THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

STAKE CONFERENCE SENSATIONS.

The NEWS has had occasion to point out that sensational and untrue reports of Stake conferences are furnished to some of its cotemporaries, with the result that there is much comment of a foolish and sometimes vicious character, since it is based on a misstatement or misunderstanding of the facts. We pointed out that with reference to the recent Stake conference at Provo this sensational inaccuracy was given considerable play. At the Tooele conference also, it was indulged in and given even broader scope; as it has been in the reports furnished of several ward conferences. Cache Stake was brought into the same line of reports concerning the meetings at Logan. There the Stake clerk came out with a prompt denial of the principal misstatements published here. His letter appears in the Tribune of this morning, and reads:

Editor Tribune:—In your special from Logan, appearing in the issue of May 4th, there are some discrepancies which convey a wrong impression of what occurred and do an injustice to some men whose names are mentioned. The voting on the recent declaration was as full and hearty as the writer has witnessed on any occasion in our Stake conferences. The opposition vote, as I counted it, numbered five, but I learned there were two behind me under the gallery who also voted in the negative. The estimate given by your informant was at least double the actual opposition vote. Your correspondent was misinformed as to the action before the High Council. Of the three mentioned as voting against the manifesto, George W. Thatcher and A. F. Parr Jr. did not vote either way, while A. G. Barber voted for it.

There was also an error as to the cause for not presenting the Stake authorities. It has not been the rule for several years in this Stake to present them more than once, or at most twice a year. All the authorities were put before the conference in February; it therefore would be unusual to present them again at this time.

Trusting you will give this publicity in the interest of fairness, yours truly,

J. E. WILSON,
Clerk of Stake and of High Council.
LOGAN, May 5, 1896.

We refer to this matter now so that readers of the NEWS may have another suggestion as to the perverse character of the reports referred to, and the unworthy motives which inspire them. There has been a great deal of raving and ranting through some of the papers over conditions which have had no existence except in imagination awakened by these incorrect and overdrawn reports, and then only through deductions of an extreme and unreasoning character. The whole thing will simmer down after a while, when the folly of those who have been shouting to ward off apparitions of their own creation will be made manifest.

Some people have become so wedded to the practice of misrepresenting the Mormons that they cannot lay it aside except for a little while at a time, and these are making most of the present opportunity to revel in the mire. We should like to point out to them something better, if they would heed; but if they will persist in following the baser course, they must abide the consequences. People of fairer judgment and more honorable inclinations will soon cease to be agitated by the noise and contortions for which there is no occasion whatever. Abraham Lincoln's remark about fooling the people is apropos to the present situation; and the sensation mongers who attempt the deception will not be gainers thereby in the long run, since truth and the good sense of the people are against them.

EXCESS INDEBTEDNESS INVALID.

The issuing of warrants in excess of legal indebtedness has been a theme of much discussion and worry in Salt Lake city and county; and so far as concerns county warrants of that character issued prior to the inauguration of the State government, the Legislature, after considerable struggling, was induced to validate them. This legislative action, however, did not authorize cities or counties to go on in incurring indebtedness in excess of the legal limit; hence any such debts now or hereafter contracted are void.

The State Constitution provides that no county or subdivision thereof, or city, village or school district shall create in any one year a debt in excess of the taxes for that year, except by consent of the taxpaying voters; and when this consent is given at an election held for the purpose, the county cannot incur an indebtedness, including that already existing, exceeding two per cent of the assessed valuation of property, nor can a city or town exceed four per cent of such valuation; this restriction did not apply in cases where bonds, etc., had been arranged for prior to admission to the Union, but became operative on all business done after statehood was assumed.

It is no secret that in Salt Lake city and county there are some who urge that an excess of the debt limit will be a necessity before the end of the present year, and who confidently assert that that such excess will be met and paid rather than that any "repudiation" shall take place. To such we suggest that there are others, and a very large number, too, who feel that the "repudiation" cry has gone far enough in the way of justifying the payment of illegally incurred debts, no matter for what purpose. The discussion and events of a few months ago, during the legislative session, and the provisions of law on the subject, which have been referred to so much that they ought to be commonly understood, are regarded as a sufficient notice to all comers that if they allow themselves to become creditors to either city or county outside of the legal limit they will be barred from making any collection. There is no repudiation in this business; it is merely a blunt refusal to have the Constitution and law trifled with as the latter has been in the past by certain officials.

The decision of the supreme court of California in what is known as the Bradford case, handed down last Tuesday, should be a suggestion to prospective creditors of city and county that their bills should be within the legal debt limit if they want them paid. In the state referred to, the "repudiation" argument was worked in justification of exceeding the debt liability until a suit was entered to stop it. Wallace Bradford began suit in 1895 to have the authorities of the city and county of San Francisco enjoined from further increasing the municipal deficit, as represented by the excess. At that time the debt limit had been passed by $205,000, with a prospect that by the close of the fiscal year it would reach $350,000. It was his theory that such bills could not be paid because of the Constitutional provision forbidding the making of the obligation. In the lower courts he lost his case, but the supreme court decision is in his favor on every point. The court holds that an equity court would restrain the levy and collection of a tax intended to meet the illegal debt. The court says of the constitutional rule, that "It places a limit, a check, upon the power of municipal officers to expend money beyond the resources provided for the current year. A barrier against indebtedness by municipal officers and local bodies has been created by the constitution." Upon this, the court holds that the creditors for the amount of the excess of indebtedness cannot be paid; and with respect to the injunction asked for adds:

We conclude, then, that in a proper case municipal officers, at the instance of a taxpayer, will be constrained from contracting illegal debts and from levying and collecting taxes for the payment thereof and from enforcing the payment of such taxes.

Perhaps in Salt Lake city and county there will be no creditors outside of the amount of limitation fixed by the State Constitution; and perhaps there may be, judging by the trend of affairs. And if there are any, they need not be surprised at some taxpayer proceeding as in the California case. Creditors who sometimes take chances hereabouts on illegally incurred debts might not find it unprofitable to keep their weather eye open.

THE FRENCH DISPUTE.

The United States has had its tilt with England over the Venezuelan matter and with Spain over Cuba; and now it has been talking right out to France on the subject of that country's discrimination against the American cattle business. The administration's communications on this subject were of a nature that even Frenchmen, who are accustomed to considerable vivacity of expression, thought them "a little fiery." To them it was announced that if France did not cease the discrimination complained of, regulations against French commerce would be enforced, and retaliation be made which would offset the condition now complained of, yet which could not be regarded as a casus belli.

It is in commercial matters that un-