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N. B. UPDIKE, President
B. S. DUNN, Editor in Chief
JOY M. HACKLER, Business Manager

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THE SPARK AND THE CONFLAGRATION.

Ten years ago a Serbian assassin fired the shots that started the world war. The victims were an Austrian grand duke, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife.

It was a little fire at the start. Austria's demands were too excessive and impudent that the civilized world was started. Russia objected, Germany sided with Austria against Russia. France, an ally of Russia, became involved—and the World War was on. The conflagration that followed as the result of this little blaze came near to consuming civilization.

Today Great Britain makes demands of Egypt that are even more excessive than those made by Austria, but the world goes on without taking much notice. Britain's demands are in keeping with British traditions, but that does not help Egypt. A British army officer officiating in a police capacity is killed. Immediately Great Britain demands an apology and the payment of an immense indemnity. Then, in addition, Great Britain demands that the Egyptian authorities put a stop to certain Egyptian propaganda demanding "Egypt for the Egyptians." British interests in irrigation in the Sudan are to be made the beneficiaries of the incident and at the expense of Egyptian interests.

Austria's demands were characterized as "impossible," and the World War resulted. Great Britain makes demands of Egypt that are more onerous and excessive than those leveled against Serbia, but the incident creates little more than a ripple.

The United States minister to Persia was killed by a street mob. Apology was demanded and made, and an indemnity of \$100,000 demanded for the widow. The indemnity is paid and a sum in excess of the amount is expended in sending a United States battleship to Persia to bring back the body of the slain minister. And the incident is closed. Great Britain has extended dominion around the world by exercising the iron hand in a velvet glove. The United States has exercised justice and moderation to an extent that leads many of other nations to believe that this republic is weak and soft.

But where the United States has exercised justice and mercy it is loved and respected. It has never seized upon such incidents as mentioned above to extend dominion or gain concessions. It has never been the cause of a world war nor engaged in a war of aggression.

Egypt will bow to the superior force of Great Britain because there is nothing else to do. Diplomacy, backed by the might of battleships and armies, is usually effective against countries that have no strong allies. But there is something for the world to think about in the parallel between the "impossible demands" of Austria ten years ago, and the demands made by Great Britain today.

WHEN IN DOUBT GIVE A BOOK.

The Christmas season approaches, not apace, but on a gallop. Already men and women are worrying about gift selections. After the few gifts known to be acceptable are purchased, there comes doubt and uncertainty. These last until the final minute, and then comes the undignified scramble.

Why not solve the doubt by giving a good book? There is no intimate friend quite so faithful and true as a good book. If it is a really good book, a worth while book, it will prove a lasting reminder of the donor. Excursions into its pages will remind the reader of pleasant days with the giver, will revive fond memories of days gone by, and will arouse eagerness for further personal communion.

Old friends and old books! What a happy combination. The absence of one and the companionship of the other—no man or woman need ever be wholly alone while absent friends are present in spirit in the pages of a good book given in the true spirit of Christmas.

WHEN IN DOUBT GIVE A GOOD BOOK.

When in doubt give a good book.

BIDDY HEN AND HER PROGENY.

Solomon has been called the wisest man by those who think that collecting a lot of wise sayings of other men and passing them off as one's own is an evidence of wisdom. Collecting proverbs was a fad with Solomon, just as solving cross-word puzzles is a fad with so many men and women today. And, wise as he was, Solomon's foot slipped now and then. For instance, there is his proverb, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise."

Now, why the ant? Selfish creature that it is, it works only for itself. Why did not Solomon advise the sluggard to go to the hen? Was it because there were no domesticated fowl in those days? From all that is known of Solomon by reading sacred and profane history, there must have been "chickens" in those days, but perhaps they were not of the feathered variety.

But if there were hens in those days, certainly Solomon guessed wrong when he held up the ant as a model for the sluggard. The hen, Mrs. Bidly Hen of Nebraska, is a far better model to hold up to the sluggard and the shiftless. She is a rustler from Rustleville. She joys in her work and loves to boast about the results she achieves. She is wholly unselfish, for she never enters a protest when her

product is taken, from her, but merely rustles around a bit harder and produces over again. In proportion to the wage she receives, which is merely board and lodging, and the board rustled for herself, she produces more wealth than any other agency around the home.

Biddy Hen is deserving of more recognition than she receives, and has doubly earned better treatment than is usually accorded her.

Nebraskans are getting wise to the fact that Biddy Hen is a wonderful contributor to the up-building of the state. They are also grasping the great truth that blood will tell in poultry as well as in dairy cows and beef steers, in hogs and in sheep.

It has taken Biddy Hen a long time to make her real worth known and appreciated. Now, when she advertises the fact that she has been busy at her daily task, we all stop and take notice, and those of us who are really appreciative take off our hats as she goes by.

We are reminded at the juncture of a beautiful poem written of Biddy Hen a great many years ago:

"Said a renowned Brooklyn preacher
To a hen, 'You're a beautiful creature.'
And the hen just for that
Laid an egg in his hat.
And thus did the hen reward Beecher."

Indeed she is a beautiful creature. The better we treat her the more she will reward us. We take issue with Solomon to the extent of advising all to ignore the ant, and to look to Biddy Hen as a proper example of industry.

NOTHING LIKE CONSISTENCY.

If consistency is a jewel no one should object to wearing it. If publicity of income, tax returns is desirable, why stop there? Why not go the whole route and have publicity of personal assessments, and of bank deposits, and of payments made to grocers and other trades people? Why have any privacy at all in business? For that matter why any kind of privacy in these days when everybody's business is the business of everybody else?

If John Jones buys Mrs. Jones a new dress, shouldn't John be compelled to tell where he got the money, where he spent it for the dress and why he gave it to Mrs. Jones instead of to some other woman? We simply must have more publicity. Not everybody has been placed upon the government payroll as a snooper, although a good start has been made in that direction. If we only go far enough in this publicity thing it will require 100 per cent of us to enforce the laws by sticking our noses into the business of 100 per cent of us. If John B. Worker insists on depositing his money in a savings bank instead of spending it foolishly, why not take the position that the public has a right to know where John got it and why he is saving it instead of spending it.

We simply must penalize success some way. It will not do to let brains, and industry, and initiative thrive at the expense of indolence and thriftlessness.

Let us have publicity for everything, and be consistent.

HOW OLD WAS METHUSELAH?

There is raging just now a controversy over the real age of Methuselah. Just why this should be is not made plain. It seems to have no particular claim to fame other than the statement of the Bible that he was Enoch's son, the father of Lamech, and lived to be 969 years old. That is all that is known about him. If he lived all those years he did not accomplish very much for a man who had such a wonderful opportunity to profit by experience.

A professor in a religious college tried to explain it by saying that Methuselah lived 969 months instead of 969 years. A mathematician knocks that theory in the head by declaring that if that process of figuring age in those days is true, then Enoch was only 5 years old when his son, Methuselah, was born. It is all very puzzling if you are intent upon figuring it out. But why worry about it? Methuselah has worn the belt for longevity for so many centuries that it is hardly worth trying to deprive him thereof. Nobody wants to live that long and accomplish as little as Methuselah is accredited with accomplishing.

What difference does it make, anyhow? Why waste time figuring out the exact age of Enoch's son when there are so many worth while things in the Good Book to study, to enjoy and to profit by? If Methuselah actually lived 969 years he failed to accomplish in that time what a carpenter accomplished in three short years. He failed to accomplish in all those ten centuries a tithe of what another man of the Bible accomplished between the time he was halted on the road to Damascus and the time when he was finally martyred in Rome.

Life is not to be measured in years, but in deeds. According to that standard Methuselah scarcely lived at all. Why worry about his age?

Speculation is rife about the possibility of an extra session of congress. Let speculation give way to the certainty that if President Coolidge does not want an extra session, then there ain't goin' to be no extra session.

The master of the National Grange tells his organization that the farm problem is economic, not political. General acceptance of that statement would result in putting a lot of politicians out of business.

Those fake bomb throwers in San Diego have discovered that even a fake bomb can hoist its throwers over the transom.

Sixty-two new members will sit in the next congress. They should not forget the chief reasons for their election.

Russia is entitled to congratulations. Emma Goldman is denouncing it.

What this country needs is a sure-fire recipe for getting a Thanksgiving turkey.

Homespun Verse

—By Omaha's Own Poet—
Robert Worthington Davie

MAKE ME AS RICH AS THE TREES.

Make me as rich as the trees where love
Lies on the ground in the barren fall,
And lingers still in the boughs above
Like the spirit stays the fall.

Make me as true as the trees, the trees,
Counting nor scoffing the years;
Lyre of the wind and its memories
Playing its smiles and tears.

Make me as strong as the trees are made,
And as willing to face the winter
In autumn's shine as in summer's shade—
In springtime's youth as in winter's blight.

Make of my thought a beauty akin
To the character of the trees.
Oh! who in the human realm may win
Richer treasures than these?

Priming It Ought to Start Something



"From State and Nation"

—Editorials from Other Newspapers—

Railroads and the Popular Mandate.

From The Rocky Mountain News:
If there is one thing that stands clear as a result of the recent judgment of the people in governmental affairs, it is this: That paternalistic panaceists and extremists in and out of congress shall move to the rear for some years to come or until there is another election. And if it could have been a command to politicians to keep hands off the transportation system of the country and let the railroad executives alone in their undertaking to restore business and give the public the service it requires.

A test of the national mind on the railroad question was taken under perfect conditions. Senator La Follette was the candidate for the presidency of the brotherhood leaders and all union and shopcraft heads, much more than he was of the farming element. His candidacy was made the peculiar interest of railroad labor leaders, whatever action may have been taken later by the workers themselves at the polls. More than 100,000 voters cast their ballots with the hope of this class of labor bosses in the campaign and election. For years the Wisconsin senator had urged in season and out of season radical railroad legislation. He was specifically opposed to the present measure, the Esch-Cummings law, as it is called.

The election results were a rebuke to La Follette and his immediate following. In states and in political divisions of states where the railroad vote is strong, the third party voted its purpose was an open disappointment to the candidates and leaders of that party. Like the rest of the country the railroad labor vote asked to be let alone, undisturbed by the professional politicians and agitators.

Despite the danger signal hoisted by the people at the ballot boxes some republicans are talking already of new railroad legislation, and of trying to get together with La Follette on an amendment to the present law. If the national administration leaders are not blind they will give short shrift to such a program.

Among other things it is proposed by the La Follette section to abolish the federal labor board provided in the present law because the board is unsatisfactory to "organized labor." The latter made clear so that all might read that while it may be well organized and rightly so respecting its own affairs, it is not organized in politics so that it can be sold and delivered to any boss and by him to any one party. The labor board is authorized to investigate all disputes between employer and employed and compel the presence of witnesses and evidence, but the board cannot under the law enforce its findings. If the law is in need of amendment it would be to give the withheld power to the board and to make both sides conform to its decisions. Railroads are public utilities, and a railroad strike nowadays is national, not local. The public must have the protection of compulsory arbitration in such a serious matter. But, it is contended, congress is not prepared to go so far. Very well, if it is not going forward to work out its logical conclusion the matters as between the railroads and the public, let it not go backward and undo what little has been done toward industrial peace—the settlement of disputes without resort to force.

Senator Cummings of the senate interstate commerce committee states that there are pending before that committee a hundred measures dealing with railroads, now bills and bills to amend. If he had his ear to the ground recently he will throw most of them in the waste basket. Between federal government and state government the railroad systems of the country have been in escrow long enough; they are entitled to their freedom.

Tax Legislation at the Short Session.

From The Rocky Mountain News:
It is intimated that there will be no effort on the part of the administration to obtain amendments to the revenue laws at the coming short and final session of the present congress. It would be unreasonable to expect any radical changes in the light of the republican party platform until there has been time to make a further study of the whole

problem of federal taxation.

Moreover, the drafting of amendments can be done more intelligently when the law enacted at the recent session has had a working test.

Further reduction in taxation is a republican pledge, but its fulfillment may properly await the convening of the congress elected upon it—a congress less likely to obstruct administration policies than that which is coming to its finish.

There is, however, no good reason why the publicity provision of the present law should not be repealed immediately. This nuisance clause in the act has come under a storm of denunciation from every section of the country. The treasury department has been deluged with communications protesting against it and demanding its repeal. It is obvious that it serves no useful purpose. The publicity it permits is wholly misleading and does no more than gratify idle curiosity or furnish fuel for the fires which class agitators delight in fanning.

The congress which passed it manifestly without serious consideration may properly be convinced by now that it acted in error and should be willing to make amends in the only way possible.

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SUNNY SIDE UP

Take Comfort, nor forget, That Sunrise never failed us yet.
Celia Thaxter

The slight of a roster of the membership of the incoming legislature as we started to work this morning, brought up a host of legislative memories. Nebraska has had some interesting sessions of the legislature, but none equal to that of 1921. There were hair-trigger moments during its earlier stages when it wouldn't have been a bit of trouble to bring about bloodshed. Indeed, there was a little bloodshed at one time, but it happened to be the blood of an innocent bystander.

Boyd, democrat, had been declared the duly elected governor, while the same decree said that the other state officers should be filled by republicans. The Farmers' Alliance had captured a majority of the house and senate, but precedent decreed that the retiring lieutenant governor, Melkielejohn, republican, should preside over the joint session that opened, counted and declared the returns. Marsh Elder, elected speaker of the house by the farmer majority, was expected to shove Melkielejohn to one side and, by refusing to declare the result, pave the way for a contest that would seat John Powers in the governor's chair. But Elder lacked the abdominal adequacy to go through with the program. Boyd was declared elected. Thayer, the retiring governor, refused to abdicate, and for a time state militia men, called out by him, patrolled the corridors of the state house.

Thayer locked himself in the executive offices, and Boyd was compelled to use the office of the railway secretary. General Victor Vitruvian was made adjutant general of the state by Boyd, and that capable old soldier bluffed the commander of the militia into accepting his orders instead of the adjutant general who was acting under Thayer. Then the steam was turned off in the executive offices and Thayer was actually frozen out. Thayer took his case to the supreme court, alleging that Boyd was not a citizen, and the court upheld him. But Boyd held on while the legislature was in session. Thayer went back in, but the United States supreme court declared Boyd a citizen and he was allowed to finish out his term.

It was during these stirring times that the session of 1921 was held. The republicans and democrats combined and, secured from the state supreme court a mandamus compelling Speaker Elder to open the returns and declare the result. The alliance majority barricaded the doors of representative hall to prevent the serving of the writ. Deputy United States Marshal "Pip" Hastings was charged with the duty of serving the writ and he and his assistants proceeded to batter in the closed doors. The night before the alliance members had held a conference and resolved to die in the last ditch rather than submit to the demand of the court, and they flocked around the entrance, inside the hall, ready to go through with it. But either their courage failed or wiser counsel prevailed, for there was very little opposition to the entrance of the marshal and his cohorts. It was in the melee that the blood of an innocent bystander was shed. He was a reporter who was caught between the contending forces and shoved against a post, his nose acting as a buffer.

Elder weakened and declared the result. If he could have resisted the diplomacy and parliamentary skill of Melkielejohn and presided over the joint session, as he had a right to do after the passage of the joint resolution declaring him the proper man to preside, things would have been vastly different. But Melkielejohn outgeneraled him and also bluffed him.

That was the warmest session ever held in Nebraska. But aside from enacting the Australian ballot law and passing a freight rate law that Boyd vetoed, it accomplished much.
WILL M. MAUPIN.

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XI.

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