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WARDWELL & THOMPSON.

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A CENTRAL BANK

This writer does not profess to know much of anything about the banking and currency questions or other matters pertaining to general finance. Hence we are not trying to solve the problems that are troubling the financiers and which they are far more able to remedy than ourselves. But when we see the benefits of or local banking systems, by which the local bank is made the clearing house for local business, it seems to us that a similar system between and for the banks of the country at large, ought to be beneficial.

In local matters the business man who gets any cash, straightway deposits it in his local bank. From these deposits he pays his bills by check. Thus thousands of dollars of business is done with but a few hundreds of actual cash. We suppose that right here in Pembina that for every dollar of cash that changes hands, that there are ten dollars of checks issued. Then this system always leaves a large amount of cash on deposit in the bank. This money is made up of large and small amounts which if not so deposited would lie idle in the safes of the owners. Always in business there are times when the business man needs to borrow money. If he had to hunt up private owners of money he would have trouble in finding it in the first place, in sufficient quantity, and if he found it, the owner might not care to go into a loaning business for many reasons. But when the bank has the money it can loan it as it is in the business of loaning. Thus the various deposits of the many, become of use to those who need the money.

It appears to us that these general principles ought to be applicable to the banks themselves. Like individuals there are times when banks have more money than they need and loan to other banks, and other times when they can borrow money to lend to their customers again to the advantage of all concerned. In fact this system is really in common use now, but it is like the individual hunting another individual from whom to borrow. When our crops in the west are threshed and all put on the market within a few months, it takes millions of dollars to pay the farmers and then the western banks have calls for much money. They in turn borrow or draw from the eastern banks for this extra supply. During the late unpleasantness in banking circles the eastern banks refused to send cash west, either on draft for actual amounts due western banks or to loan them cash. Hence for some weeks there was no money to buy wheat. But this closing down of cash payments was the result of the scare, and a scare without any reason that could be discovered. Now if there had been some great central bank, which held deposits from practically all other banks, and backed by the government

as security there wouldn't have been any scare, and any shortage of cash in any direction whether caused by a run on an eastern bank by frightened depositors, or a drain on western banks for money to buy wheat, as both demands could be cared for at once by the great central bank.

Over in Canada the banking system has come to about this idea. There are but few banks in the whole Dominion, but these have branches in every town in the country.

Like anything else, such a central bank would be an immense power, and this power might be abused if improper persons were managing it. But the Bank of England, which is the great financial balance wheel of the British Empire if not of the whole of Europe, has existed many years without a scandal and is as much a part of the government as the King.

HOW MURDER IS PUNISHED

In this state where persons accused of murder are tried before a jury, if the accused is found guilty, the jury must fix the degree of the crime and also fix and determine the punishment. If in the first degree, the punishment must be death or imprisonment for life; if in the second degree, then imprisonment for not less than ten or more than thirty years.

In cases where the accused pleads guilty to the judge, the law reads as follows:—
"Whenever any person prosecuted for murder or manslaughter pleads guilty, he shall in his plea designate whether he is guilty of murder in the first degree or in the second degree, or of manslaughter in the first degree, or in the second degree, and the court shall, if said plea is accepted, determine the punishment to be inflicted, within the limits of the law. But the court may in its discretion, examine witnesses to aid in the determination of the punishment to be inflicted or submit the same to a jury to determine the punishment, or at its discretion, may refuse to receive a plea of guilty and submit the whole case to a jury."

TOO MUCH GOLD

Probably not many of our readers have taken notice, but the statistics prove that there is getting to be an over supply of gold. Back in the first Bryan campaign there was a little book printed that had a great circulation, and considerable political influence, called "Coin," that proved conclusively that the supply of gold was so limited that just a few of the billionaires of the world could corner the same, and showed by diagrams that all the gold in the world wouldn't more than fill these few men's trouser pockets.

But now the census figures show the production of gold is increasing largely each year. The latest figures being for 1900, 262 millions, while in 1907 it is estimated at 425 millions. A great part of this increase is not from new "diggings" or mines, but from the improved processes so that where it used to cost \$14 a ton to extract gold it can now be done for \$2 a ton. The high prices of the present time are to some extent the result of this flux of gold. The earth is full of cheap gold which can be made available if the processes of getting it don't cost too much.

Maybe in the near future we may have another metallic political campaign, only reversing the relative value of the two money metals.

A report was sent to one of the St. Paul dailies that the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen had engaged the services of Detective J. C. Fielding alias Crawford in the O'Brien case. This is not true, States Attorney Brynjolfson was solely responsible for his engagement and for several days no one else knew that the detective was at work. In the light of the developments it looks as though it was the best thing to have done, and it is quite possible that the county has been saved considerable expense. Mr. Fielding was the principal detective who ferreted out the murderers of the Dahl family near Bemidji.

All the old time editors of the state will feel a distinct loss in the death of Fred Falley, of the Wahpeton Times-Gazette, who died suddenly last week, in Minneapolis, while visiting friends. He was a very genial person to meet, and as an editor, was among the best in the state.

Thirteen steam radiators, different sizes, good as new, for sale cheap.

G. G. THOMPSON.

A good second hand Radiant Home heating stove, for coal or wood, for sale. Apply at this office.

MURDER WILL OUT

Jimmy O'Brien killed his chum Arthur LeClaire in cold blood.

Such was the inevitable conclusion of the circumstances surrounding the awful deed when the investigations were made. Not all of these are yet public, as much of the investigation has been made quietly under the supervision of a Pinkerton detective, but that which has been made known pointed directly to the boy who was last in the company of the victim. On Saturday O'Brien was arrested and brought to the county jail. On Sunday and Monday he was subjected to a close cross-questioning by the detective and states attorney Brynjolfson and at last broke down and acknowledged that he alone was guilty of the awful crime, and on Monday placed the confession in his own handwriting in the hands of the sheriff.

Personally he seems to have little comprehension of the horror of the deed and its probable consequences to himself and family. Only a few minutes after he had written out his confession in his own hand, he asked to have the "funny papers" of Sunday brought to him. As a part of the detective's work at Neche, he was asked and served as one of the pall-bearers for the dead man and though watched closely gave no sign. He was one of the first to go to the river when the news was noised about town, and when there offered to help chop out the ice to get the body. And he is only sixteen years of age. He seems, when measured by ordinary individuals, to be utterly depraved morally, and so much so that he must be naturally and morally deficient in his physical make-up. The crime itself as shown by the details was most clumsily conceived and carried out, so that escape from consequences was most impossible.

Of the details there is not much to add to our brief statements of last week. The German who was arrested practically provided an alibi, as he was sleeping in a livery stable at the time of the murder. The negro who was also held who had shown nervousness and haste the next morning and who had walked to Bathgate, could not otherwise be connected with the crime, and later it was thought that he had reason to be nervous and in a hurry to leave Neche because of his possession of a furlined overcoat that it is thought he had stolen at Gretna the day before.

Of the ten wounds found by the coroner's jury at the post mortem, any one of seven would have been fatal, three being very deep. The wounds were made by a lathing hatchet which was found on the river ice near the scene. It had thawed into the ice to such a degree that it proved that it was warm when thrown there and therefore had been carried on someone's person for some time. It was said that a similar hatchet had been found by young O'Brien some time before and that he had fitted a handle into it at the blacksmith shop, and that he had driven in a horseshoe nail to secure the handle, similar to that in the one found. A bloody neck-handkerchief was found in the bushes which was identified as belonging to the boy. The clothes worn by O'Brien that day were found in the woodshed of the residence and they had blood upon them. O'Brien was with the detective when these clothes were found. Still O'Brien went on the stand on Saturday before the coroner's jury for four hours and tried to show that he was innocent.

His parents believed him innocent until the confession was made and his father told him that he would defend him if he were innocent. When the boy was taken on the team from Neche he remarked that he wondered they didn't have the band out to see him off.

Feeling ran pretty high in Neche and when after so much evidence was produced that connected O'Brien with the crime, there was considerable criticism because he was not immediately put under arrest, and the explanation had to be made to some that he was practically under arrest all the time as he was being under strict watch, but that he had not been confined as the officials wanted to see if he would do anything to compromise himself.

The coroner's jury did not adjourn on Saturday as expected, owing mostly to the fact that the evidence which was being transcribed at Crookston for the signature of the witnesses was accidentally mailed to Langdon instead of Neche, and it took some time to get it back.

The written confession reads as follows:—
"To J. C. Crawford, Pinkerton Detective."

"On Sunday December 22nd, LeClaire and I went to Gretna twice, and drank each time. Coming back the second

time both of us were quarreling about who was the best man, and LeClaire said he could lick three O'Briens, and I got mad."

"When we left Cook's shops, I made an excuse to go out to the close and I got a hatchet, and we started for the rink."

"When we got down to the rink, he made some remarks about fighting me, and he put his foot behind me and threw me over. I got up and he hit me, and I hit him with a hatchet, and after I seen what I had done I hit him again, and took his pocket book and threw it in the river. After I realized what I had done I threw the money in the river."

"I got the hatchet from behind the house where the ice is kept."

"I threw the body over the bank and followed the body down the bank. I think I had hold of him by the collar, and dropped him right in at the head of the dam in the river."

JAMES O'BRIEN.

Witness:

J. H. ANDERSON
J. C. FIELDING
GEORGE ROADHOUSE

To the above he added a further statement that he made the confession of his own free will and just to tell the truth and that he was alone in the transaction, nobody being with him.

The father of the boy is one of the oldest pioneers of this county and one of the founders of the town of Neche, going there from this city. There is a very large family of children, their being thirteen in all. Except for this one black sheep the family is highly respectable and greatly esteemed by a very large circle of friends. Mr. O'Brien built the large hotel bearing his name in that town and ran it for many years as its landlord and is well known all over the state by travelling people. He is a customs officer at Neche. Personally, Mr. O'Brien is one of the most genial and good-hearted of men, and there is not a person who knows him but deeply sympathizes with him and the stricken family in this hour of bitterness. Perhaps the most pathetic incident in this tragedy was the visit of Mr. Fred LeClaire the father of the dead boy to Mr. O'Brien the father of the accused boy, to offer his sympathy—for the burden of the latter is far the greatest.

The victim, young LeClaire, is said to have been about 21 years of age and the report that he was 24 came from the fact that he had misrepresented his age in order to get on as fireman on the G.N. railway. He was a boy well liked by all who knew him. He was steady and sober, and probably drank more beer the day of his death than usual owing to the holiday season and that he was out for a good time while visiting old friends at home, but the testimony is that neither of the boys was visibly intoxicated. He was known to have about \$100 on his person on the day of the murder and only about \$3.50 in change was in his pocket when found, and the pocketbook in which he carried his money was also missing. Search is being made for the money as we write at Neche as O'Brien claims that he threw it in the river. The watch of the dead man, a railway watch "on time," was a speaking witness as to the time of the tragedy; it stopped at 11:19, while O'Brien claimed to have arrived at home just after 11 o'clock. The watch had been recently wound before it stopped and when started ran along all right and when placed in water ran seven minutes and again stopped. If no other evidence had been found it would have been hard for the defence to explain, if the case had come to a trial.

It is stated that a man and lady companions drove by about this time, on the road that passes the dam where the body was thrown into the water, and the horses were very much frightened; the driver looking in the darkness to discover the cause, is certain that he saw a human head appear above the bank and then disappear. If this true, it might account for the fact the murderer apparently left in so great haste and let the cap of the murdered man and the hatchet lie in plain view on the ice, and made a rush for his home.

Monday afternoon, deputy sheriff's Ardies and Strachan took O'Brien back to Neche for further examination.

While at Neche on Tuesday O'Brien yielded at last to the entreaties of his father and the persuasions of the officials and showed where he had hidden the money, which was on the plate of the barn between the rafters and covered there by some untraveled rope in front of it. This of course is directly contrary to the statement made by him in his written confession as to the disposal of the money. There was about \$70. The pocket-book according to O'Brien's story was burned by him. While at Neche O'Brien was again brought before the coroner's jury and

made a statement to them in which he acknowledged that he had committed the crime. The jury adjourned on Tuesday after giving a verdict of murder at the hands of O'Brien. O'Brien was returned to Pembina Tuesday evening and lodged in jail and thus began the New Year.

The negro who was arrested in connection with the murder but proved to be innocent, answers the description of a man wanted by the sheriff of Bottineau county and he was to come after him yesterday. If he does not prove to be the right man, he will be prosecuted here on the charge of bringing stolen goods into the country contrary to the customs laws. He is said to have worked for Mr. W. Douglas of this city several weeks during the summer.

Young O'Brien was taken before Justice Aylen in this city yesterday for preliminary examination on the charge of wilful murder. Conmy & Conmy ap-

peared as counsel for defence and the defence waived examination and the prisoner was returned to jail and held for trial at the district court. It is presumed that O'Brien will plead guilty as charged in the complaint at court next week before Judge Kneeshaw, and if so and no other important business appearing, there will be no jury call.

For Singer and Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machines call on G. G. Thompson, Pembina. See advertisement in another column. tf.

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