

## LAND FRAUDS AND LAND GRABBERS

### The Republican Assaults on Commissioner Sparks for His Efforts to Head Them Off.

### The Commissioner Defended in Congress—A Lively Debate in the House.

The House went into committee of the whole on the sundry civil bill. The clause relative to the expenses of the collection of revenue from sales of public lands having been reached, Mr. Laird (Neb.) made a severe attack upon Commissioner Sparks in his administration of the General Land Office, and quoted from a number of letters written by homestead settlers in his district denouncing the Sparks orders and characterizing Sparks as a scourge worse than the grasshoppers.

Mr. Cobb is Chairman of the Committee on Public Lands and Mr. Payson a member of that committee, and having held the same official relation to the public land question in the Forty-eighth Congress, they were perfectly familiar with the laws and the facts that have been developed in regard to the dishonest acquisition of millions of acres by cattle syndicates and other associations and individuals. Mr. Cobb sat down very hard upon the young Nebraska Congressman, Mr. Laird, who had on this and a previous occasion howled himself hoarse in overzealous attacks upon the Commissioner of the General Land Office and vehement denials that frauds existed to any great extent in his district. Mr. Cobb produced and read a copy of a report taken from the files of the Interior Department, from a Republican special agent of the land office, showing the intimate relations of Mr. Laird himself with certain land-sharks who had fraudulently obtained possession of a river front and many thousands of acres of continuous public lands. Very naturally, Mr. Laird became excited on account of the unexpected exposure of the cause of his extraordinary interest in the efforts of Mr. Sparks to check the land robbers, and there was an excited passage of words between Mr. Cobb and Mr. Laird, which the latter was glad to drop at the first opportunity. With an awkwardly assumed air of innocence, and with the official sworn evidence before his face, he denied its truth and declared that the special agent's report had been traversed by an agent subsequently sent out to investigate the matter. It appeared, however, a little later in the debate that the witness upon whom he relied for his exculpation was an agent selected by Mr. Laird himself, and appointed at his solicitation. Mr. Payson, though a staunch Republican, was not willing to permit the question of preserving the lands against fraudulent acquisition to be treated as a party question. He frankly affirmed his confidence in the integrity of the intentions of Commissioner Sparks, and heartily approved of the order temporarily suspending the issuance of patents pending an investigation of allegations of frauds in the entries. He stated that, as a member of the Public Lands Committee, he had been consulted prior to the issuing of the order, and had expressed himself earnestly in favor of it. He only regretted that Secretary Lamar had not sufficient backbone to stand by the order, which had the approval of President Cleveland and Mr. Lamar before it was promulgated and was not only demanded by the interests of the Government and of the people who really desire homes upon the public domain, but was also authorized by the law and a long line of precedents. Mr. Payson spoke with great earnestness, and so clearly presented the facts and the law in controversy that he was loudly applauded by Representatives on both sides of the chamber. Incidentally, Mr. Payson recalled the fact that certain men who had thrown obstacles in the way of the consideration of a bill in the last Congress to prevent the unlawful seizure and fencing of thousands of acres of public lands were now found here opposing the efforts of Commissioner Sparks to stop the patenting of lands obtained by evasions or actual violations of the law. There was no doubt as to who were the persons referred to by Mr. Payson, although he did not mention names and designated no one until persistent challenges from the opposition obliged him to name Mr. Peters. Mr. Peters denied that he had voted against the passage of Mr. Payson's bill to prevent the unlawful inclosure of the public domain. "Let us be exact," said Mr. Payson. "I did not say the gentleman voted against the bill. I said that he had obstructed the consideration of the bill. Does the gentleman wish me to be more particular?" Mr. Peters said he did. "The gentleman from Kansas will remember," said Mr. Payson, with deliberation, "that on three occasions I arranged with the Speaker to be recognized to ask unanimous consent for the consideration of that bill, and that on two of these occasions the gentleman from Kansas said he would object, and did object." The record shows that Peters did twice, by his objection, prevent the consideration of the bill to prevent cattle companies from shutting settlers out of the public domain by barbed-wire fences, but on the passage of the bill he weakened and voted for it. When Mr. Payson pilloried him before the whole House, the only thing Peters could say was that he did not remember objecting. Two of the tracts of land, embracing thousands of acres, that were unlawfully inclosed with barbed wire by cattle syndicates were in Mr. Peters' district. Mr. Weaver, of Iowa, clipped the wings of Mr. Perkins, another of the gentlemen who were most active in decrying Commissioner Sparks, and trying to strike out of the sundry civil bill the appropriation of \$90,000 "for the protection of the public lands from illegal and fraudulent entry or appropriation." Mr. Weaver read a little advertisement of a "land and loan company" in Kansas, of which Mr. Perkins is advertised as the President. Mr. Weaver's pertinent comment on the situation was that the outcry against Gen. Sparks came from the cattle syndicates, the loan agents, and the land speculators. Mr. Weaver said:

Mr. Chairman, it is a strange position that is occupied by those who are assailing the Commissioner of the General Land Office. It must be remembered that the testimony upon which that officer has proceeded is all drawn from Republican sources. His action is based upon the investigations and the testimony of Republican officials who had been for years in the public service, and were perfectly familiar with the dishonest raids that were being made upon every part

of the public domain. The reports of these officials are on file.

Take, for example, the report of Mr. A. R. Green, late a Republican State Senator in Kansas, and at this very time, I believe, a Republican editor, and a man in good standing in his party in the district of the gentleman who has just taken his seat (Mr. Perkins). Let me read some things that Mr. Green says about these frauds:

"The hopelessness of the attempt was apparent to every one who was familiar with the soil and climate of the region proposed to be reclaimed at the outset, but the opportunity for getting a quarter-section of land for a trifle induces men to go through the merest form of compliance with the law and make up the rest by perjury. I hesitate to make the statement that in a large proportion of cases no pretense of complying with the law has been made, but I believe such to be the case. I have traveled over hundreds of miles of land in Western Kansas, Nebraska, and Central Dakota, nearly one-fourth of which had been taken under the 'timber-culture' act, without seeing an artificial grove even in incipient, and can scarcely recall an instance in any one day's travel where the ground had been more than scratched with the plow for the purpose of planting trees."

"I have seen small patches of land (possibly five acres) where the prairie sod had been 'listed' in furrows six or eight feet apart each way, and occasionally a sickly cottonwood-sprout, two or three feet in height, of the thickness of a man's thumb, standing thereon. In other cases the land had evidently been honestly plowed at some time, but through neglect had grown up again to grass, and the trees (?) were holding up their tiny cattle-browsed, fire-burnt branches in mute protest against the farcical absurdity of the 'timber-culture' act."

"As to the proportion of land entered under the timber-culture act that is not improved as required by that act, I give it as my opinion that in Kansas, Nebraska, and Dakota the proportion is 90 per cent. to 10 per cent. of bona fide and possibly successful cultivation."

"A more vicious system of fraudulent entries has been successfully practiced by and in the interest of cattle-men and stock corporations. If the law had been enacted for their benefit it could scarcely have been more successful."

"I have been told that entrymen engaged in this character of frauds seldom make a pretense of plowing or planting trees, or complying in any particular with the law. My own observation confirms this statement, and I believe it to be true. This is largely the case in Colorado, Dakota, Montana, Nebraska, and New Mexico, where immense stock ranches have been established and all the valuable grass land and water has been secured. This system also obtains to no inconsiderable extent in Kansas, I believe."

"The method is simple, effective, and infamous."

Thus I might go on for a score of pages in this report, but I will not further trespass upon the time of the House by reading.

The gentleman from Kansas (Mr. Perkins) is not ignorant of the fact, and ought not to be unmindful of the fact that large numbers of fraudulent entries have taken place within his own district, and that those transactions are notorious throughout the entire State of Kansas. Now, I have said, and I believe it to be true, that the objections to the policy of the Land Office come, as a rule, from the cattle syndicates, the loan agents, and the land speculators. I protest against a land policy which enables the speculators to get hold of the virgin lands of the West to the exclusion of the poor settler who seeks to secure a home.

Mr. Holman and Mr. Plumb, of Illinois, re-enforced the arguments already presented by Messrs. Payson and Cobb. Mr. Plumb described the methods of the land-grabbers, and Mr. Holman commended Commissioner Sparks in the name of every laboring man and every homeless man in the United States.

### NO EVASION OF THE LAW.

Chairman Oberly Promulgates Some New and Stringent Regulations.

Chairman Oberly, of the Civil-Service Commission, has furnished a copy of new and important regulations, which have been formulated and adopted by the commission to govern local boards of examiners for the classified postal and custom service. The main feature of these new rules is that local boards are prohibited from furnishing to the appointing or recommending official a list of eligibles, as is alleged to have been done by Mr. Eaton in the Baltimore postoffice case, resulting in securing a solid Democratic force of clerks to succeed the dismissed Republicans.

The new rule says the secretary shall keep the registers of persons eligible for appointment, and shall not permit the appointing or nominating officer or any other person to have possession of them or of a copy, nor shall he allow them to be inspected by any person other than a member of the board. The new regulations also provide that local boards shall give to applicants at least eight days' notice of the time and place of examination.

These iron-clad rules were drafted mainly by Col. Oberly. It cannot now be said that he and his Democratic colleague, Mr. Edgerton, are not moved by the spirit as well as the letter of the Pendleton law. These good Democratic partisans are determined that there shall be no evasion of the civil-service law either in its text or its spirit.

### Logan on the Payne Case.

Among the cards carried to the Senator's room was one from a reporter of the *Globe-Democrat*. "Show him up," was the quick response. After a few introductory words the reporter referred to the attacks being made upon the Senator for his vote on the Payne case in the Election Committee, especially the attacks of the Cincinnati *Commercial-Gazette*. The committee consists of nine Senators. The charge against Payne was the use of money in his election as Senator from Ohio two years ago or more. By a vote of 7 to 2 the Election Committee recently decided that there was not sufficient ground upon which to order an investigation by the Senate. Three Republicans—Messrs. Teller, Evans, and Logan—voted with four Democrats against further investigation.

Senator Logan said the newspaper attacks upon him in this case arose from a misapprehension of the facts. The case had not been investigated in a legal way; the Senators had to decide as lawyers. The question before the Election Committee was not whether money had or had not been used at Columbus, Ohio, but whether it had or

had not been used to corrupt members of the Ohio Legislature in their votes for Senator. It appeared in evidence that money was used in a caucus at which a Senatorial nomination was made, but it did not appear that a dollar was used in the Senatorial election itself. "The Senate," said Gen. Logan, "can not investigate the proceedings of a caucus, and nothing but caucus proceedings were offered in evidence. There was no proof of bribery in either house of the Legislature, after the caucus had nominated Mr. Payne. We stood upon that ground, and made our majority report upon that ground."

Continuing with some warmth, General Logan said: "Why, if they want to investigate the use of money outside of a hall to influence a nomination, I can show that Grant was beaten in Chicago in 1880 by the use of money. Yes, sir,"—growing still warmer, and pointing to a visitor from Central Illinois—"a delegate from your district got \$160 for violating his instructions to vote for Grant. It was a cheap sell-out, but I know all about it." "So do I," said the gentleman who was pointed at. "The fellow took the money and voted against Grant, but he's been a dead man, politically, ever since."—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*.

### The Senate and Subsidies.

The Senate, with its Republican majority, still continues by long odds to lead the House in the present Congressional treasury raids. By a vote of 23 to 12 it has saddled on the postoffice appropriation bill the \$800,000 steamship-subsidy clause which was overwhelmingly defeated in the House.

The best speech on the treasury-plunder side of this measure was made by Senator Hale, of Maine. His contention is that originally created by Mr. Blaine, of the same State, which is that the American had become an overproducing people, and if they had a fair field and a fair opportunity they could obtain the trade of Central and South America, and could furnish products as cheaply as Great Britain, France, and Germany.

Curiously, however, Senator Hale fails to see that if we could furnish products as cheaply as these European countries the fact would prove to a dead certainty that we needed no tariff as against their products.

If, on the other hand, Senator Hale wants subsidies to build and run ocean steamships, his object, if attained, would secure cheaper transport for both imports and exports, which would, of course, act directly against the protective principle of the tariff.

The real fact in the case, however, is that the protective tariff, not the absence of subsidies, impedes any trade of ours with Central and South America. To engage in that trade on equal terms with Great Britain, France, and Germany, we must sell as cheaply as they do. If we do not, no subsidy would benefit us, for what we might gain by subsidies to South American steamships we would lose by subsidies to European steamships.

Senator Hale says that Great Britain expends large sums of money in steamship subsidies. But, were this true, which it is not, the fact that Great Britain in this doing is working in the line of her free-trade policy, while we in so doing would be working in opposition to our protective policy, would entirely vitiate the Senator's parallel.—*Chicago News*.

### Stand Up and Be Counted.

Enough Democrats have violated their political pledges to give control of this House of Representatives to the Republicans. Though nominally in a majority, the Democrats are no more able to pass a Democratic tariff bill than was Gladstone able to pass his Irish bill through a Liberal Parliament. It is a pity Mr. Morrison can not dissolve the House, and, like Mr. Gladstone, appeal to the people.

The people of America want tariff reform, radical and thorough, and they mean to have it; a revenue which will give us a tariff for revenue only—that is, a free list which includes wool, ores, coal, lumber, salt and all that these items imply, with a corresponding reduction on manufactured articles into which these enter.

A little handful of so-called Democrats have united with the Republicans, and, to all intents and purposes, have abandoned their party. Now let them look to the Republicans for re-election, every one of them. They are entitled to nothing from Democratic voters. It would be a gain to the Democratic party to have every one of these men defeated, even though it were done by a Republican. They should be remembered this fall, and left to their fate. Every district should be contested by a true revenue-reform Democrat. There is no sense in any other policy. If such insubordination is to be tolerated the party will go to pieces.

These recreants come almost entirely from Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Ohio. Beyond the borders of these States the Democrats are almost a unit for reform. Now let the war be carried into these districts. Wherever one of these men is nominated revenue reformers should nominate a genuine, true-blue Democrat, and if they cannot elect him they can, at least, stand up to be counted.—*Louisville Courier-Journal*.

### Awkward for Mr. Blaine.

We do not believe Mr. Cleveland seeks a renomination. If it is "forced on him," the position would not be in the least awkward either for Mr. Cleveland, nor for the *Courier-Journal*, although it might prove extremely awkward for Mr. Blaine.—*Louisville Courier-Journal*.

THE republication of the late Secretary Stanton's opinions of himself as expressed in private letters to friends during the war is simply a Republican effort to get political discussion back twenty years. There is no need of discussing Stanton's grave errors. General Sherman and General Grant have done that for all time; Grant going so far as to say in his Memoirs that Stanton was a coward, and that "if he had been at the front the enemy would have been in no danger." Mr. Stanton's great executive ability, his reckless disregard of all obstacles, legal or otherwise, in carrying out his policy, undoubtedly had their value in the conduct of a great war. But it did also serious harm. To say nothing of McClellan, both Sherman and Grant suffered severely from his trying to "run the whole thing." As a Secretary he was in many respects the right man in the right place, but as a general commanding and an overbearing critic and destroyer of those who disagreed with him he cost the country and the Union cause a great deal more than it needed to pay. Grant's testimony on this point is too ample to allow of controversy.—*Detroit Free Press*.

## A REMARKABLE ORDER.

### The Brotherhood of Railway Postal Clerks—How It Was Made Up.

### The Order Practically Ruled by a "Grievance Committee"—How It Was Broken Up.

[Chicago telegram.]

The secret constitution and work of the Brotherhood of Railway Postal Clerks show it to be in many respects a most remarkable organization. From the first page to the last there are traces of a vast scheme of boycotting the Government. The brotherhood seems formed solely to find a place for a Grievance Committee, which, so far as the Government is concerned, becomes the brotherhood, and has full and arbitrary power to speak and act for every clerk on its rolls.

The objects of the order are stated to be for "mutual aid and protection, and for a more perfect union, that we as a body may be the better enabled to resist encroachments made upon our rights as citizens and our manhood as officials by indiscriminate removals from office of any of our members without sufficient cause and upon charges filed and fairly and fully investigated, and that we may also be the better enabled to administer to the wants and necessities of sick and indigent brothers, and in other respects to cultivate a more fraternal feeling among our members."

The first annual meeting of the Grand Lodge is fixed at Indianapolis, July 13, and its composition is entered upon in painful details. But its presiding officer, known as the Grand Chief Clerk, is shorn of all executive functions, which all appear lodged in the Grievance Committee. There is a per capita tax of \$1 upon all members of the brotherhood, which, together with the usual fees for lodge charters and the sale of rituals, will bring in a fair income if the membership is reasonably large.

The by-laws define the regulations of membership, and state that no person shall be admitted to membership in this brotherhood whose reputation for honesty, sobriety, and industry can be seriously assailed, and all applicants must be recommended by two members of the lodge as in every way worthy of membership. The initiation fee is \$2. It is provided that a member who shall die in the service, or who shall be discharged from his position for alleged causes upon which there has been no conviction, shall be entitled to a sum from the benevolent fund of the Grand Lodge equal to an amount to be raised by an assessment of \$1 each upon all the members of the brotherhood, said amount to be paid to his widow or heirs (if a married man) or if an unmarried man the same may be disposed of by will or be paid to those dependent on him for support.

The following language is used:

"To all the by-laws, rules and regulations we bind ourselves by the most solemn pledges of honor, uniting ourselves in the fraternal bands of brotherly love. We pledge to each other our lives, our honor, and our lasting fidelity and fealty, admonishing our brethren to be true to the principles that characterize true manhood. Continue to give the work your most faithful and honest efforts, and this important branch of the Government service, which your skill and genius aided so largely in consummating, will go down the ages as an imperishable monument to your memories."

The officers of the lodge are rather peculiarly named. They are the Chief Clerk, the Second Clerk, the Third Clerk, the Transfer Clerk, and the Short Stop. The Chief Clerk is the presiding officer, the Second Clerk is the secretary, the Third Clerk is the treasurer, the Transfer Clerk is a sort of general utility man, while the Short Stop is supposed to stop interlopers at the door. The power of the presiding officer, following the lead of smaller societies, is practically unlimited between the meetings of the lodge, and he can do about as he pleases.

To become a member it is necessary to have received a permanent appointment as a postal clerk, a commission from the Postmaster General being evidence of that fact, and also to be in active service at the time of application. The usual procedure is carried out in the way of initiation until the candidate has taken the oath, then he, "by further attesting his allegiance, will surrender to the lodge, through the Chief Clerk, his resignation as a postal clerk, which will be placed in the hands of the Grievance Committee, to be used by said committee under the orders of the lodge only in case of extreme emergency and in concert and conjunction with all the members of the same."

This Grievance Committee, while it is but one of the three standing committees in the lodge, thus becomes the most important one of the lot, being closely modeled after the Executive Boards of the Knights of Labor. Their duty, as laid down in the constitution, is to take charge of all matters relating to the official relations of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks with the Postmaster General and other officials in the Railway Mail Service; and when in the opinion of the committee an exigency shall exist for the exercise of arbitrary action they shall at once take the necessary steps to prosecute any plan or scheme that may, in their judgment, be the means of consummating a desired object. They shall not, however, resort to extreme measures until an amicable adjustment of all difficulties may be deemed impracticable, and without the knowledge or consent of the lodge.

This goes further than any trades union ever thought of going, and makes one committee, armed with the resignations from the service of every member of the lodge, the autocrat of its affairs. It is, perhaps, as dangerous an arrangement for the clerks under any regime as can well be imagined. The whole scheme of the brotherhood seems built up around the central idea of this irresponsible Grievance Committee.

The leaders who contrived the machinery of the brotherhood were solely planning a huge strike to coerce the Postmaster General into the agreement, for it seems scarcely possible that a body of men who intended founding a permanent society would have placed such unlimited power in the hands of one committee and effectually gagged a minority by holding over the heads of its members their forced resignations ready to be turned over to the Postoffice Department the moment the committee determined to strike. The entire plan shows the hands of good organizers and bears the marks of months of study, which it doubtless received.

## INDIANA STATE NEWS.

—The people of Decatur are indulging in a great deal of speculation as to the cause of the rise of water in the St. Mary's, on whose banks that city is located. Heretofore in the summer months the river could be waded at any point. About two weeks ago the water in the river rose fully three feet. Upon investigation it was found that at the time, and for a week before, there had been no rains along the entire river and its tributaries. The water is as clear as crystal, and very cold, something never known of this river before by the oldest citizens. Many contend that from some inexplicable cause large springs have opened up in the bed of the stream. This theory is plausible, and is sustained in the fact that in boring a hole a few feet in the river-bed, six miles east of the city, a stream of water fully three inches in diameter, forced its way out. A pipe was put in, and the water poured out at the top of the pipe, which was four feet above the surface. If the present state of water and temperature continues the St. Mary's will be stocked with brook trout by local fishermen.

—The annual reunion and military encampment of the Tri-State Veterans' and Military Association, of the States of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan, will be held at Fort Wayne, from August 19 to 23, inclusive. Tents and rations will be furnished all veterans and militia who join the Association. The Governor of Indiana is President, and the Governors of Ohio and Michigan are Vice Presidents of the Association. It is expected that this reunion will be the grandest military display witnessed since the surrender at Appomattox and grand review at Washington in 1865.

—Thomas Luck and Leonidas Bryson, convicts who were confined in the Southern Prison, the former to serve fifteen years for being implicated with Jack Groark in the murder of an old man in New Albany two years ago, and the latter to serve a term of nineteen years for the murder of his brother-in-law at Greensburg, Decatur County, have been paroled by the Governor.

—A young lady of about 18, who lived in Johnson County, near Bengal, took what she supposed was a dose of quinine. Shortly after she was seized with convulsions, and died in agony within an hour and a half. The symptoms were those of strychnine poisoning. No post-mortem was held. She was a lady of excellent standing.

—R. J. Weith, of Elkhart, some time ago secured 5,000 silkworm eggs from the Government. Nearly all of the eggs have hatched out, and some of the worms have commenced to spin their cocoons. They are attracting a great deal of attention from the fact that it is one of the first attempts to introduce silk-culture into that part of the State.

—One of the oldest residents and wealthiest men in Clark County died at his home in Owen Township recently, very suddenly. He was about 75 years of age, and had resided in the county since his boyhood. His wealth is estimated at \$250,000, part of which consists of 2,200 acres of land, on which he paid annually \$900 taxes.

—The proposed regatta at Lake Maxinkuckee is off. The oarsmen, Hanlon, Lee, Gaudaur, and others wanted too much guarantee. A subscription of nearly \$1,000 had been secured, but this would not be half enough to satisfy the party of oarsmen now traveling about the country.

—A 5-year-old boy was found with his head between two palings, dead, a short time since, at his home near Otisco, Clark County. He wandered from the house, and the general supposition is that he went to climb over the fence, when his foot slipped and he fell between the palings and broke his neck.

—The identity of the wild animal that has caused so much alarm in a neighborhood immediately northwest of Washington for some time past has been established. The animal is a large specimen of the North American tiger oreatamount. Two hunters obtained a shot at the animal, but failed to kill it.

—A 9-year-old boy, living near Wheatland, met with a peculiar accident that caused his death. He was taking a borrowed pitchfork home, and was pushing it before him on the ground, when the tines caught in a stump, causing the handle to strike him in the abdomen, and rupturing the bladder.

—The boiler in the tile factory milonee south of Veedersburg, burst recently. The engineer and one other man were seriously injured. The cause of the explosion was a defective flue. The main portion of the boiler was found 150 rods away, and the factory was badly wrecked.

—A colored lad 12 years of age, and supposed to be a bootblack from Indianapolis, fell in company with several other boys at Edinburg, and went to the river, where they got him drunk. Returning to town, he was badly beaten by some unknown person, and left in a critical condition.

—A barn near Sullivan was burned recently. The fire is supposed to have been caused by the spontaneous combustion of new hay. Five horses were burned to death, three of which belonged to a neighbor. The total loss is \$2,500; insured for \$1,000.

—There is an epidemic of horse-stealing through the counties of Northern Indiana and Southern Michigan. Livery men are the worst sufferers.

—A game-protection society has been formed at Cedar Lake with a view of putting a stop to the illegal killing of fish and prairie chickens.