

The Alliance Herald

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State Sheriff Hyers is condemned by one faction in Scottsbluff and loudly praised by another. Let's be honest—Gus isn't the highest type of police officer, and the methods he uses are no better than the man. However, if he secures convictions, it is just as well to sanction a little rudeness to the offenders.

The Lincoln city commission has found a way to deal with money-grabbing public utility corporations. The gas company in that city has been attempting to hoist the rate 'way out of sight. After fighting for several years, the council suddenly changed its tactics. There was introduced an ordinance providing for the voting of \$500,000 bonds to erect a municipal gas plant. The citizens of Lincoln are thrilled at the prospect of getting even with an ancient enemy, and doing themselves a good turn at the same time. Some of these days, under some such conditions, municipal ownership will be given a fair trial, and then the state railway commission will have a whole lot less rate-making to do.

THE DANGER SIGNAL

Sometimes good ideas come from sources where they are least expected. Federal Judge F. C. Pollock of Kansas City permitted himself to be interviewed in Denver this week on the subject of nation-wide prohibition, and while his words are colored somewhat by his "wet" proclivities, there is an element of sound sense in what he has to say. Mr. Pollock argues that the prohibitory laws should be repealed, and the tendency to restrictive legislation curbed, else red revolution may be rampant in the United States. He is quoted as saying:

Repeal or revolution ultimately is inevitable. History proves it. Men cannot continue to make prohibitory laws and retain their liberty and their contentment of mind. The breaking point will come, sometime, and then the laws will be repealed, or there will be revolution.

A lot of persons have the idea that such a thing as revolution in America is impossible. I want to say that it can come, just as quickly, and just as terrifyingly, as it did in Russia, and oppressive laws will bring it.

Fifteen thousand laws are now passed annually. Ninety per cent of the persons convicted today are convicted under laws which did not exist ten years ago. Prohibitory legislation has become actually epidemic. The people are hedging themselves about with more and more liberty-destroying laws, and the inevitable result will be that some day they will awaken to what they have done, and either repeal such laws, while there is yet time, or—revolution.

The elimination of the public saloon is, in my opinion, heavily responsible for the present wave of crime. I do not uphold the saloon as it used to be conducted. But the properly conducted public saloon would be infinitely preferable to the system which produces the skulking bootlegger, the secret whisky distiller and the home brewer, all handling and dispensing a product which reeks with crime, disease and death.

Now, some of this is the sheerest sort of poppycock. It is doubtful, extremely doubtful, whether the elimination of the public saloon is really responsible for the present wave of crime. The majority of the men who are seeking to have the prohibitory laws amended are freely admitting that the public saloon, as formerly conducted, was a breeder of crime. Police court and other court records will show a big diminution in the number of arrests for all causes since it went into effect.

But Judge Pollock has sounded a timely warning as to restrictive legislation. Morality, like other things, can be compared to a swinging pendulum. So long as it describes the proper arc, all goes well, but let it swing too far in either direction and when it swings backward it will go too far in the other. The present wave of morality is likely to go too far. It is not wise to attempt to cure all the evils of the human race in one short year. People in general do not like too many laws. Especially do they dislike laws which regulate their conduct. By carrying the reform wave to too absurd lengths, the prohibition advocates, who have scored a notable victory, are placing themselves in danger of losing not only all they have gained, but much more.

SALARIED REFORMERS

From over the state come evidences that the fight of the present legislative session will be centered about the fifty-three welfare bills introduced for the children's code commission. The chief objection to this proposed legislation appears to be that it is designed to hedge the youth of the state with restrictions, the theory being that the best way to protect them is to remove temptation from their paths.

The men and women who seek to have this legislation adopted consist of three classes of citizens—the professional, or salaried, reformers, the amateur reformers who desire to get into the salaried class, and a number of citizens who have been influenced by them. The Herald editor recalls a number of the names from his university days. Lincoln has always been afflicted with a greater proportion of professional and amateur reformers than any other city in the state, the university being chiefly responsible. It is surprising how few of the people who are connected with this attempt to get a welfare commission to superintendent the bringing up of Nebraska children have any children of their own to bring up. Therefore, their position is a purely theoretical one. It's so easy to make regulations for other people or for the children of other people.

The chief objection to the passage of this legislation is that it carries with it an appropriation sufficient to guarantee a number of these reformers pleasant jobs with high pay. The people with children, who need every cent they can secure to bring them up properly, will have to bear their share of the expense. The expense is real—the results are doubtful.

Some day the people of Nebraska will learn to take with a grain of salt the utterances of all traveling reformers who depend upon the passing of the hat to keep them traveling. Some day legislatures will realize that legislation should have a stronger basis than pure theory.

The welfare bills represent theories chiefly, and there never was a theory so wild but that men and women could be found to champion it.

ANOTHER SUPERSTITION

Ever since the sad death of the Knights of Labor, perhaps the most powerful organization of its kind that ever existed, it has been the custom to hand out advice to all kinds of societies not to meddle with politics. Participating in politics is generally believed to have been the influence that ruined the Knights of Labor.

Since that time, it has been customary for every new organization to incorporate in its constitution a provision to the effect that politics must be left alone. It's simply a relic of the dark days of the Knights of Labor. And it's pure bunk.

One of the first duties of the members of all organizations is to be interested in political questions. It is one of the most important things connected with citizenship. It is not only a privilege, but a duty, to be interested in politics. In our present half-civilized state, politics is the means through which good government is secured.

It is one of the amusing things in life these days to watch organizations which have every interest in political matters trying to avoid mixing into them. The American Legion is one of the classic examples. The ex-soldiers are forbidden by their constitution to talk politics, or to take an active part through their organization, but as well advise a bird not to fly or a socialist not to make speeches, or a prohibition enforcement agent not to take a drink.

It is possible to mix into politics without taking a partisan stand. With the primary in force, and political conventions an innocuous form of recreation, parties don't amount to very much, save in presidential years. All organizations, including labor unions, ex-soldiers, business men, ladies' aid societies, even the boy scouts, should forget the silly superstition that mixing in politics leads to disruption, and take the chance. When the time comes that every aspirant for political office has a dozen different organizations looking up his record, then, and then only, will the unfit decide to keep out of the game. Intelligent discussion of political problems should not be out of place in any organization of sensible people, and every silly fear of dire consequences should be swept out of the way. Never was there a greater need for public interest in political questions, and any conventional idea that stands in the way shouldn't be allowed to interfere for a minute.

MOVIE CENSORSHIP

The perennial problem of the censorship of moving pictures is with us again, and there is before the legislature a measure which provides for a state board to do the censoring. The bill is one of the fifty-three public welfare bills, and is regarded as perhaps the star production of the salaried reformers. So many are the requirements and so strict the provisions that its adoption will undoubtedly cripple the moving picture industry in the state. The theory underlying the measure is that the plays presented are of the sort that undermine the moral strength of children and others who view them.

If the movies were the sole source of information of the youthful mind, there would be some justification for a strict censorship. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The growing boy is generally some seven years older than his age would indicate. He has read books of which his parents would not approve; he has heard talk they would not sanction. The movies, poor as they sometimes are, are tame in comparison. If the truth were known, the young man and the young maid are seldom shocked at anything they see at the movies. More often—let the truth come out—they are simply bored.

The Herald editor had a conversation with a girl of twelve the other evening, relative to the questionnaires which she had been given in school. One of these concerned the movie houses. She had been asked to say how often she attended, the names of the stars she knew, the ones she liked, and the names of plays that had appealed to her. It was surprising, despite the fact that this girl attended but once a week, how wide a knowledge she had of the movies, and how good a judgment she had formed. She condemned the serials—they were not true to life. She did not use that phrase, she called them "silly," but she had the idea. Her preference was for entertaining tales, whether they were love stories or adventure, and the names of the plays she liked convinced us that despite her youth, her taste was discriminating.

There is but one way a taste for literature, art, music—or the movies—can be developed, and that is by reading, viewing or hearing all kinds, and then making a choice. Nine out of ten times, the child will choose correctly, provided it has had sufficient opportunity to see all the varieties. Few people will choose filth when there is any choice between filth and something better.

The trouble with the movies is the same as with literature. There are too many cheap writers of scenarios, just as there are too many hack writers in literature. The demand is such that the producers must keep on producing, and there aren't enough good ones to keep out the poor. No intelligent publisher would rather print poor literature than good, and no movie producer would desire to put his name on poor plays if there were good ideas at hand.

There is no doubt that the quality of movies is improving. There is a doubt that censorship will have a beneficial influence. It is a dangerous thing in any state to have a public censor of morals, just as it would be fatal to art or literature to have a censorship of paintings or books. The trouble lies in the censors. It requires sound judgment and a genuine knowledge of literary or dramatic values to censor moving picture productions. Those who seek the jobs of this kind are not, as a rule, mentally competent. Something more is needed than a critical spirit, or an exalted sense of duty, or a salary. The theorist has no place on a board of censorship, nor has the religious fanatic, or the prude, or the bigot. Unfortunately, these are the people who want to do the censoring.

If moving picture producers only realized the truth—that people are not interested in cheap sex plays as they would be in those of the "Miracle Man," "Twenty-three and a Half Hours' Leave," "Birth of a Nation," or similar types, the problem would be solved. Alliance is a typical western city, and the public, to judge by the attendance, has a sound judgment. Seldom if ever do the cheaper types of films get the crowds that the better class draw.

But the real censorship should be in the home. Parents read newspapers. They can tell from an advertisement whether their children should see a certain production. If they would make a practice of staying away from pictures of which they do not approve, it wouldn't take long for the producers to get the idea. This is real, intelligent censorship. People do not read the books they do not approve—they do not allow their children to read them—and they aren't compelled to go to the movies.

LAKESIDE

Mrs. H. Brunson is on the sick list this week.

Harry Hartsock left for Newcastle, Wyo., Tuesday.

Jesse Wilson drove down from Antioch Wednesday.

Joe Posse returned from the west Monday on No. 40.

Rev. Charles Burleigh returned from Hoffland Monday.

This part of the sand hills was visited by a snow storm, Monday.

Mrs. Nell Moran and little Julia Wilson returned from Alliance Tuesday.

Mrs. Jap Woodward and little son went to Dunning on No. 40, Monday morning.

Miss Belle Weibling left for Lincoln

Tuesday, where she will attend the university at that place.

Mrs. J. L. Roe has as her guests this week her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Davis, of Wyoming.

Edward Jameson went to Alliance Wednesday to receive medical treatment for an attack of asthma.

Willis Crowther returned to his home at LaCreek, this week after a few days' visit with relatives and friends here.

Mrs. Amelia Black left for California Tuesday on No. 39. Her son, O. E. Black accompanied her as far as Alliance on her journey.

Dr. Moore came in from the Frank Bollenger home Tuesday and reported the arrival of a baby boy at that place. He left on No. 39 for Antioch.

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We have therefore decided to make a cover charge to everyone of 25 cents for the privilege of dancing or listening to the music, and we have put in force our regular Palm Room schedule of prices for refreshments.

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THE ALLIANCE HOTEL ORCHESTRA

Consisting of "Billy" Ackerman, director at the piano; Orin C. Slind, of Minneapolis, violinist, and J. E. Farrell of Alliance, banjo. As an extra special feature for Saturday night the recognized saxophone king of western Nebraska,

ANDY SITLER, of Sidney

will play. It's a combination with late, catchy music that makes dancing easier than ever and gives you pep if you need it.