

The Omaha Bee.

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THE WEEKLY BEE, published every Wednesday. BUSINESS LETTERS--All business letters and remittances should be addressed to THE BEE PUBLISHING COMPANY, OMAHA.

THE STATE OF BOATRICE IS STILL FOR Paddock.

WHEN chain lightning strikes Lincoln next January it will have its choice of twenty-one rods, so far as has been already reported to the public.

HAVE we any jury fixers hanging around the United States court? Certain parties in town are offering to bat that the Hull jury will never bring in a verdict.

THE senatorial curycombs are now on the market for sale at reasonable prices. Experience has proved that there is such a thing as being groomed to death.

CHURCH HOWE is coming up as a candidate for doorkeeper of the house. He would sooner be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than dwell in tents of iniquity.

MASSACHUSETTS, in the language of Bob Ingersoll, may be satisfied with Benjamin H. Brewster, but the grand old commonwealth is not satisfied with Benjamin F. Butler.

THE senatorial candidate who hasn't always been the simon pure and only original Nebraska anti-monopolist ought to be stuffed and put in a glass case as a genuine political curiosity.

As chairman of the Mississippi river improvement committee, Senator Van Wyck can become very useful to Nebraska, as well as the people of the Missouri and Mississippi valleys.

MASON, Riddleberger and Reputation seem to have dropped out of public notice. No party can afford to shoulder dishonesty and go before the people handicapped with such a weight.

THE editor of the Republican is heavy on the challenge but he isn't particularly anxious to mention that challenge to the editor of this paper in which the anti-monopoly question was the subject proposed for debate.

THE man at the helm of the Sioux City Journal is said to be the coming dark horse for United States marshal of the new district of northwestern Iowa. That will compensate him for his valiant efforts on behalf of Jim Wilson.

WE are gratified to learn that Mr. Valentine's garden sash bureau at Washington has determined to send out hereafter seeds that will grow. Mr. Valentine has also induced the commissioner of agriculture to cut down the tea crop, and the committee has omitted from its appropriation the amount allotted for tea culture.

IN Chicago the electric light companies are compelled to lay their wires underground. In Omaha they are erecting unsightly poles in the business center that must sooner or later become a public nuisance. It would have been greater economy to have these wires permanently placed in underground pipes.

THE next legislature will be called upon to reform our justice courts. In the meantime THE BEE proposes to make it warm for the crowd of slysters and pettifoggers who earn their living by peddling out justice to the highest bidder through corrupt collusion with unprincipled justices. Every day brings to light some new piece of judicial rascality committed under protection of the law and engineered by attorneys whose names are on the rolls of the district court. Of the twelve justices courts in Omaha fully one-half have a bad reputation. Several are notoriously run for the profits without the slightest regard for decency or justice.

THE constables are on a par with the justices whose courts they serve. Their disregard of the law in the making of arrests and the service of papers are as flagrant as that of the court in its decision of cases. Both judge and constable are made instruments of oppressing the poor and the court becomes a mere machine for the collection of doubtful claims and the extortion of money from defendants. The whole matter needs and shall receive a thorough ventilation.

SHAM CIVIL SERVICE REFORM.

The first step towards a reform of the civil service was the passage by congress of the tenure of office act in 1867. This act was passed by a congress three-fourths republican to prevent Andrew Johnson from removing republican office holders at will and appointing in their stead democrats or Adny Johnsonite republicans. This was about the only substantial measure to check the unjust exercise of the appointing power in administering the government on personal preferences and spies rather than on the Jeffersonian idea of competency and fidelity to the public trust.

Practically the tenure of office bill was a "wood enough Morgan" for the opponents of Andy Johnson. They defeated the removal of Stanton as secretary of war, and saved the head of many an office holder, but in the main the spoils system, as it is called, continued and thrived.

As an experiment, congress in 1871, created a civil service commission headed by George William Curtis, who drew up an elaborate system of rules for entrance into the civil service. These rules were only to apply to thousands of clerks deputies and political small fry, while the positions of influence and power were left subject to the caprice of the chief executive and his cabinet. In other words, poor devils who applied for a thousand dollar clerkship were to be subjected to examinations in political economy and other studies that have no possible relation to their duties, while the collectors of the ports, the \$1,000 postmasters, the heads of departments and bureaus, the foreign ministers and consuls, were to be removed and appointed in the old fashioned way. The civil service commission was a failure and the law became a dead letter. During the administration that favored and created this commission the arbitrary division of public office among the victors who carried the primaries, conventions and legislatures was more flagrant than at any period during the history of the country. The sham civil service reformers who part their hair in the middle, raised a tremendous howl all over the land in favor of reform. Their cry was taken up by all political parties in '76, and every national platform made civil service reform the key note. President Hayes took up the refrain in his inaugural. He laid down the doctrine that the president alone was responsible to the people for appointment, that henceforth congressmen and senators should not interpose in appointments and announced that competent and honest public servants would be retained in office, and that dishonest men would be dismissed without regard to congressional influence. He declared that "he who served his country best served his party best," and that federal offices should not be made the reward of partisan service to the followers of political leaders. These magnificent promises were followed by the choice of a cabinet that was known to be committed to the George William Curtis scheme of civil service reform. Within two weeks after Hayes was seated in the executive chair, Carl Schurz was requested to draft a plan of civil service reform that would carry Mr. Hayes' pledges into effect. Mr. Schurz set himself at work, but the plan, if it ever was completed, was pigeonholed. The only outcome of the high sounding professions of Mr. Hayes was Executive Order No. 1, forbidding federal officials from taking part in political conventions. Like Curtis' elaborate scheme of civil service reform, this order remained a dead letter. It was defiantly violated by every office holder from the cabinet down to cross road postmasters. From the moment Hayes set foot in the white house to the day he left it, his career as an executive gave the lie direct to his professions as an ardent advocate of reform in the civil service. For the most part his appointments were made at the instance of congressmen and senators or as a reward for personal and partisan service. Men notoriously incompetent and dishonest were kept in the public service because their backers in congress protested against their removal. Star Route Brady was retained as second assistant postmaster general through Senator Morton's influence and because he was a valuable man in carrying Indiana. Scores of prominent officials whose record was notoriously bad continued undisturbed in every section of the country. Carl Schurz, that reformer of reformers, had surveying frauds going on under his nose while he was meddling with some of the petty clerks in the interior department. In one breath he denounced congressional interference as an outrage and the next moment dealt out patronage to senators and congressmen. In our own state, Schurz appointed some of the worst frauds to responsible positions in land office because they were backed by congressmen and he retained in the office of surveyor general a man who was at the head of a corrupt ring, because the senators didn't want him removed. Full of promises and high sounding professions, the Hayes civil service reform administration left the civil service in a worse state if anything than it was at the close of the second term of Grant.

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THE very first thing we must recognize is, that the president has the prerogative to make the most important appointments in the civil service. This power he exercises in conjunction with the senate of the United States which shares in part at least the responsibility. In the next place the president in the very nature of things cannot have a personal acquaintance with every man who aspires to a presidential appointment. He must take the advice of somebody, and it is eminently proper that he should consult the accredited representatives of the people rather than outsiders who are not responsible or who might desire to become a brokerage in patronage. For instance, how is it possible for the president to know whom to appoint as collector of internal revenue for Nebraska, or as receiver of public moneys, or as United States marshal, unless he consults the accredited representatives of Nebraska? Again, the people of all the states are entitled to their proportion of the public patronage, and they have an abundance of material competent enough and honest enough to fill it. Any system that would ignore locality and create a civil office holding class would be about as dangerous as a standing army.

All the proposed reforms, so far, fail to recognize the practical side of the public service. None of them would rid us of the worst abuses of the present system. This was effectively shown when Mr. Schurz was given the power to apply his own reform to his own department. What the country wants is a civil service that will insure tenure during a fixed term of years to every honest and competent officer, and the removal from office of every dishonest and incompetent man, no matter whether he is backed by the whole congress and the president himself. The country prefers a responsible government. The president should be held responsible for the appointment of cabinet officers, heads of bureaus, foreign ministers, territorial officers and commissioners who are supposed to represent the whole country. Congressmen and senators should be held responsible for federal officers in their districts and states. Cabinet officers and heads of bureaus should be held responsible for their chiefs of divisions and clerks who are appointed under them. It is all rubbish to waste time in devising schemes for examining petty employes while ignorance and crime stalk at the head of the column. It is an outrageous sham to praise about civil service reform so long as there is no responsibility anywhere; so long as the president can blame the congressmen, and the congressmen can hide under the cloak of an imbecile civil service reform.

THE president ARTHUR's suggestion that the constitution be so amended as to permit a vote of separate items of bills appropriating money, is receiving a warm approval from the press. It contains the real remedy against log rolling jobs like the late and highly flavored river and harbor bills, and it would concentrate the final responsibility for such frauds in so conspicuous a manner upon the members of congress voting for their passage over the veto as to prove an effectual base to their success. It would also give an added responsibility to the president himself. He above all other office holders has the whole country for his constituency. He is not only bound to a promotion of the interests of the whole people, but he is amenable to their united judgment. He does not feel the stress of local demands as the members of congress do, and as a rule, he would only strengthen himself by a firm exercise of the power entrusted to him. Several states have tried this plan and proved its efficacy not only in defeating many unwise appropriations, but in making legislative bodies more prudent in proposing them. Experience has proved that an amendment to the national constitution in any point which involves a radical difference of opinion upon matters of public policy is a difficult matter. President Arthur's proposition, however, is of a kind that would not divide political opinion, and it is a question whether it would meet with material opposition out of congress itself. The consent of two-thirds of the members of each house is necessary, for which it would be submitted to the legislatures of the several states for their approval. There is little doubt that more than three-fourths of these would ratify the action of congress.

THREE more appropriation bills are ready for the house. The spear of the late election is still having its effect upon Congress.

Nebraska and Kansas.

There are such contradictory reports about the operation of prohibition in Maine and Vermont, now they are not; and the reason probably is that prohibition has not diminished drinking. It is stated that in Topeka, the capital of the state, with a population of only 15,000, there are 170 saloons--although, if the law were carried out there would not be one; and what is true of Topeka is true, probably, of all the towns in the state except those where public opinion is intolerantly and actively opposed to liquor selling. In Nebraska, prohibition does not prevail, but a rigorous high license system does, and the effect is to reduce the amount of drinking, secure orderly and well conducted saloons, rid the state of a good deal of disorder and turn in a considerable revenue to the school funds. The city of Omaha has a population of 30,000, but it takes only 90 saloons to supply its wants. It is no wonder, in view of these facts, that while the people of Kansas are disappointed and dissatisfied at the results of prohibition, the people of Nebraska are more than satisfied with the working of their high license system.

THE Land Business. St. Louis Globe Democrat. The continued revelations of the amount of Government business that has been let at loose ends during the past few years indicate that it is high time for a general settling up. The first and perhaps most important discovery of the advantage taken of the prevailing negligence was in the post-office department. There, it was ascertained, a set of rascals had wormed themselves into responsible places and were stealing themselves rich right under the noses of presumably honest men, who ought to have detected them in months, if not years, before. In this connection the power of Herbert Spencer's remark in respect to the manner in which we regard the conduct of our political institutions becomes evident. He said that we are apt to assume that everything is going on right until we have discovered that it is going on wrong, whereas we should assume that everything is going on wrong until we have satisfied ourselves that it is going on right.

Carelessness was also revealed in the conduct of the treasury and navy departments and petty pilferings had come to be looked on as matters of course, and even regarded by some as merely the enjoyment of honest pilferage. The investigations which were held and the sweeping attendants star route indictments caused a little improvement. The vision of officials as to titles to property was greatly cleared. And there was laxity in congress as well as in the executive departments. Things were sufficient to pass in an easy-going way all through, when interested parties worked their little games unperceived and with great success. We got no tariff revision, no method of counting the electoral vote, no relief for the supreme court, no bankrupt bill, no repeal of silver coinage, and no half a dozen other important things which good statesmanship would have provided for us. There scarcely could have been a more appropriate season for the people to have called the attention of public men to the real situation.

In keeping with the condition of other business was that of the government and the land grant railroads. In the report of Secretary Tuller contains in coin quotations a very interesting reading. A decision of the supreme court some years ago declared that a failure to complete a railroad for which a land grant had been conditionally given within a specified time does not involve a forfeiture of the grant until congress declares it forfeited. Now, there are a number of grants which should have been completed and declared forfeited long ago in order that they might have been thrown open to settlement. As it was they remained tied up so that they were of no account to anybody, and so they remain now. Congress totally neglected its duty with respect to these lands and to the people who would have made valuable use of some of them. It is in order for legislation which should have been enacted long ago.

Things are at loose ends also with respect to the land grants that have been earned by the roads. The patents have only been issued for a small part of the amount given, the result being that the roads are relieved from paying local taxes which they ought to pay. The secretary's report points out that out of a grant of some 12,000,000 acres belonging to the Union Pacific, it has only taken out patents for 2,000,000. The Central Pacific has taken out patents for less than an eighth of what it is entitled to, and so with the Kansas Pacific, Denver Pacific and other roads. What is needed is a law compelling these owners to enter into the legal ownership of their property if they are going to accept the gift at all, and assume the burden which other property owners assume for the common benefit. The game of the companies is to permit their land to remain unpatented, and hence untaxable, and to "grow valuable by the lapse of time and the settlement of the country, thus obtaining all the advantage of public protection and the enhancement of values" without contributing to the expense of improvement. In localities where the roads own most and have to bear the total cost of all that is done for that particular section. Several railroads thus acting have been completed for twelve years, and Mr. Tuller thinks it is high time that congress was doing something to give the complaining taxpayers the relief they seek, and it must be admitted that the request he makes is reasonable.

In the opinion of the secretary of the interior, this whole subject of the public lands needs careful consideration. The lavishness with which the public domain has been distributed has given rise to enormous ideas respecting public property which ought to be corrected. The abuse of the pre-emption and homestead laws

calls for their repeal or revision.

And as to those railroad grants which have not been earned in consequence of a breaking of the stipulations as to time, it is important that both the roads and the people should know what is to be done about it. There is such a tremendous quantity of unsettled business of this nature that we can scarcely expect the present congress to make much impression on it. The principal value to be derived from the situation is to impress future statesmen with the importance of attending to business as it comes up, and not to permit it to accumulate as it has been accumulating in this country for the last few years.

Combining Against Carlisle. Special to The Cincinnati Commercial. WASHINGTON, December 10.--A curious report is in circulation to the effect that Randall has withdrawn from the candidacy for the speakership, and proposes to lend his strength to Blackburn as against Carlisle. The story goes that Randall, who wants the presidency more than he does the speakership, thinks that he would hurt himself by opposing Carlisle, and proposes to kill two birds with one stone, defeating Carlisle with Blackburn, and at the same time through Blackburn shaping the course of legislation in the house so as to advance his own prospects for the presidential nomination in 1884. This story is considered rather wild. A friend of Mr. Randall said to-night that while that gentleman would doubtless be glad to kill off Carlisle with Blackburn, he did not think he had any intention of withdrawing from the race in order to bring about this result. This gentleman thought Mr. Randall's great ambition, whatever his hopes for the future might be, was to get a good grip on the speaker's gavel again. He noted that Randall's policy was to conduct a very wary still hunt, saying and doing as little as possible till after the adjournment of the speakership caucus next December. This gentleman did not think that it would hurt Randall in the south to beat Carlisle, and that being conceded he could not see but what the speaker's chair brought Mr. Randall nearer to the presidency than a seat on the floor of the house. All the men on the democratic side who consider themselves possible candidates for the speakership next winter are exercising extraordinary caution as to their acts and utterances. There is an impression among thoughtful men on the democratic side that the speaker who will carry the others will take the prize will be Republican N. J. Hammond, of Georgia, a quiet member who is generally considered one of the soundest lawyers and finest parliamentarians in the house of representatives. Representative W. S. Holman stretches his name off the list of candidates for speakership of the next house. His friends have been pressing his name, but he thinks he can best serve his country as the great objector on the floor.

The Question Settled. Austin (Texas) Sitings. Peter Tag is one of the most celebrated names in Austin, although he has really no excuse for fame. He was once a member of the Texas legislature, and since then he imagines he knows it all, so to speak. A few evenings ago he was present at a little tea party, and the subject of perpetual motion came up for discussion. "Ladies and gentlemen," said Peter, putting his hand in the arm hole of his vest, and throwing himself back on his dignity, "it's not worth while for you to try to solve that problem. I tried to make something out of it when I was a member of the Texas legislature, and I failed, so what use is there in you worrying your heads about it?"

Western Union Wealth. Special Dispatch to THE BEE. New York, December 13.--At the meeting of directors of the Western Union Telegraph company to-day the quarterly dividends of 1 1/2 was declared, payable January 15th. Reports show the net revenues for the quarter ending December 31st, partially estimated, \$2,150,000, which, added to the surplus on October 1st, gives \$4,817,097. Declining interest on bonded debt, sinking funds and the dividend just declared, leaves a surplus of \$3,490,447. The resignation of Geo. F. Baker as director was received and accepted, and Dr. Lower Welch, of Philadelphia, was elected to his place.

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