

THE OMAHA DAILY BEE

E. ROSEWATER, EDITOR. PUBLISHED EVERY MORNING.

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STATEMENT OF CIRCULATION: State of Nebraska, Douglas County, ss.: George B. Teschuck, secretary of The Bee Publishing Company, being duly sworn, says that the actual number of full and complete copies of The Daily, Morning, Evening and Sunday Bees printed during the month of May, 1901, was as follows:

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Net total sales, \$32,818. Net daily average, \$1,091. Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me this 15th day of May, A. D. 1901.

The Board of Education has taken a solemn oath to exclude married women from the teachers' pay roll, except—

With a city tax of 90 mills staring them in the face, South Omaha taxpayers are beginning to feel warm under the collar.

The case of John Redell has been submitted to the supreme court, and there it will have to rest until after the September equinoctial.

Senator Platt has entered Governor Odell in the presidential race for 1904. Presidential entries at this early date are like those for futurity races, only a small per cent of the nominations ever qualify to start.

Whatever the Board of Education does in the direction of economizing on the expenses of the High school without materially affecting the efficiency of its instruction will have the cordial approval of all taxing citizens.

Douglas county democrats make an open confession of weakness when they resort to arbitrary gerrymandering to retain control of the county affairs. The democrats must be in a bad way when they see no other means of rescuing themselves from certain defeat.

Every public school teacher who ventures into the bonds of wedlock from now on must do so with her eyes open to the consequences. It is greatly to be feared that several prospective marriage ceremonies may have to suffer postponement on account of the latest school board edict.

Whenever public officers or committee of citizens acting in a public capacity subject themselves to just criticism from the press they always insist that they are being "attacked." If every criticism of public acts constituted an attack to be considered as a personal matter, public officers would feel free from all accountability to anyone but themselves.

As a result of soldiers being sent into the Indian reservation in Oklahoma to clear off the "booners" will probably come a howl about the soldiers depriving settlers of their rights. This has been the history of such moves, when in fact they are simply protecting the rights of the vast majority of the proposed settlers, who have been content to obey the law and wait for the proper time to enter the territory.

The law provides that county commissioner districts shall be revised only for the purpose of making them more nearly equal in population. The proposed democratic gerrymander makes one district containing 11,554 inhabitants and another containing 36,645; in other words, one commissioner would be chosen by and represent three times as many people as his associate. No more flagrant example of partisan injustice could be improvised.

The Department of the Missouri is to have a resident commander again. Since the breaking out of the war with Spain the scarcity of officers has necessitated the placing of more than one department under the command of each general officer and the Missouri is now one of those less favored. It is not only gratifying to Omahans to see a change in this respect, but doubly so that it brings General Bates back to the city where as the commander of the Second Infantry in years past he made many friends.

According to exclusive Washington advices to the local popocratic sheet, President McKinley has asked Congressman Mercer to go to the Philippines to study the problems with which the government expects to grapple in the next congress. Mr. Mercer, who is known to be a great grapple with public building sites, is said to be in a quandary whether he should obey the presidential command or take a tour of the granite quarries of Vermont, Colorado and Missouri. In the meantime, the commissary is getting his supplies ready for the transport.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

The city council of South Omaha has taken steps for the impeachment and removal from office of Tax Commissioner Fitzgerald, recently appointed under the new charter, for discriminating in favor of one class of property owners and against another class. The resolution under which the impeachment is proposed cites that portion of the charter which provides that the tax commissioner shall list and assess all property required to be listed at its fair cash value, for the purpose of securing just and equitable assessments. The charter also provides that if the tax commissioner assesses any property at a disproportionate value, as compared with other property, or violates any of the duties of his office, he shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine not exceeding \$1,000, and, incidentally, removed from office. Instead of discharging this duty impartially, it appears that the tax commissioner is charged with assessing all property in South Omaha, except that of the corporations, at one-fifth of the fair value, while the property, real and personal, of corporations is assessed at about one-thirtieth of the fair value.

Such rank discrimination cannot be defended on any grounds, excepting, possibly, that the precedent has been established for just such unwarranted favoritism by precinct assessors and boards of equalization. That precedent, however, affords no excuse or defense for the South Omaha tax commissioner any more than it does for the assessors in Omaha and other parts of the county. There is only one way to reach the officers guilty of such flagrant disregard of their sworn duty, and that is to prosecute them to the full extent of the law. When assessors, tax commissioners, councilmen and county commissioners, who are required and empowered to make fair distribution of the burdens of taxation, are made accountable for the honest discharge of their duties, there will be an end to undervaluation and tax evasion.

It is not so much a question of ratio of assessment to market value as it is of the uniform valuation of property for taxation purposes. If property of private individuals is returned at one-fifth, one-fourth or one-third of the market value, the property of corporations should be returned at the same ratio of market valuation. With an impartial assessment of all property South Omaha would have ample funds for carrying on municipal government. With an honest and impartial assessment in Omaha there would not only be abundant funds for carrying on the city government, but we would have a very material reduction of the tax levy.

The ridiculously low assessment of corporate property in South Omaha will force a levy of 90 mills, or 6 per cent, for city purposes. This will fall most heavily on the property of the middle class and poor people who own small homes or store buildings. When the state and county taxes are added, this means an aggregate tax of 8 per cent for the years 1901 and 1902, which is simply monstrous and unbearable. It is incredible that the owners of corporate interests at South Omaha should desire such a disproportionate burden to be borne by other property owners. We would rather believe that the tax commissioner and the assessors were overzealous in their desire to serve the corporate interests.

The Bee takes pleasure in congratulating the council of South Omaha for the courage it has displayed in grappling with this momentous issue that concerns not only the taxpayers of their own town, but those as well of Omaha and Douglas county. There is no disposition on the part of any class of taxing citizens to impose greater tax burdens upon the corporations than are borne by the most favored individual property owners, but they should cheerfully contribute their proportion of the cost of local and state government, so that the taxation shall fall no heavier upon one class than upon another class of property owners.

THE TRADE BALANCE. The fiscal year of the government closes with the present month. Without waiting for the June figures of the country's foreign commerce, it is possible to make a very close estimate of the trade balance for the year from the statistics for the eleven months ending with May. These show that the exports for that period were valued at \$1,385,013,505. For the month of May last the exports were \$124,589,029 and if this volume should be maintained proportionately during the current month the complete returns for the year will show exports exceeding in value \$1,500,000,000, a point not heretofore reached. Assuming that the value of the year's imports will be \$835,000,000, the apparent balance of trade in favor of the United States will reach the enormous sum of \$665,000,000.

We say apparent balance because, owing to certain unknown quantities in our foreign exchanges, it is not possible to ascertain exactly the amount of the trade balance. In order to do this it would be necessary to find out the amounts annually sent abroad in payment of dividends on American stocks and interest on bonds, what is paid every year to foreign vessel owners, insurance agents and commission men for shipping American products to foreign ports, what amount is expended annually by American travelers abroad, and other unknown and unascertainable facts. It is probably not an extreme estimate to place these offsets at a total of \$400,000,000, which reduces the apparent trade balance to that extent. Then there is the fact that the value of exports is admittedly inflated, while imports are generally undervalued. The value placed upon exported merchandise is that at which the commodities sell in the home market, while imports are never overvalued, there being strong inducements to scale down the true value of foreign products on which a heavy duty must be paid.

But making conservative allowance for all this, there still remains a considerable trade balance in favor of the United States for the current fiscal year, which is so much added to our available capital, even though Europe shall not send it here in the shape of gold. It is a balance to our credit to be drawn upon as may be required and is just as available in that form, for all the purposes of international exchange, as if the amount were piled up in gold in our bank vaults.

While the exports for the current fiscal year will be something like \$200,000,000 in excess of those of last year, the imports will be about \$15,000,000 less. We are sending to foreign countries commodities of nearly double the value of those received in exchange. Perhaps we cannot reasonably expect this condition to be long maintained. We may have to buy more abroad or experience a reduction in our exports, particularly as to Europe. But how, under this may be, our export trade at present is certainly very satisfactory, in spite of the fact that in some manufacturing there has recently been a slight falling off in the foreign demand. It is doubtful if the next fiscal year will give this country so large a trade balance against Europe as the present year, but whatever reduction there may be in that direction will possibly be made up by increased exports to the Asiatic and South American markets.

ADMITS RETALIATION. When the Russian government imposed discriminating duties on American products, following the decision of the secretary of the treasury that beet sugar imported from Russia must pay the countervailing duty, it was said that the action was not retaliatory, but was taken for the protection of Russian industries. No claim of this kind is made in regard to the late order of the Russian minister of finance increasing duties on other American products. On the contrary the avowal is made that this action is taken by way of retaliation for tariff restrictions on the part of our government against Russian petroleum.

Possibly Russia has justification for this course, but however that may be it suggests a challenge to a tariff war. In the first instance there is no question that Russia went farther than fair retaliation required. Very little beet sugar was imported from that country, so that no injury of consequence could result to her sugar industry from the imposition of the countervailing duty of our tariff. It would seem that in the present case the Russian has also gone beyond the bounds of fair retaliation, as if to invite a tariff conflict.

At all events, a situation is created which our government may feel compelled to take notice of. It is needless to say that the United States does not want a tariff war with Russia, but we can hardly submit tamely to such a policy of discrimination as that government has adopted toward us, unless we are prepared to permit other countries to adopt a like course. The matter is very sure to receive the attention of congress, with the result of action either to placate Russia or to meet retaliation and discrimination with similar methods.

NAVAL STATIONS IN CUBA. The seventh clause of the Platt amendment provides "that to enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the government of Cuba will sell or lease to the United States lands necessary for coaling or naval stations at certain specified points, to be agreed upon with the president of the United States." As soon, therefore, as a government is established in Cuba negotiations will be entered upon for carrying into effect this agreement.

It is the understanding that four or five stations will be occupied by the United States and while there has been no statement as to where these will be, it is probable that there will be two very remote from Havana, another at Guantanamo, and a fourth at Santiago de Cuba. The control of the Yucatan channel on the west and the Windward passage on the east is of prime importance and for this naval stations will be established as near as possible to Cape San Antonio at one end and Cape Mayal on the other. Thus all the channels between Porto Rico and Yucatan will be commanded by the American navy.

It is not anticipated that any difficulty will be found in effecting a satisfactory arrangement with the Cuban government. It is probable the United States will propose to purchase outright the lands required, but if Cuba should not be disposed to sell she will be asked to lease the lands for a period that would practically amount to ownership. In any event, however, the United States will occupy positions in the island which will enable it to exert a constant influence for the maintenance of peace and the preservation of Cuban independence. Cuba will also be free from any danger of foreign aggression, while there will be no interference whatever with the administration of her internal affairs.

The Mollath case, being argued before the court of appeals in New York, is again calling attention to the testimony of handwriting experts in law courts. The testimony of all experts, especially in cases where large fees are involved, is becoming a subject of suspicion. The positive opinions expressed by experts on almost every case, colored to suit the ideas of the party who employs them, are giving such opinions little if any more credence than they are uttered of paid attorneys. They are employed to establish a certain state of facts just as the attorney is employed to maintain a certain construction of law. There is no good reason why one should be considered as disinterested and the other not.

participate in governmental affairs. It will be a good thing for the island if they learn that politics is not the sole aim of man and that the minority has duties to perform as well as the majority.

The foreign ministers have declined to allow Chinese soldiers to return to Peking until the international troops leave. Force of habit might cause the two forces to engage in a brush which would overturn all the work of the diplomats. As the foreign troops do not agree any too well among themselves they could hardly be expected to keep the peace with the Chinese.

There is some doubt whether it will be safe for his subjects to congratulate the czar of Russia upon the latest addition to his family. Each time the stork has visited the royal household he has left a girl, while the czar longs for a son who may succeed him in the avocation of dodging dynamite bombs.

Absent, but Not Forgotten. It was in the nature of a low-down trick to pull off the excitement over the third term, while the Hon. A. J. Beveridge was out of the country.

Extending the Range of Harmony. If the Union Pacific has really secured control of the St. Paul railroad there may be several varieties of community of interest in western traffic circles before long.

Drawing to a Full. Louisville Courier-Journal. Every American citizen completed now is the "Queen of the Navy"—until another new one makes her trial trip. If this keeps up we shall yet hold in our navy an invincible queen-fool.

Heyday of School Life. The alma maters of both hemispheres are now bidding fond farewells to the boys and girls who have been spending happy years in halls of learning under the benign and beneficent influence of the safe and shelter from the troubles and sorrows of the rude world outside.

Boorishness in Virginia. The refusal of the members of the Virginia constitutional convention to take the oath to uphold the constitution of the United States ought to indicate the great loss of influence and the safety of shelters from the troubles and sorrows of the rude world outside.

Congressmen and Cadets. Two members of congress, one a senator, have, it is reported, agreed to try to secure the restoration to the military academy of one of the cadets recently dismissed for insubordination. They have determined to resign their seats in congress and to press the case to an issue. It is to be hoped that no such attempt will be made, for unless the government lamentably weakens in its attitude of resistance to order and discipline, it confronts the two congressmen and their proteges. A reapportionment under the circumstances would be a challenge to the officials at the academy, who would have ample warrant in refusing to consider such a candidate.

Potential Influence of Money. One of the worst evils existing from too much money in the hands of a few families is seen in the immoral methods sometimes introduced into the courts. The poor man who tries by appeal to influence the course of justice is liable to go to a penitentiary. The aristocracy of the east play fast and loose with the commandments and the statutes with equal ease and money accomplishes immunity for all of the guilty and the accessories before and after the fact. Now a rich pair in Sandusky have grown weary of each other and a legal separation has been too long. He is a third time a man who has twice failed. Doubtless there are many politicians in the democratic party whose minds are made up, but who hesitate to express their preferences so early, preferring to wait until the next national convention.

Chicago Post: Within the last few days an attempt has been made to revive Senator Allison's presidential boom. It is really very inconscient of him to have put a quietus upon this innocent announcement so soon after it was made. There is so much to be said in favor of the "father of the senate" as a candidate and so little against him that it is a pity he has checked the flow of benevolent eloquence. Senator Allison has ability, experience and a personal magnetism. He is a diplomat, though he has had no occasion to use this gift where it would have done most good. In a less strenuous effort he would make an ideal president. Unfortunately he was born too early. He is 72 years old—young, his admirers would say, and when the next national convention meets in 1904 he will be three years older—or younger. Be this as it may, the established senator is right in saying that "you can't convince our people that a man of 75 is not old," too old to be nominated for such an office as the presidency of the United States. The disqualification is so obvious, so final that the Allison boom has been dismissed from the political columns of the papers short of readable copy.

Business Life in America. Frederic Harrison's Observations. Telegraphing and telegraphing to date in the United States and few busy men ever use a pen except to sign their names. They do not even dictate their letters. They speak into a phonograph and have their message typewritten from the instrument. Life in the states is one perpetual whirl of telephone, telegraph, telegraph, electric bells, motors, lifts and automatic instruments. To one such a life would not be worth living, and the mere sight of it is incompatible with continuous thought. But business seems to be done in that way. And I do not learn of the percentage of suicide or insanity was very seriously increased by these truly maddening inventions.

AMERICAN INFLUENCE ABROAD. "Great Supply Center for the World's Needs in Cash." St. Louis Globe-Democrat. Without mentioning the name of America at all, the London Standard has referred to it, the dispatch from London telling about the reduction in the discount rate of the Bank of England shows the prevalence of American influence on the other side of the Atlantic. The reduction in the rate of the Bank of England is a surprise to London. Many of the London brokers thought that their government must have received some good news from South Africa which had been withheld from the general public. This notion, in fact, seems to have been so general that Mr. Balfour, the British foreign secretary, was no foundation for the stories which this bank rate reduction appears to have incited that negotiations for peace with the Boers were under way by the British.

One of the chief reasons for the reduction in the Bank of England's discount rate is the abundance of gold in the United States, which is at the service of any borrower, in England or anywhere else, who offers the requisite security. The United States treasury has almost \$100,000,000 of gold in addition to its regular \$100,000,000 redemption fund. The banks of the United States are well supplied with the metal. Somewhere in the neighborhood of \$70,000,000 from the gold mines of the United States will go to the mints in 1901, after making allowance for the gold that is used in the arts and manufactures, as well as the gold of the world, known all these things America, in fact, has been furnishing gold to England, Germany, Russia and several other countries in large amounts in the past twelve months.

One of the great supply centers for the world's needs in cash at this time. The fact that this country has more gold on hand than it can make profitable use of is understood in London, Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg and the rest of the great capitals. Whenever these centers want money which they are either unable or unwilling to obtain at home they know they can get it here. This fact has a steady effect on the world's money markets. It is a fact which has much potency. Here in the Bank of England's discount rate is the abundance of gold in the United States, which is at the service of any borrower, in England or anywhere else, who offers the requisite security. The United States treasury has almost \$100,000,000 of gold in addition to its regular \$100,000,000 redemption fund. The banks of the United States are well supplied with the metal. Somewhere in the neighborhood of \$70,000,000 from the gold mines of the United States will go to the mints in 1901, after making allowance for the gold that is used in the arts and manufactures, as well as the gold of the world, known all these things America, in fact, has been furnishing gold to England, Germany, Russia and several other countries in large amounts in the past twelve months.

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