

LOFTUS AND HIS METHODS

Shippers' Representative Again Questioned by Legislative Committee.

Admits that Peterson Was Once Asked to Become a Member of the Association.

Did Not Know as Much About Him Then as Now, He Says.

The investigation of the Minnesota Shippers' and Receivers' association, or rather of George S. Loftus, its active head, was resumed Thursday afternoon by the house committee and for those present it proved decidedly entertaining.

Personalities, rebuffs, and innuendoes were the principal features. At times the personalities were decidedly broad and no one would have been surprised at what in saloon parlance would be called a "rough house." There was suppressed anger on one side and a tendency to flippancy on the other.

The investigation opened and finished with George S. Loftus, a commissioner for the association, on the stand. S. D. Peterson, as chairman, presided and put the questions, though he was later relieved by John Lennon, of Minneapolis, who obtained better results.

The examination was directed principally to inquiring into the association's methods of making and breaking candidates for public office, breaking those who refused to endorse the association principles, and endorsing those whom it believed to be with it.

In answer to a question as to how many members the association had, Mr. Loftus said about 372. As to their being in good standing he could not say nor could he say how many lived in St. Paul. Further, he did not know how many had left the association except that there were some, and he believed their withdrawal to be due to outside influences.

Mr. Peterson, who was conducting the examination and who, during the late campaign, was one of the principal targets for the association's attacks, kept leading up to his own case all the time. He wanted to know if Mr. Loftus had not stated that the association was not particular about whom it admitted to membership.

"You mistake me," answered Mr. Loftus. "I said there were some men not far distant whom I would not admit."

"Then you referred to some men in the room at the time?"

"I did."

"I will ask whom you referred to?"

"You are the one. We were of the opinion that your record was bad."

During the putting of question, James Manahan, who represented the association as attorney, was persistent with interruptions and coaching remarks for Loftus, and it angered the committee. Peterson, under a strain that would have made most any man want to fight, kept his temper admirably, and Lennon laughed, but Representative Bouck, another member, was indignant.

"If this Manahan is going to continue to interrupt, nothing will be done. I am for putting him out. It was the same at the last meeting."

This brought a laugh from Manahan, and the remark that it might not be well to try it.

Mr. Lennon interposed, however, with a demand for order, and a statement to the effect that the committee had no designs on anybody. It was appointed to investigate, and a square deal would be given all concerned. He insisted, however, that no promiscuous "butting in" would be tolerated.

Mr. Peterson asked Mr. Loftus if his firm was not connected with the shippers' association. To this Mr. Loftus made answer to the effect that he did not know whether that concerned Mr. Peterson or not.

It was here that Mr. Manahan "buted in," and it was here that Mr. Bouck objected, with the added remark that probably before the committee got through it might investigate Manahan.

"I guess not," was Manahan's answer.

Mr. Loftus was asked whether the directors had authorized the sending out of circulars and postal cards attacking candidates, to which he made affirmative answer. However, he did not know the author of the cards. They were probably gotten up by some member of the board.

Cards and circulars, Mr. Loftus said, were not the only methods used. They had workers out, used the telephone and occasionally made personal visits to the district. One man whom he knew confined his efforts principally to New Ulm and Mankato.

Mr. Peterson had been the recipient of some of the cards and circulars, and one of them was an invitation to send \$5 and join the association. This necessitated the endorsement of the association's principles.

"Did you send me this?" said Chairman Peterson, passing over the card and envelope.

Both Mr. Loftus and Manahan denied that the handwriting was theirs.

"Well if I had sent the \$5 would I have been accepted as a member?"

Mr. Loftus said he could not speak for the association, but as for himself decidedly no. "From what I know now I would not admit you," was his answer.

"Oh, then, you have just found me out," said Peterson with some spirit.

Some La Follette speeches had been sent out under the senator's frank during the campaign, and these contained an attack on Senator Nelson. Mr. Loftus admitted that they had gone out with the association's endorsement, but he would not admit that they were an attack on Senator Nelson. They contained his record.

During the session of the house Thursday a petition signed by a number of New Ulm people protesting against the investigation was received, and Mr. Loftus was asked by John Lennon why he had not turned it over to the committee direct instead.

"Was it not your aim to prejudice us with the people?" asked Mr. Lennon.

"No, I did not think the committee would give me or the petition fair treatment," was Mr. Loftus' answer.

Besides he said he had nothing to do with the petition. He had seen it drawn up, but had not dictated any of its contents. A newspaper editor, he said, was largely responsible.

"You were at New Ulm?" then asked Mr. Lennon.

"Yes, and I heard considerable about Mr. Peterson."

"Naturally," interrupted Mr. Lennon. "He has been made postmaster there."

"Yes, they were saying Sam might be able to pay a few of his debts now."

"Cut that out," said Mr. Lennon with considerable emphasis. "At least be a gentleman. Because a man has been unfortunate there is no need to crow over the fact in public. This is no place for personalities."

Mr. Loftus was asked if he had ever solicited rebates, which brought an objection from Mr. Manahan to the effect that the association was under investigation, not Mr. Loftus.

"Objection overruled," said Mr. Peterson with considerable judicial dignity.

Mr. Loftus answered, "No." His work and that of the association was directed at recovering overcharges. They were in the nature of rebates if

that was what the committee was driving at. Neither he nor his firm had ever asked for rebates from the established rates. As a rebater, he said, President Stickney had said he was the worst in the state. He now had on file claims for over \$4,000 in overcharges, and it was through his activity that indictments were brought against a number of railroad companies in Minneapolis recently.

Mr. Loftus admitted that he had collected rebates when the custom was recognized, but not since the enactment of the Elkins law. He continued to collect overcharges though and added that, if he did not, he and his firm would soon go out of business.

Starting in with personalities the feature, the examination finished on a more business basis. Mr. Lennon took charge here and both he and Mr. Loftus seemed to be more agreed on the questions made and the answer given. Mr. Lennon prefaced his turn at the wheel with the statement that all would get a square deal.

"We have got to make a report and we are not out to get anybody," said Mr. Lennon. "If things are in your favor Mr. Loftus then you will get full credit, and if they are not, the truth will also be told."

Mr. Loftus was asked if a clerk in his employ had not at one time stolen some money collected.

Mr. Manahan objected, as that was before the association was formed, and the matter was dropped.

Mr. Loftus was asked if the association always stood by those who had endorsed the principles it advocated.

"That depends," answered Mr. Loftus. "Sometimes men are not sincere in their endorsement. They vote for a thing because their negative would not have any effect."

"Oh, then you do not even give them credit for what they do do?"

"Not necessarily."

"Well, then, if a man came out squarely would you stand by him?"

Mr. Loftus wanted to know the man referred to and the name of Mr. O'Laughlin, of Wabasha county, was mentioned.

Here it developed that Senator Cook, his opponent, who was "not right" and who landed the place first, was opposed by the association but later the association withdrew its opposition. This had been done after some correspondence and a conference with Senator Cook. Mr. O'Laughlin had signed the association's cards and Mr. Cook had not.

This was one of the inconsistencies the committee professed to be able to

see into though Mr. Loftus insisted that his explanation was satisfactory.

A list of non-paying members, those in arrears with the association was shown Mr. Loftus which he recognized. On one was the name of the National Harvester company. This the committee took to mean that the trust was a member, but Mr. Loftus contended not.

"That is an agent of the company in one of the small towns," said Mr. Loftus. "We have lots of them."

In this way the examination continued. Little, it might be said, was realized. The small committee room was crowded with spectators and they included a number of the senators who are close to Mr. Loftus and his work for shipping reform.

Reflections of a Bachelor.

New York Press: The most fun in going to Europe is that most of your friends can't.

The one thing that a woman can't understand about a man is the way he will throw away money on useful things.

One of the meanest things about having money is the way everybody worries for fear you will keep on having it.

If a girl drops her glove and a man picks it up for her she tells how he made it happen so he could try to flirt with her.

When you hear a man bawling at the top of the lungs he will try to tell you afterward that he was listening to a political argument.

Pointed Paragraphs.

Chicago News: Dead men tell no tales, but the anecdotes their friends tell about them more than make up for it.

The recording angel doubtless has to keep a special set of books in which to record secrets women do not keep.

Think twice before you speak; and if you think three times the chances are you will not think it necessary to speak at all.

When a young widow begins to take the advice of a man seriously it's a sure sign that she is willing to let him fill the shoes of the late lamented.

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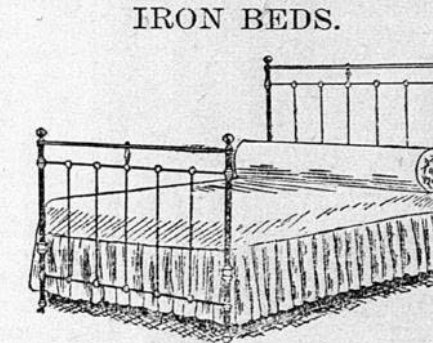
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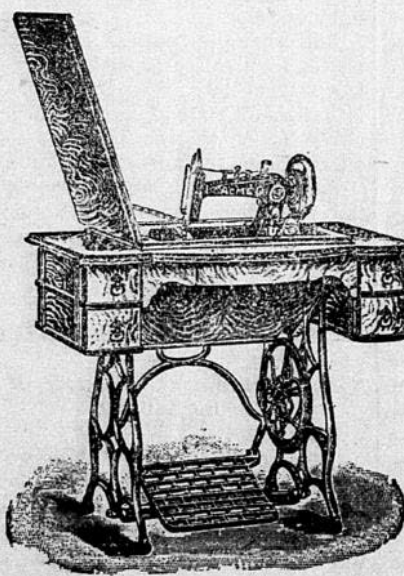
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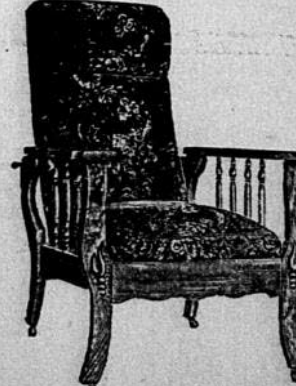
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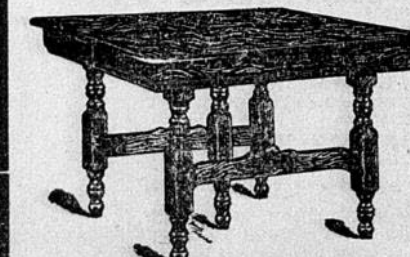
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