

NEBRASKA

Occasionally one comes across a theory that the collection of debts by law should be abolished. Let the payment of a debt be wholly voluntary. Then credit would be extended only to the honest, there would be no expensive litigation, and only rarely an unpaid debt; so goes the argument. It is the contrary view that the retail merchants take in asking the legislature to make it possible to collect debts by force of law in circumstances wherein now the debtor is exempt. The present law, by which a married man with a good salary can defy his creditors, puts a premium on fraud, so they argue, and not without excellent foundation. These two views with variations will no doubt divide men as long as men buy things on "tick." If first one view prevailed and then the other the general results in the long run would probably diverge less widely than one might suppose.

Clearly, the Nebraska house of representatives will never vote in favor of woman suffrage so long as a majority are convinced that family peace lies in the other direction. So far as the explanations indicate of the vote on the proposition to memorialize congress to pave the way for a sixteenth amendment granting national woman suffrage, family discord is the grisly fear that haunts the minds of most of the members. The British suffragists, quicker for once than their American cousins, have grasped this disposition of the male mind and are taking the logical course. This week the parliament house has been beset by crowds of clamorous women, demanding suffrage not at the expense of peace, but as the price of peace. This policy was first inaugurated a year ago at the suggestion of the then Prime Minister Balfour. "Stir up trouble," said Mr. Balfour, "that is the way to get what you want." George Meredith, the famous novelist, gave the same advice. "The mistake of the women," he said, "is to suppose that John Bull will move sensibly for a solitary kick. It is only by the repetition of this method of enlivening him that John Bull can be persuaded to move at all." Philip Snowden, an influential member of the house of commons, predicts that the present parliament will grant the demands of the suffragists, saying: "But how soon depends entirely upon the persistency of the exertions of the agitators." This persistency the women are now attending to with full zeal. Already over two-thirds of the members of parliament, perhaps not as a consequence of this activity, but it seems partly so, are said to have committed themselves to passing a woman suffrage bill before the end of the present parliament. Should the Nebraska suffragists take to English ways the members of the next Nebraska legislature may vote for suffrage for the sake of peace as this week they voted against it for the same reason.

H. M. Bushnell has the following to say on an interesting phase of the county option question: "County option should stand or fall on the county vote proposition. To divide the county into districts, as proposed by some of the legislators, would leave the conditions practically as they are now. If the people of a county under county option vote against license in the county every town in that county would then stand on the same basis. The contest for saloons on the theory that they would hold the local trade would be eliminated from each town because the saloons would be eliminated from all the towns of the county. As the conditions are now, under the present law, there is a constant strife between towns adjacent to each other with the pro-license people all the while using the unworthy argument that each town must hold on to the saloon system for fear of losing the farmer patronage. As it is now, every dry town in the state has a saloon faction clamoring and plotting from year to year, using all the while this old exploded theory that the rival town is more prosperous and attracting more farmers because it has saloons. County option would put all the towns in the county on the same basis and these annual struggles in each town, and the feuds and bad feelings engendered by them would largely disappear."

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"I think the business men over the state are coming more and more to see that county option is a practical way to settle the saloon question in the small towns and villages especially, so that the business people in these towns will not be constantly divided over the saloon question. The saloon question is the cause of a contention every year in half a dozen towns of a county, whereas, if the county as a whole could vote and settle the question it would be settled fully throughout the whole county and the business public in each town having no quarrel pending over the wet or the dry proposition would turn its energies towards the growth of the town and the working out of business enterprises. There is nothing today in the state of Nebraska that deadens the growth and progress of towns, and that divides the business men more than the ever recurring contention on the saloon question. The county option law would eliminate this annual strife. This reason alone, if there were no other, is enough to justify such a law. The town that has a quarrel on hand all the time over the saloon question is not an inviting town to which good citizens come either for homes or for investment. The men in the state senate who opposed the county option bill because it would make the saloon question an issue in each county every two years evidently overlooked the fact that as it is now we have this saloon question not every two years in each county but every year in every town of every county in the state."

"There is a strong demand for money," says a Lincoln banker. "It comes from the country, but that does not necessarily mean from the farmer. Once in a while a farmer is found who is a speculator and a borrower, but the majority of them have money they can put their fingers on when needed. The demand will increase about March 1, when many real estate deals in the state will be closed. A great many changes in ownership of Nebraska property are being recorded and these take money, and the effect of the change is being felt by Lincoln banks."

Relating to the amount of money in the country a banker reports a stock sale in the vicinity of Wymore, where \$1,600 worth of stock was sold and where notes to the amount of \$160 only were offered in payment. He explains this in this way: "The farmer may not have the money but he can go to his banker and get it, if his credit is good, on his plain note. The banker knows him, knows his resources and his disposition to pay, and is ready to loan him money. If he goes to the sale and offers a note he is compelled to ask someone to sign the note with him. The average farmer dislikes to ask his neighbor to sign a note with him, and the result is that he gets money of his banker. Then, too, many farmers keep ready money in the bank which they check against. Sometimes their relations with their banker are so close that their check is good whether they have money on deposit at that time or not. Your country banker knows more about the financial situation of the people in his neighborhood than the city banker knows about his patrons. The patron of the country bank tells his financial troubles and successes to his banker and the city patron often hides these things from his money loaning friend."

The big business concerns of Lincoln are growing in a truly metropolitan way with the new year. The Hardy Furniture company is about to move into a new store on O street between Thirteenth and Fourteenth that will be a revelation to the people who have been buying of the house since 1870. The Rudge & Guenzel company is building a four-story store on O street between Tenth and Eleventh, and now the tenants on the second floor of the Miller & Paine building are preparing to move out to make room for another story and bigger departments there. There is progress all along the line in the retail section of Lincoln, and just as much in the jobbing district. It is expected that not only one but perhaps two wholesale dry goods companies may be organized in the next two months.

Attorney General W. T. Thompson and Deputy Attorney General W. P. Rose, having been directed by Governor Sheldon to bring a suit to test the right of the governor to accept the use of the house bought by order of the legislature for the use of the governor, have performed that duty and have filed a brief in the supreme court of the state setting forth argument why the governor is prevented by the constitution from receiving anything other than his salary. The attorneys assert that while the constitution makers might have been influenced by wrongs committed by

state officers, they did not leave the legislature with power to confer upon the governor the right to use a house owned by the state, the state to furnish light and heat and a servant in addition to the governor's salary.

The suit is on behalf of the state to recover from Governor George L. Sheldon \$100 rent for the month of January for the residence set aside for him by act of the legislature. It is argued by the state's attorneys that the governor's compensation is limited by the constitution to \$2,500 a year and he cannot lawfully receive any additional. The case is presented to the court on demurrer by Governor Sheldon, who is the defendant to the state's petition. The argument of the attorney general contains the following statements:

House rental, light, heat and services of an employe, when gratuitously furnished by the state for the individual use and benefit of the governor, are perquisites of office or compensation, and acceptance thereof, in addition to his salary, is a violation of the constitution.

The Wisconsin railroad commission decides the passenger fare matter by ordering the railroads to establish a rate of two and a half cents a mile, instead of the flat two cent rate that had been largely demanded. A further request is made that family books be sold at the rate of 500 miles for \$10, or two cents a mile. Like Nebraska, Wisconsin has a large area of thinly settled territory, as well as a considerable area where the people are numerous and the towns are populous and prosperous. When the commission comes to the decision that it cannot enforce a two cent fare generally, and is willing to take the next best thing, the decision is at least a hint to Nebraska not to make the rate law so drastic and inflexible that there is danger of losing it all. It is best not to risk everything on a single throw.

One of the first lessons in the text book of philosophy which Nebraska pupils were put to studying when that subject was first made compulsory for public schools, some twenty years ago, illustrated the transmission of energy. Let several ivory balls be suspended by strings so as to hang in a straight row touching each other, said the book. Raise the ball at one end and let it drop against the second ball. The second and the third and the fourth balls will not be moved, but only the last one in the row. Croquet was a popular game in those days, and all children of scientific mind proved the assertion to their complete satisfaction by testing it with a row of croquet balls. An interesting effort to divert this law to uses hardly anticipated by the students of those days is now being made by the opponents of the two-cent railroad fare. A two-cent fare for South Dakota and Nebraska, they argue, is impossible because these states have a less dense population than Iowa and Missouri and the other states east. Iowa and Missouri should not hope for a two-cent fare, their legislatures have already been told, because their population is not so dense as that of Illinois and other states east. Mr. Felton, president of the Alton road, has just finished explaining that Illinois has a less dense population than the states farther east, a complete bar to two-cent fares. Indiana, of course, has a less dense population than Ohio, and should not aspire to a two-cent fare. While Ohio, which already has the two-cent fare in successful operation is distinctly the last ball in the row. Ohio alone flies out of line from the impetus started back on the Rocky mountain slope and transmitted through the intervening states. It is not yet certain, however, that the intermediate states are to remain as quiescent as croquet balls.

"At prevailing prices few farms are paying 5 per cent on the investment or on the asking price," says a central Kansas banker. "Prices are based rather on the desire for a home than on worth as producers." This has stopped investment and driven speculators to the cities to buy town lots in hope of a rise. The same is true of much of Nebraska farm land. An observer of panics states that the regular order of march is farm boom, city boom, lull, crash.

Two ideas obtain among business men with reference to Sunday baseball and the saloon question. One party believes in liberal laws and a laxity of law enforcement to encourage strangers to come to Lincoln and spend their money. The other party insists that there is more money for Lincoln in the strict enforcement of strict regulations, even if the matter is not argued from a moral standpoint at all. These people hold that a large share of Lincoln's growth in the last few years is due to the reputation the city has as a clean residence city. They say that the thing to do is to be as different from Omaha as possible, and that it will pay in dollars and cents. It is a fact that one of the big reasons a successful school man gives for wanting to come and take the old Western normal plant is the moral

reputation of Lincoln. He says it brings students here in large numbers.

The university is now constructing in its own shops a telescope of twelve inches aperture and eighteen feet focal length. This would be regarded by professional telescope makers as a rather ambitious undertaking, since the machinery for operating a large telescope, while massive, must yet be "built like a watch." Professor Richards is confident, however, that the work of building the mechanical parts, even including such delicate work as graduating the circles and building the driving clock, can be successfully done in the university shops.

The grinding and polishing of the object glass, twelve inches in diameter, was completed some time ago by Dr. C. S. Minnich of Palmer, Neb. The two discs of optical glass, one of crown and one of flint glass required for the lens, were imported from the famous Jena glass works in Germany, one of the two or three establishments in the world which are able to make these large blocks of glass of a texture perfect enough for telescope lenses. The cost of these two discs of rough glass was about \$200.

It required several months' work of an exceedingly critical sort to so grind and finish these glass blocks that the rays of light passing through all parts of the twelve-inch lens will be bent to meet at a common point eighteen feet away. Optical tests were made from time to time by Professor Swezey during the progress of the work and the lens has been back and forth several times between Lincoln and Palmer for this purpose. For the

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