

Poor farm jury stays split after 45 hours

The trial of William J. Semple opened in the middle of November of 1906. As superintendent of the Monroe County poor farm, he was being tried for cruel and inhuman treatment of the residents.

The charges had come as a result of a report by the grand jury after a routine visit. Arrayed on one side in the courtroom were Semple, his defense attorney, the Rev. T.J. Clark, representing the Charity Association and several witnesses



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

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from the neighborhood of the poor farm.

The prosecutor had subpoenaed several members of the grand jury,

as well as inmates, themselves. A curious facet of the case was included in the account of the trial in the Nov. 20 issue of the *Bloomington Telephone*. Commented the newspaper, "A rather curious coincidence and one peculiarly fitting in a case which has been so extensively used politically, is the fact that the jury is evenly divided politically — six Republicans and six Democrats."

The worst scenario for Semple was a fine which could range from

\$10 to \$100, and the jury had the power to remove the superintendent from his post. Those who were to decide were Edward Borland and John Jackson, Perry Township; Samuel Johnson, John Bays and Horace Blakely, City of Bloomington; William Jacobs and Homer Butcher of Salt Creek; Frank Sherlock, Clear Creek; Robert Isom, Van Buren; William Kinser, Polk; Ogle

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