

The Omaha Bee.

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

AND still no news from Crook.

Spring is now struggling to catch up with summer, and the last persons to complain will be our farmers.

With summer weather the commercial travellers are flocking to our hotels which are crowded from cellar to attic.

The city attorney's opinion on the paving question is exciting a great deal of comment and is generally received with favor.

Mr. Carey, the informer, has been ordered into exile. The climate of the United States might prove unhealthy to his delicate constitution.

Another newspaper man, Col. John Hay, receives a bequest of \$100,000 from the estate of his father-in-law, Amasa Stone, while his wife will fall heir to a trifle over \$5,000,000.

Every congressman, just now, is enthusiastic over the prospects of civil service reform in every district but his own. At home he is in favor of a liberal interpretation of its principles.

California is about to prosecute its railway commission for selling out to the corporations. The sins of commission on the Pacific slope ought to lead to their omission elsewhere.

Senator Van Wyck fails to see the necessity of four post roads to Deadwood when three have hard work to find enough mail to carry. That is where Senator Manderson and Mr. Valentine seem to disagree with him.

The United Presbyterians are no longer united on the question of prohibiting instrumental music in the churches and a strong effort was made to forbid the nubbical organ in the sanctuary. No move was, however, made to abolish the collection plate.

Iowa democrats have convened and adjourned after adopting the usual platform which means anything and everything. J. Sterling Morton turned up present with his inevitable speech on the tariff and Judge Kline was nominated for governor on the first formal ballot.

Mrs. Meikleham, grandmother of Thomas Jefferson, to relieve whose destitution an appeal was made to the democracy some months ago, has received \$420, \$200 of which came from Mr. Tilden. The memory of Thomas Jefferson is valued at less than \$500 by his degenerate political descendant.

Secretary Teller has been warned by Representatives Cobb, Damm and R. Rogers against any issuance of certificates to the Southern Pacific railroad company for lands granted to the Texas & Pacific road. A congressman's warning rarely weighs down the beam as against the seductive smiles of a railroad lobbyist.

And now let the other departments follow the example of Mr. Graham in forbidding official absenteeism. It is high time that the government should be run by the heads of bureaus and departments, and not by assistants and deputies. For months at a time, the government is practically allowed to run itself.

The Christian Soldier comes to the front with an opinion about Gen. Crook's Indian campaign. "I think," says Gen. Oliver O. Howard, "as he would think of me if I was in his place and he in mine, that he will act judiciously." There can be no doubt that if the cautious pursuer of Chief Joseph was now in Gen. Crook's place very little apprehension would be felt regarding his safety. --New York Sun

What does the sun mean? Does it mean to charge General Howard was lax in a stern chase which is justly regarded as in many respects the most remarkable Indian pursuit on record? Or does the editor imply that General Howard is a coward? In the latter, he is the first man who has ever read history who has ventured the opinion. Whatever the peculiarities of the present commander of the department of the Platte, he is a brave man from sole to crown. Such flings as the above are no less unkind than they are undeserved by the 'Christian Soldier.'

UNEQUAL ASSESSMENTS.

It would be a month's solid work to dig out of the assessors books all the instances of unequal assessments in Douglas county. Nothing more than a hasty glance is needed to convince any citizen of the carelessness or criminality of the assessors in making up their lists of the real estate valuation. Every charge made by the Bee is sustained by the records. The same names which last year appeared upon the rolls as heavy tax shirkers are down once more in black and white as evading a fair assessment. Private corporations, whose property looks up into the hundreds of thousands, are again assessed at rates varying from one-sixth to one-tenth of what our smaller property owners are paying. The water works company, which claim an investment of \$350,000 in this city, is listed at \$34,000. The assessment of the gas company is proportionately small. The banks are rated low enough, but they are clamoring for an entire exemption of their real estate from taxation on the ground that the value is partly represented by their capital stock which is taxed. Elevators and smelting works and mill works are all down at figures way below what they ought to be, while the opera house which, with the ground upon which it stands, could readily be sold for \$150,000, is assessed for taxation at the ridiculous small sum of \$25,000. If we turn to the property of wealthy land owners the inequalities and discriminations are even more flagrant. The assessor of the first ward is either too ignorant to perform his duties properly or else he is too corrupt. In spite of the known fact that real estate in South Omaha has increased on an average thirty-three per cent during the past year, the lists of that ward are almost a transcript of last year's assessment. Property that is held at from \$700 to \$1,000 a lot is assessed at from \$250 to \$300 an acre, while lots owned by men of small or moderate means are listed at from one-third to one-fourth of their market value. In the second ward there is a larger increase in the assessment than was at first stated, but when it is considered that all that portion of the Second ward that lies near the park has doubled in value within the past two years, and that fully two hundred houses have been built inside of the same period, the additions to the list are trifling. An interesting feature of the present assessment is the fact that eight city blocks, occupied by the Burlington & Missouri railway for their depot grounds, entirely escape local taxation.

Meantime the board of commissioners, who are sitting as a board of equalization, express themselves as well satisfied with the assessment, and are rather astonished that any one should take the trouble to criticize it. We are very much mistaken if the criticism of our citizens, to whom the tax shirking of the wealthy property owners means increased taxation for themselves, will not make itself felt in a more effective way than through complaints in the papers.

LICENSING SHOWS.

The ordinance introduced by Councilman McGuckin to raise the license on circuses and shows that exhibit in Omaha is in the interest of sound public policy. Mr. McGuckin at first only desired an ordinance drawn that would charge each circus exhibition within our city limits \$500, but City Attorney Connell found on examining the existing ordinance regulating shows and theatres that it needed thorough revision. He therefore drew an ordinance covering the whole subject. At present Omaha only derives \$100 license fee from circuses. It is notorious that Omaha is the best circus town on the Missouri river, and few of them have left here with less than \$10,000 of the people's money. Is it unreasonable to ask that our city should make them leave at least \$500? Robinson's antics show that exhibited here last month paid \$300 for showing at Council Bluffs, and they could have well afforded to have paid \$200 more in Omaha. The hue and cry that these circuses will exhibit out of the city limits is absurd. If they do, their receipts for night shows will fall off about two-thirds. Few people will venture out to the state fair grounds with women and children on a dark night. The state fair managers made a failure of night exhibitions, and Buffalo Bill had the same experience with a better attraction. But even if some circuses did go out of the city limits and out down the receipts we can afford to stand it. The trades people will have just so much more money circulating among them. And now a word about the theatres. As we understand it the new ordinance simply follows the old except as it raises the annual theatre license from \$100 to \$200. The license charged for each performance is not intended to apply to Boyd's opera house or the Turner hall. It only applies to theatrical troupes and shows that might come here independent of the licensed theatres. The \$100 additional license fee for the opera house is proper. The opera house is not a public charity. Mr. Boyd has been complimented upon his enterprise sufficiently to satisfy the vanity

of any ordinary man. His opera house is self-sustaining, and our city must deal with this question purely from a business standpoint. The Republican threatens for Mr. Boyd that he will close his opera house if this ordinance passes. Mr. Boyd will do no such thing. He will not cut off his nose to spite his face. One hundred dollars a year added to the cost of running the opera house will not bankrupt the concern, especially in view of the fact that every year as our population grows his income from his theatre will increase.

The filing of articles of incorporation for the Omaha & Northern railroad is the first indication of a genuine move on the part of several of our citizens toward connecting this city with northern Nebraska. We have no doubt a line from Omaha up the Elkhorn Valley will be a good investment for owners if it is honestly and economically constructed and operated. It will be a paying investment for Omaha from the day on which it is opened. At present our merchants are almost as much shut out from the trade of northern Nebraska as if they lived in another state, and the people of the upper counties often find it easier to transact their business with Chicago houses than to place their orders in this city. For these reasons a direct road to the north will fill a long-felt want, and if it is projected as a legitimate commercial enterprise, and not as a stock-jobbing operation, it will be cordially welcomed on all sides.

Henry Watterson, who has been recently lecturing on "Homicide in the South," has been interviewed on the homicide of presidential candidates. Mr. Watterson is emphatic in his denial that Mr. Tilden will consent to be a candidate under any circumstances. He speaks of Bayard as unavailable, and Ben Butler as out of the question, but thinks that if Kentucky were to speak to-morrow Joe McDonald would be named without a dissenting voice. Mr. Watterson is not as sanguine as some of his fellow democrats concerning the result in 1884. With true blue grass instinct, he says it would be as easy to forecast a horse race, or the caprice of a woman. He thinks, however, that a square fight on the tariff issue will assure a victory to his party, whoever may be the candidate. Mr. Watterson probably knows as much as any other man what he is talking about. And that is nothing at all.

Is it a board of equalization or of discrimination? Many tax payers are interested in the question.

How It Works in California.

San Francisco Chronicle. It is nearly seven months since the present railroad commissioners were elected, and five months since they took the oath of office. But they seem to be no nearer to an understanding of their duty than in November of January last. They have listened to many specific complaints of the clearest violation of the law and the constitution without a motion toward satisfying the complainants or stopping the abuses. Two of them were substantially nominated and elected by railway influence. One of the two thinks "tax extortion" is proved. The other wants more time for thinking before he will act. Both are seemingly at odds with the third, whose resolutions for a general reduction of 20 per cent on freight charges and a maximum of 3 cents a mile for fares was tabled yesterday by a majority of the board, after the declaration of one of them that he is "all-conscious of a desire to serve the people." We, too, have heard of the "consciousness" of something, and this is the case with the people are tired of being fooled with that the majority of this board, and in so doing trifling with dangerous explosives; and that if they do not soon afford relief to the public by a reduction of rates, a rule prohibiting discriminations and an exposure of the outrages of the monopoly, they will be themselves exposed and placed in imminent peril of something worse than this by way of San Jose on Saturday.

Riveting the Granger Decisions.

Chicago Tribune. The importance of the decision rendered Monday by the United States supreme court in the Granger case, Neal Ruggles against the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad of this state can hardly be overestimated. The point involved was the former hope of the corporations in their effort to break the long line of Granger decisions made a breach in the power of the state. The supreme court held and reiterated that the state had, as an attribute of sovereignty, the power to regulate the tariff of railroads. But the shrewd lawyers of the corporations seized on the words, almost universal in railroad charters, giving the companies the power to fix the rates of toll, and claimed that these words were an express surrender of the sovereignty of the state and a contract with the railroads giving them the prerogative of determining their charges.

Their only ground for expecting anything from this argument was that the supreme court, in deciding the case of Pick against the Northwestern railroad, had used this phrase: "We decided that the state may limit the amount of charges for fares and freights 'unless retained by some contract in their charters.'" If the court could be induced to hold that the permission given the companies to fix fares was such a contract the Granger decisions would go for nothing, for all the charters contained these potent words. We pointed out at the time this case was argued before the supreme court that the provisions in the

charters for the fixing of fares and freights could be properly construed only as one to be exercised under the sovereign power of the state. Otherwise the community would be in the anomalous position of submission to two sovereignties, the state and the corporation. There is one thing the sovereign state cannot do, and that is to create another sovereign. The essence of the power of the state is that it is indivisible. It may be delegated for a time, but it can never be put beyond the reach of recall.

It is substantially this broad ground that the supreme court has taken. The court says that the power given to the railroads to determine their rates is to be interpreted as subject to the clearly established power of the state to fix them if it so desires. "The charter must be construed in the light of this established power."

The gratification of the public with this victorious ending of the long struggle between them and the corporations will be very great. The feeling of popular relief will be heightened by the recollection of the apprehension that the supreme court, since its re-organization, could not be looked upon as an anti-corporation bench. The fear was widely expressed that the Granger cases were about to be overturned, and all that had been gained by years of effort in the struggle to restrain corporate power would be lost. But the reverse has happened. The court has riveted all its decisions in favor of the power of the state to regulate, and has closed the last loophole of escape for the corporations from submitting to the exercise of this power. It may be reasonably hoped that the anti-corporation bench which involves the question, arising between the state of California and the Central Pacific, of the power of the state to tax the railroads as corporations, and not, as they insist, as persons, will be decided in favor of the people.

Morale of Army Officers.

Washington Cor. Philadelphia Record. It does not always follow that because a man is an army officer that he is a poker player. Nor is theft the inevitable sequel of a soldier's playing. In fact, the best poker players don't steal. They don't have to. There are as good men in the army nowadays, and relatively as many of them, as in Washington's day, or Scott's, or in the red hot days of the sixties. Here in Washington we see a great deal of these army and navy officers. We see some fools and some knaves, since they are all human; but we see ten times as many pure, honest, intelligent, courageous, God-fearing men. I know a man in the quartermaster general's branch of the army against whose pay there stood a debt of a million dollars--more than all his pay for twenty lifetimes. That looks like a damaging fact. But every cent of the money was accounted for and the account squared. But see, he fitted out expedition after expedition before, during and after the war. He was in a dozen towns, and all over the United States. As his accounts came in the sharp eyes kept for the purpose in the treasurer's department detected every entry that seemed extraordinary or excessive in the least degree, and a sharp pen struck it out. Then these items were put together, and when the grand settlement came my friend found \$1,000,000 on the wrong side of the ledger. Here was a debt for carriage hire; there for transportation for 1,000 tons of stores, and so on. Item by item was explained and allowed, until this great mountain of debtedness had been swept away. I asked a man who knows how much money this particular quartermaster has disbursed since he entered the service, some years before the war. "A hundred millions?" I suggested. "Two or three hundred," said my friend; "and he has accounted for every dollar of it."

Abusing His Master.

Philadelphia Press. Some people will consider Mr. Chaney M. Dapert, who is Mr. William H. Vanderbilt's lawyer, to have been guilty of uttering queer words when he expressed a hope at a public dinner last Saturday night that "mutual-headed millionaires would have no influence on the politics of the future."

Drawing the Line.

New York Star. Logan is one of the statesmen who prate most loudly about equal rights for all men, irrespective of creed or color; but he draws the line outside the Zuni springs.

Dakota Not a Paradise.

Notwithstanding that the emigration to Dakota this spring has been so great that some of the lines of railroad leading thither have been absolutely blockaded, the Chicago Journal has lifted its voice against the expediency of the exodus, especially from the state of Illinois. The story of Dakota has been in some respects altogether too highly colored; the emigration business has been overworked; the excitement is over, and now comes the relapse. Dakota is no doubt a good place for wheat-growing purposes, and is just the place for the poor foreigner from Sweden or Norway, or any other old country in Europe, to settle in, but the climate is too severe for a man who has been reared anywhere south of the fortieth parallel of latitude. As a matter of courtesy on the part of the geographers, Dakota is placed in the "temperate zone," but when wells 20 feet deep are frozen over, and winter sets in about the first of October, with a coldness that defies the registry of Fahrenheit, and continues until May, it might as well be called a cold section of country.

Sub Lists Abolished.

Cincinnati, June 7.--The International Typographical Union to-day adopted a resolution requiring sub lists to be abolished in all union offices by September 1st next. The effect of this is that any union printer may be employed by any regular employe in any office as substitute without being required to be first enrolled as a substitute by the foreman. The order was put in force immediately in the Times-Star office, where its promulgation was greeted with cheers.

Orcharding has been tried and determined.

"I have not seen a crop of wheat of twenty five bushels per acre, have asked old settlers, and they have not. Last year the department of agriculture made the returns for this county at fourteen bushels. This was rather light, but the crop was the best in five years. Forty bushels of oats and thirty five of corn are good crops, and it takes five acres of prairie to pasture a steer through the summer. Flax is our main market crop, and is fast ruining lands devoted to it. Many who undertook sheep farming have given it up. Cattle business is the most profitable business at present, and the men who run the threshing machines grow poor at it. There is a heavy immigration to this territory, and much of it of a land-grabbing nature. Six months' stultious residence, then prove up, mortgages or sell or \$300 to \$500, then leave Dakota or repeat the game, making a net gain of perhaps \$200 for the six months, is the programme by thousands. And many an honest pioneer takes his claim, tills to make a home, and in a year or so finds himself almost isolated from neighbors and debarred from the blessing of society. If grasshoppers, or a failure of crop occur this year, there will be a bigger stampede than followed Moses of old. Any one intending to come to Dakota territory ought to be prepared to accept the regular hardships of pioneer life. Don't build your hopes on enormous crops. Every dollar you earn here is well earned. The busiest man in South Dakota is Shylock. His grip is on some quarter or more of land every section, and five years will see thousands of farms in his hands."

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