

IN THE REALM OF
POLITICS

The real political sensation of the week has been the announcement of Mr. Rosewater that if he fails to defeat Dave Mercer in the primaries he will run as an independent candidate by petition for the express purpose of beating Mercer. Mr. Rosewater says that he does not care to go to congress himself, but that he is tired of seeing Mercer there. The announcement is laughed away by the Mercer fellows, but if they are not really alarmed then they have less political acumen than they are usually credited with. The fact is that Rosewater could personally poll enough votes to make it hard sledding for Mercer, and the only thing that can prevent him from making the race, once his mind is made up, is the nomination of Frank Ransom by the democrats. He is generally credited with hating Ransom about as fervently as Mercer, and it would be a case of half a dozen of one and six of the other. Mercer is now serving his fifth term, and it is a credit to his political ability that he has succeeded in holding on as long as he has. Mercer is not a statesman and makes no pretensions to being one. When he first went to congress he could not make a speech that anyone would listen to for any length of time. Experience has made him more proficient in oratory, but no one ranks him among the magnetic spellbinders.

What is it, then, that enables him to win time after time over young republicans, abler, more brilliant than himself? Omaha has many of these in her professional ranks, but they are pigmies in politics compared to Mercer. The only answer to the question is that Mercer has consistently stuck to the policy he began with, that of getting things for his people and jollying them at every turn. Dave is for an appropriation all the time. If the commercial club of Omaha sees something it wants, a federal building, army headquarters, Indian supply depot, an exposition appropriation—anything that takes government money out of the treasury and plants it in Omaha—they ask Dave to get it and he proceeds to take up the pursuit. Long service has enabled him to learn the ins and outs of appropriation seeking and by means of trades and steady plugging he can generally land whatever is wanted. Omaha people seem to have the commercial spirit down fine. They do not care for a constructive statesman, an orator, a leader of men as congressman. So long as this spirit obtains Dave is reasonably certain of getting back. Men are so constituted that an appeal to their cupidity rarely fails to win, and Dave is a good player at the game.

Some enterprising reporter has discovered and blazoned rudely forth to the world the fact that Governor Savage is a candidate for renomination. This can hardly be classed as news, however. The governor has been a candidate for some months. He was a candidate when he pardoned Bartley, and really was deceived into the belief that he was assisting his political fortunes by taking that step. In his ambition he is receiving the powerful support of both United States senators, Senator Millard, particularly, has interested himself in the governor's behalf and has turned over to him, to use for his personal advantage, a part of the North Platte patronage. This fact is just being discovered by the men who thought their local prominence justified them in thinking they could name a postmaster or two. There is Senator Currie, for instance. The senator lives in the small town of Sargent, which is also the governor's habitat. Mr. Currie was a prominent can-

didate for United States senator last winter, and naturally thought that he would be permitted to name the man who should handle the mails at Sargent. He suggested a man, but his choice was not named. Instead Governor Savage's choice nailed the job. From other towns comes the same story, corroborative of the governor's access of patronage-dispensing.

Col. E. R. Sizer, who can almost read his title clear to being the next postmaster of Lincoln, his name having been sent in to the senate for confirmation, has been a resident of the city almost continuously for twenty-eight years. He was born in Ottawa, Ill., on the 25th of August, 1850. He married in 1871, and came to Lincoln in 1874. He graduated from the Ottawa high school, and after serving fifteen months in a mercantile establishment in Princeton, Ill., emigrated to this city.



ED R. SIZER.

Appointed by the president as postmaster of Lincoln.

Mr. Sizer's first official position was deputy district clerk under R. M. Vedder, a position he relinquished in 1879. In 1883 he was nominated for district clerk by the republicans, carrying the county by over 3,000 majority. Four years later he was re-elected by an equally large majority. The clerk's office in those days was a fee office, and the profits were large. Mr. Sizer became interested in the banking business, but later real estate investments claimed his interest. He was the leading spirit in the effort to establish a prosperous college suburb at Lincoln Normal, but the panic times came and all of the company's backers lost heavily.

After Sam E. Low's selection as district clerk Mr. Sizer became his deputy, serving for two years. When the war with Spain came and Cuba fell into American hands, Mr. Sizer was sent to Havana, where, as chief clerk in the customs office, he did most excellent service. His health failed him and in the fall of 1900 he came home. In May, 1901, he was named as state oil inspector, a position he yet holds.

Mr. Sizer has long borne the reputation of being a most excellent political manager. He is a believer in thorough systemization, and his ability in this line has made him invaluable both as a campaign manager and the head of a public office. His competency to fill the office of postmaster is unquestioned.

Mr. Sizer won his title of colonel as a member of Governor Thayer's staff. He has been prominent in a number of secret orders, and was a member for a time of the staff of the brigadier general of the Uniformed rank, K. of P.

The Fremont postoffice fight is still up in the air, but the Schneider faction held a little rejoicing this week when

R. B. came home and announced that he had secured a pledge from Senator Millard that no one would be recommended for the Fremont postoffice unless he secured the joint endorsement of Schneider and Richards. The senator is anxious to stop this Dodge county quarrel, and hopes to be able to force a compromise on postmaster by taking up some new man. Richards, however, has sworn to stand by Swanson to the end and Schneider feels the same way about Ross Hammond. The advantages with the Schneider fellows because Hammond now has the postoffice and will hold on until his successor is appointed and qualifies, just as good, he thinks, as a reappointment. Schneider has been doing some missionary work among the members of the county committee, and called it together the other day. In view, however, of the new turn he took no action and told the members that the matter had been settled. The postoffice department, however, is not likely to stand for this condition of affairs for long after Hammond's term expires, and some one will have to be named.

The tussle over patronage is causing considerable hard feeling. Up at Pender E. A. Wiltse, the banker, has been Millard's dispensing agent. He promised ex-Senator McDonald, the present postmaster, to endorse him again, but lately the congressional bee has been buzzing in the Wiltse bonnet, and as a newspaper is a good thing to have, he is said to have promised Editor Huntsberger of the Republic that he should have the office. A deal was plugged up to leave the matter to an advisory committee of twenty-four to be selected by three republicans. Two of the three were enemies of McDonald and he refused to submit his candidacy to the committee. As it was constituted Huntsberger won, and now public indignation meetings are in order.

With the republican city primaries still six weeks off an unusual amount of activity is manifest. The action of the city council and the pretty general opinion that a majority thereof have banded themselves together for ulterior motives have centered public attention upon that body and given rise to some severe comments. Councilman Malone, a democrat, is the retiring First warder, and the only other democrat in the council, Erlenborn of the Second, will probably be succeeded by a republican. The men who seek to control councilmen have great power therein, and the quality of the new men is as yet undeterminable. In the Third Councilman Spears concludes six years of service by a voluntary retirement. A number of prominent republicans in this ward have been importuned to run, but they fight shy of bucking the machine. The principal interest centers in the Fourth and Sixth wards, where two men whose previous standing and conduct led their constituents to expect greater independence of action and a different course than they have taken are marked for slaughter. In the Fourth Councilman Bacon will face a determined opposition. Five men are mentioned to succeed him, John S. Bishop, J. R. Inkster, M. Weil, J. D. Woods and C. Y. Smith. Bacon possesses certain elements of strength that will make it necessary for a combination against him if he is to be downed. In the Sixth the opposition to Councilman Fryer has centered on L. J. Dunn, a well known business man. Mr. Dunn is loth to assume the burden of a fight and the duties of the place, but now that he is in the fight he promises to stay.

The principal complaint against Fryer is that he has lined up with the anti-Winnett faction in the council. He voluntarily came to the mayor and promised to stay with him in the fight over the matter of who shall appoint the committees, the mayor or the president of the council. This is the latest step of the gang to secure undisputed control of the committees, and thus be able to advance or throttle, as they choose, any piece of legis-

lation. Fryer was depended upon to vote with the mayor's forces, but instead he came out on the other side. He attempted to explain to the mayor after Monday night's meeting.

"You have no idea," he is reported to have said, "the pressure that was brought to bear upon me—a pressure I could not withstand."

"You needn't explain to me," said the mayor, "after going back on your promise I wouldn't believe anything you said."

Then he walked away.

A councilman must either be a force or a nonentity. If he possesses the ability and the courage to stand for what he believes right even if he does make mistakes, there is little criticism of his course. If the control of his votes lies with the manager of some railroad or some gas company he is indeed a man to be pitied. There are some councilmen who scarcely move without asking the advice of a coterie of friends, and these rank but little higher than the fellows who represent the corporations. Under the present system of ward representation it is practically impossible to get business or professional men to run. If they do accept it is under great pressure. The remedy is plain, change the charter if you can.

Time once was when the Union Pacific railroad company was the great arbiter of political fortunes in Nebraska. When financial misfortune came upon it and it was outstripped in the gridironing of Nebraska by the Burlington, the latter road assumed the reins of power. It is still strong, still powerful, but in recent years a new factor has appeared. That is the Elkhorn. It has enlisted in its service some of the shrewdest lawyers and politicians in the state, and it is adding to this force of workers each year. It was weak last winter, but still strong enough to beat the Burlington out of its preferred choice for senator. The most interesting phase of this determined attack upon the Burlington citadel is the apparent intention of the Elkhorn people to take a hand in Lancaster county politics. Within the past month a number of annuals have been judiciously distributed, and there are more Elkhorn passes carried in Lincoln now than there ever were before. A pass is a power in controlling politicians, and as this move is made at a time when the Burlington has been curtailing the number it had out, it is the more effective.

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Seadsby—That depends. She will if we can find a peer to buy up for a husband before the event occurs.

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