DESERET EVENING NEWS.

DESERET NEWS PUBLISHING COMPANY, LESSEES.

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IRRIGATION IN THE LEGISLATURE.

The importance of the right kind of legislation, and the diversity of views as to what is the right kind, was no doubt firmly impressed upon the minds of several members of the Legislature at a conjoint meeting of the House and Senate committees on irrigation and agriculture, held last evening. Besides the members spoken of, the session was attended by President George Q. Cannon, Judge L. W. Shurtliff, Col. Stevenson and other gentlemen identified with the State Irrigation association; by Prof. A. A. Mills, of the Agricultural association, and Prof. J. H. Paul, of the Agricultural college; by Bishop Rawlins and Mr. Israel Evans, who were considered representatives of the "old settlers," and by Judge Dusenberry, Prof. Cleff and others. Nearly every visitor present was heard in remarks upon the subject, all agreeing as to the tremendous importance of the questions involved and also agreeing upon the main proposition as to its complexity with reference to legislative treatment, and the extreme care with which new laws should be considered. Perhaps President Cannon most successfully represented the views of the majority of those present in his suggestions as to the determination, recording and maintenance of existing water rights, and as to the measurement of the water of our streams.

The latter is a proposition which offers few difficulties, and concerning the necessity of which there can hardly be any question. As to the former, the plan suggested was to have local boards of arbitration in the various counties to ascertain by evidence the claims and rights of the water users, these rights to be affirmed by certificates, in other words "water deeds," and the whole matter then, if necessary, to be made legally binding by being decreed and placed on record in the courts. The resort to costly litigation was deplored, and the injustice that might readily be done rightful claimants in the ordinary courts and under the usual legal procedure was strongly pointed out; and the experience of Bishop Rawlins and associates with reference to the adjudication of their water rights in one of the Cottonwoods in this county made an effective argument in favor of the arbitration plan. The Wright law of California, the much discussed Wyoming law, and incidentally the Carey law as to public lands in arid states, were referred to; and the difference between conditions east or west and those existing here, as indicating the character of prospective legislation, was dwelt upon and found expression in the idea that so far as practicable legal enactments instead of overturning should confirm and crystallize rules and usages which have existed since the settlement of the State.

The meeting was in all respects an agreeable and profitable one; and it is truly to be hoped that out of the many suggestions made, and the material left with the committee in the form of an exhaustive written dissertation on the whole subject by Col. Stevenson, some simple law may be framed and adopted looking at least to the two points above referred to as matters of immediate necessity.

BOX ELDER'S GRIT.

News readers have been informed of the severe disaster which befell the good people of Box Elder county two weeks ago in the destruction of their fine Blake Tabernacle, the actual fire loss representing something like $12,000. To a large, populous and wealthy Stake this sum would not be so large as to render difficult its easy replacement. But in the case in point the people are not very numerous, and they have moreover sustained various other severe financial losses, which, coming at a time of general stringency, have greatly ground them down in their monetary abilities, though by no means extinguishing their energy and courage. Furthermore, the various wards of the Stake have almost overreached themselves during the past year in the erection of public buildings; so that while they late their new disaster with plucky fortitude, they find their powers simply inadequate to a task which their spirit prompts them to assume without delay.

Nevertheless as has been stated, they have set to work to restore their Stake house, and the hopefulness and zeal thus evinced cannot be too highly commended. It is an example of potent faith and brave determination quite characteristic of Americans generally, of westerners particularly, and of the people still more especially who settled these desert vales and made the land delightsome. Some of the authorities of the Stake are at present in this city endeavoring to enlist the active sympathy of their friends in the work now in hand. And the News has sincere pleasure in recommending them and their most worthy object to the consideration and generosity of the home public. The people of Utah are so closely connected that any injury affecting one section is felt by all. The repair of losses sustained in one county is therefore an effort which the others may appropriately contribute to and to which they should have no active, tangible and willing interest.

CAMPOS AND CUBA.

Martinez Campos in an interview with a representative of a leading Danish paper speaks of the Cuban revolution. He says among other things that people in Europe do not understand the situation on the island. It is well known that the Cubans are fighting for independence, but it is not generally known that they are divided in so many factions that independence would speedily result in anarchy. There are, however, at least four principal parties. The first consists of the wealthier classes, who only wish to maintain the status quo. Another class is content with Spanish suzerainty but demands home rule as to the internal affairs of the island. Then there is a small party longing for union with the United States; while the most numerous faction, the Palenses, or descendants of the negro slaves, joined by a large class of people who have absolutely nothing to lose, clamor for an independent government. Under these circumstances, the general says, it would be unwise to proceed with much severity, crushing the good with the bad. His policy, therefore, was to gain rather by diplomacy than by force of arms.

It seems that the Spanish government was not unwilling to let General Campos try his experiment up to a certain time, but when the rebels threatened Havana and he apparently was unable to drive them back, notwithstanding he had 60,000 men at his disposal, they lost all patience with his "diplomacy" and decided on more energetic measures. In military circles in Europe his policy receives no endorsement. It is pointed out that his first duty was to crush the rebellion and then show leniency when this feat had been accomplished. In the meantime the thought prevails that there is much speculation as to the course the United States will adopt when a more vigorous campaign is commenced. A London paper, quoted by the Literary Digest, has this to say:

The truth is that the insurrection in Cuba is being supplied with arms and money entirely from the United States. Not on any small scale either. The principal subventioners are the Sugar Trust, which body has contributed large sums of cash and quantities of arms, and is accused of bribing Congress to fix the sugar plantations in order to run up the price of sugar. Neither Messrs. nor Havemeyer's a good reputation, and both are as much so as little "generals" as the Rockefellers, Jaynesses and Wittenghby. Nevertheless, they may be fighting against oppression and therefore deserve our sympathy. But Spain is quietly working up her case against the United States all the time, and the feeling of the Spaniards against the Americans is such that if by any unfortunate chance the latter did find themselves in a difficulty it is almost a certainty that Spain would seize the opportunity of avenging herself.

FOOLISH LEGISLATION.

One of the trials that members of legislatures have to contend with is the persistence with which persons who have axes to grind insist upon the introduction and enacting of measures in harmony with their peculiar views or individual interests; and considering the backing that such persons manage to secure from reputable citizens, it is a wonder that the amount of foolish legislation that finds its way to the statute books is not larger than it is. For, while the legislator may be careful and shrewd, it is not possible for him to be fully informed as to details on all matters he is called to legislate upon, and he must trust to a considerable extent to the representations of those who do possess such information and are of good standing in the community.

The State Legislature now in session has had its share of those who clamor for laws that would be unwise or absurd; and although measures have got through one or the other branch seemingly by some sharp practice, taking it altogether the members of the lawmaking body have done very well in keeping our objectionable schemes by preserving their true innocuousness before final action was taken. Several such schemes have been subverted, and many more are unconsciously awaiting the same fate.

Among the propositions of an improper character that have been presented, some of which have received committee endorsement, are several arbitrarily fixing the prices which the State, or those acting in pursuance to statutory mandate, shall pay for certain commodities. Such plans as upbuilding the wages of workingmen, etc., have been urged in support of these propositions, when in fact not one of them would have any bearing toward the result alleged to be sought. Some of these have been discussed already, and others akin to them are now pending. Among the latter may be named one which received the endorsement of the committee on printing—that fixing the price to be paid for legal notices required by law to be published. Of course the advertising space of a newspaper is a matter of merchandise, just as the butter and sugar of a grocer; and there would be as much sense in enacting a law requiring the State to pay a certain price, and neither more nor less, for the butter that might be needed in State prison supplies as to say what it shall pay for advertising. In the particular bill in question, certain prices are fixed for legal notices. The publication of such notices is now done even by the big daily papers at about one-third the price fixed in the bill; so that its effect, if it becomes law, would be to force those who had to pay for the notices, and if the figure fixed by law had been too low, the papers would merely decline to dispose of their space for such a price, as they have a perfect right to do.

There are some things which the Legislature can regulate under existing circumstances, and others which it cannot and be consistent. Of the latter are such matters of business and commerce as the item referred to; and the best thing a committee can do when a bill with such a string to it is offered is to kill it without wasting the time of upon legislative sessions to discuss its provisions. Painstaking members of the lawmaking body do not relish a general discussion of absurd or foolish legislation.

A MILITIAMAN'S NERVE.

Col. Coit commands a regiment of the National Guard of Ohio, and gave the order under which the militia fired with fatal effect upon a mob who attacked a jail at Washington Courthouse some months ago, for the purpose of lynching a prisoner therein confined. He has since been twice tried for manslaughter; the first time the case was not continued because of the illness of a juror; the second time, a week or two ago, the jury brought in a verdict of acquittal. The law-abiding element in Ohio and everywhere else approved the action of the second jury and tendered the valiant colonel the assurance of the usual distinguished consideration. This was all very gratifying as far as it went, but it paid no lawyer's bill and fed no children. So, as soon as the congratulations were fairly over, the officer proceeded to the seeking of a more substantial tribute of sympathy—the same being a claim against the State for remuneration amounting to a cool $52,000. He probably has no expectation of getting the full amount asked for, but if he should happen to do so there are many citizens of Ohio who are already preparing to pitch into the jury before whom the petitioner stood his second trial.

JIM CORBETT, signing a theatrical contract upon which he can fall back in case of a challenge, announces that in his opinion "prize-fighting is done." He is happy to believe that it is—for him. Actual fighting never has any attractions for the professional writer after he has gained enough notoriety to make money out of other people's simplicity.

A St. Louis preacher warns his flock that "it costs money nowadays to be a Christian." Common fairness would have required him to state that it costs still more to be a thorough-paced sinner.

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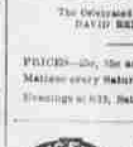

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