

The Omaha Bee.

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The BEE PUBLISHING CO., Props. E. ROSEWATER, Editor.

The republican legislative caucus has agreed to a secret ballot for United States senator. The ballot is the prerogative of a sovereign, who is accountable to no one but himself for his acts. The representatives of the people are accountable to their constituents. They have no right to evade that responsibility either in the legislature or in any caucus. The secret ballot in a caucus affords a chance for bribery and corruption and leaves the people in the dark as to the men who have betrayed them. If a bad man is nominated by secret ballot all who participate will be held equally responsible. The men who are true to their trust should not fall to have their votes recorded; the men who are recreant should not be allowed to sneak under the secret ballot.

French broth is now attracting more attention than Irish stew in European political restaurants.

The tendency of the times is towards consolidation, but it does not appear to have struck the senatorial vote at Lincoln hard enough to leave a mark.

Mr. ROBINSON got in his work, after all, in the naval appropriation bill. The senate will now be given a glorious opportunity to do some thorough pruning.

It is announced that Ex-Secretary Blaine contemplates an extended tour through the south in the spring. Mr. Blaine's political fences in the south are in at least as good a condition as in any other portion of the country.

ANOTHER effort is being made by the Ohio temperance people to pass the Pond law. It nearly drowned the republican party at the last election. Ohio would do well to follow Nebraska's sensible method of dealing with the liquor question.

SENATOR VAN WYCK's speech in favor of putting wood on the free list is strongly commended by the leading papers of the country. Even the New York Sun has a good word to say for the Republican senator, who knows the difference between protecting American industry and stimulating American monopoly.

CITY ATTORNEY HOWE is of the opinion that some changes in our charter are needed before we can extend paving operations over the central portion of the city and levy the necessary tax for street intersections. The attention of the Douglas county delegation and especially of Mr. Colpetzer is called to this subject, which will doubtless receive prompt attention.

The fire of yesterday morning gave evidence that there is a lack of harmony in our fire department and that the service needs a little more enthusiasm. Omaha has had good reason to be proud of her volunteer firemen, and there ought to be no falling off in the efficiency and spirit of the force now that an excellent water works system makes it easier and less dangerous to fight the flames.

The unusual length of the senatorial contest at Lincoln is having its effect in restricting legislation. The number of bills reported from the committee is smaller than for years, and those passed will in all probability be much fewer in number than at the last session. The people may, perhaps, be congratulated over the prospect. Legislation is an unfortunate necessity, and should be as sparing as possible. The ideal state will require no laws. It is unnecessary to say that Nebraska is not at present the ideal state; but if nine-tenths of the bill introduced in the senate and house smothered to death, few will object. We need a good railroad bill, a reform in our revenue laws, an increase in the number of judicial districts, laws amendatory to charters of cities of the first class, and laws regulating primary elections. Of course the appropriation bills are necessary. Aside from these subjects, the measures which the state cannot just as well do without could be omitted on the ten fingers of any legislator at Lincoln.

PASSENGER RATES.

Mr. Eastis, the ticket agent of the Burlington & Missouri River railroad, has been before the special railroad committee at Lincoln and given his reasons why a three cent per mile rate would be oppressive to the corporation which employs him. He says that it costs the railroad nearly that sum to carry passengers, and that the reduction from five to four cents a mile, which was made two years ago, has not resulted in corresponding increase of traffic. In effect, Mr. Eastis threatens if the proposed reduction is made by the legislature, to decrease transportation facilities and to shut off advertising the B. & M.'s lands in Nebraska, while he intimates that the directors of the road will refuse to permit further extensions, and will order the cancellation of all special and half-fare permits.

If the B. M. depended entirely on its passenger receipts to earn dividends on its stock, there might be some weight in Mr. Eastis' arguments. The facts of the case are that the receipts from freight would more than pay expenses if the road never carried a passenger. On no other part of the C., B. & Q. system are the freight charges as extortionate, and the Nebraska and Colorado divisions have been dependent upon for several years to make up dividend deficiencies on the line east of the Missouri. In other words, Nebraska has been taxed by tariff, to which Illinois and Iowa would never have submitted, because the Boston directors of road insisted on dividends on the stock, with its fancy financial trimmings. So far as the special rates are concerned, of which Mr. Eastis boasts, on his own admission, it costs no more to haul 150 passengers than it does 35. If the special rates induce 150 passengers to travel where only 35 would otherwise patronize the road, the company is patting that much ahead. It is certain that if the special rates did not pay they never would be granted. We doubt very much if Mr. Eastis has persuaded the legislature that a decrease of one cent per mile in passenger rates will throw his road into involuntary bankruptcy.

Four legislatures are now struggling with the problem "How not to elect a United States senator," and up to the present each has been very successful in solving it. The days when senatorial timber was so scarce that a few ballots usually decided the contest between two or three prominent candidates are past. Our conservative fathers were very old fashioned. They thought that the qualifications for a United States senator ought to be somewhat above those required for a justice of the peace. And they generally succeeded in electing men of more than local prominence whose abilities had been tested in public life, and whose character had been for years under general scrutiny. In consequence, ability and prominence had a monopoly of senatorial nominations and fourth class lawyers and third rate merchants were wickled excluded from political competition.

We are wiser than the last generation. The national senate to-day is divided along the lines of wealth, monopoly favoritism, political demagoguery and mental mediocrity, with a sprinkling of men who have had no other claims for preferment than honesty and brains, and whose election has been secured in old-fashioned states like Vermont, Massachusetts and Delaware, where the fogies are still in the majority. The country is advancing, and there is a strongly marked tendency in favor of breaking down the political bars to all who choose to enter the legislative pasture. Twenty years hence even a Niagara Falls hack driver may aspire to the proud title of dark horse in a New York senatorial contest, provided he can secure the complimentary vote of one of his former patrons.

SEVERAL complaints have reached THE BEE, of the overcrowded condition of the High school. One of the first duties of the board of education when Spring opens, will be the erection of a new primary school in the district from which the lower grades in the high school building now draws a large per cent. of their pupils.

THE claim agent's census of pensioners already rolls up a footing of 250,000 names, but the men who caught malaria by skulking in the woods during heavy engagements have not all put in an appearance and filed their certificates of disability.

OTHER LANDS THAN OURS.

France is trembling on the verge of a ministerial crisis. The president of the republic, the ministry and the chamber of deputies are at variance regarding the proper policy to be pursued with respect to the expulsion of the royalists and imperialists. The excitement aroused by Prince Napoleon's manifesto has been further increased by the rumors of a legitimist rising. The committee to whom Floquet's resolution of expulsion was referred have adopted a proposition extending its scope, depriving all families who have resigned in France of civil rights as citizens, excluding them from office and exiling them from France and French territory. The ministry oppose

such a radical measure, and urge a law increasing the discretionary powers of the government in treating with pretenders. An open rupture between the chambers of deputies and the ministry seems inevitable, and the resignation of M. Doule, the premier, is regarded as certain. It is evident that the French republic is menaced with serious dangers. What with the anarchist machinations that are openly and secretly plotted in the south, and the legitimist organizations reported in the west, it would seem that it will have to fight for its life. The administration of the republic is declared to have been unfortunate, and the people are surprised and disappointed at the extravagance and expenditures and the deficit shown in the budget. France is not prosperous. Somehow or other, the republic is declared to be more costly than the empire. The army, too, does not exhibit the efficiency that was expected of it, as the result of the elaborate reorganization. The Tunisian war showed that it is lamentably deficient in the quality of mobility, and it is probably incapable of successfully meeting the admirably organized German corps as it proved to be in 1870; and a consciousness of this fact has a depressing effect on the French mind. The republic is, no doubt, still the emphatic choice of the French people, and they are utterly adverse to exchanging it either for a Napoleonic empire, or a legitimist kingdom; and it is to be hoped that they will yield it the hearty support it will need in the dangers gathering thick and close around it. But with Gambetta in his grave and no one to fill his place; legitimist plottings in the Vendee; socialist plottings at Lyons and on the Swiss border, and imperial manifestations openly issued and posted in Paris, it seems destined to an ordeal that will test its powers to the utmost.

In England the political dullness of a season which has no parliamentary session has been broken by two important speeches, one by Lord Spencer, lord lieutenant of Ireland, the other by the Marquis of Hartington, a member of the Gladstone cabinet. Both take a rather hopeful view of the outlook, but insist on the necessity of vigorous measures to repress crime. The speech of Lord Hartington is reactionary in tendency. It declares home rule out of the question and peasant proprietary too expensive for the government to purchase. Mr. Gladstone is still at Cannes resting and the note on the Egyptian question is received with general approval as affording England an opportunity either to advance or recede from her present position towards the Porte. Ireland is distracted by the exposure of a wholesale conspiracy, with assassination as its object, and which is believed to have been responsible for the crimes of the last four years throughout Ireland. Informers attracted by the government rewards have revealed all the details of the plot, and forty arrests have been made by the police. The Phoenix Park assassins are said to be in custody, together with the assassins of Major Fields. The greatest consternation prevails. The crown claim to be in possession of sufficient evidence to convict all of the accused, and to lay their hands on the ring-leaders of the society which devised and executed the recent outrage.

Alsace and Lorraine, which Bismarck claimed in 1870 as territory whose people were German by race and sympathy, after twelve years' coaxing and coercion, are found as obstinately opposed to German rule as they were when the war closed. Old Gen. Manteuffel's mission as stationholder has been a failure, as he was compelled to avow in a speech the other evening at Strasbourg. He is wholly arbitrary and without permanent energy. Sooner or later France will reoccupy her ancient limits from the ocean to the Upper Rhine, and the attempt to enslave or coerce the citizens of Alsace Lorraine will prove as futile as it would be to seduce New England from the American union.

The existence of a famine in Ireland has been denied, but it is clearly established by a letter to the civilized nations, signed by the acting governor, the bishop, directors of education, members of the Alding, or parliament, and many prominent officials, merchants and newspaper editors, that those who dispute the existence of suffering write with no foundation whatever for their statements, or have been misled by entirely false reports as to the condition of our country and the nature of the present distress. The charitable donations sent to this country by noble hearted Danes, Englishmen, Norwegians and other foreigners, especially those consisting of grain and cattle, have been of the utmost importance to the farmers, who were in great need thereof, in order to be able to preserve some of the most precious life stock. Famine cities have prevented much distress. But in spite of them all, our farmers, for want of cattle food, have been obliged to make such reductions of their live stock that great and inevitable distress is to be anticipated unless the Lord sends some help not yet to be foreseen.

Republicans find cold comfort in Spain, where Don Alfonso's seat upon the throne was never more secure. The constitution of 1870 has just been indorsed anew in the Cortes by a vote of 220 to 13, while the cabinet reorganization ten days ago was effected in as quiet and orderly a manner as if it had taken place in London instead

of Madrid. Senor Sagasta has no rival for the premiership. He has a powerful majority behind him, and the probable permanence of existing institutions was indicated by a public declaration of his not long since to the effect that republicanism was not suitable for Spain. "The substitution of a republic for the monarchy," said he, "would split Spain into fragments."

Much pride is justly taken by the Germans in the benevolent institutions of Berlin. These number five hospitals, eight orphan asylums, numerous pension funds, and not less than 350 relief societies. The sum total of funds available for the aid of needy persons in the neighborhood of \$8,000,000, besides miscellaneous educational charities. Among the more important of these institutions is the "Victoria National Invalids' Fund," which disposes of the income of \$800,000 for the relief of cripples of the war of 1866, and the "Crown Princes Fund," of \$400,000, which has a somewhat similar application to the veterans of 1864. The pension principle is everywhere apparent.

It is reported with some degree of probability that Russia is about to adopt a more humane policy toward Poland. Some official at St. Petersburg has discovered that the Russian Poles are quite too anxious to make friends with the Prussians and Austrians, and they are to be shown that their real interests are centered in Russia. The Russian agreement with the Poles is practically an abandonment of the attempt to force the Russian language on the Polish people, inasmuch as the clergy are hereafter to speak Russian where that is the language of the people, but Polish where Polish prevails. Reforms in the laws of property are also to be introduced. Since 1865 Poles have been forbidden to buy land in half a dozen provinces, and they are prohibited from selling land except to Russians, or to devise it outside the line of descent, with the additional provision that in failure of direct issue or collateral heirs of the testator it falls to the crown. It is now proposed to abolish these restrictions altogether.

The large cities of Italy will have troubles over religious processions, though these parades are forbidden by law. The clerical party resists the prohibition with bare hands, even though there never was much solemnity about the ordinary parades. In the country districts the enforcement of the prohibitory regulations is left mostly to the discretion of the syndic, or mayor, who, if he is so inclined, shuts his eyes to the infraction of the statute. At Naples, however, several attempts to carry out the parades have recently come to naught. Such occasions always attract the indefinite numbers of street arabs in Italian cities in indeterminate masses, and the mountebanks and peasants make the most of them. The Italian holidays, formerly extremely numerous, have been cut down to a very short list, and some are sanguine enough to hope that the result will be to get more work done.

The Italian coal trade has hitherto been almost monopolized by England, but the St. Gothard Tunnel, which has worked many revolutions--on paper--seems likely to bring about a real change in the basis of supplies and fuel for the peninsula. A coal exhibition is to be held at Milan next autumn, and coal companies in general are to be invited to exhibit their wares, in order that Italians may be able to judge of the qualities and prices of coals offered for importation. The annual Italian output is returned at about 100,000 tons of lignite, and 90,000 tons of turf, with a very small amount of anthracite, while the country's imports from England amount to 1,500,000 tons.

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The sheriff of Northumberland county, Va., Mr. Wm. Claughton, says: "We have many good medicines in our parts, but nothing which equals St. Jacobs Oil. It is unequalled for rheumatism and all bodily pains."

STATE NOTINGS.

Hampton has been incorporated. West Point's city debt is only \$500. Louisville has a new paper, The Observer. A national bank has been organized at Aurora.

West Point will have a carnival on February 9th. Weeping Water wants a high school or academy.

A company to prospect for coal in Holt county is to be formed at O'Neill. A lady of Falls City has already grown lettuce, but she grew it under glass.

Lincoln has so poor soil Sunday night the ministers could hardly read their sermons.

An Aurora furniture firm has made an assignment, caused by too much long time credit.

O. S. Camar's building at Lyons was damaged by fire to the extent of \$500 on the 10th.

Weeping Water can do almost all them. In boring for water, a man struck a fine bed of marble.

A thousand dollar school house is to be built at Burnett as soon as bonds issued for the purpose can be sold.

Nearly all of the town of Cozad (still owned by John J. Cozad) has been attacked to recover a judgment.

The corner stone ceremonies of the M. E. church at Neligh have been indefinitely postponed on account of the weather.

A Cass county man, out of tobacco, rode six miles on horseback to Weeping Water to get some on the 12th, cold as it was.

A Phelps county man did considerable work last fall driving a team to a common plow and lending another team hit to a wally plow.

A 3-foot vein of coal is said to have recently been discovered in Butler county, and the men who did it claim the state bonus offered therefor.

A carpenter employed by the big association of West Point got full the other night and in going home fell into a snow bank, where he remained till morning, having nearly frozen to death.

The residence of C. J. Moon, of Industry, Phelps county, caught fire recently from a defective fuse. No one but Mrs. Moon was at home and she had to run a quarter of a mile to a neighbor's for assistance.

J. A. Flint, station agent at Covington, serious illness, caught the other day. He was carrying a lamp when the oil caught fire and spilled over his hands, causing them some what before he could extinguish the flames.

A recent dance in the McCook hotel ended in a fight amongst all hands around. One of the "gentlemen" made an indecent proposal to a young lady and she told her brother. He started the row accordingly.

Liberty's saloon caught fire on the night of the 18th, after everybody was in bed, but the bucket brigade rallied and saved it. It was in the midst of a number of frame buildings, and the town undoubtedly escaped a calamity.

A S. C. & P. train was derailed on Sunday between Wisner and West Point, throwing off the baggage car and two coaches. The train had just got through a heavy drift. Two men were injured, though not seriously. The end of one of the rails came up through the passenger car and ran through the coal box.

A SCENE IN COURT.

Hot Words by Court and Counsel. Special Dispatch to THE BEE.

WASHINGTON, January 25--The monotony of the star route trial was broken to-day by an extraordinary exhibition of temper by both court and counsel. During the cross-examination of a witness, Bliss said Ingersoll was right in the statement that the government assumed that Stephen W. Dorsey was the root of the conspiracy. In proof of fact he sent out the proposals and received them. The witness said packages were returned him through Stephen W. Dorsey. The proposals returned responded: "The proposals were used in bidding at the letting. 'All that he could get in,' said witnesses. Dorsey's letters were offered in evidence as showing his connections with the transactions to which witness had testified. Defence objected to the letters being offered. In the course of the argument Ingersoll used the expression, "where will this end?"

"In the penitentiary," promptly interrupted Bliss.

Ingersoll, shaking his finger at Bliss, "you will be there as soon as my client!"

The Court--"This is entirely unprofessional."

Ingersoll--"Did I provoke it?"

The Court--"No."

Ingersoll--"I represent a gentleman and do not propose doing any thing a gentleman may not do."

The Court said at the last trial it seemed to have gone off with the idea that it was an attempt to prove some sort of official misconduct on the part of Senator Dorsey and gave rise to doubts in this case. It might as well be understood that the questions arising in this case would be decided without bias from any other decision.

(Suddenly and with great indignation to Williams, who was smiling.) "What do you mean by that sir? What do you mean by sneering and giggling like a fool at the decisions of this court?"

Williams--"I don't understand you; I don't believe the court's language was warranted. I was talking about another matter and did not hear you."

The Court--"You should have been listening."

Williams--"You honor has not decided the question yet. I could not have expressed any opinion upon it."

"The court accepts your disclaimer and owes you an apology for the severity of its language."

The delivery of the opinion was resumed and resulted in the admission of the papers. Dorsey's letter to a postmaster in Arkansas, which has been already published, was read, and after hearing objections to certain other questions, which were finally ruled out, the court adjourned.

Baby's Petition. Life is restless, days are fleeting, Children bloom, but die in teething; Wash my tale, all friends and mother, With the precious girls and brothers; Had I known 'twas 'twas Victoria! Children die, all but Cassaria! No sleep or nights by baby's qualling, Like lacks they die in early morning.

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