

purpose of making these tests the lens was set up in the long, dark tunnel under the Physics building and a tiny point of light, like an artificial star, was formed by the sun's image reflected from the polished surface of a thermometer bulb; this point of light was examined through the lens and the accuracy with which the rays of light were brought to a focus was tested for different parts of the lens. But using in addition a glass prism, the action of the lens on each of the several colors of which light is composed was separately tested.

In the earlier tests it was found that the central parts of the lens had slightly too much curvature, although the error was so small that rays of light from the different parts of the lens came together in the same point in the focal plane within less than one one-hundredth of an inch. Some idea of the precision called for in modern optical work may be formed from the fact that this imperfection meant the removal of a film of glass only about one one-thousandth of an inch in thickness from the surface of the lens. Dr. Minnich at once said that he could reduce even this small error; and he has succeeded in doing so; the final tests for this "spherical aberration," as it is called, showed that the rays of light from different parts of the lens when brought to a focus at a distance of eighteen feet away now fall within one one-thousandth of an inch of the same point in the focal plane, so that they might be hidden behind a grain of sand one-tenth as large as the dot over this letter "i."

The machinery for operating this big optic tube will constitute an up-to-date mounting, combining some of the excellences and conveniences for manipulation which have been devised in recent years by several of our leading telescope makers. Before designing this mounting Professor Swezey made a careful study of three of the large telescopes in the west, each built by a different maker. The detailed designs are being prepared by one of the students who has already completed the drawings for about half of the several hundred parts of the mechanism.

The Nebraska press is apparently as nearly unanimous in favor of the county option as it has been in favor of anti-pass, direct primary and freight rate legislation; and that is saying a great deal. The position of the Beatrice Times is typical. To quote: "It cannot be gainsaid that the people in the rural districts have an interest on one side or the other in the question of whether saloons shall be run in the towns where they trade. The magnitude of this interest in comparison with the interest of the people living immediately in such towns should, it would seem, determine the general propriety or impropriety of county local option as a matter of principle. The Times inclines to the belief that the best way to settle this question is for all interests to discuss it with a view of reaching a sane conclusion. There is one point that should not be lost sight of. It is this: Morally, there is no defense for the open saloon except that of expediency. Gradually, but surely, it is becoming outlawed in all parts of the country outside of the large cities and other localities dominated by some special interest. No step toward its annihilation is too drastic unless it is overdone to the benefit of the saloon. With these facts in mind, the people of Nebraska ought to make free to let their legislators at Lincoln know their wishes on the question of local option, inasmuch as it was not an issue in the late campaign."

A FEW FIGURES.

Farm hands in England are not migratory. A certain farm in Wiltshire has a regular staff of six men and two boys who have served for the following periods: Forty six years 8 months, 44 years 8 months, 32 years 8 months, 26 years 7 months, 14 years 11 months, 4 years 11 months, 5 years 6 months, 3 years 9 months. There is thus an aggregate of 179 years of service.

Immigrants into Canada for the past year numbered, according to the London Times, 215,912, an increase of 71,294 on the previous year. Of these immigrants the British numbered 95,257, those from the United States 63,781 and those from the continent of Europe 53,874.

Official statistics show that seventy-five people lost their lives while climbing the Alps last year. The total number of killed and injured is at least 200.

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* LEGISLATIVE *

The direct primary bill will be presented to the legislature early in the week. As drafted, it contains in the main the ideas of the Dodge bill and a number of provisions in a bill drafted by Representative E. P. Brown. The principles of the Dodge bill have been tried in Douglas county where there has been very little fault finding with those who have looked at results and counted them by the general character of the nominees.

Many members of the legislature, who are now working for the direct primary are doing so because of the platform planks of the two parties. At the meeting of the joint committee a number were inclined to shy at the primary idea because of its novelty and yet wherever in the state there has been a primary the people have been satisfied.

Representative Baker of York county is a true disciple of Roosevelt, having a family of twelve boys and two girls.

One of the notable developments of the session has been the apparent unanimity of interest between the old and the new telephone companies. The bill calling all telephone companies common carriers would fall as heavily upon the independent concerns as upon the Bell interests. In neither house or senate has the measure been reported out of the committee. This common interest was noticed at the outset when opposition was manifested by each company to the physical connection bill.

Representative Dodge of Douglas sat last Friday evening in the big house committee room just outside the room where the finance ways and means committee was listening to the arguments of Lincoln ladies in favor of the orthopedic hospital. He heard the earnestness of their pleas and remarked: "I'm glad they did not get at me." Mr. Dodge had just a few hours before dictated a bill for the removal of the hospital from Lincoln to Omaha.

A problem that is puzzling the members of the legislature or one that will soon give them much trouble, is the question of appropriations for the maintenance of the state government. The last legislature appropriated over \$3,000,000 for the biennium. It is thought by some that this legislature may have to exceed the amount given by the last legislature. It is argued that the cost of living is increasing, that the needs of the state are increasing owing to an increase in the number of wards of the state, and yet there is a desire on the part of the legislators to keep the expenses down to the lowest possible point.

It has struck members forcibly that the demand for new salaried positions is beyond that confronting any other legislature. There has been objection to the maintenance of some of the state departments now existing, yet in the face of this there are bills before the legislature creating many new departments, many of which will cost considerable money and if once created may never be abolished. There are bills creating additional salaried positions in the food commissioner's department, creating a fire commission to inquire into the origin of fires, and a bee commission. The railway commission was created by the adoption of a constitutional amendment last fall.

The voices of railroad men, so often attuned to tones of command, were with great difficulty brought down to the tremulo of appeal at the recent public hearings. J. E. Kelby, attorney for the Burlington had the greatest difficulty of any to put tears in his voice, but a large majority of his hearers, and a majority of the members of the legislature, have not yet got done talking about his statement that the railroads had pondered and even grieved because they could find no way whereby they could get back any of their taxes after they had once been paid. Hence they have not paid their taxes since 1904, when the new revenue law went into effect. It has occurred to some of the members that the railroads might have thought of that simple method which individual taxpayers are compelled to follow, that of paying the taxes assessed against them and then proceeding in the courts to recover whatever part may have been assessed illegally. Still, some lawyers say it can't be done.

Senator Clarke of Adams made an earnest effort last week to have the senate approve his bill abolishing capital punishment and instead of the present optional law, require that persons convicted of murder in the first degree be sentenced to the penitentiary for life. He failed, but he predicted that the time would come when the

death sentence would be abolished for some other punishment, as was the rack and the screw and the beheading machine. Epperson of Clay, although generally a mild mannered man, made a speech in which he said he would willingly go to the penitentiary and help the warden hang some of his candidates for a necktie party. He mentioned a Buffalo county man as one who ought to have been put to death, but said this man is now alive in the penitentiary waiting for the time when some governor will pardon him and set him free upon society. Senator Epperson said if he were a governor and there was a law like the one in Kansas he would take a day off and issue orders to hang a bunch of candidates for the death sentence. Aldrich of Butler, opposed the bill on the ground that a life sentence means in Nebraska an average imprisonment of about seven years.

When the first public hearing on primary matters was granted, Representative Wilson of Custer asked why, under the primary system, the republican party of Lincoln could not produce a man good enough to be elected mayor, with the big republican majority, and why Omaha was given over to the democrats at the same time. Representative Clarke of Douglas in answering the questions, mentioned that a law governing the selection of candidates was meant to bring out the expression of the people. It was not a law for a party, but one for the public at large. In Omaha the question involved at the city election was "beer or more beer," and "more beer" won. Lincoln citizens explained that excise and corporation problems complicated the contest here in a similar manner.

But in Lincoln the full history of the primary in the last ten years is the most complete vindication for the system that anybody could ask. It has cleaned up the politics of the town, taken the city offices away from the old-fashioned bosses, and on the whole has given the people a clean and efficient government. Up to ten years ago the D. E. Thompson gas machine controlled the city. In 1895 or thereabouts the council was induced to take snap judgment one night, extending for five years a lighting contract that did not expire for about six months. That is a sample of the way the old-fashioned bosses managed things when they owned the council. Everybody in Lincoln knows that the

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most potent factor in bringing about the change has been the direct primary.

Some of the members of the state railroad commission refuse to get excited over the various forms proposed for the 2-cent fare law. "If the law holds fire in the courts," it is pointed out, "all well and good. It didn't need the Brown amendment. If the law is knocked out, the commission still has the power to put a reduced rate into effect wherever the business will justify it. If the commission and the law are both knocked out, then it will be necessary to start all over again, anyway."

DANGER IN RAW PORK.

LINCOLN, Neb., Feb. 19.—To the Editor of The Independent: The recent cases of trichinosis occurring in this state at Hastings and Fremont emphasize the fact that pork eaten raw, or even not thoroughly cooked, is dangerous to life. No law could be passed by the legislature that would compel a bacteriological examination of every carcass that was killed for home consumption, and it is only in this way the trichina can be discovered and the meat products condemned. For this reason we must depend upon the press of the state to make known to the people in the most public way the danger there is in eating raw pork. This knowledge should also be taught in all schools, and a full discussion of the subject then be had in our homes. (Signed) S. K. SPALDING, State Health Inspector.

What crazy things people do under the head of "trading!" It is usually a good thing to be suspicious of a man who is always "trading;" such men are often unreliable.



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