

FIGHTING OMAHA'S CHARTER

Strong Lobby of its Enemies Before the Legislative Committee.

CORPORATIONS AND TAXSHIRKERS UNITE

An Unholy Combination to Protect the Railroads and to Save Rich Property Owners From a Just Share of Taxation.

The most important features of the charter amendments now before the legislature are in danger of defeat. A strong lobby of interested parties is at Lincoln making strenuous efforts to have the provisions most offensive to them. The opposition has centered on and is chiefly directed against four propositions, to wit: To create the city limits. To extend the office of assessor. To let the power to change street grades without consent of property owners be vested in the council.

To change the make-up of the Board of Public Works. (The opposition wants the board as now constituted to stand.) To provide for the assessment of railway property along the right of way. To require railroads to pay for viaducts ordered built over street grade crossings, as provided in present charter.

City Engineer Rosewater, City Attorney Council and the council committee appointed to look after the charter amendments have all been at Lincoln and are earnestly advocating the adoption of the above amendments. As far as can be learned, they are all sincerely in favor of proposed changes in the interest of the city.

The subject was discussed Thursday evening before the legislative committee. One of the representatives of the city government in speaking of the attack on the proposed charter says:

Railroads and Obstructionists Combine. "The cloven foot of the opposition to the charter amendments has been discovered. The tactics of former railroads on Omaha's rights have been under the light is being made under cover, and as formerly, the real opposition comes from railroad corporations desirous of escaping municipal taxation and a number of obstructionists desirous of preventing all public improvements.

The claim that injury would result from more clearly defining the power of the city to extend its corporate limits, or that an additional burden would be put upon the taxpayers by the appointment of a tax commissioner are mere shams to cover the real purpose of the opposition. The principal objections urged to the charter amendments as proposed by the committee of fifteen, and as approved by the city council, related to the extension of the corporate limits and the appointment of a tax commissioner, and it was not until an examination was made of the bill presented by Mr. James Creighton to the senate committee as a substitute for the original bill that the true purpose of the assault was discovered.

In the discussion which took place before the senate committee no reference or objection was made to the original amendments, in which the citizens of Omaha are so largely interested, but the substituted bill leaves out this important amendment. The bill offered by Mr. Creighton secures some desirable amendments to the tax section, thereby enabling the railroad companies to absolutely escape all municipal taxation on their entire right of way, tracks, depot grounds, buildings and personal property in the city of Omaha.

Railroad Attorneys Bill. "These facts were probably unknown to the taxpayers who signed the petition presented by Mr. Creighton to the senate committee with his substituted bill, but they are facts demonstrated beyond controversy by the bill now in the hands of the senate committee. It is an open secret that this bill was prepared by certain railroad attorneys and by J. O. Conner at the request of Mr. Creighton and others. While under the provisions of the substituted bill the interests represented by Mr. Creighton secure some desirable changes, the railroad companies obtain, as usual, the chief benefits resulting from charter amendment proposals.

It is claimed by the charter committee preparing the original amendments that an amendment to the existing section of the charter relating to taxation is absolutely necessary under a recent decision of the court, by which it has been declared that while under existing law the portion of railroad property returned by the State Board of Equalization can be taxed for county purposes it cannot be taxed for municipal purposes. One of the chief objects of the amendment as proposed by the committee of fifteen was to cover this serious defect in existing law.

In view of the fact that the railroads secure fire and police protection, it is claimed by the members of the charter committee that such companies should bear their proportion of necessary taxation for such purposes, the same as private citizens. It is also claimed by the members of the charter committee that the railroads should be required to construct viaducts in Omaha where street crossings are dangerous, the same as they are required to do in other cities. The law as it now exists is found to be defective, and owing to such defects the railroad companies absolutely refuse to construct either the Fifteenth or Sixteenth street viaducts, entirely ignore the ordinances requiring them to do so.

Unholy Alliance Unmasked. "It is claimed by Mr. Creighton, as reported by some of the parties who appeared before the senate committee, that a change was necessary, as a matter of expediency, in uniting forces with the railroad companies in order to defeat the charter amendments and prevent the present council from proceeding on carrying on works of public improvement. To carry out this scheme it is further proposed by Mr. Creighton when the bill reaches the house to cut down the salary of every city official and otherwise load down the bill with amendments. The members of the charter committee who appeared before the senate committee express themselves as satisfied with the action taken yesterday and believe as the result of the presentation of the Creighton bill the main of the opposition has been removed and that the people of Omaha will stand as a unit in favor of the passage of the original bill.

Changing the Boundaries. City Engineer Rosewater obtained the floor to recite that no map of Omaha was convenient, but the facts were that it is not the intention to extend as much as it is to straighten out the city limits. Certain favored parties along the western boundary had been in the past graciously exempted from city taxation, though their property was considerably nearer the center of the city than that of other land owners who had to contribute to the municipal treasury. The people demanded equality of taxation, and no man, no matter how rich he might be, should be allowed to escape his share of the tax burden merely because he was rich or had evaded doing so in the past.

Another reason for straightening out the city limits was to make them conform to the east to the degree of the United States supreme court, under which part of the property heretofore included in the limits had been declared to be a part of the fair sister state of Iowa. Again the growing intelligence of the people demanded that the city should have the power and the right to own and operate its own water works, and it would be advisable, if this is ever done, that the pump house and main plants should be inside the corporate limits, whereas they are outside now. As it is under the present dispensation, the water works company escapes taxation for this property. While it exacts considerable tribute from the people of Omaha.

Preventing Fraud and Perjury. City Engineer Rosewater made a vehement attack upon the whole present system of taxation. He started out by saying that the time had arrived when public contentment of the law should be stopped. Assessors today, after taking an oath to return all property at its true and full value, as a matter of fact list property at one-third and one-fifth of its actual value. "You are all members of some church," said Mr. Rosewater, "which is based upon certain lines of truth and moral principles, yet everybody can comfortably perjure himself when the assessor comes around. What a spectacle, when honest men assist and countenance public officials in perjury of themselves and violating their oaths, and all for the purpose of robbing the state. Every town and county in this state thinks that by this pernicious system of undervaluation they thereby get the best of the state and chuckle slyly in so doing, as though the fraud were not palpable and notoriously public.

"The theory by which the assessor escapes his conscience, that he has the valuation upon property on what it would fetch under the hammer. If this be so, it only applies to reality, yet it gives an excuse to extend the same to the forms of taxable wealth, even to the absurdity of undervaluing money itself. Who ever heard of an auctioneer selling gold dollars at one-fifth or one-third of their actual value? Yet the assessor practically does this same thing in his returns. Place the entire system upon a true valuation and a large amount of capital now escaping just taxation will have to bear its fair burden with reality, which, being out of doors, cannot evade.

"If this bill is adopted you will have an intelligent and central bureau, who will lay out on a large map the entire property of the city with the amount of taxation for each piece. The boards of trade of Omaha and Lincoln are all reputable men and leading citizens, and in the published official reports of these boards it is announced, as an explanation of the present high taxation that the valuation of the city of Omaha and Lincoln is one-tenth of the actual value and therefore the taxes are in reality one-tenth of what the rate would appear to be. If this report be true, then the sworn returns of the assessors prove themselves to be forgeries, or they themselves are totally incompetent or dishonest."

VICE WAS SEEN TOO OFTEN

Deputy Sheriff's Brother Joined a Gang of Counterfeiters.

HE TRAPPED THE CHIEF OF THE GANG

Smart Amateur Detective Now Arrested on the Charge of Having Turned Counterfeiter in Kansas—Caught by Uncle Sam's Men.

The doors of the Douglas county jail have closed behind Tom McCarthy and Harry Lynn, leaving both of the men inside the building, where they will remain until the United States court disposes of their case. Deputy United States Marshal Harris brought them on the charge of having manufactured and passed counterfeit money, consisting of bills and coins.

The arrest grows out of the conviction of Dave Enslo, who was sent over the road at the last term of court. A long time ago the authorities concluded that there was a place at Nebraska City where the spurious money was being manufactured, so they employed Deputy Sheriff Vic McCarty of Sarpy county to do a little shadowing. Vic struck a hot trail but could not land his men, they being suspicious of him. He did not propose to be balked, so he worked his brother Tom in on the gang. The men took kindly to Tom and soon let him on the ground floor of the business, teaching him the art of making money that looked as good as the genuine. Enslo showed him the tools and how to use them. He taught him how to get rid of the stuff after it was manufactured and in fact made him an expert in the business.

One dark night last summer, when there was a large stock of the bad money on hand waiting the arrival of the agents who were to take it to the county, Tom gave the snap away to his brother Vic, and Enslo was arrested. Tom's experience and his education with Enslo as a tutor had made him anxious to turn a penny without any great amount of manual labor, and it is alleged that he turned his attention to making bad money of his own, taking in Lynn for a partner. The two men did a flourishing business until their arrest.

Deputy Harris claims that he has a good case against the men, that he can send them both over the road.

MURDER OR SUICIDE?

Insurance Company Investigating Last Winter's Tragedy at Mrs. King's.

On the morning of March 27, 1902, there was a tragedy in the home of Mrs. King, at Ninth street and Capitol avenue, and Mabel Mooney and Howard Gafford were the principals. The pair were found dead in bed, each with a bullet in the head. Everything pointed toward murder and suicide, and the coroner's jury, after spending a couple of days investigating the affair, agreed that young Gafford had first killed his mistress and then shot himself. The young man's folks are fairly well off and live at Carroll, Ia. They scouted the idea of their son having committed a crime, and at the instance of the father, detectives were employed to go over the ground again, but nothing new was discovered that would throw any light on the affair.

Young Gafford carried a \$3,000 life insurance policy in favor of his parents, and in the course of time the claim against the company was made, but payment of the policy was refused on the ground that Gafford had committed suicide. The case went to the courts and has dragged along ever since. A few days ago the counsel employed by the insurance company came to Omaha. Since then they have been busy going over the testimony again and taking the depositions of several of the women who were inmates of the resort at that time. So far the testimony has been about the same as was brought forth at the coroner's inquest and points toward the original theory.

The deceased was a young man and was traveling for a commission house at Des Moines. He had known the girl, Mabel Mooney, for a long time, she formerly having been a resident of Carroll. According to reports he was madly in love with her and was constantly urging her to give up the life she was leading, run away with him and get married.

During his last visit here Gafford had about \$800, and spent nearly a week at the house of Mrs. King, being in the girl's company day and night. A day or two previous to the shooting Gafford became restless and watched the girl closely. On the night of the shooting he had ordered a supper sent to the room, and the couple partook of it and talked the night through. The strangest thing about the whole affair was that two shots were fired, but no one in the house heard either of them, and it was only by accident that Cecil Gray, the girl who occupied an adjoining room, went into the apartment occupied by Gafford and Miss Mooney and discovered that they were both dead.

One of the principal points taken by Gafford's relations to support their theory of murder was that after Gafford reached Omaha he drew on his house for \$500, and was known to have about \$800 when he reached here. They claim that a double murder was committed for the purpose of robbery. Something like \$250 was found in Gafford's effects, and the testimony given at the coroner's jury and before the attorneys yesterday showed that the young man, during his stay, spent money like water. He was so liberal as to pay a hackman \$20 for carrying a trunk and a trunk and \$50 at another time for the services of the carriage for a day and night.

Several whisky bottles were found in the room, all empty except one, and the relatives also claim that the couple were first drugged and then killed. This is hardly possible, as the coroner's assistants sampled the liquor to see if it had been drugged, and they are all still alive. That is pretty fair evidence that the contents of the bottle were nothing but what the label indicated, and that was "old rye."

According to the statements of the life insurance lawyers, they will continue to investigate the case, and they believe they have enough proof of suicide to hold in any court.

Thought Hissell a Murderer. A man giving the name of Noll came to the police station yesterday and gave himself out, stating that he had shot a man in Fremont and was a fugitive from justice. Chief Seavey telephoned to Fremont and learned that Noll had engaged in a drunken row there with a man named Noll, but no physical damage had been done to either one of the belligerents.

Winter Cholera. A mild form of bowel complaint, popularly known as winter cholera, made its appearance recently at Fairbault, Minn., and several other places. No deaths were reported from it, as a few doses of Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy will effect a cure in every case. For sale by all druggists.

See Dentist Keim, 40 & 41 Barker blk.

FUNERAL NOTICE. Notices of funerals or burials under this head, fifty cents; each additional line ten cents.

S. J. Hess, died March 1st, at Kansas City, Mo., funeral Sunday, March 5, at 2 p. m., to Prospect Hill cemetery.

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Advertisement for Misfit Clothing Parlors. Features a large illustration of a hand pointing to the word 'FIRE!'. Text: 'FIRE! "Give them bargains, now, such as you never did before." This is the order of the insurance companies to the clerks at the MISFIT CLOTHING PARLORS 1309 Farnam Street. The real wet clothing has been disposed of and the companies have got nearly all their money out of it, and the balance of the stock will go without regard to damage or value. These Prices Will Convince You.'

Table listing clothing items and prices. Columns: OVERCOATS, SUITS, PANTS. Prices range from \$12.00 to \$15.00.

Advertisement for Raymond, the Jeweler. Text: 'RAYMOND, THE JEWELER. MAIL ORDERS RECEIVE PROMPT ATTENTION. 1309 FARNAM STREET. Open from 8 A. M. Until 10 P. M. LISTEN TO THE REPORT OF CAMOLE JUNIPER. We claim CAMOLE JUNIPER is the most wonderful female compound ever discovered. And we guarantee it to cure females who have suffered for years with female complaints. CAMOLE JUNIPER is a success when all others fail. If you are irregular you can rely on CAMOLE JUNIPER. Take no other. \$2.00 Bottle. Sold by all druggists.'

Advertisement for Koal-spar and Nebraska National Bank. Text: 'Koal-spar Agents Wanted Everywhere. THE RENOWNED COAL SAVER. NEBRASKA National Bank, U. S. DEPOSITORY, OMAHA, NEB. Capital \$400,000 Surplus \$65,000. 1816 Douglas Street, Omaha, Neb. Dr. DOWNS'