

With straight face and earnest mien the railroad representatives assure the legislature that to make the railroads pay the city taxes which they now escape would rot the country people.

President Lincoln once asked a friend: "If you call a sheep's tail a leg, how many legs would a sheep have?"

"Five," replied the listener. "No," said Lincoln, "calling a sheep's tail a leg does not make it one."

Evidently the railroads hope that the legislature and the people of Nebraska are ready, like Lincoln's friend, to count the sheep's tail as a leg because the railroads choose to call it one.

A department store for the exclusive patronage of colored people is being fitted up at considerable expense in a favorable location in New York. The building has been secured by a corporation owned by colored men, and a mercantile company similarly financed will be in charge of the business. This is a reminder that cool headed students of the race problem of the south are beginning to hold out the hope that as soon as the colored people advance a step or two economically their patronage will be sought by the white business men, and then they will have the strongest sort of club to use in winning for themselves political rights. Perhaps this six story department store—in case it prove a financial success—will offer a needed demonstration of the value of the trade of the colored people.

French human nature would have to be very different from the sort found in other countries if French financial interests tamely submitted to the passage of the proposed income tax law in France. The news that they are exerting every effort to defeat the bill, even though it involve a ministerial crisis, is not at all unexpected. Russia, the United States, Belgium, Hungary and Portugal are the only important countries besides France where the income tax is not firmly established, and the French financiers do not want to forsake this company. The reason is not far to seek. They can dodge their other taxes directly by raising rents or interest, as money lenders do when mortgages are taxed. But a tax on their incomes they have no way of making anybody else pay. Moreover, incomes below \$1,000 are exempt, so that the poorer people not only cannot have the rich men's taxes shifted to their shoulders, but do not even share in the tax proportionately to their own little incomes. The present government in France is not particularly responsible to pressure from financial interests however, and the chances are strongly in favor of the final success of the bill.

Naval warfare is becoming so complicated as well as costly that the nations of the world may soon be compelled to resort to The Hague for a perpetual guarantee of their rights in order to save themselves from bankruptcy. Besides building Dreadnaughts, the British admiralty is now planning for fleets of air ships and submarines to work in connection with them. The airships are able to detect the presence of hostile submarines, and to give warning of their presence by means of wireless telegraphy. The battleships are to keep in touch with the submarines by signal bells that are easily heard through the water. When an attack is contemplated the air ships give notice to the battle ships of the location and movements of the enemy, the battle ship signals to its own submarines, and the attack is made under water with eyes that are located at a distance and far up in the air. All of this is given in the most matter of fact manner by the London Express. The British public pays the bills of all these expensive experiments because it is supposed to be necessary for the salvation of the empire to have a strong enough fleet to whip any two or three nations that could combine against the lady who "rules the wave."

Be of good cheer; with all of their absurdities of theory and practice, the great medical men of the world are slowly but surely emerging out of the woods and coming to exercise a vast deal of sense. They are beginning to look for the needle over the territory where it was lost.

The famous surgeon Dr. Nicholas Senn has of late years taken a deep interest in the cancer problem and after visiting the primitive peoples of the far north and of darkest Africa, he makes the statement that there is no cancer among the Eskimo, and so little of it among the natives of the dark continent that he feels safe in saying that the primitive races are immune; that it is a disease of civilization, due to overindulgence. "Cancer," he says, "is nothing more or less than the extraordinary development of tissue due to overnutrition." Look out there, you fat man leading a sedentary life and eating enough to nourish a horse. The doctor says the only way to cure a cancer is to starve these exuberant tissues. This may readily be done if

the work is commenced in time. Better yet is his prescription for civilization intended as a preventive of these fungoid tissue developments. "Back to nature," is the full interpretation of his remarks along that line. Lead the simple life. Avoid the excesses and dissipations common to our social communion. Eat to live. Exercise to give the muscles healthful tonicity. Drink in the sunlight and the air and keep the body clean and the mind free from worry. In thus making yourself immune from cancer and other formidable and fatal maladies, you dodge the thousand and one petty distempers that send you to the drug store for condition powders or to the boozery for something to make you feel better.

BAD HABITS.

In legislation, as in other affairs of life, bad habits are extremely hard to shed. Here at home we have the wolf bounty and a few other less marked old fads of legislators which come along biennially to disclose the frailties of our lawmakers and refuse to be ignored.

In congress we have the free seed distribution graft, which is even more persistent. It is now more than a dozen years since J. Sterling Morton, then secretary of agriculture, started congress by denouncing free seed distribution as a graft, and each recurring two years period has seen it come up with a smiling face and refuse to be knocked down.

Even the present session of congress, which has manifested an impulse toward reform in many directions, was unable to deny this antique abuse of official power, although nowhere in the United States could there be detected a shadow of a demand for free seeds. There is hardly a newspaper in the country which, if it has mentioned the subject at all, has not either denounced this free seed graft or made sport of it as something too cheap for countenance.

Yet it is not cheap for the government. Congress spends annually large sums for seeds, paying extravagant prices for an article that is not always reliable, to serve no other purpose whatever than to send a few people in each district who do not want them and are merely sent as a reminder by the congressman to his constituent that the great man in Washington has not forgotten his friends. The congressman might just as well send a comic valentine. It would cost the government less money and do the constituent and the congressman just exactly as much real good.

Speaker Cannon seems to have realized the popular contempt for the free seed graft, for when the measure came up in the house he managed to be busy elsewhere. Other members were not so careful of their record, probably because they believed that the matter was too small a graft to excite much popular resentment. Every recipient of these seeds ought to send them right back with an expression of disapproval of the graft.

THE PRIMARY BILL.

Under the direct primary planks of the republican, democratic and populist platforms there were left to the legislature two main points in a primary bill to be settled. These were the questions of whether the statewide direct primary should make plurality or majority nominations, and whether the "open" primary or the "closed" primary should be provided. The open primary permits the voter to choose in secret the party whose primary ticket he votes. The closed primary requires him to state publicly his party affiliations as a condition of voting the primary ticket of his party.

There is something to be said on both sides of these questions. The ideal would be majority nominations under a system of voting first and second choice, but this so complicates the voting and counting as to make it seem impracticable to many of the best friends of the primary. Likewise the ideal would be the open primary. But the open primary has its possible drawbacks and so long as people are wedded to the idea of close party organization, will have its bitter opponents. The difference in either case is by no means sufficient to justify division among the friends of the direct primary.

The bill drafted by the special committee on direct primary conforms with the platform promises. Except in one respect it follows closely the Wisconsin and Oregon laws, both now in successful operation. It provides plurality nominations, as do the laws of these states, and improves upon these laws by providing rotation of names upon the ballot where there are many candidates. Unlike the Wisconsin law, however, the Nebraska bill calls for the closed primary.

Except on one point the closed primary provisions of the bill are made as unobjectionable as could be, even to those who favor the open primary. In order to vote a primary ticket the intending voter has only to answer the general question, "What political party do you desire to affiliate with?"

This covers the claim of the advocates of the closed primary, and yet it is not offensively inquisitorial, since the general party affiliations of most voters are not only no secret but a matter of more or less pride. The provisions for challenging voters may contain elements of danger, and need careful scrutiny from the members of both houses.

LAWYER'S FEES.

That is not at all a bad suggestion of a correspondent writing as a constituent of Senator Burns and asking that a law be enacted limiting attorney fees to five dollars a day. Perhaps the lawyers will hardly see the merit of the proposition, but about everyone else who has ever become tangled up in the courts will be able to discern them with half an eye.

As matters now stand it takes a marvellous degree of courage for one to get into the courts, and unfortunately courage is not all it takes by any means. No man has any right to think of voluntarily going to law unless he has a good balance on the credit side of his bank account. But he who goes voluntarily to law is a prize winner when compared to the man who gets in through the choice of some one else.

The volunteer litigant has time to frame up a bargain with his lawyer, and if the prospect doesn't look good to him, he can drop the scheme. But it is not so with the involuntary litigant. There is a story of a man who said he liked pie, and that he always cut a pie in two and ate both halves. The average lawyer knows just what the point of that story is.

Law and the services of attorneys are something of a necessity. The most timid and peaceable persons are sometimes forced into the courts. When such necessities arise they must have lawyers. Most of us can recall cases wherein litigants have been compelled to pay fees that were scandalously high. The members of the bar doubtless invented the system so long pursued by the railways of exacting all the traffic will bear. They proceed upon the theory that the person who has a just cause would rather give them the lion's share of it than lose it all for lack of their services.

What is said of the lawyer in this connection may be said of the members of several other professions, though perhaps not so aptly. The doctor often measures his fee by the ability of the patient to pay. He takes all the traffic will bear.

So that, as an abstract proposition, the law has as much right to regulate the fee of the lawyer and the doctor as it has to regulate public service charges. But when the day comes that our lawyer can only mulet us for \$5 a day, it will pay us even better than it does now not to have any lawyer.

A VETERAN CORRESPONDENT.

In the large number of biographies dealing with the civil war period that have made their appearance in the last ten years, especially in the south, frequent references are found to "Bull Run" Russell, the English correspondent who won his title by his merciless criticism of the northern troops after their first important engagement. He was also as frank as the typical Briton in dealing with the south, and both sections were well enough pleased when he was recalled by the London Times a year or so after the beginning of the war. It is now known that Russell wrote good history, but the fact could not be admitted at the time because neither side was then in a mood to have its deficiencies pointed out.

While this visit is the thing that will naturally rise in the minds of Americans when they read of the death of Sir William Howard Russell of London, in his eighty-seventh year, it was a small episode in the life of a famous war correspondent and military authority. He was sent to the United States at the opening of the civil war not to make a reputation but because he had already won fame in the Crimea. During the last sixty years, until the Spanish American war, in fact, he was an observer of virtually all important armed conflicts. The result of his life work is a dozen volumes of well written, vivid history, to say nothing of a great collection of war trophies and decorations.

BUILDERS TOO SLOW.

Vice President Worthington of the Wabash railway has come to the front with a new assignment of the responsibility for the shortage of rolling stock. He says that if the railways have not kept pace with the general industrial advancement of the country, it is due much to the failure of a part of the manufacturing industry to develop as rapidly as has been needed.

This railway official states that it has been impossible to secure 1,000 additional cars in an order from any car builder for any one road, or fifty locomotives from an engine builder for one road, at any single time in the past ten years. Another executive railroad officer has stated that it has been impossible to secure steel rails to build the trackage that has been

needed. Mr. Worthington says that James J. Hill struck the keynote of the situation when he declared recently that what the railroads needed was more trackage and equipment. It was Worthington's expressed opinion that the railroads of the country need just twice their present equipment and four times their present trackage, but that development along that line is being held back by the disability of car and locomotive builders and steel rail manufacturers to produce the materials.

This handicap to the efficiency of the railroads is not limited to the lesser lines, but the most comprehensive and wealthiest roads of the country feel the condition sharply.

The county option law, still pending in the legislature, has aroused a general discussion among the Lincoln lawyers and such as have come in from other parts of the state to visit the legislature. The bill already defeated in the senate and still pending in the house has been objected to by attorneys as unconstitutional for the reason that this bill does not repeal that section of the Slocumb law it is intended to replace. Even the lawyers themselves find it difficult to formulate a bill which will settle the question of whether or not there shall be saloons in the town when the county has voted wet with a local sentiment in the town and a town council that is dry. If Clay county, for example, voting on the saloon question under a county option law should vote wet then how would you get a saloon in Fairfield where the anti-saloon sentiment is overwhelming and where the town board is against saloons?

Along with the discussion of the county option proposition there is also considerable talk among the lawyers and local politicians of Lincoln as to the regulation of the saloon system here. Whatever happens in the legislature the city government of Lincoln must go on and it is becoming more and more the consensus of opinion that Lincoln, as a great college center, must steadily progress toward stricter regulation and gradual strangulation of the liquor traffic. In a discussion among a number of attorneys the idea was advanced that the Winneti theory of closing in upon the saloon business by gradually lessening the number of saloons and increasing the license could be ultimately developed into a condition where the saloon was nothing more nor less than a store where whisky and beer could be bought but not used on the premises.

The man a girl has the least use for is the one who asks permission to kiss her.

The owner of a fierce dog is sure it never bites except under great provocation.

The trouble is, so many women accept the estimate of women in the magazine stories.

The boy who is fond of Good Literature is never very popular with anyone but his aunt.

The man who accepts a situation usually gets less out of it than the man who takes a job.

The surest sign of old age is when comfort begins to count for more than appearances.

A wife's objections to her husband's beard do not count for as much in curing him in ten years as the first grey hair.

It is said of an Atchison brag that any one can be as smart and as rich as he is simply by being as big a story teller.

Atchison welcomes newcomers, but regrets very much that a man who raises white setter dogs threatens to move to Atchison.

Want Column

If you want to buy, sell or exchange anything; if you have a farm to rent or want to rent a farm, a small advertisement in this column will bring about the desired result. Try it—only 2 cents a word. No advertisement for less than 30 cents first insertion. All initials and numbers counted as words. Cash with order. Address

THE INDEPENDENT.

Advertisers write me quick and get Our Special offer. W. P. Wakefield, Co., Agents, Lenoir, North Carolina.

FOR SALE a fine 3,000 acre ranch and farm land in Wheeler and Garfield counties. J. S. Harris, Bartlett, Neb.

WANTED—Men each state to distribute samples of our goods and take advertising cards. Salary \$21 per week, \$1 a day expenses allowance. Saunders Co., Dept. 7, Chicago.