

assuredly we hope so. But it is more likely that the great majority will not pay for the corner posts used in bounding, and the lead-pencil consumed in describing, the property. In the meantime men go on throwing away time and labor in courting fickle fortune, while broad, rich acres, teeming with fertility, inviting the labor of the husbandman, and giving guaranty of a safe and abundant living, lie unused on every hand.

THE CODE COMMISSION.

The suggestion of the NEWS, made a couple of weeks ago, that the Legislature should provide the State with a commission for the codification, revision and annotation of the existing laws, and to make a report to the next Legislature, has received a response, in part at least, in the bill introduced into the House by Mr. Nye, of Salt Lake county. The matter is now squarely before the Legislature, and should receive prompt and careful attention, that the legislators may not adjourn until such a commission is provided for.

As Mr. Nye's bill now stands, however, it is fatally defective in not providing for a sufficiently qualified commission to thoroughly cover the ground as it should be covered. Conclusive proof on this point is given in the Territory's experience with the compilation of 1888, when the committee consisted of as thoroughly capable lawyers as can be placed on such a commission. The weak point then consisted in the fact that while lawyers may understand the law, it cannot be reasonably expected that they are well up on all points associated with the people's needs. Therefore they should be associated with some men of other callings in so important a work.

Mr. Nye's bill provides that the code commission shall be composed of three men learned in the law. That is not sufficient. Three able lawyers would be highly valuable to the State on such a commission, yet they are not sufficient. There should be on such an important committee men who have some learning outside of the legal profession, that the revision under its direction may be simplified and practically applied to the needs of the people through the added experience and information that these persons would bring. The codification of the laws in Utah requires something more than their mere construction and definition to a legal mind. As shown in the past, there is need for correctness, plainness and simplicity in their literary style and other ways that, with all due respect to the legal fraternity, does not and is not always expected to emanate therefrom.

Another suggestion would be that all of the commission should not be of one political party. The Legislature should express a view that, while the majority party may require the chief attention, yet the Governor is not expected to confine himself to its ranks, but may call on some men of another party specially qualified for such work. This codification and revision is for people of any or all parties, and from the inception of the scheme in the law itself, should be founded on that basis.

Let us have a high-minded, capable code commission, not confined to the

legal fraternity or to any other class, political or otherwise, but representative of the whole people so far as practicable, that the people, independent of avocation, politics or creed may have full confidence in its work being performed with fidelity and ability, and in a manner thoroughly comprehensive of the needs of all.

FOR THE EXPOSITION.

Some weeks ago there was a momentary revival of interest in, and an incipient blaze of enthusiasm concerning, the proposed semi-centennial celebration next year of the settlement of this valley, by the introduction of a series of resolutions providing for a grand intermountain exposition to be held in Salt Lake City in 1897. Without wishing to appear too inquisitive, we should like to ask what has become of the proposition. Only about three weeks of the legislative session remain, and for the great project itself there is not a single day more than is needed in which to make the arrangements on a scale of appropriate magnitude.

We know there are people who question the ability of Utah to take the lead, and the willingness of other states to follow, in such a scheme. The NEWS is not one of the doubters. Times have been hard, it is true, and money is not yet any too plentiful. But money is not the only thing needed, and our faith is that if we have the other requisites, the cash will be forthcoming also. Such an exposition as this paper has advocated would be worth far more than it could possibly cost, and the immediate returns, we believe, would fully compensate for every outlay, to say nothing of the good results which, like bread cast upon the waters, would return after many days.

It is about time the mountain states, of which Utah is the undisputed queen, were given a chance to show what they have done and can do. It is the duty of the Utah Legislature to take the initiatory steps toward giving them that chance.

GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP.

A good many good men who are also thoroughly posted on political affairs favor the exclusive ownership of railroads by the government. As a party tenet we do not care to discuss the matter, but considered in the light of a popular proposition we have a few suggestions to offer.

The total valuation of the railways of the country with their attendant rolling stock, grounds and buildings, is fully \$10,000,000,000. This colossal sum, which the imperfect intellect of man in its best estate cannot begin to grasp, would either have to be paid or the government would have to resort to confiscation to effect a change of ownership. Surely no one is so lost to all sense of legal rights, to say nothing of concrete justice, as to even be willing for the latter plan to be resorted to, let alone to advocate it; we therefore turn to the question of purchase, and the first thing that suggests itself in such connection, as in all similar cases, is as to where the money is to come from. The nation is deeply in debt and growing

somewhat deeper rather than otherwise, and the sum named represents its total income for an entire decade; besides, it has to be kept going and needs the whole of its resources to do it, leaving a small deficit to be carried over at the end of each fiscal year besides. So, clearly the roads could not be bought and paid for out of current resources. Borrowing has become a frequent resort with us, but where could such an amount or any considerable part of it be obtained in this way? No nation under the sun is possessed of any great fraction of it in movable money; indeed, we seriously question if all of them combined could raise it, and if they could they would not care to let it go even to as good a debtor as the United States is and has always been. We might issue a popular loan, which would be popular for a very short time only, for so soon as the people learned that they were only contributing toward the creation of a huge mountain of debt, the principal and interest of which they must pay even while ostentatiously receiving interest themselves, the "popularity" of the scheme would collapse like a pricked bubble; besides, only a little of the needed amount would be raised under any such circumstances. The engraving bureau might be set to work night and day and in the course of time issue enough fiat money—i. e., paper not based on coin or values of any kind—to equal the figure named; but suppose the railroad people refused to take such issues for their property—as assuredly they would, coming from a nation wholly and hopelessly bankrupt as this one would be under such circumstances—then what? The purchase scheme would undoubtedly, if carried out at all, have to be done by piecemeal, one road at a time; by this means the government would immediately become a rival to business to its own citizens, and, holding the supreme power within its hands, could place such citizens at a disadvantage by various means which any government invested with too much authority is prone to.

Another thing: The government, which practically construed means the administration, in full and complete ownership of all railway systems in the country and controlling all the employees thereof, would be able to succeed itself indefinitely, or at least decide as to who should succeed it. The vast army of men who live by railroad service are so distributed throughout the land that, acting together as they could be made to do by orders from headquarters, they would constitute a balance of power which would swing every doubtful state and many more into line for whomever and whatever the administration saw fit. It might not do this, but is there any considerable class of people who would care to try the dangerous experiment of placing within the hands of the ruling forces at Washington any such alarming increase of power? We should hope not.

There are yet other objections to the proposition, such as the revenue which the counties through which railways pass derive therefrom, this being a very important item in the newer states particularly; but enough has been said for the present.