THE OMAHA DAILY BEE.

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DARK AND DEVIOUS DOINGS

Concealment the General Order of Business in the State House.

PUBLIC OFFICE A PRIVATE SNAP

An Aggregation of Sinecures Drawing Snug Salaries for Secreting the Records—Remarkable Exhibit of Idleness, Ignorance and Nepotism.

LINCOLN, Dec. 18.—(Special.)—In a remark recently dropped by ex-State Auditor Tom Benton he struck the keynote of the entire capitol diapason.

"Were I auditor," he said, with emphatic unction, "none of you newspaper men should see a d—d voucher or overhaul the books."

Tom Benton has gone out of statesmanship and into potatoes. It was on account of a partial investigation by a press representative of an unfortunate flyer in potatoes on the part of Benton & Co., in which a loss of some $450 was made, owing to the failure of the B. & M. to elect Tom Majors, that the above candid expression was vented. Just before election several carloads of potatoes were dumped out at various state institutions by Benton with the idea that the state institution would absorb them at a very exorbitant price. But they became scared after election and concluded all at once that they did not want so many potatoes.

But the spirit of Tom Benton still hovers over the capitol like a benediction, and his peculiar idea of conducting a public office on the theory that it is a private snap still finds cheerful endorsement in almost every department in the costly, yet inartistic, cut-stone pile recognized as headquarters of the commonwealth of Nebraska.

The last session of the legislature appropriated $25,000 to pay expenses of impeachment proceedings against certain state officials. True, the supreme court took a judicial clip at the amount and reduced it to $15,000, but the sum of $11,749.60 has been expended for that purpose, taxpayers' money, and with no practical result unless succeeding state officials who are to follow profit by expensive lessons of the past. One of these lessons analyzed is a direct reproof of the sinuous, subterranean, sub rosa, "under the hat," gum shoe method of conducting public business. Had the honest press of this state—unsubsidized and fearless newspapers that are ready at all times to reflect, as in a glass, for the benefit of the taxpaying public the daily official acts of state officers—been permitted to have convenient access in business hours to the official records prepared by those unfortunate gentlemen who fell under suspicion all this expense to the state might have been saved and the gentlemen themselves spared much pain and annoyance.

NOT A PRIVATE SNAP.

Now the cold truth is, and it would be well for incoming state officials to note the fact, that they have not a book, not a slip of official paper, not a document in their offices that they dare refuse for purposes of investigation to any reputable citizen in the state who conducts himself in a manner becoming a gentleman while in their presence. All their official acts, all their official documents are subject to consultation and inspection by representatives of the press, and as such privileged matter and every officer of the state lays himself liable to law whenever he refuses such privileges. This applies to every department, from the office of Governor Crounse down to the last bit of memoranda entered up by the head janitor of the building. There is no legal authority which permits them to transact public business in secret, and all their numerous board meetings and mysterious conclaves from which reporters are excluded are unlawful, illegal and aromatic of fraud. Paid servants of a patient public, they deny the right of the public to look in on their work, suppress their proceedings from the taxpayers who look to the press for official and routine information, and then snarl at the press when it becomes necessary to expend $10,000 or $15,000 to inquire into their nefarious plottings and scheming under the misnomer "board meeting."

In no other state in the union is state house business so successfully sequestered from the public. In Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin a part of the duties of stenographers, typewriters and clerks paid by the public is to prepare copies of public documents for the press. With the exception of the supreme court, which, of course, is more fully acquainted with the law than the gentlemen who come in from the back counties and rattle around a few years in the state offices, no official papers are duplicated for the press by any department of the building. There is a small army of well paid stenographers and typewriters, often idle, and seldom pressed by work, but aside from an occasional piece of typewriting for the B. & M. Journal or a prepared synopsis for the Omaha Palliator of public plunderers, the World-Herald, nothing is prepared for the metropolitan press.

HUMPHREY'S CANDID DEPUTY.

Take, for example, the office of the commissioner of public lands and buildings. Here is a force confessed to be numerically too large. There are employs here emaited and lymphatic with the utter nothingness of their semi-official existence. Yet a press representative has been told by Deputy A. R. Samson that if he got any information out of that office he would have to steal it. Another has been denied access to the commissioner's biennial report, and told that the B. & M. Journal and Omaha Palliator would be afforded ample opportunities to inspect it. How long would such officials last in New York state, in Michigan, in any commonwealth where the people have charge of their public business instead of the railroads?

Take another example of the pernicious effects of private board meetings. There is to be given away, for there is no legal method of renting it, a concession for cigar stand and lunch counter in the capitol building during the coming session of the legislature. Mr. Andis, proprietor of the newsstand in the Capital hotel, says that he applied to one of the members of the Board of Public Lands and Buildings for the privilege. He says he was referred to Secretary of State Allen. Mr. Allen, he avers, told him that he could have it, provided he did not give it to his (Allen's) niece. Last Friday Mr. Andis called at the state house for his answer, and was told that he could not have it; that other "arrangements" had been made. Where is it recorded in the proceedings of the Board of Public Lands and Buildings that this pie stand was to be taken from the board's charge and peddled out by the honorable secretary of state, or seized as a little perquisite in behalf of a member of his family? If recorded at all, would not the information have made interesting reading in the papers? Not, perhaps, the Ring Journal, but in newspapers that, not knowing what to suppress, print all the news. Where are the records of the state depository "board," the board that has been known to make a state depository of a bank known at the time to be insolvent? John C. Allen is secretary of this "board," but it is considered quite probable that he would turn red, white and blue should a presumptuous citizen ask to look at the books. Dick Townley is secretary of the State Banking board, but it is not within the range of possibilities that he would cheerfully submit the records of this financial guild to the public. As the matter now stands, taxpayers of Nebraska are contributing $2,400 and office expenses, $1,500, for the privilege of being kept in ignorance of the official acts of this institution.

SCHEMING TO HAMPER HOLCOMB.

Not satisfied with the present number of star chambers, miscalled public boards, the railroad legislators-elect are now incubating a scheme for another clique to be designated a "board of appointments." Whether it will eventuate or not depends on the hardihood and recklessness of self-constituted leaders of the republican party. The plan, as outlined, is to refuse to confirm the appointments of Governor Holcomb, pass an act creating such a board, and thus render it impossible for the governor to name any appointees to public institutions of the state. Originators of this scheme claim to have a majority large enough to pass this act over the governor's veto. In the event of their success another secret "board" will be foisted upon the state and another avenue of boodle opened to state officials already afflicted with an embarrasse de riches in this line.

It has been stated here that the cost of impeachment proceedings was some $11,000. But that is merely the cost charged up to the state of Nebraska. The officials who were tried are known to have been many more thousands out of pocket—for a time. The words "for a time" are used advisedly. There are dark reports in circulation and shady stories afloat to the effect that a number of hard working employes in some of the state departments have been "held up," as it were, told to stand and surrender a portion of their monthly earnings to aid in payment of extra impeachment costs not included in the $11,749.60 expended by the state. This is not a charge made against any state official. It may or may not be true. It is to be hoped that the latter is the case, but in any event, if true, it will certainly be known in the future, for it has already been admitted, but mere confession is not always reliable testimony.

ANOTHER HONORABLE OUTFIT.

The Board of Transportation is another expensive portion of the machinery of state whose sinuosity easily eludes the news gatherer. This board also tells the B. & M. Journal what it may and may not print, and, at times, fixes up a choice bit of advance rumor for the Omaha Palliator. An examination of its personnel and analysis of its individual honarium may afford something newsy in default of any other tangible information to be gathered from its proceedings. One of the official documents of this board is called "Proceedings of the Board of Transportation." The last entry in this important docket was made on June 9, 1894. They have made a vast improvement on the Rentonian theory, for while Tom would see the public damned before he would be annoyed by curious investigators the transportation board does away with all such annoyance by making no records whatever. It may be urged by a generous public that there is a lack of clerical force. The Board of Transportation comprises eight official members and a stenographer. They are five commissioners and three secretaries, as follows: J. C. Allen, chairman; A. R. Humphrey, secretary; Eugene Moore, J. S. Bartley and George H. Hastings, commissioners, and J. N. Koontz, W. A. Dilworth and J. W. Johnson, secretaries. The salaries of these secretaries amount to $2,000 apiece, that of the stenographer $1,200, with incidental expenses of the office amounting to $650 per annum. It is true the stenographer has been seriously ill during the past two weeks, but the inquiry naturally arises, what have the three secretaries, yes, four, including Secretary Humphrey, been doing since the 9th of June that no record of the board's proceedings are transcribed? What would the Board of Transportation do if suddenly called upon to make a biennial report to the governor, and why should not such a report be demanded? But, really, they are a jovial, good natured crowd, and when they are gathered around the council board one feels like addressing them in the language of a Christmas carol:

"God bless you, merry gentlemen,
May nothing you dismay."

But the trouble is one cannot get into the council chamber to sing carols or anything else to them. And when they have evaporated they leave no record of their deliberations behind. They are as airy and volatile as a drop of gasoline in the August sunshine. And their warfare against railroad monopolies is much like the charge of Don Quixote against the windmills. Like the historical army of France, they march up the hill and then march down again—for $2,000 per annum apiece. The appropriation for this board is $15,050, but it is learned that they will exceed this amount this year by reason of the expense attending the maximum rate cases, and create a deficiency.

VERY EXCLUSIVE HERE.

In approaching the office of Governor Crounse one cannot but feel that he is treading on classic ground. It is an awe-inspiring atmosphere, that of a governor's office. Here we are in the presence of one clothed with power to snatch a man out of the penitentiary. Is it the fear that he may also find it in his way to clap one into the donjon keep at the smallest provocation that overawes us? But in other states it is the complaisant private secretary of the governor who takes excellent care of the press boys, showing partiality to none and courtesy to all. He it is who exercises due care in shielding his excellency from the faintest tinge of suspicion that he has, as chief executive of a great state, some official action to conceal. The private secretary is paid for this work by the people, and in nearly all the states in the union he cheerfully performs this duty. How do we find it in Nebraska? The private secretary of Governor Crounse, this paid servant of the public, drawing $2,000 a year, is a man of ice. So far as the press of Nebraska is concerned, he might as well be one of the under secretaries attached to the British cabinet. True, he is now a congressman-elect, but then a congressman, like a governor, is nothing but a man, high and inscrutable though he be. It is a matter of local history that the private secretary of Governor Crounse has always neglected his duty to the press, and for which he has been munificently paid by the people. Having discovered that the man with the pompadour, drawing $2,000 per annum to serve the press and public, is in dense ignorance of anything unusual or worthy of note transpiring around him, the news gatherer is waved over to the governor's stenographer, at a salary of $1,200 a year, with the languid suggestion that, possibly, he knows something. Sometimes he does, and again he doesn't, but at all times he avails himself of every opportunity to remind the news gatherer, other than the B. & M. Journal man and the representatives of the Omaha Palliator, that this **is a most disagreeable duty, and one from** which he would like to be relieved, and expects to be shortly when he assumes the position of court reporter to Judge E. P. Holmes, to whom his excellency, the governor, enclosed a warm letter recommending him as such, with the commission of Mr. Holmes, appointing him to the bench.

The Bentonian atmosphere of private snapism penetrates even this office, this department which of all others should be open and above board, and every official act free to the gaze of honest men. There is no substantial reason why the act of executive clemency in pardoning a prisoner from the penitentiary should be concealed, yet we have the word of Governor Crounse's stenographer that but very few of the pardons are given to the press and through the press to the public. Why? What ulterior end is subserved by their concealment? What should there be to conceal in a governor's office? Are not his public acts public property?

THERE'S A CHANGE COMING.

The Tom Benton system of running the state capitol is doomed to signal failure. It has been given a sufficient trial in the past. Results have been disastrous, disastrous to the state, almost ruinous to those who have sought to defraud the public of legitimate news. A metropolitan newspaper is bigger than any state official; it is bigger than any one man connected with its publication. Whenever politicians, in office or out, attempt to run counter to its just claims for the routine news of the day they are certain to be snagged. Nothing more quickly excites suspicion in the minds of the people than attempts to transact official public business on lines of the private banker. While it is true that the shores of the political river are strewn with victims of newspapers, it is equally true that in the entire history of American journalism no honest man has ever yet been made an innocent victim of the public press.

Tom Bentonism must go from the Nebraska state capitol.

WOODCHOPPERS ON A STRIKE

Riotous Scenes at a Central American Mahogany and Logwood Camp.

MARINES CALLED TO PRESERVE ORDER

Contractors Finally Concede the Price Demanded and the Men Who Are Not in Jail Went Back to Work--Strikers Want the Prisoners Released.

NEW ORLEANS, Dec. 18.—The Central America Times of December 14, published at Belize, British Honduras, received here by mail today, contains a long account of a labor riot which took place there on the 11th inst. The origin of the present disturbance is purely industrial. The men engaged in mahogany and logwood cutting, who constitute the bulk of the laborers of the colony, demand higher wages than merchants were inclined to pay, and having failed to obtain relief by application to the authorities, they became exasperated and began to wreck the stores of their employers.

When the mob reached Mutrie's store it was confronted by the clerks, armed with revolvers. They fired over the heads of the mod and wounded a man and woman. The mob then rushed into Cramer's store, smashing a number of glass cases, musical boxes and musical instruments and carried off a large number of watches. Several persons were slightly bruised by being struck with clubs.

From about 3:30 o'clock when the rioting began, until 5 o'clock, the town was unprotected and at the mercy of the mob. The constabulary was not idle, but the rioters were not in a temper to listen to reason, and all efforts of the officers were insufficient to produce a cessation of the disorder. All they could do was to take into custody and confine in the police station a man whom they looked upon as a ringleader. The rioters then turned their attention to the police station. The windows were broken and the attitude of the mob was so threatening that the prisoner was released. A few minutes before 5 o'clock forty bluejackets and three flies of marines were landed and marched to the court house wharf. On the blue jackets being drawn up in front of the police station all signs of disorder ceased.

From the steps to the council chamber the governor addressed a few remarks to the crowd, urging them to disperse. During this time the more violent spirits ha drapidly crossed the bridge and were reassembling at Currie's drug store and became exceedingly threatening again. The sailors were then brought over to keep them in check. The attorney general mounted a box and gave the men five minutes to disperse, threatening if they did not he would read the riot act and the sailors would use firearms. The mob stood sullenly around for a short time, but gradually melted away.

On the 12th there was an attempt made by the strikers to rescue eleven prisoners as they were being transferred from the police station to the jail, but the blue jackets drove them off. On Wednesday Cramer & Co. posted a notice offering to pay wood choppers $15 per month—the amount the strikers demanded. The men then sent a white flag to the govenor asking that their comrades in prison b enoly fined and that they be paid $15 per month. So far the governor's answer has not been made public. H. M. S. Pelican has arrived and the Canada was expected again yesterday.

NEW YORK, Dec. 18.—A special cable to the World from Kingston, Jamaica, says: Troops have gone to Belize, British Honduras, to suppress riots resulting from the imposition of English currency on the inhabitants. The Spheroid brought an appeal for aid. A state of anarchy prevails and there has been some bloodshed.

BERLINER PATENT IS VOID.

United States Circuit Court Holds Against the Bell Company on Every Point.

BOSTON, Dec. 18.—The long contested patent suit of the United States against the American Bell Telephone company was ended this morning when Judge Carpenter of the United States circuit court rendered a decision against the Telephone company. This suit was a bill in equity praying for the repeal of letters patent issued to Emile Berliner, assignor of the American Bell Telephone company, for a combined telephone and telegraph system. The Berliner patents were issued to the telephone company, but never put into use by them, on account, they claim, of the expense of making changes in the telephone system, while other companies were prevented from using the system. The first ground of the bill brought by the claimants in this suit is that the patent is void, being beyond the power of the commissioner to issue. On this point the decision of Judge Carpenter declares:

"It appears that one of the functions of the device shown in the patent of 1880, namely, the function of transmitting articulate speech, is identical with the sole object or function in the patent that Drawbaugh was entitled to. The plain duty of the respondent corporation was, as it seems to me, to insist on its right to a patent at once.

"That the unwarrantable delay thus caused was intended by the respondents, I can have no doubt.

"I think these facts were so gross as to forbid any inference except that they dishonestly delayed issue of that patent, taking advantage for that purpose of the perhaps accusable willingness of the officials of the patents office to postpone the decision of a sharply debated question in which a large public interest was involved. My conclusion, therefore, is that the complainant has made out the case, and that there should be a decree that the patent in question was void and shall be delivered up and cancelled."

Lawyer F. P. Fish, counsel for the Bell company, speaking of the decision, said: "The case will now go to the United States court of appeals, and a decision will possibly be rendered next spring, after the case has been argued anew, as though the circuit court had not made this decision. If the case is decided against us it will be taken to the United States supreme court.

"The value of the patent involved is said to be $5,000,000. The government's case against the Bell company contained two counts and the judge sustained the government in both. The first count was in effect that the issuance of the patent to Berliner was unnecessarily delayed, and the second count was in substance that a former patent to Berliner covered substantially the same claims as made in the patent issued in 1891.

BOSTON, Dec. 18.—In the Stock exchange the effect of the decision was to send off Bell Telephone stock with a rush, and for a few minutes there was great excitement. The stock had opened unchanged at 200, and when the news of the decision reached the street it slumped by degrees to 151. From this point it recovered to 191, and at 1 o'clock was at 192.

HIS JUDICIAL DUTIES CONCLUDED.

Judge Holcomb Receives the Assurance of the Friendship of the Custer County Bar.

BROKEN BOW, Neb., Dec. 18.—(Special Telegram.)—Judge Holcomb concluded his work here today as judge of the Twelfth judicial district, it being the last term he expects to hold before entering on his duties as the state's executive. Just before the court adjourned the attorneys of the Custer county bar passed resolutions complimenting the judge for his impartiality, fairness and integrity as judge, and extending to him their good wishes for a successful administration as governor of the state. The resolutions were signed by all the members of the bar and officers of the court.

Judge Holcomb responded to the resolutions, expressing his warm friendship and affection for the members of the Custer county bar. He will leave in the morning for Lincoln, where he will remain for a few days.

The Custer county bar has strong hopes of H. M. Sullivan of this city receiving the appointment to succeed Judge Holcomb on the bench. The bar associates of the county, regardless of politics, are unanimously for him. He is strong with the people, being the only republican that has carried the county for six years. He carried the county at the last election by fifty plurality for state senator, and only fell twenty-seven short in the district, which has had more than 1,200 majority for the populists.

Mattress Makers Combine.

CHICAGO, Dec. 18.—Manufacturers of bed springs, mattresses and bedding met in secret session at the Sherman house today to form a national association which will regulate the output of goods and control prices. Delegates were present representing the trade in all sections of the country.

LAND GRANT FORFEITURE REPORTED

Berry Led the Fight but the Best He Could Get Was an Adverse Report.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—The senate committee on public lands today decided to adversely report the house bill providing for the forfeiture of the lands of grants where the roads were not completed in the time specified in the bills making them, though built at a later period.

It is understood that there was a sharp contest, and the first vote in the committee was a tie, 5 to 5, and afterwards one of those voting in the affirmative changed his vote to the negative, so as to permit the bill to be reported. Senator Berry led the fight for the bill, contending that as the railroads had not complied with the conditions upon which the grant was made they should surrender the lands. If the bill should become a law it would result in restoring about 54,000,000 acres of land to the public domain, 36,000,000 acres of which lie along the line of the Northern Pacific road west of Bismarck, N. D.

The vote on reporting the bill stood as follows: Yeas, Berry, Pasco, Martin, McLaurin, Allen; nays, Vilas, Dolph, Pettigrew, Carey, Dubois; not voting, Power.

Senator Allen afterward changed his vote so as to permit the bill to be reported adversely, as that appeared to be the only way of getting it reported at all. Senator Power declined to vote either way. He said, after the adjournment of the committee, that he was opposed to the bill, but he took exception to the antagonism of his mineral land bill by some of the western senators who were opposed to the land forfeiture bill, and took his position today on that account.

Manderson Introduces Some Measures.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—(Special Telegram.)—Senator Manderson today introduced in the senate, by request, a bill providing for the establishment and maintenance of a bimetallic monetary basis and to secure the adjustment to business requirements of a suitable volume of the national currency. He also submitted a statement on the provision of the bill and the financial condition of the country, which statement was ordered to be printed as a document and referred to the committee on finance. The bill provides for the free coinage of gold and silver impartially.

Congressman Meiklejohn today favorably reported from the committee on invalid pensions the bill introduced by Representative Hainer granting a pension to Marion C. Gurney of Beatrice.

Congressman Bryan will leave for home Friday morning.

Amendments to the Canal Bill.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—In beginning his speech on the proposed Nicaragua canal today, Senator Turpie introduced several amendments to the pending bill, the most important of which was the following: No part of the contract for said work shall be let to the Nicaraguan Construction company nor to any other corporation associated or allied or legally succeeding the said Nicaraguan Canal Construction company. Contracts in said work shall be let only by the Maritime Canal company of Nicaragua and shall be settled and paid for only by the officers of said company, subject only to inspection of said work in sections when completed, as congress may hereafter provide, and subject to the previous approval of the secretary of war.

News for the Army.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—(Special Telegram.)—By direction of the secretary of war, First Lieutenant Graham D. Fitch, Corps of Engineers, is relieved from further duty under the immediate orders of Major William H. Hener, Corps of Engineers, at San Francisco, Cal., and will proceed at once to Memphis, Tenn., take station there, and relieve Captain Solomon W. Roessler, Corps of Engineers, of all the duties with which he is now charged.

The retirement of Captain Alexander B. Macgowan, Twelfth Infantry, is officially announced.

Railroad Land Selections Approved.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—The secretary of the interior has approved clear lists of lands as the basis of land patents to the Northern Pacific railroad, embracing 91,414 acres within the Coeur d'Alene and Lewiston land districts of Idaho; to the Southern Pacific, embracing 19,190 acres near Los Angeles, Cal.; to the Southern Pacific, embracing 47,506 acres within the primary limits of the company's grant in California, and to the Central Pacific, covering 33,759 acres in the neighborhood of Salt Lake City.

Confirmed by the Senate.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—The senate, in executive session today, confirmed the following nominations: Charles D. Clark of Tennessee, to be United States district judge of the eastern and middle districts of Tennessee; Judson C. Clements of Georgia, to be an interstate commerce commissioner. Postmasters—William B. Larkin, Fayette, Ia. John A. Williamson, to be register of the land office at Lander, Wyo.; Francis E. Rice, to be receiver of public moneys at Lander, Wyo.

Some New Postmasters.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—(Special Telegram.)—Postmasters have been appointed as follows: Nebraska—Kewanee, Cherry county, B. E. Johnson, vice V. P. Sterling, resigned; Kilmer, Lincoln county, Laura E. Kilmer, vice Ida M. Mahan, resigned; Vailton, Red Willow county, Rexford Simpson, vice Joseph William, resigned. Iowa—Lamotte, Jackson county, W. B. Nembers, vice N. A. Hoffman, resigned; Milton, Van Buren county, E. B. Casady, vice S. L. McLean, resigned.

Pence Wants to Know About the Income.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—Representative Pence of Colorado has introduced a resolution asking the secretary of the treasury as to the probable revenues and deficiencies for the current year; whether internal revenue taxation or customs duties can best meet possible deficiencies; what revenue would be yielded by taxing beer and fermented liquors from $1 to $1.50 per barrel; what revenues have been or will be gained by the increased tax on distilled spirits.

Howgate Pleads Not Guilty.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—Captain Henry W. Howgate pleaded not guilty to seven indictments brought against him for embezzlement while disbursing clerk of the signal service when arraigned today before Judge McComas of the criminal court. Counsel were also notified to appear before the court next Saturday to arrange for the date of the trial on the three other indictments, two for embezzlement and one for forgery.

Bishop of Moush Was Not Arrested.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—The Turkish legation here received the following official telegram:

"Among the erroneous statements published about the Armenian troubles it has also been said the Armenian bishop of Moush had also been arrested. This news also is without the least foundation in fact."

Agreed on the Holiday Recess.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—Speaker Crisp and the house leaders have reached a tacit agreement by which the adjournment for the holiday recess will be taken at the close of the session next Saturday, and the reassembling will be at noon January 3.

Gold Reserve Going Down.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—The gold reserve was further reduced today by the withdrawal at New York of $1,800,000, which leaves the amount of the reserve at the close of business today $91,354,909. The cash balance was $155,948,459.

Trinidad Strikers Convicted.

DENVER, Dec. 18.—The case of the strikers charged with obstructing mails on the 1st of July at Trinidad was disposed of in the United States court today. The jury found C. M. Melick, John Imhoff, O. R. Myrtle and Thomas W. Lally guilty, and recommended the mercy of the court.

Hotel and Bottling Works Destroyed.

GREENWOOD, S. D., Dec. 18.—The Park hotel and Greenwood Bottling works were destroyed by fire this morning. The hotel furniture was saved. Both buildings were insured.

Consul to Juarez, Mexico, Dying.

EL PASO, Tex., Dec. 18.—Theodore Huston, United States consul at Juarez, Mexico, is very ill and is not expected to live through the night. He was a resident of Macomb, Ill., when he was appointed consul by President Cleveland.

CURRENCY BILL IN THE HOUSE

Springer Introduces it and Explains the Provisions of the Measure.

CRITICISED BY REFRESENTATIVE WALKER

Has a Measure of His Own Which He Claims is the Evolution of Fifteen Years of Study—Postoffice Appropriation Bill Reported.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—Notwithstanding the fact that the debate on the currency bill was scheduled to begin in the house today less than 100 members were present when Speaker Crisp dropped the gavel and the attendance in the public galleries was very light. The committee on rules had prepared a special order under which the house should operate, but had decided, in view of democratic opposition to the measure, not to offer it at present, but to allow Mr. Springer to call up the bill by virtue of its privilege. Immediately after the call of committees for reports, therefore, the chairman of the banking and commerce committee moved that the house go into committee of the whole to consider the measure. His motion prevailed without division and Mr. Richardson, democrat of Tennessee, took the chair. Mr. Walker, republican of Massachusetts, in charge of the opposition to the measure, gave notice that at the proper time he would offer a substitute.

After a fruitless attempt to fix a limit to the debate Mr. Springer took the floor and delivered the opening speech in favor of the currency bill. The great importance of the passing hour, he said, could not be more effectively emphasized than by referring to the report of the comptroller of the currency, which showed that last year there were 8,000,000 depositors in national banks having a capital stock aggregating $1,069,000,000. Their deposits amounted to $4,220,000,000. Mr. Springer declared that the committee had given the subject the most careful consideration. It had carefully examined the recommendations of the president and the secretary of the treasury, had called before it some of the ablest financiers in the country and the result had been the presentation of the pending measure as a measure of financial reform. He did not pretend to say that the bill met the views of individual members of the committee. It was a compromise and as such harmonized fairly the views of all.

SPRINGER ANSWERS QUESTIONS.

Mr. Springer then proceeded to detail at length the scheme of the bill, reviewing much of the ground covered in his report which has already been printed.

Mr. Sickles, democrat of New York, interrupted Mr. Springer to ask him how he reconciled the second and fifth sections of the bill. The second section provided that the noteholders should have a first lien on the assets of the bank issuing them; the fifth gave the association of banks contributing to the safety fund a first lien on the assets.

Mr. Springer replied that the proposed act gave the billholders the first lien on the "remaining assets.

"But the word 'remaining' is not in the fifth section," said Mr. Sickles.

"That will be the effect of the bill," remarked Mr. Springer.

"It is not law yet," retorted Mr. Sickles sententiously, "you must vote it through first."

Mr. Springer finally admitted that the word 'remaining' should have been incorporated in the fifth section, but said this was one of the slight defects of the bill that could be readily corrected.

"In case of panic if half the banks in this proposed system," inquired Mr. Mahon, republican of Pennsylvania, "should fail, would the other half be assessed to redeem the failed banks' notes?"

"Certainly."

"That is, the solvent banks would be bankrupted to aid the insolvent?"

"There would be no such result," replied Mr. Springer. "If all the banks should fail under this system the noteholders would be secure."

In answer to an inquiry by Mr. Simpson, populist of Kansas, Mr. Springer admitted that time alone could show the amount of circulation which would be taken out under any law, but as far as the retirement of the legal tenders was concerned, for every dollar deposited in the treasury by the banks $2 in circulating notes would be issued.

While Mr. Springer was discussing the provision looking to the ultimate redemption and retirement of the legal tenders, emphasizing the necessity for this by pointing out that the treasury had within the year twice been forced to issue bonds to protect the redemption, Mr. Cannon of Illinois asked whether it was nt true that $100,000,000 borrowed to maintain resumption had in reality been used to pay the current expenses of the government.

AVOIDED THE QUESTION.

"There is nothing in this bill on that subject," responded Mr. Springer, curtly. Mr. Springer gave notice that at the proper time he would offer sundry amendments looking to the perfection of the bill, among them one permitting the deposit currency certificates issued under the act of 1872, $54,000,000 of which were outstanding.

Mr. Dingley of Maine charged Mr. Springer with inconsistency in now reporting a bill which contained a provision for the repeal of the 10 per cent tax on state banks, a measure which he had earnestly opposed less than six months ago. Mr. Springer insisted he did not oppose the repeal of the tax on state banks as a separate measure, but when made a part of a general system of financial reform, he considered it safe, although he was frank to say he would prefer simply national bank circulation.

Mr. Walker of Massachusetts, who was in charge of the opposition to the measure, then took the floor. He began with a statement of the essence of the Baltimore plan. The beginning and the end of that plan was to give to National banks power to withdraw their United States bonds from the treasury and issue circulating notes on their assets up to 50 per cent. It afforded not a shadow of relief and did not deserve a moment's consideration. Again the bill presented by the secretary of the treasury was an amazing scheme. The bill had not a feature that could be enacted except after remodeling, without endangering the financial interests of the country. Mr. Carlisle had drawn the bill over night. He described the peril of the present condition of things in the banking world, the dangers that threatened. Yet the committee on banking and currency had dawdled away its time until this undigested scheme of the secretary of the treasury had been thrown into the hopper when, after a few hearings, it had been brought into the house without a single change.

HAS A BILL OF HIS OWN.

Mr. Walker spoke of his own bill and its superiority over the Carlisle bill. He expressed the hope that the bill would be passed in place of the Carlisle bill. "That would be done if you had the courage of your convictions," continued he, addressing the democratic side, buh falling in that I hope you will recommit the Carlisle bill, as I feel you surely will when you know its character. While contrasting his bill with that of Mr. Carlisle he dwelt upon the advantage of divorcing trade from the government; of allowing banks to proceed under the laws of trade, not the laws of commerce. A bank, he said, could not be drained of gold like the federal treasury. The government could not refuse gold. A bank and its customers were mutually dependent. A bank could pay optionally in gold and silver under his bill, but the laws of trade, the necessities of the case and the necessity of protecting the currency would determine which. The Bank of France furnished an analogy. That bank would pay in silver if silver would do as well as gold. If the purposes for which the money was to be used required gold, gold would be paid in any quantity. The laws of congress could be defied, the laws of trade never. While describing the manner in which his bill would redeem and reduce the legal tenders, Mr. Tracey of New York interrupted him to ask him if his bill would retire the Sherman notes. "Yes sir," replied Mr. Walker. "Read my bill and you will find all the details worked out. I have not been working on this bill six years for nothing."

"Nor am I," he added, "the most stupid man in the world. (Laughter.) I have been laboring singlehanded," he continued, lifting his arm aloft, "until fifteen months ago, when I delivered my Chicago speech. That roused the country somewhat and it has been rousing ever since." (Laughter.) Mr. Walker's elaboration of the terms of his bill attracted the closest attention and the members crowded about, taxing him with questions which he dexterously met and parried. His bill, he declared, would bring the country back to the old democratic doctrines of Jackson and Benton. The banks, when it was in operation, would hold $250,000,000 of gold and $250,000,000 of silver.

TREASURY OFFICE SEEMS FATAL.

Speaking of the onerous work placed upon the secretary of the treasury by a necessity of keeping up the gold reserve in times of financial depression, Mr. Walker created a laugh.

"Manning dide din office," said he; "Windom died in office. I say to you that any man who runs the Treasury department under the existing conditions for four years and does not die has not done his duty."

Concluding, Mr. Walker, while deprecating the effect of the Carlisle bill, said he had no doubt that in presenting it the secretary has no other than the highest motive of serving his country. He spoke two hours and was applauded by many democrats, as well as republicans.

Mr. Hall of Missouri, also a member of the committee on banking and currency, who followed Mr. Walker, said it must be distinctly understood by members that the Walker bill was not under discussion and that when they came to a vote they must vote either for the Carlisle bill or a continuation of the present system. Mr. Hall contended that the Carlisle bill was opposed by the national banks because they preferred the Baltimore plan Why? Because in the Baltimore plan the government stood behind the notes issued, and in the Carlisle bill the banks themselves were responsible for their notes. Mr. Hall insisted every bank official summoned before the committee had been forced to admit, when cornered, that currency issued under the Carlisle bill would be entirely safe. They had opposed the bill on account of the fifth section, which made the banks solely responsible for their issues. He also repudiated the statements that this bill had been prepared in haste. He said it had been prepared after fifteen months of investigation by the banking and currency committee and twenty months of suffering by the treasury. At the conclusion of Mr. Hall's speech the committee rose.

Mr. Henderson of North Carolina reported the postoffice appropriation bill and then, at 5:15 p. m., the house adjourned.

HILL TALKS FOR CLOTURE.

Says that the Country Demands of the Senate that It Prepare to Do Business.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—Thirteen senators will make speeches next Thursday on the occasion of the unveiling of the statues of Daniel Webster and General John Stark, which have been placed in statuary hall at the capitol by the state of New Hampshire. The list of speakers who will devote themselves to Webster includes Senators Chandler, Hoar, Morgan, Morrill, Platt, Davis, Cullom, Mitchell of Oregon and Lodge; while the Stark list embraces Senators Gallinger, Proctor, Hawley and Dubois. In the list of house speakers will be Messrs. Blair and Baker of New Hampshire; Grout and Power of Vermont; Everett of Massachusetts and Curtis of New York.

Mr. Turpie devoted some time to consideration of questions of the concessions and forfeitures possible in the event of non-completion of the canal within ten years from 1887. The provisions regarding these matters we re exceedingly strist. The concession given in1887 would be absolutely forfeited in 1897. What title did the company have in the canal routes. It was not that of a fee simple, a fee base; not even an easement. There was nothing to mortgage and nothing to sell. The concessions gave no title and no sort of property rights to the company. Taking up the question of the physical construction of the various portions of the canal, the senator went on to point out the great difficulties that would have to be overcome and to argue that the estimated cost of the minor canals forming part of the whole system were too low and in one case—that of the canal between Lakes Managua and Nicaragua—the estimate was mere guess work.

Turning then to the matter of terminal points of the proposed canal, the senator insisted that the estimates affecting the work at those places were much too small. The engineers said $2,500,000 would be required to restore the harbor at Greytown on the Atlantic, whereas he had heard a naval officer say $10,000,000 would be required. As to the Brito harbor, the Pacific terminus, that place was not even a roadstead. It was simply a stretch of sand on the ocean. Regarding the statement that the construction of the canal would give work to deserving people, the senator quotes from a report that Jamaica negroes were the only ones that could do the work under the climatic conditions existing there. The whole thing appeared to Mr. Turpie as having every indication of being a gorgeous bubble.

Without waiting the conclusion of the speech, the senate, at 4:15 p. m., went into executive session, and at 4:28 p. m., adjourned.

DIRECTORS TOOK IT ALL.

No Money Left in the Newfoundland Bank for Anybody Else.

ST. JOHNS, N. F., Dec. 18.—A heated meeting of the members of the Commercial Bank of Newfoundland resulted in startling disclosures. Four firms, members of which are directors of the bank, owe the institution as follows: Goodfellow, $115,000; Goodridge & Jobes, represented by Hutchings, $120,000; Duder, $600,000; Goodfellow & Co., $100,000. Goodridge & Jobes claim to be able to realize fully the amount of their liabilities. The sums owed by these concerns are three times the amount of the bank's capital stock, but if the assets are successfully realized upon the indebtedness of the bank will be so decreased as to perhaps admit of the payment of a reasonable dividend. It was learned some of the bank officials had overdrawn their accounts and that Bookkeeper Growdy, who is now missing, had falsified the books so personal friends of his had overdrawn to the amount of $30,000.

CRISPI MAY RESIGN.

Situation in Italy Growing More and More Serious All the Time.

LONDON, Dec. 18.—A Vienna dispatch to the Chronicle says it is stated in Rome that Prime Minister Crispi's resignation is expected at any moment.

A dispatch to the Times from Rome says that troops continue to arrive in the city. Everything is quiet. Many members of the Chamber of Deputies have gone home to spend the Christmas holidays. It is reported that Prime Minister Giolitti has passed through Vienna, but it is not known where he is going.

A dispatch from Rome to the Standard says the pope views the situation gravely. His holiness has been heard to say he fears the Giolitti scandals are only the forerunners of still sadder events.

General Gourko Promoted.

ST. PETERSBURG, Dec. 18.—In honor of the czar's name day, General Gourko, who on December 1 resigned the post of governor of Warsaw, will be made a field marshal. His resignation of the governorship of Warsaw, on account of ill-health, has been accepted. Grand Duke Sergius has been made a member of the council of the empire and will retain his post as governor general of Moscow.

Brisson Succeeds Burdeau.

PARIS, Dec. 18.—M. Brisson, who was prime minister on the fall of M. Jules Ferry in 1885, was elected president of the Chamber of Deputies in succession of the late M. Burdeau.

CONVENTION'S LABORS ENDED

Last Day of the Session at Denver is an Animated One.

COMPLIMENT THE RETIRING PRESIDENT

**Strong Resolutions on the Debs Case Adopted—One Delegate Bitterly Attacks the