

# Columbus Tribune-Journal

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### REPUBLICAN TICKET.

- For Judges of the Supreme Court—  
Charles B. Letton.  
Francis G. Hamer.  
William B. Rose.
- For Regents of State University—  
Victor G. Lyford.  
Frank L. Haller.
- For Railway Commissioner—Thomas L. Hall.
- For County Treasurer—Daniel Schram.
- For Clerk of District Court—Christian M. Gruenther.
- For County Clerk—John S. Hayes.
- For County Judge—T. DeWitt Robison.
- For County Superintendent—Gideon Braun.
- For County Surveyor—F. W. Edwards.

### In Favor of the County Superintendent.

Some of the democratic papers last week, in speaking of the candidates for county superintendent, appear to think that there is only one man in Platte county that could under any stretch of imagination be considered fit for this office. We grant that the schools have been well taken care of in the past, during the administrations of Superintendents Leavy and Rothleitner, and we might also add Superintendents Cramer, Tedrow, Montcrief, C. A. Speice and others who have held the position, as well as Mr. Lecron.

Even some men who are accredited being above tiny tricks do funny things sometimes. In his paper last week Mr. Gruenther, who, by the way is on both tickets, allowed his zeal for the democratic part to run away with him, and suggests that the county superintendent's office should be nonpartisan, and therefore republicans and democrats alike should support the democratic candidate. In view of the fact that Mr. Gruenther received and accepted a place on the republican ticket, this action at his time, comes with particularly bad grace. He should at least preserve a showing of neutrality as between the candidates on the county ticket.

As regards the competency of Mr. Braun, the following letter has been received at this office from a prominent teacher of this county, who for several years has worked with him and knows his qualifications.

Columbus, Nebraska, October 24, 1911.

To the Editor of The Tribune-Journal:

Since the public schools of Platte county have long enjoyed the distinction of being among the best in the state, and that the people have always been in the habit of selecting the very best material for county superintendent, I will say for Mr. Braun that he has been raised under the wing of Platte county superintendents. His work as a teacher has been under Superintendents Leavy and Lecron, and his entire life, from kindergarten to teacher has been under the supervision of Platte county's school administrations. So, if their administrations were of such value, he who has been connected with the public schools of Platte county through all these years, ought certainly be best qualified to take charge of the work begun by them. The present superintendent was new in the county when called to the superintendency, and then never got into touch with the real problems facing him—the rural schools.

There are also some who have expressed doubt that Mr. Braun has strength enough, on account of his age, to defend the school laws and not be swayed by the arguments of interested persons. There are few men in the county who would be harder to influence than he, after he had studied the question at stake and prepared to render a decision accordingly.

Very truly yours,  
A PLATTE COUNTY TEACHER.

We would much prefer to have given the name of

the author of the above letter, but were requested by the writer not to do so, for reasons which we consider good and sufficient. No fairminded person, however, can take exception to the arguments presented by our correspondent.

### Now, Brothers, Be Fair.

Some of the leading spirits of the Democratic campaign boosters, in their fear that Daniel Schram may carry the election as county treasurer, have started the story of his being a standpatter. We do not know whether he is a standpatter in the generally accepted meaning of the term or not. We cannot, for the life of us see what possible connection that would have with the competency or integrity of any man when it comes to a question of taking care of public funds for a county.

There are one or two things that should command some attention. One is the fact that Daniel Schram has made good in his private business career. Having made good, not only in the matter of accumulating a competency, but also in creating a good reputation as a business man, he will have no trouble in procuring the necessary bonds for the position of county treasurer, which some people would find a difficult undertaking.

That he has the confidence of the business interests of Columbus and Platte county in general, is attested by the fact that he started his business career with a small bank, and with his efforts the institution has grown until at this time it is credited with assets of more than a half million dollars. If he is a good man with whom to place your individual funds, is he not equally safe to place in charge of public?

Some interested political adversaries of Mr. Schram are industriously circulating the story that, if elected he will make of the office a personal matter, and place members of his family in office as deputies. This is false, and notwithstanding the fact that last week we branded it so, on the authority of Mr. Schram himself, they have been very busy during the past week, in their insistence that Mr. Schram was to man his office with members of his family.

Some of his opponents have raised the cry that the democratic nominee is one of the people, rich in good name and citizenship, and possesses a score of other equally desirable qualities; but not in a single one of these things does he surpass Mr. Schram. Moreover he bases his claim to the office on the fact that he has been a beneficiary of the indulgence of Platte county taxpayers for twelve years.

Old Sam Houston, when elected governor of Texas, was approached by a man who had been warden of the state penitentiary for many years, and who had opposed the election of Houston. "Well," said the governor, "you say you have been in the penitentiary during all these years and that you have faithfully performed all the duties assigned to you?" "Yes, sir." "Then, if that is the case, I guess it is about time to pardon you out."

The office of county treasurer or any other official position is not intended as a charitable institution. It is a business proposition. We heartily endorse one plea made by the democratic campaign manager: "Let us show by our votes that in Platte county the people esteem a man for his personal worth alone, regardless of the size of his bank account."

There is another candidate on the republican county ticket, for whom very little has been said in connection with the county campaign. He is a man who appears to have the friendship of a considerable number of Platte county people, and is recognized as having some measure of influence even among some democrats. His nomination on the republican ticket was the result of breaking off a tie with another good republican, and now that he has the nomination, of course every republican in the county will be pleased to give him their vote, and, if necessary, to get out and work for him at the polls. He has held a county office before, and thus enjoys considerable acquaintance among the voters. He has built up a reputation as an auctioneer, but has no time to sell such little things as horses and automobiles; nothing less than selling a farm at auction will go with him. He is also a newspaper man, and as such has the sympathy of his brothers in the den, and is entitled to that of others. Nearly every one in the county has heard of him, and some outside. More than this, we have the pledge of even the editors of the Columbus Telegram and the Humphrey Democrat, that if elected, he will make a good official. Let all the republicans, and as many democrats as he can rally to his support, vote for him. He wants to be clerk of the district court, and his name is C. M. Gruenther.

# TWO INTERESTING COUNTY OFFICIALS' LETTERS

One of the most remarkable political letters ever penned was placed on exhibition among the records of the county board last Friday. It was penned by, or perhaps more correctly, for, Judge Ratterman, and is certainly an able document, in that it bears the earmarks of being the work of a past master in the art of using language to conceal the real thoughts of the author.

In order that our readers may understand thoroughly the conditions, we reproduce entire, both the report of the county attorney and the reply of Judge Ratterman, as they appear on record:

To the Honorable Board of Supervisors of Platte County:—

Gentlemen: Through the columns of a newspaper it appears that the county attorney has made a report to your honorable body, alleging that there remains uncollected of the inheritance tax due the county the sum of \$4,000.00.

The order directing the county attorney to check over the records of my office to ascertain the amount of such tax uncollected was made last March. For some reason no steps were taken to comply with this order until about ten days ago, although from the time the order was made I repeatedly applied to the county attorney for counsel and suggestions with respect to the collection of this tax, but each time was turned away without advice or suggestion.

The impression conveyed by his report is that the county has lost \$40,000 of inheritance tax through some fault of mine. This report is grossly unfair to me.

In the first place permit me to say to your honorable body that there is no such amount of uncollected inheritance tax due the county. Some of the estates from which inheritance tax is collectible are still in process of settlement. I have collected in the past few years almost \$2,000, and when the record is finally made up I have no reason to believe that there will be a dollar of this tax uncollected if each county officer does his duty in the matter.

The inheritance tax law is new and subject to many different and conflicting interpretations. There is one estate where the interests of the heirs was very confining and the settlement of the estate troublesome. In this estate the tax has not as yet been collected, but nearly all the heirs can be reached, and furthermore, under the law, the tax follows the land, and by proper procedure the county will collect every dollar of this tax.

I would therefore respectfully ask your honorable body to appoint a committee to go into this matter in a business-like and non-partisan manner, and thereby afford me as well as the county attorney, an opportunity to be heard, and to present the facts fully and fairly, to the end that the taxpayers may be advised of the true condition of affairs.

Respectfully submitted,  
JOHN RATTERMAN,  
County Judge.

The report as presented by Mr. McElfresh is as follows:

"To the Honorable board of Supervisors of Platte County, Nebraska.

"Dear Sir:

"Beg to report that pursuant to motion passed by this board, I have checked over the probate records of the County Judge, and find that no proceedings were had to collect the inheritance tax provided by statute in a great number of estates subject to such tax, and from my investigation would estimate the amount of such tax remaining uncollected to be about \$4,000. These estates having been closed, it will entail considerable trouble and cost to collect the same, and am of the opinion that by reason of lapse of time and removal of heirs it will be impossible to collect a great portion thereof. I find that one estate has been closed during the year 1911 subject to this tax without any steps having been taken for the collection thereof. The statute makes it the duty of the County Judge to take the necessary steps to have this tax ascertained and collected in all estates which appear subject to such tax. In order to avoid any additional costs and to insure the collection of such tax, hereafter I would recommend that this Board instruct the County Judge not to close any pending or future estates without having first collected such tax, if any be due.

Respectfully submitted,  
C. N. McELFRESH,  
County Attorney."

Dated, October 10, 1911.

Now, Mr. Voter, read those two communications carefully, and see which one would naturally come nearer to the facts in the case. In the case of the county attorney, it is made plain that he was working under the direct instructions of the county board, to whose orders he is subject. The board had reason to believe that the trust imposed in the county judge had not been kept in good faith. Their instructions to the county attorney were to investigate and report the result of his investigations, which was done in the above letter. He asserts that in the cases

in which the estates have been closed, that the collection of the tax must necessarily entail considerable trouble and expense—a fact which every school boy knows. As to his definition of the meaning of the statutes, it is a clean-cut statement of facts as they appear on the law books of the state. As to his recommendation to the board to take steps to see that the tax is collected in future cases, there was nothing else that could be done, and the board realized this by unanimously passing the resolution suggested by one of their own number, in accordance with the report.

Now, let us look at the reply of the county judge.

In the very first sentence he tries to discredit the record by alluding to the report as a newspaper story. Well, so it was; but it was born of the records on file with the county clerk.

Throughout the entire article may be heard the wail of despair—the grasping of the drowning man at the straw of a false sense of injured innocence. We hearken to the cry of it being done for political purposes. Suppose, however, that the county attorney had presented his report prior to the August primaries, at which the county judge was a candidate against three others of his own political faith, then we would have heard the cry that he was interfering between candidates for political purposes. Or, suppose that he had withheld his report until after the election, then it might have been charged that he had kept it back for political purposes.

The county judge weeps because the inheritance tax law is "new"; it was a law when he became county judge ten years ago, and if a judge whom we are told on excellent authority is "among the first in point of knowledge of the probate law," could not determine the provisions of a law with which he has to deal with as much frequency as this one, in ten years, then, in the name of Heaven, when would he?

The county judge asks plaintively to have a committee appointed to go into the matter "that the taxpayers may be advised of the true conditions of affairs." Good, as far as it goes. But why did he wait until the last day of the last session before election? Did he not know that this report had been filed ten days prior to the time his letter was filed, and that the board was to meet again soon, and thus give him an opportunity of carrying the results of this second investigation before the public? HE KNEW HE DARED NOT ASK IT, but now puts on a bold front, knowing the board would not meet again until in December.

The friends of the county judge charge that the county attorney waited until the closing days of a political campaign. The absurdity of this statement is so apparent that it serves but one purpose—that of calling attention to the fact that it gives the man in question a full month in which to refute them, and could had he so desired, have had the results of the investigation made public before the election.

The county judge says, "When the record is finally made up and the estates closed I have no reason to believe there will be a dollar of this tax uncollected if each officer does his duty in the matter." As a matter of fact and of law, the county judge is the sole officer charged by the statutes with the overseeing of the collection of this tax. The county attorney has nothing whatever to do with any estate unless asked for official advice, or when, as in the present instance, the interests of the public are jeopardized by delinquency. He may see no reason to believe but that this tax will be collected, but that is beside the question, for he is evidently talking of estates that have as yet not been closed. But what of those estates which have been closed without the tax being collected, and upon which the county attorney based his report?

In another column we publish two letters—one from the county attorney to the county judge, and one from the county attorney to the editor of the leading newspaper advocate of the cause of the county judge, which, by the way, is also the greatest beneficiary of the present administration. Read them. Read them again. Read them thrice, digest them thoroughly and meditate on the food for thought contained therein.

Reports from over the district seem to grow brighter every day for Colonel Elliott for congress. People are coming to realize more and more each day the fact that the farmers of Nebraska have suffered long enough from the misrepresentations of democratic congressmen, and are not particularly inclined to turn the reins over to Dan V. Stephens. The appearance of certain democratic leaders on the arm of a notorious individual at the Norfolk convention, who had robbed many poor men of this county and then sought refuge in the bankruptcy court, sickened numerous men who would otherwise have been supporters of Mr. Stephens. Moreover, there are still some democrats in the district who have not forgotten the ungracious action of Mr. Stephens in supporting one candidate for the nomination three years ago, at the expense of another, and who insist that what was true at that time must be equally true now. Incidentally, some of these same men are asking how it comes that he has the ostensible support of the men whom he took pains to throw down in 1908, and declare that if he would betray one man at a time, he might be expected to betray another at another time if the occasion suited him.

Democrats are pleading that one of their men has broken in the new treasurers for their work for the past dozen years. Dan Schram won't need any breaking in.

### Two Letters.

Below we reproduce two letters from County Attorney McElfresh, one in reply to County Judge Ratterman, and the other in reply to an editorial which appeared in the Telegram of last week. Both letters are published at the special request of the County Attorney, in explanation of his action, as well as in answer to the attack made upon him and published last week, in the guise of an official communication. We desire to call particular attention to these letters, and beg of you to consider carefully the contents of them. The letters speak for themselves.

Columbus, Neb., Oct. 23, 1911.  
Mr. Edgar Howard,  
Editor of the Columbus Telegram,  
Columbus, Nebraska.

Dear Sir:

In the issue of your paper of October 20th, 1911, and in an editorial by you under the head of "A Boomerang", you have sought to discredit me in the eyes of the public because of my report to the County Board regarding the failure of the County Judge to collect the inheritance tax as provided by law. I will not say that the article was "pre-empted by prayer", but do not hesitate in saying that it was concluded by a denial of the facts to the public and that your editorial in the main is a seething distortion of truth.

You being a beneficiary of the office of the County Judge one can readily follow your inclinations without surprise, and I am frank to state that your position regarding a vital matter with the public is in keeping with the policy you have pursued in

Have you read those McElfresh letters?

Do you suppose the judges will explain?

A good housewife will sweep down the cobwebs occasionally. Let Platte county try it for an experiment.

No long time service in a county office has ever had the opportunity of turning the heads of any of the candidates on the republican ticket.

Nobody ever accused Judge Robison of failing either of collection of what was due the county, or of turning in the marriage ceremony fees.

John Hayes seems to be making a hit with those voters with whom he comes in contact. John is all right and the voters are coming to find it out.

Ratterman says he is not short \$4000, but fails to say just what the correct amount is. Awful, if McElfresh gave him the benefit of a few dollars.

Gideon Braun in the county superintendent's office will look like he was made to order for the place. His entire training being for the benefit of teachers and school boards who will have to deal with that office, make him particularly fitted.

at the expense of the public. If I had completed my investigation and filed my reports prior to the August Primaries you would have raised the same below. If it had been filed after election some one would have accused me of shielding the facts for political purposes. Following your logic, no time would have been the right time.

I have long reached the conclusion that truth should prevail as far as possible in public affairs and that deceit and fraud practiced upon an unsuspecting public, whether by a public official or newspaper, is of equal degree to criminal offence. What views if any, have you on this matter?

Do you believe that deception should be practiced against the people in order not to injure the candidacy of an aspirant to public office? Or do you believe that the public should know the facts except when it might effect dividends of your business?

Misery loves company, and it appears to me that because of your attempt to injure a candidate in the Senatorial campaign last fall by questionable practices you wish to drag me in on a level with yourself because of an official report based on facts made to the Board at his request. If any boomerang has been hurled, you have hurled it by an ingenious endeavor to obscure the facts and deceive the public, and no doubt in due season it will return to pierce that seeming sanctimonious halo, as did the boomerang hurled by you a year ago.

I was elected to the office of county attorney, not to satisfy the whims and caprices of any newspaper or politician, but to represent the people as a whole. In an honest endeavor to serve them and to save them some thousands of dollars, I ought to have your support, rather than your disapproval. If you had desired to use your paper for the public good you would have made some little investigation before flying to the relief of a political patron in an editorial calculated to deceive the public and debase an

(Continued on next page)

## LIFE'S DISAPPOINTMENTS



ANTICIPATION

REALIZATION

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