

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

MR. GEDDES AND THE "NEWS."

When a man gets angry in a discussion he throws aside all dignity; and that is what County Commissioner Geddes seems to have done in his statement that appears in the NEWS today, when he talks of any attempt in this paper to convey a false impression in its criticism of the county's action in refunding the whole indebtedness of \$350,000. Perhaps when Mr. Geddes gets a little more experience he will recognize that people may differ with him as to policy without being either dishonest or untruthful. We realize that Commissioner Geddes has labored faithfully and has made an efficient officer, and for this we have approved and will continue to do so, his actions in that line; but we also realize that he is liable to err, and believe he has done so in this instance, but we have no desire to be as harsh in judgment and expression as he has been.

So far as the discussion has gone, we might be content to leave it where it is, and allow people to judge for themselves. But since the article the gentleman objects to appeared several days ago, we will call attention to only a few of Mr. Geddes's statements, and leave the controversy. In the first place, the gentleman says that we might have learned that "in order to prevent an increase in county taxes it is absolutely necessary that the warrants should be taken up and bonds issued in their place." The assertion is contradicted by the very law under which the bonds are issued. Instead of the issue preventing an increase of taxes, it makes such increase obligatory, since the law provides for a special tax to pay the interest and the bonds. The commissioner will find this provision in paragraph c, page 526, Laws of Utah, 1896. So he is in error on that point.

Again, he says the NEWS article was "based on the assumption that an economical administration can, at the present rate of tax," pay the entire warrant indebtedness in ten years. The gentleman should read the article again. It is not based on any such assumption; for it includes in its argument the increase of taxation in the next ten years that the bond issue requires in the second ten, and shows the saving effected thereby. Mr. Geddes says that if the sinking fund were created in the first ten years and the bonds paid in that time, there would be a saving over that shown by the NEWS. That is true; but the law provides for raising the sinking fund in the second ten years, and until there is shown some disposition to raise the money before then, the gentleman's statement is only an "if" at best, and the bonds will go the full period, as is commonly the case.

Further, our county friend suggests retraction or explanation of the one per cent robbery in the amount of interest. We think the statement good enough as it stands. The bonds bear five per cent while the State bonds carry four per cent interest. Mr.

Geddes goes off into a dissertation on the use of the word "gold" in the State and other bonds. That is not the point at all. The real point is that the county voluntarily offers five per cent for money when the State pays but four. The commissioners assumed what neither they nor the NEWS knew, and what we do not concede, that the money could not have been borrowed at four per cent. It was not tried, as it might have been with good effect.

One more point: The commissioners may make \$20,000 a year saving on cash purchases; but if it is done on the illustration of Mr. Geddes, that a three-year credit meant a loss of 35 per cent, besides the 8 per cent per year interest on warrants for that time, making 59 per cent in all, or nearly 20 per cent per year, then the showing for past business methods is decidedly more incompetent than we have supposed or than we believe it to be. We rather suspect that our critic's statements are those that need the "revision and explanation;" and we are not piqued over the matter at all. We only suggest that the gentleman allow some other passengers in the boat that carries those who have the welfare of the taxpayers at heart.

CONVENTION SCENES.

The fact that one-fifth of the delegates to the Democratic national convention in Chicago failed to vote in the ballot for presidential candidate is ominous of a serious division in the party ranks. These men did not "bolt," and thereby avoided the dramatic features which attend such action; but by refraining from taking part in the proceedings they reduce the convention's working force just that much. When the silver men "bolted" at St. Louis they gave the convention opportunity to fill their places; but at Chicago this is not done. The delegates who will not vote neither take part in the proceedings nor allow others to do so, hence the convention went ahead on a four-fifths basis. On the first ballot the non-voting delegates numbered 185, and if the rule of two-thirds of the votes cast should be applied so as to make that number sufficient to nominate, then the successful candidate would require only 497 votes instead of 620, which would be two-thirds of the whole convention. Should the number of those who refrain from voting be raised to 231, then by the rule named less than a majority of the whole convention could select the candidate.

This hold-back action of one-fifth of the convention easily may turn a more serious defection from the party's nominees and platform than did that of the "bolters" at St. Louis. The Democratic delegates who refuse to vote are still full-fledged members of their party and maintain all the influence which that fact can bear in their respective localities. This feature will add to the formidable character of any organized

opposition they may present in the campaign; and if the threat now held forth, of issuing a manifesto and calling a new convention, be carried out, it will present a complication not at all conducive to the party's success. That such a procedure will be followed, however, is far from a certainty, notwithstanding the strong feelings which the "sound money" men display. There is still a possibility that they will not take such radical action, though this possibility is rendered slight by the selection of William J. Bryan.

The scenes at the convention Thursday afternoon truly were of a remarkable nature. In some particulars they displayed the anarchistic element as charged by Governor Flower of New York; but in such scenes of excitement even the display is not to be taken as indicative of any such real spirit in deliberative action as the New Yorker seems to fear. No wonder, though, that when Mr. Bryan electrified the convention with his eloquence, old political generals were stupefied. He struck a popular chord and it was the first good opportunity given for an outburst of that feeling on the momentous question that had been welling up in the hearts of the silver delegates for months. Incapable as the English language is of conveying a full description of the scene at this time, that which is told displays a marvelous picture. It is stated that "cheers swelled to yells, yells became screams; every chair in the valley of the Coliseum and every chair in the vast wilderness on the hillside, became a rock on which frantic men and women were wildly waving handkerchiefs, canes, hats and umbrellas—anything movable; some, like men demented, divested themselves of their coats and flung them high in the air; delegates rushed upon the stage and shouldered the half-dazed orator and bore him in triumph down the aisle; louder and louder shrieked the thousands, until the volume of sound broke like a gigantic wave, and fell only to rise and break again. For almost ten minutes this maddened tumult continued."

With all the fierce excitement of such a scene, it is no wonder that the gold advocates felt themselves completely overwhelmed; nor is it any wonder that the leaders of the convention deemed it advisable to defer balloting until today. The excitement was too intense, the ferment too violent, for deliberative judgment, and postponement was the wiser course.

The proceedings today are of a quieter aspect in some respects, though there was not the slightest variance from the determination to select a silver candidate. The majority would not name one who has not that record. It has selected one of the most pronounced type in Hon. William J. Bryan of Nebraska—the first resident west of the Mississippi river to be nominated by one of the great parties for the presidency.

JUSTICES AND CONSTABLES.

Charles W. Carroll, writing from Orderville, Kane county, asks this question of the NEWS:

A justice of the peace or constable is elected and commissioned for two years,