

A prudent business man who has valuable books, heirlooms, accounts, papers, policies of insurance, records, and securities, provides fireproof, water-tight deposit boxes, safes or vaults for their preservation. He does this as a matter of course. Even householders, if they have any considerable number of like valuables and do not possess adequate facilities for their safe keeping on the home premises, rent safe deposit boxes from their banker or trust company. Common sense and common prudence alike call for similar precautionary measures by counties and municipalities in the preservation of their local archives. The people of the State at large, and the legislature in particular, have for years exhibited an increasing interest in the preservation of the State's archives and historical records, documentary and general. The public has peremptorily demanded and secured more facilities for insuring due protection and care thereof. It is high time that the people of our cities and towns realize that their local official records are in grave danger of irreparable loss both by sheer neglect and by fire, and preventive measures should be instituted immediately and vigorously.

FINE PRINTING IN IOWA.

There are few directions in which, during the past dozen years, more substantial progress has been made in Iowa than in that of fine book and general printing. There are several well known firms at the capital whose book and job printing has attained remarkable excellence. Our attention has been called to this subject more distinctly by learning that some of the large book sellers in eastern cities have come to Iowa for their best printing. In one instance one of our Iowa printers has manufactured a book which sells for \$20 a copy, for which he received the sum of \$10 for each one printed. Lately he informed us that he had ten books in hand which he was manufacturing for a distinguished firm in Cleveland.

These books were to be printed in limited editions and the contract required a high class of work in the points of printing, paper and binding. In another Iowa town a large number of splendid books are constantly in process of manufacture and appearing at frequent intervals. This should be a matter of great pride to our people who are interested in artistic work. The subject appeals to us more especially from the fact that most of the printing to which we refer is in the direction of historical publications. Of course, these books bear high prices and very justly, when the quality of the work and the limited number issued are considered. We always rejoice to see such books, and more especially when they bear the imprint of an Iowa publishing house. Again, in the direction of calendar printing, it has long been widely understood that some of the finest in the United States emanate from an enterprising Iowa town, where the establishment has grown, through the high quality of its work, to simply immense proportions. Its "traveling men" now visit every state in the Union. Some of the pamphlets issued by our county auditors are especially fine. The quality of general newspaper printing shows equal improvement. Some special editions that come to the Historical Department are not surpassed in the points of printing and illustration, aside from the fact they are precious epitomes of the history of their several localities. All this emphasizes the well known expression that, "In all that is good, Iowa affords the best." We need hardly add that it gives us great pleasure to place these twentieth century facts upon record.

THE BUILDING STONES OF IOWA.

It has been very much the custom heretofore whenever a public building has been erected to send out of the State for the principal part of the materials. In doing this our people have patronized the states of Indiana and Minnesota. As a

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