristian and mighty little of it scientific. The writer is not a Christian Scientist, believing that what Mrs. Eddy was pleased to call by that name is purely natural, and capable of demonstration by any one regardless of their beliefs in this or that system or religion. But this the writer does know: Christian science as practiced by the followers of Mrs. Eddy has cured the hopelessly sick, it has made good men of confirmed drunkards, it has made happy thousands of homes that were little hells on earth, it has carried joy and happiness into places that knew them not, and it has helped thousands to the road to right living and clean thinking. Whether it is "christian" or "scientific," or neither, we care not. We are of those who measure things by their results—and Christian Science has shown results. What care we what the name may be?

The census reveals that while Nebraska was gaining 125,914 in population during the last decade, Iowa was losing about 11,000. The very reasons that caused Iowa to lose in population should have caused Nebraska to gain more than it did. People left Iowa by the thousands on account of the high prices of farm land, the crowded condition of the farms, and the lack of opportunities for new beginners in agricultural pursuits. If Nebraska had acted wisely she could have caught many of those enterprising and migratory Iowans on the fly. As it was the Iowans passed through the state