

THE COURIER

VOL. XVIII, NO. VII

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1902

ESTABLISHED IN 1886

HIS HONOR, THE MAYOR OF LINCOLN

Being the Record of Impressions of a Man Around
Whom a Political
Contest of Unusual Interest Is Now Being Fought

Next Tuesday the republicans of Lincoln will settle their family quarrel and decide, in most of the wards, who will be the candidates to be voted for by the people generally in April.

Much of the interest attached to the contest arises from a protest on the part of what may, for the purposes of the campaign, be called the better element of the party, to the attempted control of the council by the gas company and allied politicians who are credited with being really interested in eventually exploiting a big corporation that will include the waterworks, street railway, steam heating plant and electric lighting system. Perhaps much of the public indignation may be ascribed to the very coarse work that the gas company has been doing of late. So long as the public does not see the pulling of the strings or does not hear the creaking of the wires, so long as its observation is limited to what the councilmanic automatons do, it is easily deceived. But there have been changes, of late. A new manager, a young man untried in the subtleties of politics, came along and upset all precedents. When he wants anything done he goes right up to the council chamber and starts the whole machinery in full view of everybody. This has offended the public's sense of the proprieties and it has started in to put the company out of the political business.

Against his protests and his desires, the fight has in part assumed the phase of Winnett and anti-Winnett. This is because the mayor has taken an uncompromising stand in most matters coming up before him, a stand that has not endeared him to the dozen and one fellows who are always seeking some little advantage over their fellows through legislative enactment. They are not without power in a small way and they are the men who are seeking to make the mayor and what he has done an issue in the campaign.

"I do not wish to be made an issue in this or any other campaign," said the mayor to a Courier representative the other day. "I have had my own ideas about how things should be done, but I have never endeavored to induce or compel the council to follow my lead. All that I have ever asked any member of the council to do is to make up his mind what is right and to act accordingly. I have doubtless made mistakes, but who hasn't? The one thing that every officeholder owes the people who put him in place is to give them an honest, impartial government. When he has done that as best he could he has done all that anyone could ask."

Hudson J. Winnett is a rather curious psychological study. His appearance gives little indication of the sturdiness and staunchness that form so large a part of his mental make-up. At first look one would take him to be a well-mannered gentleman who would be inclined to agree with what

you say rather than have any dispute over the matter. Quite a number of self-seeking men have made this mistake. But there is a directness in the mayor's glance, a firmness in his tone that belies first impressions. The man who has an axe to be sharpened on the municipal grindstone is apt, in talking with the mayor and councilmen to indulge in a charming indefiniteness of language. He is inclined to refer to a spade as a gardening utensil. His real purpose is usually masked. It only comes out by indirection.

directed towards the furtherance of public interest.

There have been others—men who believe themselves the natural directors of local affairs—who have sought to show the mayor the pathway in which he should tread. They have been speedily disillusioned. The mayor is a man who prefers to choose his own route, careless of whether it leads to political success or political oblivion. The one guide he has had for his footsteps is, is it right? If he didn't believe it was there is no power

There are two kinds of men who succeed, who leave their impress upon the community in which they have labored. One is the blunt, frank fellow, who weighs not his words nor even seeks to foresee the results of any certain course of action. He achieves his ends by the strength of his cause or the masterfulness of his course. The other is the man of caution, the silent man, whose mind is so constructed that he can see the end before the beginning is made, and who devotes his energies to bending, not by force or frankness, men to his will. This is the tactful man, who flatters, cajoles, persuades, who achieves without leaving in his wake a string of men whose hands itch for the close contact of a substantial club. Mayor Winnett is not a tactful man. If he had been, perhaps there would have been fewer quarrels between mayor and council, but on the other hand some of the hidden springs of councilmanic action might have remained concealed.

Within the past year there has been a tension—perhaps a contention would express it better—between the executive and the council. At the beginning of the present municipal year what has been designated as a "gang" first made its appearance in the council. In its practical workings it is a hard and fast combination which carries through the council, by mere force of numbers, whatever it has decided upon. This plan is inimical to the interests of the public, as it deprives the members of the combination from voting as their best judgment dictates because self-interest is the dominant factor in the placing of their votes. If any two or more members refuse to help out the scheme or plan of the others, if they refuse to scratch their backs when that "itchy" feeling comes on, they will not be helped out when there is another log to be rolled. This combination has been composed of Malone, Stewart, Lawlor, Erlenborn, Bacon, Albers, Fryer, Thompson, Pentzer and at times Hutton and Lyman. Frampton, Spears and Powell have at all times stood loyally by the mayor. Stewart and Lawlor are both men of brains, sharp and clever, made so by their years of experience in the council. They have been the real leaders in the fight against the mayor. Men who know Fryer and Pentzer and Bacon have been at a loss to understand why they should tie up with men and interests that are not working for the best interests of the people. All three are men whose previous lives and affiliations have been such as to give reason to believe that they would not be found where they have been. The reason they give is that it would be impossible to get for their wards what their wards deserve if they did not assist in the achieving of certain results for others. Whether or not this is a sufficient reason is a

(Continued on page 9.)



MAYOR H. J. WINNETT.

The few who made the mistake of believing the mayor could be won over to the support of their selfish schemes of aggrandizement have been surprised at the reception their propositions received. The mayor, without being truculent or scrappy, has disposed of them in very short order. The man they had picked out as a lamb developed into a lion without previous warning. He insisted upon calling things by the name sanctioned by common usage. He had the painful habit of picking out the meat of a proposition and of pointing out that it was not

in Lincoln that has been able to change his course. If he believed it was, he stood pat.

Like all men of strong convictions and inflexible determination, Mr. Winnett has been lacking in tact. He is not a bulldozer, neither is he a boss. He has been impatient of men and their schemes because he believed they knew better and were working for selfish motives and personal ends, and he has not scrupled, when his opinion was asked, to express in vigorous language his opinion of men and measures.