

THE NEW NORTHWEST

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LEE MANTLE AND SILVER.

Senator Lee Mantle has written from Washington to a resident of this community stating that in his opinion loyal republicans in the West should stand unhesitatingly for the two cardinal principles of free silver coinage and protection. It is the expressed conviction of the senator that these two planks in the republican platform would constitute the causes of a great triumph at the presidential election this fall. This newspaper is in hearty accord with Montana's junior senator in so far as silver is concerned. It does not agree with him, however, that the principle of protection is one essential for the advancement of the interests of the great trans-Mississippi country. There is this much about it: Protection will never become popular in this vast part of the union until silver has been recognized by the protected gold bugs of the East. This newspaper takes its stand with the old line democrats who believe in tariff for revenue with incidental protection; in a financial system that use both gold and silver as money metals and as the foundation of the monetary system; who believe that all paper currency should be redeemable in coin; who believe in a flexible and increasing currency proportioned to the increase of business and population; who know the history of the party and the country, and who doubt the ability of the present congress to relieve the distress of the country by the issuance of more bonds. Seeing the terrible necessities of the government at this time, with the danger of bankruptcy absolutely staring it in the face, the republicans of the east and a vast proportion of the democrats refuse to come together and enact a sound banking system which will be a credit to the party inaugurating it, and a defense of the United States. The present condition of affairs in the commercial world was not brought about by laws enacted by a democratic congress. The evil consists in not rising to a full appreciation and thorough apprehension of the conditions that bad laws enacted by former administrations have produced. The crime against silver in its demonetization, and the destruction of one-half the foundation of our monetary system, the unrighteous discrimination against the use of silver money now coined, and, as Senator Mantle says, the enforced issuance of bonds to replenish a gold reserve when silver should be used as the reserve and in payment of the debts of the country; the enormous expense saddled upon the government by former administrations acting under the dictation of an iniquitous bondholder's combine, and made under revenue laws inadequate to meet those expenses; all these things should unite the West, independent of party allegiance, to demand a financial measure designed for the good of the whole country and not simply for the money lenders. The principle should be observed that the government, as the constitution provides, should coin money, and as an inference it should supervise all the issuance of currency so as to insure the redemption of the bills issued. No one in this country wants to carry around either gold or silver if a bill can be had that is redeemable and sure to be redeemed upon demand in coin. The people of the West should unite in demanding a law positive in its character, directing the secretary of the treasury and all bankers to pay out gold and silver in equal quantities for the redemption of currency, and in the payment of all contracts not otherwise specified. At the very least, the discretion left to the secretary of the treasury should be limited to the equal use of both gold and silver. In fighting for these principles Senator Mantle will find his constituents in this commonwealth standing firmly at his back at all times. Montana people are proud of the stand taken by the representatives of this state in congress during recent weeks. This newspaper, in common with the press of the state, refuses to take its politics from the dictators of the East. The New Northwest will enter this campaign free from party prejudices and will take its stand with the political party that promises to best serve silver and the interests of the great west.

MR. HASKELL'S LETTER.

Ever since the state board of examiners decided to suspend work on the eastern penitentiary building at Billings, the Gazette of that city has kept up a tirade of abuse against the state officers composing that board, charging them with fraudulently using the money appropriated by the legislature for the benefit of the Deer Lodge prison and the insane asylum; when, as a matter of fact, the board was pursuing a wise policy, and for the best interests of the state, in refusing to cripple institutions already es-

tablished by using the money necessary for their maintenance in erecting new, and, at this time, unnecessary buildings at Billings. But the Gazette, in its windy warfare against the board, has met with but little encouragement or sympathy from the press and people of the state; and for the purpose of correcting some of the misrepresentations that have been paraded before the public, Attorney General Haskell has written a letter in which he fully explains the duties and scope of the state board of examiners and the reasons for suspending public work in certain cases. We think a careful perusal of Mr. Haskell's letter will satisfy all fair-minded people that the board has acted wisely in the matter, and for the best interests of the state. The letter, which was published in the Helena Independent of March 10, is as follows:

As the appropriations made by the legislative assembly exceeded the revenues of the state, it necessarily follows that funds to meet such appropriations are not always available. It is, of course, disappointing to communities in which public buildings are to be erected to have the work of construction delayed. If it was as easy for the state to collect revenues as it is for the legislative assembly to appropriate money, all our public institutions might have been completed long ere this and fully equipped for the work assigned them. Unfortunately, however, an appropriation does not carry with it the ways and means by which money can be secured to make it effective, hence it follows that in the expenditure of public moneys state officers must be governed by the condition of the funds in the treasury, rather than by the appropriations made.

Intelligent men understand that state officers cannot incur any indebtedness and must adapt their expenditures to the revenues. Even the legislative assembly is powerless to create any indebtedness without providing revenues to meet it, in accordance with the constitution. Money cannot be drawn from the general fund and expended in line with the appropriations made when it is not in the general fund. This is so clearly a business proposition that no one should criticize a state officer for being governed by it, yet it is unfortunately true that evilly disposed individuals, with personal and political ends to serve, are libelling the state officers of Montana, using as a text the fact that the eastern penitentiary at Billings has not been completed, although an appropriation was made by the legislature for that purpose. Not only are the state officers censured for the non-completion of the building, but the allegation is made that the money appropriated for this institution has been fraudulently used for other purposes, namely: Turned over to Messrs. Mitchell & Mussigbrod, of the insane asylum, and Messrs. Conley & McFague, of the penitentiary at Deer Lodge.

Although conscious of the fact that these malicious attacks are made solely for political effect and to serve a political purpose, we believe it to be our duty to show their untruthfulness from the public records, which are accessible to all who may desire to investigate the details of public business for themselves.

The depreciation of values and relative shrinkage of revenues has made the straits upon the general fund a severe one. The outstanding warrants for 1895 registered up to November 30th, that year, and drawn against that fund amounted to \$60,144.81, while there was only \$2,084.54 in the treasury with which to meet these bills, outstanding revenues not being due and collectable at that date. The total appropriation for 1895 amounted to \$631,950.68, while the income of the general fund amounted to \$418,093.01, or \$213,857.67 in excess of tax revenues. Under these conditions it was necessary for the state board of examiners to do a great deal of cutting down to bring the expenditures within the revenues.

It was not deemed wise to close down institutions already established in order to complete and equip new ones, especially when the former could not be dispensed with. Included in the appropriation of \$631,950.68 were \$105,000 for the maintenance of the insane in 1895, and \$55,000 for the penitentiary at Deer Lodge. The most ardent champions of the eastern penitentiary at Billings would sincerely insist that either of the foregoing institutions should be closed down in order to facilitate its construction by some specific date. That the money appropriated for the eastern penitentiary was not used to maintain the institutions named is evidenced by the fact that while \$55,000 was appropriated for the Deer Lodge penitentiary, but \$40,807.55 was expended—a saving of \$14,192.45 being thus effected in the general fund. The care and keeping of the insane slightly exceeded the appropriation, but Messrs. Mitchell & Mussigbrod did not receive one dollar in excess of the appropriation. The amount appropriated and paid was \$105,000, the amount expended being \$106,217.10, or \$1,217.10 more than the appropriation. This excess is represented by a certificate of indebtedness and is incorporated in the deficiency bills for 1895, which amount to a total of \$16,173.09 for that fiscal year. In addition to the saving of \$14,192.45 in the appropriation for the Deer Lodge penitentiary, the entire appropriation of \$7,500 for the University at Missoula was saved; and the appropriation of \$15,000 for the deaf and dumb school at Boulder

was cut to \$6,204.84, a saving of \$8,795.16. By careful and economical management a small saving was also made in running the reform school and orphan's home.

Over a great deal of the money the state board of examiners has no jurisdiction. Of the amounts appropriated, \$26,000 went to pay clerical hire in the legislature and the general expenses of that body, while \$61,773.68 was appropriated for deficiency bills. The general appropriation bill, amounting to \$496,677, was to pay salaries of state officers and the expenses of state government as regulated by law. That the expenditure of \$74,450.68, of an appropriation amounting to \$81,950.68, under the regulations provided by the constitution and the law, from an income of only \$428,693.61, required careful financing to say the least.

The board of prison commissioners recommended to the legislative assembly an appropriation of \$30,000, the exact amount required to complete the eastern penitentiary, including all furnishings. This recommendation was taken up by the legislature and \$30,000 added to the amount specified, for what purpose we are unable to say, as the \$30,000 was fully ample to cover all details, even to furnishing the cells of the prisoners.

When it became evident that the appropriations largely exceeded the revenues that could be applied thereon, the board of prison commissioners made every effort to devise some way by which the construction of the eastern penitentiary could be proceeded with. From April 3, 1895, to Aug. 30, 1895, 14 meetings were held by the board for the purpose of securing funds to complete the building. At one time arrangements were made whereby local banks agreed to advance the money on certificates of indebtedness, provided they could be guaranteed the difference in interest between that which would be allowed by the legislature, probably six per cent, and the 10 per cent they required, for the few months intervening before the meeting of that body. None of the citizens of Billings, however, would make this guarantee, and the arrangements fell through. Failing in every effort to raise the funds in proceed with the work, and the contractor, Mr. Shaffer, demanding an immediate settlement, a compromise was effected by which he was to quit work on the building and accept certificates of indebtedness from the board for the amount of labor and material furnished by him up to that time, exclusive of the amount already paid him. These certificates, which go into the deficiency bill, amount to \$7,623.33, a final settlement being effected with Mr. Shaffer Aug. 30, 1895.

Even the foregoing facts it will be seen that the efforts of any corrupt and venal newspaper to levy blackmail upon the state officers of Montana, as the price of its silence, is wasted energy. The public records, open to the inspection of all, will show precisely what money goes into the various funds and for what expended. Under the circumstances the eastern penitentiary has, to the regret of all, been compelled to wait just as other similar institutions are awaiting the advent of more prosperous times.

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