

DRAWN. The taxpayers of Nebraska will be enraptured to learn that the members of the Board of Railway Commissioners have never failed to draw their salaries from the public treasury at Lincoln.

If for drawing freights and passengers, engineers on the railroads of Nebraska had similar skill and strength, a mile a second would be ordinary speed. If railroads charged for their services as railroad commissioners charge for theirs it would cost a dollar a mile per hundred pounds of freight and twenty-five cents a mile for passengers in the state of Nebraska.

THE DIAMOND SYNDICATE. Inquiries frequently reach THE CONSERVATIVE as to the nature of the private business of the populist nominee for the presidency. What does he do? What is his means of livelihood? These are questions often asked and, to judge by the frequency of their repetition, never satisfactorily answered. The people of Nebraska remember him ten years ago as a clientless lawyer, who tried to supplement his income with the emoluments of public office. They recall his tearful letter, in which he sought a position on the railway commission, not to protect the interests of the "plain people" against the greed of the "railway octopus," but, as his epistle frankly stated, for "the money that is in the office."

He was disappointed. Undaunted by failure, he next sought to replenish his depleted exchequer by making an effort to place himself on the pay roll of the United States government, in the capacity of a congressman. Urgent and pitiable was his appeal for votes. A stern necessity made it so. Success crowned his strenuous efforts. He gratefully received the annual compensation of \$5,000, with uninterrupted regularity, for four years. While in congress, his excellence in imitation, his superiority in declamation, his skill in emotional acting, easily gave him a position of preëminence, among his fellow members, as the most accomplished in dramatic art. By his retirement it was conceded, and rightly too, that congress sustained the irreparable loss of its most clever actor and most artful pretender. The loss, however, was reciprocal. Mr. Bryan, in turn, was deprived of Uncle Sam's generous allowance. This was probably the more keenly felt.

He returned to Lincoln. The income from his law business had not grown appreciably since he had announced that it was insufficient, unaided by the bounty of the government, to keep his family in a moderate degree of comfort. Today, as is well known, his clients are even less

numerous. The general knowledge of these facts probably prompts the interrogations to which THE CONSERVATIVE has referred. People wish to know something about the business capacity of the one who aspires to look after their business. Success in private business indicates fitness for public business. His fellow citizens are unwilling to believe him dependent upon the revenue derived from his candidacy. They cannot reconcile money made from candidature for the presidency with either the dignity of the office or honest business methods. They logically reason that one who thus profits might, in the event of election, use the office to aid private finance. To avoid the necessity of frequent apologetic statements, on the part of admiring friends of the distinguished populist candidate, THE CONSERVATIVE has investigated the business connections of the silverine exponent of populism and is glad to announce indications of a possible revenue, aside from the gate receipts of his exhibitions in vocal pyrotechnics.

The home office of the Mercantile Tontine Investment Company is located at Lincoln, Nebraska. The following is the manner in which the business is conducted: Investors pay to the company \$1.25 per week for 70 weeks. They are then entitled to receive a \$180 diamond or \$160 in cash. The profit seems almost incredible.

The president of the company is Mr. A. R. Talbot, long associated with Mr. Bryan, under the firm name of Talbot, Bryan & Allen. Mr. Talbot is president pro tem of the senate and, while Gov. Poynter was attending the Sioux Falls convention, acted as governor. Mr. Allen is brother-in-law of the populist presidential nominee. In a recent interview, given out at Chicago, Mr. Bryan said that, upon his return to Lincoln, he would go out to his farm and be an agriculturist. "An agriculturist," he said, "was a fellow who made his money in the town and spent it on the farm." This would indicate that Mr. Bryan has been making money "in the town." Can it be that he shares in the diamond business, as he has in other connections of his law partner? Can this be the source of his accumulations "in the town?" If so, he is probably amply able to retire for a while to the seclusion and ease of pastoral life.

Talbot's diamond company is proof of genius in finance on the part of the founder. The enterprise is all the more commendable because it is free from the influence of "plutocracy," and is managed exclusively by and in the interests of the "plain people." It is more profitable than a national bank. Monte Carlo, in the zenith of its popularity,

did not compare, as a wealth accumulator, with Talbot and company's diamond syndicate. It pays fifty per cent interest on deposits. Think of it—a financial institution in Nebraska paying fifty per cent interest to depositors! Yet Mr. Bryan complains of hard times. In the face of such overwhelming evidence of prosperity, his appeals to discontent appear as the empty utterances of a demagogue; his predictions of financial disaster—the idle vaporings of a false prophet.

In 1896 Hanna promised good times and a chance to make money. The good times have come. Prosperity and Plenty. The opportunity to make money is here. Prosperity and plenty abound in Nebraska. Yea, and it doeth even exceed prophecy! Verily, Hanna did not foretell fifty per cent interest! Nor did his prophetic vision discern diamonds for the "plain people." Talbot and company's diamond syndicate is indisputable evidence of the return of better times. This enterprising firm has discovered the secret of making gold, for which alchemy long vainly sought. Farmers, stop your senseless toil! Abandon your unproductive farms! Desert the sacred ratio of 16 to 1! Get in on the ground floor with Talbot and company! Why endure the privation and solitude of bucolic life, with its scanty remuneration, when Talbot and company are paying fifty per cent interest? Why be doubters? Why question the scheme? It must be all right because Talbot and company say it is all right. Why ask, how they can make fifty per cent? It does not make any difference *how*. They say they *will*. Accept their word for this as you did for the proposition that fifty cents was one hundred cents.

The high esteem in which the firm is held might lead people to believe they are engaged in a work of philanthropy and are not receiving a just return for their labors as "captains of industry." But they have thoughtfully protected their interests, without in any way affecting the profits of those who are to receive fifty per cent. It is in this wise: The depositors pay at the rate of \$1.25 per week for 70 weeks. The principal is then returned together with fifty per cent interest. They receive this amount only by continuing for the entire 70 weeks. If they should fail, however, to pay every week for the 70 weeks, they would leave with Talbot and company the total amount paid, as a reward to the latter for their business management. Statistics show that eighty per cent lapse contracts requiring weekly payments. This, no doubt, is due to a lack of proper habits of industry and economy, for Talbot and company have too keen a sense of justice, have been too active in prosecuting the war upon the "cause of greed," to profit by the