

THE VALENTINE DEMOCRAT

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VALENTINE, - NEBRASKA.

OLD FAVORITES

On the Shores of Tennessee. Move my armchair, faithful Pompey, In the sunshine, bright and strong, For this world is fading, Pompey--

Nebraska Politics.

Excerpts From The Nebraska Independent, Lincoln, Nebraska, Made by Direction of the Populist State Central Committee

ANOTHER KEY-NOTE

Candidate Mickey Talks at Humboldt on National and State Matters

Mr. Mickey, the republican candidate for governor, delivered his "key-note" speech at Humboldt last Friday night. It differed to some extent from the key-note sound by Norris Brown at the meeting of republican delegates in June, when ratification was made of Mr. Mickey's selection by John N. Baldwin, the U. P. attorney, and his railroad conferees.

After throwing a few bouquets at himself and incidentally at the republican party, Mr. Mickey launched out on a discussion of the tariff--but said nothing. Then he lauded McKinley and Roosevelt, talked a little about the issues of 1896, referred to Bryan's "First Battle," and then touched on state matters a little.

He indulged in a few platitudes about how contracts should be let for supplies for state institutions, but had the good sense to not quote any of the bureau stuff about "surpluses" and "deficiencies," probably knowing that this would get him into deep water.

He then took up the revenue law and said that "our state revenues are in bad shape," because "we are all, or nearly all, a lot of tax shirkers." Referring to the fact that the state has now a floating debt of about two millions, he said that "we have allowed our liabilities to increase at the rate of about \$100,000 per year for many years," but he neglected to mention that every dollar of that floating debt was placed there under republican administrations.

He then showed his claws regarding the practice of investing the permanent educational funds in the warrants constituting this floating debt--a practice inaugurated by the fusionists as soon as they got in power in 1897, and one which appeals so strongly to the good sense of the people that the present republican administration dared not discontinue it.

Mr. Mickey said: "There is a very grave doubt in the minds of many about the legality of this course, and it is evident that this matter must be given attention at the fund replaced. The question arises, how shall we do it? Probably he does not know that the fund is being 'replaced' in part every time the treasurer makes a call for registered general fund warrants; and that it is being reinvested every time the treasurer buys a general fund warrant with educational money.

Again he paid his respects to the tax-shirkers, saying that "tax-shirking is an evil of great magnitude and is, to a great extent, responsible for the decrease in our grand assessment roll. True enough. But he neglected to state the cause of tax-shirking--the fact that the state board is primarily responsible. The records show that every time the state board makes a substantial increase in railroad assessments, the assessors respond the next year or the year after by raising land valuations; and that a decrease by the board causes a decrease by the assessors.

plank and said: "This is the position of the republican party upon the question. I accept it and stand upon it." What he stands upon is this: "The franchises as well as the tangible property of all corporations should be assessed so as to bear their just and due shares of the cost of government, state, county, and municipal, the same as other taxable property as contemplated by the constitution."

What does that mean? According to the "second answer" filed by the present republican board of equalization, at the behest of Baldwin and other members of the celebrated Mickey conference, it means a railroad assessment of 2 1/2 millions. According to the contention of the present republican board and the railroad attorneys who represented it, as acting attorneys general, the board did assess the franchises as well as the tangible property at an amount high enough "so as to bear their just and due shares of the cost of government;" and as that amount was 2 1/2 millions, and as Mr. Mickey hasn't said it was too low, it must meet his approval.

The day for pretty platitudes is past. It is not enough to say, "I shall be governed only by what I think to be fair and just to all." People like to know what the speaker considers "fair and just," whenever it is possible to tell in advance. And it is possible to say what one considers a fair and just railroad assessment under present conditions. No one expects the problem to be worked out to a cent, but it can be stated approximately. This the populist plank does by saying:

"Based upon the present assessed valuation of all property we will raise the assessed valuation of the railroad property of this state from 26 millions to at least 40 millions of dollars."

Mr. Mickey does not say that the populist demand is unfair or unjust, but remarks that "it seems easy for some to settle this and other kindred subjects on the spur of the moment." He seems ignorant of the fact that the question has been growing for a good many years, and that hundreds of men who never held a state office have given the subject more hours of serious study perhaps than the members of the state board are accustomed to do when they actually make the assessment. The populist plank is the outgrowth of such study. It is not a mere leap in the dark.

Speaking of investments for the permanent education funds, Mr. Mickey favored an amendment including school district bonds, municipal bonds of our own state, and the state bonds of other states, as securities which might be purchased. All will agree to this, except the last item. From a legal standpoint a state bond is less desirable than a county or city bond.

He then quotes a half column of literary bureau stuff showing a comparison of the receipts and disbursements of the state treasury. The comparison covers a period of 19 months in the administration of Meserve and a like period under Stuefer. Assuming that the totals are correctly given, it is not difficult to show how erroneous are the deductions. For example, the figures show that Stuefer's total collections were more than a million dollars greater than Meserve's--chiefly permanent educational funds and that he lacked of disbursing all his receipts.....\$213,442.01 While Meserve lacked only 144,104.43

Yet the claim is made that Stuefer's average monthly balance was \$31,000 less than that of Meserve--which is simply absurd.

Their own figures show that Meserve's average monthly receipts were \$249,473.41 And his disbursements were 241,888.97 Leaving the sum of.....\$ 7,584.44 undisbursed each month, so that in 19 months he lacked \$144,104.43 of paying out all that he had received during that time. This takes in all funds.

Mr. Stuefer's average monthly receipts were.....\$311,860.91 And disbursements were..... 299,627.13 Leaving the sum of.....\$ 11,233.78 undisbursed each month, so that in 19 months he lacked \$213,442.01 of paying out all that he had received during that time. Evidently his average DAILY balance was much greater than Meserve's. In the face of such a showing it couldn't be otherwise. The deception is made by taking an average of the balances at the end of each month--one day out of 26 business days--and calling it an "average monthly balance."

As to the investments of the permanent educational funds, Mr. Stuefer has received more and invested more than Mr. Meserve did, because a large part of Stuefer's receipts came from the sale of the warrants purchased for investment by Mr. Meserve. The comparative figures are: Meserve received.....\$1,239,231.29 Meserve invested..... 1,207,275.85 Difference.....\$ 31,955.44 Stuefer received.....\$2,402,082.91 Stuefer invested..... 2,227,573.61 Difference.....\$ 174,509.30

Accordingly, while in his 19 months Mr. Meserve lacked \$32,000 of investing every dollar he received in that period, Mr. Stuefer, in his 19 months, lacked \$175,000 of investing all he received.

Again the same tactics are pursued

before striving officially for these needed reforms. But if elected to the senate I will work and vote for revision of the state revenue laws to the end that the big corporations pay taxes in just proportion with the little home owners; enlargement and perfection of the initiative and referendum; liberal appropriations for state institutions based on economical management; an amendment to the federal constitution providing for the election of senators by direct vote of the people; for equitable freight rates, and against freight pools and railroad mergers.

in trying to show that Stuefer's average monthly balance of these funds was \$13,000 smaller than Meserve's--simply an average of the balances on hand on the last day of each month. It does not stand to reason that this is a fair statement, because on the average Meserve invested all his receipts but \$1,681.87 each month, while Stuefer lacked \$9,184.69 of investing all his receipts each month. Stuefer's average DAILY balance of these funds on hand must have been at least \$70,000 greater than Meserve's.

As a key-noter Mr. Mickey's "timbre" is a trifle better than Norris Brown's, but both of them remind one of the expression of a bored man at the matinee: "Too many cracks for good weather-boarding, and hardly enough for a paling fence."

CHARLES Q. DE FRANCE.

A DEBT TO BE PAID

The Exeter Enterprise Reviews the History of the Counting Out of Honest John Powers

The following from the Exeter Enterprise is a well worded statement of the counting out of Governor Powers in 1890. It is true that the people owe it to "Uncle John" to elect him secretary of state this fall, and thus partially atone for the wrong done him in 1890, yet his claims for election by no means rest upon this alone. Mr. Powers would scorn to aspire to a position he is unqualified to fill--and there is no office within the gift of the people of Nebraska he could not fill with honor to himself and them. Although getting up in years, yet both in mind and body he is more vigorous than thousands of men twenty years his junior. Delegates to Grand Island will not soon forget his marvelous powers of endurance in presiding over the convention from 3 o'clock in the afternoon all through the night until the next morning. Says the Enterprise:

Regardless of politics the people of Nebraska ought not to miss the opportunity to elect John Powers to the office of secretary of state. It is a debt which they owe him for having beaten him out of the governorship in 1890, which he was fairly elected in 1890. Briefly stated the circumstances of that campaign were as follows:

A vote was impending on a prohibition amendment to the state constitution. In order to hold the prohibition vote the republican party had agreed with the prohibitionists to submit the amendment, and had agreed with the Omaha brewers to defeat it. At the end of the campaign it was apparent that there was danger of the amendment carrying, so it was arranged that a number of ballots were to be placed in the poll boxes in Douglas county, all against the amendment, but so that it would have no political effect, these ballots were equally divided between the republican and democratic tickets. L. C. Richards was the republican candidate for governor, J. H. Powers, the populist candidate and James E. Boyd the democratic candidate. There being few populists in Douglas county the excess fraudulent vote was divided between the republicans and democrats and the populists left out. The result on governor was very close and Mr. Powers would have been elected but for the fact that the stuffed ballot boxes in Douglas county elected Boyd over Richards.

It was probably the first instance in Nebraska politics that any man was ever elected to a state office by fraudulent votes, and the best way the state can redeem itself will be to elect Mr. Powers as its secretary. To make the scheme certain of success the returns from Douglas county were not given out with the others, but held back until the returns from the state were in, so that it would be known how many "anti-prohibition" ballots it would be necessary to stuff into the Douglas county boxes to defeat the amendment. Telegraph offices all over the state were ordered held open all night and the best news collectors in each reporting township paid to send in a report of the county vote before the poll books were sealed. The result was a surprise because the amendment was defeated outside of Douglas county, but to make the matter sure several thousand bogus votes were fired into the Douglas county boxes and never a one of them had on it the name of John H. Powers.

The republicans dare not challenge this statement as a matter of historical accuracy. In view of the fact that the same old republican machine is trying to inspire the prohibition vote with the magic name of Mickey, these facts are interesting just at this time.

The Baldwin Candidates

The Independent has nothing to say against Messrs. Mickey, Weston and Mortensen as individuals. They are pleasant gentlemen to meet, and have warm personal friends who swear by them. As a business proposition for the railroads the election of these men would be a good one. Mr. Weston's position on the railroad assessment is well known. He was the moving spirit to prevent any material increase. Governor Savage had ideas of an increase, but Treasurer Stuefer--who really knew but little about the subject--was induced to hold with Weston and the two outvoted Governor Savage.

Mr. Mortensen has for years represented the Burlington as land agent at Ord, and Mr. Mickey represented the Union Pacific in a similar capacity. In the face of this, with a vague platform, and with Baldwin's famous interview undenied, can the people hope for any increase in the railroad assessment if these gentlemen are elected? As a business proposition for the other taxpayers, their election would certainly be a losing one.

It is reported from London that Sir Marcus Sempell was elected lord mayor of the city for the ensuing year, succeeding Sir Joseph C. Dimsdale. The election took place on September 29. Honestly now, Mr. Taxpayer and Citizen, into whose hands would you prefer to give the management of your public affairs, Baer or Mitchell.

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More than half the quantity of cheese imported into Britain comes from Canada. Improved cheese rooms are now being fitted on the big liners.

A summer loan exhibition of Japanese art at the White chapel art gallery, London, was visited by 90,000 people, chiefly of the poorer classes.

Ice in the refrigerators lasts longer if wrapped in newspapers.

Old Farmers' Experience. "No two seasons are alike, and a single experiment in farming counts for very little," said a veteran farmer. "Every year the conditions under which the several crops are grown are different, and if a crop is a grand success this season we cannot be sure that it will be next season. Some crops will succeed under many conditions, while others must have a season exactly suited to them to yield well. The first are crops on which to depend, while the latter will do to grow in a limited way." Paris pays nearly one quarter of all the direct taxes levied in France. The 1902 cranberry crop of the United States is estimated at 750,000 bushels, against 1,040,000 bushels in 1901. The Nile is the only river in the world that flows for 1,500 miles without a tributary. Pretty postillion belts are of white satin and with two rows of buttons in black and a jeweled clasp.

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