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THE INDEPENDENT,
Lincoln, Neb.

Reports from Kansas indicate that the legislature at Topeka thinks it has passed a drastic anti-pass law. The persons allowed to go free "are about the same as provided in the national railroad act." Things are in such shape in Nebraska that it would be regarded as something of a railroad victory were the legislature here to pass so lax a law as that.

Although the railroads are opposing the extension of freight carrying privileges to trolley lines in Pennsylvania and other states where the question is up, it remains to be proved that the freight business of the railroads would be greatly injured by allowing suburban trolley lines to carry freight. It would probably be rather a saving of horses, and would perhaps injure the trade in wagons and buggies.

After ballooning stocks to a point where a reaction was inevitable, the railroad managers are pointing to the present depression as a sign of the trouble that is certain to follow further "radical legislation." But if the decline in stock could be traced directly to two-cent fares and other legislative acts, the country would not be frightened. A decline in stock values to something approaching the real value of the properties is rather to be desired than otherwise.

Attorney General Jackson of New York is engaged in an effort to head off a supposed movement of the Bell Telephone company to absorb all the telephone business of the state, including the independent companies. It was to be assumed that the rival interests would consolidate as soon as it became evident that one could not destroy the other, but the consolidation era arrived sooner than was expected.

The defeat of the Sunday baseball idea in the legislature will naturally give an impetus to the movement to make the Saturday half holiday general in Nebraska. Instead of increasing the number of days when men are required to work the present day tendency is to give all classes of workers a full day on Sunday for rest, and as much time during the week as possible for recreation and amusement. The Saturday half holiday is an almost necessary feature of this program.

Eastern financial writers predict that five per cent for western farm loans, the rate current in Nebraska now, will be too low before long if railroad and other corporation paper is to continue at six per cent. This assumes that the money now in the west will be drawn eastward to meet the demand at higher rates from these sources. To date in Nebraska there has been no sign of such a thing. Long time loans at five per cent on eastern Nebraska land will by many people be preferred to any other security even at a slightly higher rate.

It should not escape notice that the head of the weather department, Professor Moore, went through a hostile investigation at the hands of the minority of a congressional committee and came out with a substantial endorsement. The principal point of attack was the creation of a station called Mount Weather, Va., for the advanced study of meteorology. Congress has agreed with the chief of the bureau that it is time for a serious attempt to extend the boundaries of our knowledge of the weather, and that an institution of this kind promises to be effective in that direction.

Assistant District Attorney Heney who is trying to try Ruef in San Francisco, declared his undying contempt for Judge Hebbard's court, alleging that the judge was drunk and in collusion with Ruef's attorneys in making a certain ruling. In case Judge Hebbard cites the attorney for contempt the case will be a worthy spectacle. Senator Patterson through his newspapers accused the Colorado supreme court of corruption, and was fined for contempt, being refused opportunity to prove his charges. Judge Hebbard, as soon as he gets over his last spree, might with equal facility, it would seem, make Heney sweat for his attack on the judiciary.

The railroad managers never seem to overlook an opportunity to rasp the public with petty annoyances like the decision of the Union Pacific to charge three cents a mile all the way to western Nebraska just because the main line dips down into Colorado for a few miles. This is held to make a journey that begins and ends in Nebraska an interstate affair. The railroad men who grasp at these opportunities to make trouble for themselves succeed admirably in showing that they have neither the capacity nor the breadth of view to make them fit stewards for so important a matter as the transportation of the people.

The manufacturers of Ingrain carpets are suffering from the prosperity of the country, and the prevailing taste for higher priced carpets and hard wood floors and rugs. They are forming an organization to standardize their goods and sell them through a New York agency under a uniform label. This tag they are arranging to make familiar to the public through a newspaper advertising campaign. It is hoped in this way to restore the old time popularity of this sort of floor covering. The battle seems to have been lost in the cities and towns, and this campaign is to be conducted in the country. The rural newspapers are to receive the bulk of the first advertising appropriation.

Chinese coolies will not be employed by contract on the Panama canal, at least not now. Until the army engineers have had time to grasp the situation presented by the determination to have the engineer corps manage the digging of the canal no important changes in policy could well be adopted. This and the fact that there are now 25,000 men at work on the Culebra cut, enough to make surprisingly rapid progress, are no doubt among the factors leading to the rejection of the bids. Should it prove possible eventually to get all the labor needed from the United States and the West Indies it may safely be assumed that there will be no resumption of that plan.

Marshall Field was not satisfied to relinquish control of his fortune at death. Under an Illinois law providing that the absolute ownership of property must vest within the period of a life or lives in being and twenty-one years thereafter, he was able to tie up the bulk of his property for a period of something like fifty years. Hence there is to be a great estate automatically adding to itself and to pass ultimately an enormous amount to some remote heir. The legislature has taken a hint from this and pro-

poses a law forbidding the disposal of property in such manner as to allow it to accumulate for a period of over twenty-one years, or during the minority of any person living at the time of the death of the deviser. The change is a mild one, but it indicates the drift toward a closer examination of the social meaning of inheritance laws.

Observers in the south claim that 200,000 northern people have settled there in the past twelve months. Whether the number is correct or not, it is inevitable that the pressure of high priced land in the corn belt must in a measure overcome the reluctance of migration to take a direction transverse to the parallels of latitude. It has in fact done so to some extent in connection with the Canadian migration, and now that there is little left to that movement it can hardly fail to extend southward. Some of the best land in the United States lies uncultivated or half cultivated in southern states.

No doubt the president will give Mr. Harriman and other railroad magnates plenty of additional opportunities to "be good" before the expiration of his term of office. It is intimated in a recent dispatch from Washington that "The president has some very positive ideas about further reform in the postal service, especially in the second class contracts are handled. The conditions prevailing there are said to be little short of scandalous. The railroads have been greatly favored. The president wants a change in the thousands of contracts. This matter will have much of Mr. Meyer's attention assistant's office, where mail transport for the next few months."

Nine million acres of corn are planted in Iowa every year, estimates an Iowa paper. It adds that each acre produces not less than ten tons of corn stalks and every ton of corn stalks will yield 130 pounds of alcohol. There is here then 1,844,000,000 gallons of alcohol to be gained in Iowa from what would be otherwise a waste product, enough to run all its factories, steam cars, stoves and traction engines. All this is very pretty and the western farmers will be foolish not to advance as fast as possible to the utilization of this force. But commercial methods change slowly, and it will be long before there is a market for all the alcohol to be made from all the corn stalks in the state of Iowa. There is still found occasionally a man who writes with a quill pen, and some farmers in Iowa still swing a pump handle for hours every week because they have not the aptitude to harness the winds for pumping their water. There will be farmers to burn corn cobs long after there is alcohol enough to heat their houses cheaply and do their cooking a thousand times more conveniently.

Will J. Davis, proprietor of the Iroquois theater which burned over three years ago with a loss of six hundred lives, is now on trial at Danville, Illinois, for manslaughter. His failure to obey the regulations for the safety of theater patrons in building the Iroquois theater is the ground for the charge. Two years after the original indictment was found the process of drawing a jury is beginning, the intervening time having been consumed in legal quibbling. Some advantages may be discerned in the long delay. In the heat of feeling following the disaster of December 30, 1903, it would have been well nigh impossible to secure a jury of the requisite ignorance and want of opinion to try the case. Moreover, public opinion has cooled sufficiently by this time to admit of a trial without an outside demand for the punishment of somebody, anybody. Had the trial been delayed a few years longer till a new generation of theater builders arrived on the stage, the additional end would be served of saving the expense of a trial altogether.

An ancient Greek book makes two of its characters, strangers, meet in a social way. "Are you a pirate?" asks one courteously by way of opening the conversation. So we see how standards change, for pirates of the maritime sort are no longer welcomed in polite society. Another illustration even more striking because of the quickness of the change, is afforded by last week's proceedings in the Nebraska senate. Hardly more than two years ago to ask a man, "have you a railroad pass?" was equivalent to asking, "are you a man of influence, are you prominent in society and politics and business, do your neighbors hang upon your words and follow your advice, and can you deliver your ward or county in the convention?" Then men flashed their passes as now they flash their diamonds or their honorable titles and now the senate has voted to make the possession of a free pass the mark of a criminal.

When the United States supreme court held the Nebraska flag law to be valid Illinois was given a glimpse of what she misses by not being allowed to appeal from the decisions of her own courts. The state of Illinois once had a law of the same purport as the Nebraska flag law. As in the case of the Nebraska law, the act was assailed in the state courts. The Nebraska supreme court sustained the law, giving the suitor a chance to appeal to the federal supreme court. The Illinois court decided against the law, and as the state could not appeal from the decision that ended it. According to the present status of the case, the United States admits the authority of the state of Illinois to protect the flag from defacement, while the state's own courts deny that it has that power. In case Illinois should re-enact the flag law it would be a matter of some interest whether the state supreme court would reverse itself and sustain the decision of the highest court.

While the Rhode Island legislature is entering upon the third month of a senatorial deadlock the Missouri legislature is completing the passage of a direct election law. With the two deadlocks of the winter a warm memory, no state in which the inhabitants have any considerable political influence or intelligence—the two commonly go together—can well refrain from doing as Missouri is doing and as numerous states have already done in this respect. In New Jersey the defeat of an objectionable candidate was, as usual in such exigencies, not related to the success of an opposition candidate, but resulted merely in the election of the next best friend, politically, of the defeated candidate. In Rhode Island where thirty-odd ballots have been taken they are considering throwing over all candidates who were known as such before the election and selecting a dark horse, as was done in New Jersey. Meanwhile, since Monday noon Rhode Island has had but one senator.

Teamster Hamilton of Omaha, who pulled a horse's tongue out in order to stimulate its movements, owes the resentment of the law and public opinion very largely to a man who is yet living. George T. Angel of Boston began to plead against cruelty to animals before public sentiment had fairly set itself against cruelty to human slaves. With several associates he founded the Massachusetts society for the prevention of cruelty to animals in 1868, and his little paper, "Our Dumb Animals," which is still devoted to defending the rights of dumb creatures, was established in that same year. Not long ago a scheme was broached in the Massachusetts legislature to increase the license on dogs to five and ten dollars according to sex. A hearing was called on the bill, pains being taken that Mr. Angell should not know of it. In some way he received a hint of what was going on, and dragged his eighty-seven-year-old body to the garret of the capitol to confuse the scheme by his opposition.