

THE OMAHA DAILY BEE

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WHEN OUT OF TOWN. Subscribers leaving the city temporarily should have The Bee mailed to them.

In spite of the New Year's resolutions, many a man is still carrying his bundle of bad habits.

Nebraska's divorce laws need reforming a good deal more than Nebraska's marriage laws.

The man who claims to have seen the first robin is doubtless mistaken. It was evidently the last robin.

One legislative lobbyist has been duly registered at Lincoln. The others are there, but still traveling incognito.

The prophecy that it would be a cold day when the democrats got control of Nebraska came true, all right.

The white rhinoceros of Africa may learn from congress what will happen if it turns up its nose at the president.

In effect, Colonel Goethals says he does not care a Gatun dam what the critics say of the progress of work at Panama.

Senator Tillman will doubtless feel justified in raising the rates for his chautauqua lectures after all this free advertising.

The Washington police have run down a man named Waterbury who has been passing his time by duping congressmen.

A scientist asserts that a well-bred ant will lay 50,000 eggs a day. Go to the ant, thou hen, study her example and be wise.

What happened the next day is about the best proof that Paul Revere did make that ride credited to him in history and song.

Just to prevent Nebraska from feeling lonesome, the Illinois legislature has also worked itself into a vote canvassing squabble.

In planning the rebuilding of many of the forests of the nation, Mr. Pinchot ought to require the use of fireproof material.

Soldiers coming home from Cuba will please excuse the weather. The weather man is doing the best he can with the materials at hand.

Castro came out of the operation under the knife without much trouble. He is finding it more difficult to get from under the operation of the hammer.

The report of an earthquake in Oklahoma must be an error. If we remember rightly, earthquakes were prohibited by the Oklahoma constitution.

Anyway, neither the retiring nor incoming governor of Nebraska has urged legislation for prohibiting the use of cracked dishes at lunch counters.

Russian authorities admit that the country has a cholera epidemic, but as only the very poor are suffering the authorities are not much concerned.

Alfred Austin has not written a poem on the disaster at Messina. Someone must have told him that the Sicilians are already sufficiently distressed.

Applicants for pardons and paroles from Governor Sheldon must have been pretty well coached. Every one of them must have ascribed his downfall to "Demon Rum."

THE BACK-FIRE ON HITCOCK.

The stories sent out from Washington to the effect that my appointment of Chairman Hitchcock to a position in the cabinet of President Taft will encounter opposition when presented for confirmation to the senate, unless Mr. Hitchcock shall have first retired from the headship of the republican national committee, must be taken to mean simply that the reactionaries have not yet ceased their back-fire upon the chairman. These political schemers did their very best at the outset to prevent the nomination of Mr. Taft and then to keep the chairmanship from going to Mr. Hitchcock.

After he had been made chairman over their protests his enemies among the reactionaries set up a back-fire to force him out even at the risk of seriously menacing the success of the campaign, and they have, apparently, not yet become reconciled. The objection raised to Mr. Hitchcock going into the cabinet while retaining the chairmanship of the national committee is but a pretext. There are precedents of cabinet officers occupying the head place in the national political organization in the examples of Chairman Cortelyou and Chairman Payne, to go back no further. The keen sense of propriety now manifested by the senatorial junta likewise stops short of doubling up the chairmanship with a membership in the senate. Mark Hanna, Tom Carter and Matthew S. Quay all served as committee chairmen while occupying seats in the senate and on the other side of the political fence James K. Jones and Arthur Pue Gorman were senators and national chairmen at one and the same time. If the present chairman had happened to have been one of the reactionaries there would not have been even a peep from that quarter about the "indelicacy" of having an officeholder in that position.

Turning from national politics to state politics, it is a common practice among all parties for the officers of state organizations to hold official places, both appointive and elective, and while an occasional outcry is made no serious resentment has ever been manifested by the people in any case where the officer has proved competent and faithful to public duty.

In the present instance the back-fire on Chairman Hitchcock is not occasioned by the prospect that he will go into the cabinet, but is born of a desire on the part of his enemies and the enemies of Mr. Taft to get control of the party machinery themselves through a new chairman more pliant to their wishes.

PRESSING PROBLEM OF REVENUE. The incoming administration at Washington will be compelled to give its wisest consideration to plans for either increasing the national revenues or readjusting the present disbursements so as to prevent, if possible, the necessity of issuing bonds to replenish the treasury. The problem is one attracting attention in connection with the proposed tariff revision, but the best informed admit that some reform in the revenue-getting methods of the government must be had without reference to the effects of tariff changes.

In the past seven years the country has done more business and spent more money than in any other like period in its history. Secretary Cortelyou estimates the deficit at the end of the fiscal year on June 30, next, at \$114,000,000, and that the deficit for the year ending with June, 1910, will be about \$145,000,000, based on existing legislation and prospective receipts and expenditures. If these estimates are verified the treasury will find itself empty by June, 1910, the estimated deficits about equalling the funds now in the treasury or on deposit in national banks.

The only recourse, then, is apparently to resort to the issue of bonds to meet certain expenditures. There seems to be no let-up in plans for spending money, and spending it on projects that the people approve. President Roosevelt has inaugurated progressive policies in the matter of forest conservation, irrigation and reclamation work, of inland waterways, of the army and navy and other development of governmental and natural resources that have been received with enthusiasm by the public, but which promise to be tremendously expensive. The president's opponents will charge this expense to extravagance, while his friends and the public will be disposed to charge it to the account of nation building. Personally the president concedes the costliness of some of the plans he has inaugurated and he has frankly said that posterity should pay its share for the benefits it will receive from them.

One proposition advanced which is meeting with some favor is to resort to bonds for river and harbor improvements, the construction of federal buildings and permanent improvements heretofore paid out of current revenues. A financial circular says on this point: "There is a growing demand throughout the country, supported by many men high in authority, in favor of bond issues, from the proceeds of which should be financed those great enterprises which are permanent in their nature. Arguments difficult to answer are being made as to why should not public buildings be paid for out of the proceeds of bond sales. The act of congress approved May 20, 1908, appropriated \$24,000,000 to cover the purchase of 250 sites and the construction of 250 public buildings. Why should this vast sum be taken from current revenues, making the burden of taxation fall heavily on the present generation, when the objects of the appropriation are designed for the use not only of those who live in this day, but of others yet to come? This is a pertinent inquiry, and one which is being repeated with reference to every large expenditure involving permanent outlay."

It is estimated that the annual appropriations for permanent improvements of the character named would just about make up for the deficit cited by the secretary of the treasury. The objection is that it would open the way for bond issues for all manner of public enterprises and might entail upon the country a burden that would be a source of weakness and peril in the future. While it is plausible argued that we could easily support a public debt of \$5,000,000,000 and then be in better condition, population and wealth considered, than any other nation in the world, our policy has been in the direction of reducing the debt instead of increasing it. The debt at the close of the civil war, when the country had a population of 34,000,000 and a disordered financial system, was \$2,800,000,000. The present debt is about \$900,000,000, of which \$80,000,000 is of the new issue for the Panama canal.

If, as it is claimed, the proper care of our supply of water, including the care of the forests, would largely increase the taxable wealth of the country, and the use of water power brought within the reach of the industries would produce sufficient revenue to care for the bond burden, then the bond issue might not only be advisable, but justified, as a good business investment. In the absence of such assurance, however, the people will be disposed to go slow on debt inflation projects and take up only the most urgent needs, one at a time.

IMPORTANT TO OMAHA. The decision handed down four days ago by the United States supreme court in what is known as the New York 80-cent-gas case is of importance to Omaha, and for that matter to every progressive American city confronted with public service franchise problems. The supreme court has reversed a ruling of the lower court, which granted an injunction against the enforcement of a maximum gas rate prescribed by law on the ground that it was confiscatory. While the text of the court's decision, with its full line of argument, is not yet available, what has been given out shows that the power of the state to establish reasonable rates for public service corporations in the absence of contract limitations is completely vindicated. The court has further indicated that the capital invested in these undertakings is entitled to reasonable profit and that limiting the profit to 5% or 6 per cent is not necessarily confiscatory.

The nub of the whole rate question comes down to what constitutes the capital investment upon which this profit may be reasonably demanded. In the New York gas case the gas companies had fixed the valuation of their franchises at \$20,000,000, which had been cut down by a special master to some \$12,000,000, and is now reduced by the court's decision to \$7,781,000 by eliminating the item of good will and the additions over and above the valuation of the original franchises as ratified by the state at the time they were bought by the present company.

No less significant is that part of the court's ruling which holds that the determination whether the 80-cent rate for gas is or is not confiscatory has not been properly presented because the rate has not been put into effect and given a practical test. In other words, the court holds that before such a regulation by the state can be upset on the ground of confiscation it must first have a fair trial and come up on a showing of the actual facts of operation. It is not a far step to see the application of this doctrine to the railway rate cases that are pending in so many western states.

So far as Omaha is concerned, its relations to its public service corporations, with one or two exceptions, are for the present governed by contract conditions stipulated in the franchises, but when the time comes, as it will, for rearranging these relations, this decision of the United States supreme court cannot fail to give the city a material advantage.

Armories for the state militia companies in the larger cities must eventually be erected if our National Guard is to be made a real force and maintained as an effective auxiliary to the regular army. The localities in which the militia companies happen to be cannot be expected to furnish the armories. The whole question, however, resolves itself into one as to when the state will be able to spare the necessary money to this purpose.

The State Railway commission has issued an order requiring the installation of a telephone in every railway station in Nebraska whenever patrons make the request, to be maintained at the expense of the railroads. It is to be presumed that this order will be approved by both the Bell and Independent companies, although it may provoke competition for the business.

Governor Shallenberger's inaugural says several things about platform pledges made to the people of Nebraska, but not a word about pledges in the Denver platform applicable to state legislation. Have the 50 per cent trust remedy and the curtailment of the power of injunction and the before-election-campaign-fund publicity all gone by the board?

The prospect of the democrats organizing the republican county board in Douglas county does not seem to appeal to the republicans who do the work for republican candidates presented for election. The republican commissioner who is figuring on a tie-up with the democrats will do well to look before he leaps.

One of the recommendations of the new governor is for final abolition of all fee offices and putting the officers on salaries. The Bee has been working along this line for many years and has made such notable progress in its campaign against fee grabbing that only a few positions still remain where the fee business has survived. We doubt now that even the present incumbents of these offices will have any objection to being put on a salary, provided, of course, the salary is commensurate with the service and proportioned to other salaries.

Mr. Bryan wants it distinctly understood that he is not interfering in the work of the democratic legislature, except where his interference is necessary for the salvation of the party, and as to when it is necessary for him to take a hand he reserves to himself the sole decision.

In Russia forty-one men who participated in a railroad strike have been condemned to death, twelve to penal servitude for life and forty-eight to lesser terms of exile. Luckily there is only one Russia.

Alfred Henry Lewis declares that \$5,000 a year is not sufficient salary for a member of the cabinet. That's what congress thought when it raised the salaries of cabinet members to \$12,000 a year.

"Jim" Corbett wants to fight "Jack" Johnson in order to bring the pugilistic championship back to the white race. We suggest James K. Vardaman and Benjamin Ryan Tillman as seconds for Corbett.

It will be hard to make the people of stricken Sicily believe that the large and powerful battleship fleet of the United States is a menace to the welfare of nations.

Still, the catastrophe at Messina will hardly cure the human habit of building cities at the foot of a volcano or on lowlands certain to be flooded about once a year.

A man in Virginia is appealing to the unwritten law as his defense for killing his cook, who not only refused to marry him, but threatened to leave his house.

Some Prophets Vindicated. Chicago Record-Herald. "Those people who predicted that it would be a cold day when the Standard Oil company paid that fine are calling attention to the fact that zero weather came immediately after the supreme court had disposed of the case."

Variations of the Pension Roll. St. Louis Globe-Democrat. Last year, by official report, 9,676 pensioners died, of whom 34,333 served in the civil war. The highest number of pensioners on the rolls in 1908 was 1,066,053, of whom only half were soldiers or sailors in the war of the rebellion. Widows form a large part of the list and the amount they receive was recently increased one-half.

Munificent and Expeditious. Baltimore American. The best part of a million in cash and supplies went to the aid of the people of the United States through their representatives in congress. The gift is a munificent one; but it is not at all likely that one dissenting voice will be raised in the popular approval of this prompt aid. It is a gift worthy of the country and its resources.

Living Among Earthquakes. New York World. As when Vesuvius last broke loose, people will wonder who chooses to dwell in such scenes of danger. But between the great disasters that make so portentous a printed list are long periods when the slopes are golden with lemons ripening and the rich soil smiles with double harvests. A volcano is not such a bad neighbor. It always gives warning, and in its worst fits enriches the soil. The earthquake in its appalling fury and unescapable suddenness is a different matter.

Some Timber Left. Philadelphia Record. It is some consolation to learn that nearly two-thirds of the timber that once covered the greater part of this country is still in existence. In spite of the ravages of the lumbermen there are yet about 500,000,000 acres of timber land, about one-fourth of which area, with about one-fifth of all the standing timber in the country, is owned by the government and is being conserved by scientific methods of forestry. But the large area of forest lands in the aggregate affords little consolation to those localities, covering most of the eastern states, where the mountains have been denuded of forests until the rains wash the soil into the rivers.

Expansion of Landlordism. Springfield (Mass.) Republican. It has been reported that a group of capitalists, among whom is James J. Hill, contemplates the purchase of some 7,000,000 acres of land in Texas for ranching purposes. This would give them ownership of an area larger than the state of Massachusetts, and there is something decidedly repugnant in the fact that a single individual or small group of individuals should have control of so large a part of the earth's surface. As a matter of fact, however, a vast fortune like Mr. Rockefeller's is less liable to dangerous uses when tied up in land than when existent in a liquid form. But in either case such a private fortune as that is not a happy fact for society to contemplate.

SOUTH AS A BALANCE WHEEL. Colonel Watterston's View of Its Political Future. Louisville Courier-Journal. Upon the wide and open sea of reaction and speculation, the south serves, and will probably continue to serve as a balance-wheel to the national engine. We could not afford to break up and abandon the democratic party even if its fundamental doctrines had grown obsolete. There would still remain conditions with which the republican party is not able to deal. But democratic doctrines are not out of date. They are yet vital. In both houses of congress they maintain a most respectable representation. Upon them we have long stood and shall continue to stand.

This shall not prevent our giving the new administration support when we agree with it touching any of its proposals. Mr. Roosevelt owes to that support whatever measures he has carried. It may be that Mr. Taft will in time owe a similar debt. If he does it will give to the friends of our being as well as patriots of our character. Meanwhile it is a long lane that has no turning and democracy and democrats, saluting the new president with respect, can look pleasant and abide their fate.

OTHER LANDS THAN OURS. The national congress of India, a body of 2,000 members, organized as a vehicle of native sentiment, at a recent session at Madras expressed approval of the reform measures proposed by Lord Morley, designed to increase native participation in local councils. The proposals are tentative, inasmuch as they must run the gauntlet at the spring session of the British Parliament. As outlined by Lord Morley the reforms propose, first of all, an increase in the number of legislative councils, giving in these local governing bodies "due representation to the different classes of the community." These bodies will be empowered, besides dealing with local affairs, "to discuss matters of public and general importance, and to pass resolutions." There are also to be councils for the lieutenant-governors and for the viceroys, and the right to discuss and vote upon financial projects is to be given to both. The representation of natives is everywhere to be enlarged. As a step toward the goal of native aspirations the proposals are fairly satisfying, and serve to check for a time, at least, the agitation which gave England serious concern. It remains for the future to show whether the performance will come up to the promises. Meanwhile the public bureau of England are doing some lively pen work, shaping public sentiment at home and abroad. Sydney Brooks, the London correspondent of American publications, is striving to give England the United States in the right channel, several American editors, who have expressed doubts of the sanctity of England's mission in India, and scoffed at the British Parliament soliciting Turkey on the inauguration of constitutional government, are being rebuffed by Mr. Brooks. At the same time another Englishman, James T. Sunderland, one of larger view and broader human sympathies, tells his countrymen that the true remedy for India's ills is to abolish "the system of holding and governing foreign peoples without their consent."

The dismissal of Yuan-Shih-Kai, grand councillor and commander-in-chief of the Chinese army, for the reason that he was troubled with rheumatism and therefore unable to stand the modern army test, is said to have created a painful impression in foreign diplomatic circles. It is regarded as a sign of reaction, a return to the policy of Chinese exclusiveness. The dismissed commander was very susceptible to western influences, a fact strikingly shown of the reorganized Chinese army. During the fall maneuvers most of the arms carried were of German make, so were the Krupp cannon, the captive balloons and the wireless telegraph instruments and telephones. Minor parts of the equipment came from Japan. "No guns or arms of British origin were used," writes a correspondent of the London Times. It is barely possible that the supremacy of German influence in the Chinese war department would rival that of the Japanese in Manchuria, for such expedients are not uncommon, though usually denied. The fact is apparent, however, that the policy embodied in the slogan, "China for the Chinese," is a factor in the situation. The taking over by the government of the Belgian interests in the Peking-Hankow railway, the captive balloons and the wireless telegraph instruments and telephones. Minor parts of the equipment came from Japan. "No guns or arms of British origin were used," writes a correspondent of the London Times. It is barely possible that the supremacy of German influence in the Chinese war department would rival that of the Japanese in Manchuria, for such expedients are not uncommon, though usually denied. The fact is apparent, however, that the policy embodied in the slogan, "China for the Chinese," is a factor in the situation.

A New Jersey man pleaded guilty to the charge of murdering his wife, but the court would not accept his plea. Nevertheless, the chances are that the man knew what he was talking about. Tom Johnson's crusade for 3-cent fares in Cleveland reaches an inauspicious end. The federal judge who is winding up the street railway controversy stated recently that if the monthly rental of \$3,333 was paid there would be nothing for wages or other expenses, therefore, in the opinion of the court, it is "absolutely necessary" to raise fares to 5 cents to make the service pay fixed expenses.

Conductor Boles, on the Salt Lake & Ogden railroad, near Delta, Ore., noticed a person trying to flag his train one day last week, when the train came to a standstill he found, not a highwayman, but his wife, who had hidden from Mayer, three miles, to get him to come home and kill a skunk which she had shut up in the chicken coop. Boles knocked off and dispatched the intruder.

PERSONAL NOTES.

M. Leroy-Baillou, the eminent French economist, estimates that the private fortunes of the French nation represent a grand total of \$2,750,000,000 francs, or \$2,900,000,000.

The ten-million-dollar stock yards, to be built on the Hackensack meadows are expected to lower the price of beef. They may also divert the mosquitoes from human habitations.

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A New Year's gift unique in the history of sang-ruled Philadelphia was made by County Commissioner Rudolph Blankenbush, "the war horse of reform," who presented his entire salary for the three years he has been in office, \$16,000, in equal parts to the police pension fund, the firemen's pension fund and the teachers' annuity fund. To the board of city trusts he forwarded a certified check for the amount, and requested that the interest each year be turned over to the beneficiaries named, each worthy of full measure of public support.

The discovery and exposure of a crafter connected with the municipal government of Schoneberg, an aristocratic suburb of Berlin, caused some cheap critics of the local yellow press to lament the outbreak of "Americanism" at the German capital. The alleged crafter was a political boss in a section of a nation where bosses are an inheritance as well as an institution, where they outrage honesty and morals as scandalously as in the land of the free.

No nation or race possesses a monopoly of the virtues. Greed is not lodged in the national bounds on either side of the Atlantic. Unfortunately, it stained only last year the exalted station of the premiership of Sweden, as well as the city councils of Schoneberg, London and Pittsburgh.

Former President Cipriano Castro of Venezuela has received a cordial welcome from the tradesmen of Berlin. His coming was heralded far and wide, and interest in his personality grew as his fortune in the public prints increased from \$2,000,000 to \$20,000,000. "Guanduhetta" and "Hoch der president!" filled the air and blazoned shop fronts. The landlord of the hotel where he stopped ran up a flag that reached from the gables to the ground, floating proudly in front of Castro's suite of thirty-five rooms. Before the doctors cut into the game the happy boniface had 100 men employed to cheer and shout every time the Venezuelan made his appearance.

As soon as Cipriano's health is restored it is confidently expected he will scatter a few of his asphalt millions. Perhaps he will settle in Berlin. His home is not as attractive as it used to be.

THE NATIONAL OCCUPATION. Blanche Goodman in New York Times. Father's busy launching diatribes against some trust. Mother's at an article on "How to Banish Dust." Sister's in her boudoir grinding verses out on "Spring." Brother's gathering data for his book on "Motoring."

Baby's in the nursery, preparing to indite some helpful thoughts on "Causes of Insomnia at Night." Cook is in the kitchen with a pencil and a pad. At work for "Anybody's" on "Some Places I Have Had."

Neighbors busy as can be—haven't time to fret—Pushing pens and pencils on a play or a letter. What's the use of business cares? Not the slightest need. Since every one is writing things for other folks to read.

Saturday's Piano Selling. Concluding the Last of The York Branch Piano Stock. There are quite a number of high grade Piano Bargains left, notable a Chickering & Sons Boston upright, walnut case piano, sells new at \$550—our price \$290—easy payments. Another high grade Hallet-Davis mahogany upright piano; new \$600, our price \$300—easy payments. One nearly new Cable-Nelson, walnut upright piano, the \$375 kind, at \$225, on \$6 monthly payments. Some new upright pianos \$139, \$159, \$178, \$190, etc. In this line we have a number of Cramers, Hopes, Hinzes, Kensingtons, Willards—all of them like new. Don't forget our Big Leaders—The Kranich & Bach, Krakauer & Kimball Pianos, best in the world. SATURDAY IS BIG PIANO SALES DAY. A. HOSPE CO. 1315 DOUGLAS STREET.

20% OFF. When you can buy clothing bearing the label of Browning King & Co. at a fifth off you are sure of your money's worth and are taking no chances. The label of Browning King & Co. on your suit or overcoat is a guarantee of material, style and workmanship. Fit guaranteed. 20% discount on all men's, boys' and children's heavy weight clothing. Furnishing Goods Specials. \$1.50, \$2.00, \$2.50 and \$3.00 Shirts [broken lines] for \$1.15. All \$3.00 and \$3.50 Shirts now \$2.25. All \$2.00 and \$2.50 Shirts now \$1.65. All 50c Neckwear [except blacks and plain colors] at 35c; or three for \$1.00. Broken lines of Mufflers at Half Price. \$1.50 and \$2.00 Gloves [broken lines] \$1.15. Browning King & Company. Cor. 15th and Douglas. R. S. Wilcox, Mgr.