

# CURRENT TOPICS

AT THE ANNUAL meeting of 124 associated Ohio daily newspapers held at Cleveland a statement upon the price which publishers should pay for print paper, was made by John Norris, chairman of the committee on paper of the American Newspaper Publishers' association. Mr. Norris said if free competition and normal conditions should prevail in the paper trade, news print should be delivered in press rooms at \$35 a ton, or \$1.75 per hundred pounds. He charges that newspapers are taxed \$8 a ton above that figure on one million tons, or \$8,000,000 per annum, because of the ignorance and lax methods of print paper makers and that the same causes are imposing a penalty of \$50,000,000 per annum upon the users of all kinds of paper.

THE OLD De Armond district in Missouri rolled up an increased democratic majority in the special election held February 1. The Associated Press tells the story in this way: "C. C. Dickinson of Clinton, a democrat, defeated Philip Griffith of Greenfield, republican, in a special election in the Sixth district to select a successor to the late Congressman David A. De Armond. Official returns give Dickinson a majority of 3,791. The Sixth district is normally democratic, the pluralities running from 2,515 in 1902 to 2,160 in 1908. Today's election had a national significance as the issues were drawn largely upon the tariff question. Governor Hadley and Secretary of Commerce and Labor Nagel stumped the district for Griffith, while former Governor D. R. Francis and J. W. Folk, United States Senator W. J. Stone, Congressman Champ Clark and J. A. Reed of Kansas City were among the prominent democrats who took part in the campaign."

DEMOCRATS everywhere find great encouragement in the returns from the Sixth Missouri congressional district. The Omaha World-Herald prints this Washington dispatch: There was jubilation among the democratic members of the house today upon receipt of returns from the Sixth district of Missouri indicating that C. C. Dickinson, the democratic nominee, had been elected by a majority of 3,788. The joy was not altogether confined to the democrats. The insurgents took considerable comfort in the democratic victory because of the fact that the republican candidate lost no opportunity to praise Speaker Cannon and to lambast the insurgents, picking out Victor Murdock as his particular object of attack. The democrats declare that Dickinson's election is the forerunner of what is to come at the next congressional election. The fact that Judge De Armond, popular as he was in that district, was never able to run his majorities much over 2,000, while his successor got a majority of nearly twice that amount, is regarded by the majority of the members as dissatisfaction of the people with the republican party, and especially with the tariff, which bodes ill for the majority next November. Champ Clark, minority leader, was particularly elated. "That victory in the Sixth Missouri district," said Mr. Clark, "is but the beginning of a democratic victory all along the line next November. The people are dissatisfied with the tariff bill enacted into law by a republican congress. Further evidence of this dissatisfaction will be discovered in the next congressional election, when the democratic party will be given the balance of power in the house." Several members of the minority took occasion to comment in the house on Dickinson's election and more than one of them criticised Secretary Nagel for his activity in attempting to defeat Dickinson."

REPRESENTATIVE Ernest Roberts of Massachusetts, a member of the house naval committee, has introduced a bill requiring that wireless stations be licensed. In support of his measure Mr. Roberts has collected a mass of data showing the abuse that is made of wireless telegraphy. The Washington correspondent for the New York Sun says: "An amateur operator, signing Admiral Bob Evans' name sent a false official order to a warship." Mr. Roberts also shows the interception of commercial and social

messages, some of the latter extremely personal and very lively, and an offer by the United Wireless company to discontinue all its stations along the Atlantic coast where there are navy stations near by if the latter will handle its commercial business. The report of the interception of social messages comes from the Mare Island navy yard and was transmitted to the department by the commandant. This report tells a pitiful tale of the activities of two precocious youngsters who put up a wireless apparatus, became expert in its use and kept in a book a transcription of intercepted aerograms. Here are a few samples with names and details slightly changed for obvious reasons: 'Miss Brown, Oakland—Can't meet you tonight. No shore leave. Be good in the meantime.' Another naval officer, according to this book, addressed his best girl at Mare Island like this: 'Honestly, could not show up last night. Am arranging so I can see you oftener. Will take you to dinner Wednesday afternoon.' And here is another gem: 'All lovely. Am sure you are mistaken. Call again.'"

MR. S. C. BASSETT, of Gibbon, Neb., recently took issue with a statement that Farmer Thiessen of Jefferson county had cleared \$1,108.41 on a carload of hogs. Mr. Bassett's letter was printed recently in The Commoner. Mr. Thiessen, who is a republican member of the Nebraska legislature, replied to the Bassett statement as did also Mr. Herron. Mr. Bassett, who is a practical farmer himself, returns to the fray with this letter: "I do not wish to be tiresome regarding this subject but there is one important matter which Mr. Herron certainly noticed and which it seems to me should have been taken into account when he so suddenly reduced the per cent of profit from 200 to 68.7. It is stated as follows: It is fair to estimate that Mr. Thiessen's brood sow herd numbered twenty, which in 1908 were valued at \$360. To continue the business on the present basis the brood sow herd in 1909 should number twenty head and in this instance these brood sows are valued at \$828, some of the older ones being fattened and sold and we will conclude younger ones of those raised taking their places. The increase in the value of the brood sow herd is \$468 and this item is classed as profits, at once realized upon and included in the profits of the transaction amounting to \$1,197.41. In order, as in this instance, to include the increased value of the brood sow herd as profits in raising, fattening and marketing a bunch of hogs on a farm it would be necessary to sell brood sows so that for the year 1909, Mr. Thiessen would start with nine brood sows valued at \$360, instead of twenty as in 1908. Under such a method of 'farming' and of 'bookkeeping,' if the price of hogs should continue to boom for the year 1909, because of the enormous profits in hog raising, Mr. Thiessen would be out of the hog business since he would have left no brood sows from which to raise pigs. Eliminate this item of unrealized profits amounting to \$468, and we have in this instance a profit of \$729.41; thus suddenly the per cent of profit on investment and expense drops from 200 to 41.5 and the end is not yet for there is still unaccounted for abundant alfalfa pasture and forage for twenty brood sows for one year and 100 growing and fattening pigs for eight or ten months."

THE STEAMER Kentucky sank February 4, but the entire crew was saved through wireless telegraphy. A New York dispatch carried by the Associated Press says: "Thanks again to the wireless and international distress signal, 'S. O. S.,' Captain Moore and his crew of forty-six men are safe on board the Mallory liner Alamo, bound for Key West tonight, while their vessel, the steamer Kentucky, is at the bottom of the sea off Cape Hatteras. It is another case of a disaster averted by wireless and told to the world by the same medium. The Kentucky, a wooden vessel of 996 gross tonnage, and 203 feet long, was bound from New York to the Pacific to carry passengers between Tacoma and Alaskan ports for the Alaska Pacific Steamship company. First news

of the Kentucky's distress was received at the United Wireless company's station at Cape Hatteras at 11:30 o'clock this morning. There the operator heard the 'S. O. S.' quickly followed by this message: 'We are sinking. Our latitude is 32.10; longitude 76.30.' Almost simultaneously the operator heard the steamship Alamo respond to the Kentucky's call for help, informing Captain Moore that the Alamo was making all speed to the sinking vessel's assistance. Thereafter no message was received from the Kentucky, indicating that water had interfered with the power, putting her wireless apparatus out of commission. The navy department at Washington in the meantime flashed wireless messages along the Atlantic coast, dispatching the battleship Louisiana and two revenue cutters to the scene, but at 5 o'clock word came from the Alamo that she had arrived first and taken off all hands in safety. This is the message received in New York by the United Wireless company from Cape Hatteras station: 'Latitude 32.46; longitude 76.28. Steamship Alamo has just taken Captain Moore and crew of forty-six men from sinking steamship Kentucky. Water had already reached fire room, and steamer will sink before midnight. The Alamo is now proceeding to Key West.'"

AN ASSOCIATED Press dispatch from Washington says: "The soldier who fought through the civil war as the personal substitute of Abraham Lincoln may have a statue erected in commemoration of his services. His name will be engraved in the niche of fame if the bill appropriating \$20,000 for the purpose presented by Representative Halmer (dem.) of Pennsylvania, becomes a law. The name of this hitherto almost unknown hero is J. Summerfield Staples of Stroudsburg, Pa. He died there some ten years ago, and it is at Stroudsburg that it is now proposed to erect the statue. In 1863, when the fortunes of the federal government were at their lowest ebb, it was decided by President Lincoln and his cabinet that they send personal substitutes to the front as an example to the country. Staples, then eighteen years old, was selected as the president's substitute. He enlisted in the second division of Columbia volunteers and served until the close of the war."

REFERRING TO Governor Hughes' attack upon the income tax James K. Peterson of New York writes to the World to say: "In the discussion of Governor Hughes' objection to the income tax amendment the most important points seem to have been overlooked. The governor had no right to meddle in the case at all. The constitution does not allow the governor of a state a voice in the making of constitutional amendments; that duty devolves on the legislature alone. Mr. Hughes as a private citizen can express his opinion freely, but the governor of New York had no right to send a message to the legislature either favoring or opposing the amendment. He violated the constitution in so doing. Moreover, if he objected to the amendment because it would allow congress to tax the income from state bonds, he ought to have said so when the amendment was pending in congress. His failure to do so casts a doubt on his good faith."

But the objection itself is unsound. The constitution as it is authorizes congress to tax the states themselves, apportioning the tax according to population. There is nothing in the constitution to prevent the federal government's raising its entire revenue in that way. And as congress already has power to tax the states, there can be no harm in giving it power to tax the income from state bonds."

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