

Merchants pursue 'dead beats'

(Continued from page 1)

McGee, E.P. Adams, S.K. Rhorer, George Bollenbacher, J.M. Howe & Son, E.P. Cole, C. Robertson & Bro., D.T. Raley & Co., Cron & Roshbury, Jos S. Payne & Co., Ren C. Smith, Tobe Smith, W.J. Allen, C.P. Tourner & Co., Baker & Neeld, John W. Davis, Turner and Sudburry, Dunn & Co., and C.A. Mobley. In the same edition of the *Telephone* was a large advertisement sporting a huge headline — "Cash is King" and the text, "It Buys Goods Cheaper because it does away with all bad debts that the profits of Good Customers must make Whole." The firm was Collins & Karsell, sellers of "Glassware and Queensware of Every variety; Canned Goods, Pickles, Wood and Willowware. A new Line of Lamps, Best Flour, Best Teas, Coffees, Sugars, &c., &c." A search of subsequent issues of the *Telephone* did not turn up any lists of dead beats, but Collins & Karsell were not kidding.

MEANWHILE, THE Bloomington merchants were stung by a "stranger" who sold spaces for business cards and ads in his *Merchants Hotel Register*. The cost per merchant ranged from \$2 to \$5.

Having canvassed most of the merchants, the stranger thereafter skipped town, leaving behind him in

his hotel, the Orchard House, the book in which he had carefully printed business letterheads and cards. Chuckled the *Telephone*, "The book is now there for public inspection, and many, but not all, of the advertisements (?) in it were given by men who never advertise in the home newspapers. None of them 'squealed' after discovering the swindle, as they were, no doubt, heartily ashamed of having thus allowed themselves to be duped. The place where people expect to find advertisements of business and professional men is in their home papers. There an advertisement is legitimate, and has some weight; but when they are found in connection with any of these clap-trap advertising schemes they are looked upon with suspicion . . ."

BY THE END of May, one firm, at least, had made good their threat to go after dead beats. In connection with a case appearing in court there appeared in the May 24 edition of the *Telephone* a curious ad. It contained a list of all of the earthly goods of a Rev. John A. Bower as follows: 1 cook stove, \$15.00; 3 heating stoves, \$15; 1 heating stove, \$8; 1 beadstead — bedding, \$14; 1 carpet, \$12; 1 clock, \$10; 1 watch, \$5; Library, \$200; Garden utensils, \$3, and 3 bee hives, \$15, for a grand total of \$297.