News of the Week

The arbitration commission appointed by the president has at last presented its report. One would have to be thoroughly acquainted with the mining, transportation and selling of anthracite coal to understand it. A raise in wages of 10 per cent has been awarded and a sliding scale of wages adopted, by which when coal goes up wages rise and when it goes down, wages fall. As the starting point of all this is the present price of anthracite coal at the seaboard, The Independent can't see in this any chance for a future rise of wages. If hard coal goes higher than it is now, the use of it will be discontinued by hundreds of thousands who have been accustomed to heat their houses with it in past years. The demand for it would be immediately restricted and the price would go down, unless the monopoly would be satisfied with reduced production and sell to only those concerns that must have it until something is invented to take its place. The award does not force the recognition of the union, but provides for arbitration in the various fields the umpire to be appointed by a federal judge. To The Independent it seems that it is throwing the whole regulation of wages into the hands of the federal judges and organized labor knows full well from past experiences what to expect from them.

Anthracite coal is selling in Nebraska at the present time along the lines of railroads from $15.50 to $16 a ton. The various grades of bituminous coal are so high that it matters little, as far as the cost is concerned, which the suffering people buy. Much less coal is being consumed than usual, every housewife being as careful as possible in its use and every substitute possible is being used. Corn cobs, where the farmers have been able to get cars to ship their corn notwithstanding the constant refilling of the stoves required, are burned by well-to-do farmers who have been accustomed to use coal for heating purposes, and using the cobs for light fires in warm weather. There is no longer a scarcity of coal. It can be obtained at any of the stations, but the exorbitantly high prices greatly reduces the consumption. It is hard to account for this on any other supposition than that competition in the coal trade has been destroyed and the price is being kept up by combinations. If the usual quantity of coal is being mined and the production is kept up for a few weeks longer, the result must be an enormous stock of unsold coal in the hands of the operators. That does not necessarily mean a lower price for coal in the near future, for the republican government of this country has turned things topsy turvey and chaos results in the economic world where order and system under the natural laws of supply and demand have so long ruled. Under the old order of things it would result in bringing down the price. Taking their cue from the railroads, all men take all the traffic will bear, without any regard for reasonable profits.

Farmers are everywhere experiencing very great difficulty in getting help. The present price of corn and wheat does not warrant very high wages. Many of the farmers have gone through with such sad times in raising corn and wheat at a loss and getting into debt thereby that they will prefer to let the land lie idle to paying wages that mean a loss. They say that they have the long end of the lever on the city fellows as long as they keep out of debt. They can live without going into production to any great extent, while the city man must have business or wages or starve. Twenty dollars a month for a farm hand with board, room and laundry is better than $60 in the city where expensive clothing has to be constantly worn and where board and rooms must be paid for at the present rates. Then the farm life with modern machinery is much more healthful and less toilsome than most of the work in the city. A farm hand can save nearly his whole salary, for his clothing is but a bagatelle. Notwithstanding this, a great many young men go to the city who ought to be on the farms, spend all they make and when the gray hairs begin to appear find that they are not wanted any longer. Better let the girls sell the ribbons and lace and make strong men of themselves in the fresh air and sunshine of the farms.

The selfishness and greed that directs the action of United States senators, even when that greed comes in direct opposition to the defense and welfare of the country, was well exemplified in the action of Senator Hale when he attempted to have the size of the warships reduced from 16,000 to 12,000 tons, because there was no ship yard in his baliwick that could handle a larger vessel than 12,000 tons. It did not matter to Senator Hale that the reduction of the size of the ships might endanger the republic. All he was after was the profits of building them. It is men like that who have laid a claim to all the patriotism in the country

The great railroad magnate, B. D. Caldwell, in his testimony before the interstate commerce commission, after declaring that the supreme court decision to the effect that a railroad was only entitled to "a fair profit on its investment" was foolish, went on to say that "the business of the country was in the hands of the traffic man who makes the rates." That is all the evidence that is necessary to sustain the position taken in the editorial in this issue entitled "Concentrating Power."

The recently invented electrical appliance that enables those who were born deaf or have become deaf from any other cause to hear, is a fulfillment of one-half of the prophecy that "the blind shall see and the deaf shall hear." When will the other half come true?

It was announced in the republican dailies that as Gorman had been appointed leader on the democratic side of the senate that he would bring order and harmony out of the chaos that had existed and that the minority would hereafter act as a unit. Gorman was to line up the democrats against the Panama canal treaty and as the republicans lacked two of having a two-thirds majority, Gorman would have the situation in hand and be able to demand things in return. When the show-down came Gorman mustered just five votes. There has never been a more ridiculous failure in leadership since the senate existed. But the republican dailies continue the cry: "Great is Gorman!"

The very great reduction in the "labor cost" in manufacturing almost everything which has come about from the genius of American inventors has excited the brighter minds of Europe to the same sort of work. Heretofore inventors have had no standing in "society" over there and were looked upon more as innovators and cranks than anything else. Lately a change has come over the spirit of their dreams and inventors are receiving the honor due them. The result is that several machines and processes of very great value have been given to the public. Many of them will be exhibited at the St. Louis fair. One of them utilizes the heat that now escapes from chimneys, increasing the horse-power from the same amount of fuel one-third. Another is the process of making smokeless briquettes, the use of which has lately been adopted by the British navy. Another is the German method of making briquettes from coal dust and slack. These have ofr some time been used as fuel in Germany at a greatly reduced cost when compared with coal.

Trusts having become somewhat unpopular with the people the plutocrats have invented a new name for them. They now call trusts "large units." These chaps had so much success with catch phrases in the last two presidential campaigns that they still continue the plan

Philadelphia has introduced self-government in the city schools. The school board says that the new device is introduced for "maintaining order in school, or school discipline; instruction in manners and morals; holding before children a high ideal of conduct and citizenship." Late developments in Philadelphia show that a negro Voodoo doctor with his love potions and subtle poisons has been extensively patronized by the millionaire crowd. There the highest ideals in government is Quay and his henchmen and it has long since been proved that it is utterly impossible to do anyhting with the adult population. So it is well that the school board is going to try to develop a different race from the school children. It is hoped that the next generation will have at least some rudimentary knowledge of "manners and morals."

The Inter-Ocean of March 17, besides the first page described in another editorial article, had an advertisement filling three full columns of one of these get-rich-quick horse racing concerns. The advertisement contains editorial indorsements from three other great republican dailies, namely, the Boston Record, the Cincinnati Commercial-Tribune and the Kansas City Journal. That is the sort of literature that is flooding the homes of the people of the great cities, bringing in its train demoralization and crime. It is sent out by the republican party.

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