

NEWSPAPERS AND PARTY POLITICS.

SOME POINTED REMARKS BY A NEBRASKA EDITOR
AS TO WHAT HE WOULD DO.

IN THREE provinces at least—Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba—the elections are either close at hand, or the campaign is more or less warm. These remarks, therefore, by J. B. Haynes, in *The Nebraska Editor*, intended for Western States application, have some interest for us in Canada. Mr. Haynes says:

"If I owned one of four newspapers in a town scarcely big enough for two, I would do my best to bring about a consolidation and reduce the number by two. I would go to the managers of all political parties and say to them that during every campaign reasonable space in the columns of the consolidated paper would be placed at the disposal of the chairman of the county and city central committees; that they could insert political announcements, statements of fact, or arguments within the space allotted, on condition that the author must in every case sign his full name to articles published. Thus I would treat all parties alike, confining each to a given amount of space, and reserving the right to exclude any statement which under the law might be construed as libellous.

"My censorship would be limited to the question of libel, and this question I would be willing to submit to the arbitration of attorneys selected by the chairman using my columns. If the attorney for the committeeman who had handed in copy for the space set apart for his party, which I, as owner of the paper, thought to be libellous, would call in other attorneys representing other parties whose chairmen were also using my columns, and they, or a majority of them, would give me a written opinion that the article in question was not libellous, I would withdraw my objections. In this way an open forum could be instituted, affording a free and fair field for the discussion of all local measures and candidates. After the arguments and facts had all been presented to the voters by the several committeemen, I would, a week or two prior to the election, sum it all up and, in my editorial columns, pass judgment upon it, which, by the way, would be non-partisan and would be in the nature of a judge's charge to a jury, and might or might not have any influence upon the jury in returning a popular verdict.

"After this fashion I would try to demonstrate the utter uselessness of a starving party organ in every county seat, and put business principles into practice in the conduct of my newspaper. If the venture proved a success I would soon number among my readers adherents of all parties, and any merchant could advertise in my columns without fear of giving offence. I would treat candidates impartially.

"A brief biographical sketch of each would be printed at regular advertising rates—say, 10c. per line. This sketch would state who and what the candidate is, free from eulogy or commendation. It would be simply a matter of business. The candidate might be unknown to the community at large, and it ought to be worth money to him in a campaign to be able, through my medium, to tell the people who and what he is.

"As it is now, every nominee of a party convention feels at liberty to ask of the editor of the party organ a free puff, and if he does not get it, is offended. There is no good reason under the sun why he should be given any notice he is not willing to

pay for. The days of a newspaper as a party hack are numbered. This applies with equal force to announcements of political meetings and to the ante-convention announcements of candidates. I like the custom which has long prevailed in southern newspaper offices. Prior to a party convention, John Smith enters the newspaper office and hands in an advertisement reading something like this:

"John Smith begs to announce his candidacy for the office of sheriff, subject to the action of the Democratic county convention."

"This notice is kept standing for weeks and is paid for at regular advertising rates. It is high time the Nebraska press adopt the practice.

"Another word about the newspaper as a party hack. At the outset of a local campaign the central committee calls a meeting and the party organ is expected to publish the call free. Numerous public meetings follow, all of which must be announced free, and then comes the call for the party convention. The candidates are named and the fight is on. Every night meetings are held. Candidates are assessed to the limit to pay the expenses of the campaign. Any worthless leg puller can touch the aspiring candidate. The owner of the hall must be paid, the speakers must be secured and paid, the liveryman is worth his hire, the party hustler must be quieted, but the party organ is expected to contribute time and space without money and without price. Every editor in Nebraska knows this to be true, yet no man can give a sound reason why it should be so. Certainly it is not due from a sense of duty to party."

This commercial view will startle some Canadians. The duty of a newspaper compels it to devote a good deal of space to a political campaign. It does this as a matter of news. In supporting the principles of a party it does not want to appear sordid and disobliging in leaving out small items, regarding meetings, etc. In this way the politicians deadhead a lot of stuff that ought to go in at card rates. What is the remedy? I have no suggestion to make, for none occurs to me.

Perhaps, one method that may tend to let the politicians realize that while a paper supports the same political policy they do and is anxious for the triumph of that policy it is not the mere slave of the party, is to distinguish news from politics. This can be done by reporting both sides fairly. The *Toronto Globe* is conspicuous for that course, and there is no evidence that it loses anything by it. After a time the press will begin to take the politicians less seriously than they do themselves. Then the advertising department will get a chance.

NEW COLORS IN BRISTOL BOARD.

A new range of colors is being shown in the well-known Burnside Bristol board. The price of this board in both white and colors has been reduced, and the firm who control it, Buntin, Gillies & Co., Hamilton, expect to increase their already large trade in the line.

INKS.

When in need of inks, be sure and order the celebrated Ault & Wiborg inks. They are kept in stock by all the branches of the *Toronto Type Foundry*. The inks are all fresh, and the prices are low considering the quality.