

The Alliance Herald

Official Paper of Box Butte County

TWICE A WEEK—TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

Official Paper of the City of Alliance

VOLUME XXVIII

ALLIANCE, BOX BUTTE COUNTY, NEBRASKA, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1920

NO. 10

DENVER FANATIC KILLS MOTHER OF ALLIANCE MAN

JOE SMITH'S MOTHER MURDERED MONDAY AFTERNOON.

Mrs. Mary Smith, 71, Victim of Shot Fired by Insane Russian.

Mrs. Mary Smith, seventy-one years old, mother of Joe Smith of this city, was almost instantly killed late Monday afternoon at her rooms in the Greek apartments, 1339 East Seventeenth street, Denver, by a shot fired by Philip Greck, a religious fanatic, who is believed to have been the victim of an attack of violent insanity at the time the murder was committed.

Joe Smith received a telegram Tuesday morning from his sister in Denver, which said simply: "Mother is dead; come at once," and giving no hint of the tragedy. Mr. Smith left on the late train Wednesday morning, and it was not until the Denver newspapers arrived that Mrs. Smith knew the facts surrounding the death. A telegram from Mr. Smith asked that the pool hall be closed from 2 to 5 o'clock Thursday afternoon, during the funeral, but no additional details have been received. Mrs. Smith recalls sending Christmas presents to that address, and is quite certain that it is her husband's mother who met such a terrible death. Mr. Smith is expected to arrive in this city today.

The following account of the tragedy is taken from the Denver Post:

Philip Greck, 30 years old, was reading from "The Traveler's Guide From Life to Death" late Monday afternoon. With him were his wife and Mrs. Mary Smith, 71 years old, in the Greek apartments, 1339 East Seventeenth avenue.

On a page headed "Man's Way to Salvation" Greck read: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."—Prov. 14:12. Then Greck turned to the opposite page, headed "God's Way to Salvation," and he read: "Doing is a deadly thing. Doing ends in death."

Shoots Without Warning.

Greck grasped a revolver which his wife and their caller had been discussing and shot Mrs. Smith to death without a word of warning.

There had been no quarrel—no manifestation of hatred, the police say. Greck leveled his revolver and fired into the breast of the aged woman without a moment's premeditation.

Religious fanaticism is declared to be the only cause for the shooting. As Mrs. Smith toppled to the floor mortally wounded, Greck, brandishing his smoking weapon, dashed through the open door on the second floor of the house, down the stairs and into the street. The terrified screams of his wife, who was found by other roomers kneeling over the body of Mrs. Smith, first warned of the tragedy.

Beside the outstretched body lay a small red book, a book of Bible excerpts and religious discussion—the key to the tragedy. Several minutes after firing the shot Greck surrendered to Officer C. E. Townsend of the Capitol Hill police station, with the words, "I have killed a woman—she did me wrong!"

"We were sitting in our apartments—the three of us, my husband, the old lady (Mrs. Smith), and myself, when this awful thing happened," said Mrs. Greck immediately after the shooting. Her version of the affair was narrated to the police as she stood above the body of the murdered woman.

Mrs. Smith Very Religious.

"To think that my husband could have done that. That poor old lady—dead. My husband had talked nothing but religion of late. He was often in Mrs. Smith's room, poring over her books and discussing the bible. She was very religious and she was good and kind, and so far as I know, there was no earthly reason for killing her."

"As we talked, just before she was shot, my husband arose from his chair and said he was going to a union meeting."

"Aren't you afraid to stay home?" the old lady asked me. I answered that I had no reason for fear, and I said I had a gun—I was safe."

"I wish I had a pistol," the old lady said, and just then my husband walked past her. As he was just opposite her he said, "Oh, you do, do you, well there!"—and I saw that horrible flash of light and the smoke—everything seemed so terrible, and I stood and screamed as my husband ran out of the door."

The pistol shot was not heard by many of the other roomers. The gun used was of a small calibre. Greck handed it to the police as he surrendered.

When asked Tuesday his motive for the shooting, Greck first assumed

(Continued on page 5)

THE WEATHER

Forecast for Alliance and vicinity: Fair and colder tonight and Saturday.

BASKETBALL TEAM OUT PLAYING HOLIDAY GAMES

Coach F. C. Prince and seven members and subs on the basketball team of the Alliance high school will return Sunday from a four-day trip in search of basketball victories. The hunt has been moderately successful so far, but more games are expected to be bagged before the holiday series closes.

The team left Wednesday noon. The first stop was Merna, where Alliance won, 61 to 20. Thursday the Alliance five lost to Ansley by a score of 20 to 16. The boys will play Litchfield today and Ravenna Saturday.

Next week, the second of the holiday vacation, the boys will go into the North Platte territory for three games with North Platte, Oshkosh and another city in that vicinity. The boys are enthusiastic over spending the holidays in this way, and Coach Prince is perfectly willing to devote his vacation to building up the team.

TWO QUESTIONS UP TO VOTERS NEXT TUESDAY

IMPORTANT MATTERS TO COME UP AT SPECIAL ELECTION

Citizens Will Vote on Adoption of City Manager Plan and Ratification of Telephone Franchise

The voters of Alliance will be called upon next Tuesday to decide two important matters at a special election called for the purpose. They will be asked to say whether this city shall give up the mayor and council for the city manager plan of municipal government, and whether the telephone franchise which has been before the council in some form for two years shall be approved.

There has not been a whole lot of interest in either proposition on the part of the voters. A group of business men who have been interested in the city manager plan for some years are taking an active part in advocating the change in the city government. The mayor and a majority of the council, together with other business men, are opposed to it. The general public has not been particularly interested. Two or three public meetings have been held, at which the attendance was more or less limited.

Prof. L. E. Aylsworth of the University of Nebraska made his second visit to Alliance in the interest of the city manager plan last Tuesday. In the afternoon he addressed the Woman's club and in the evening a public meeting at the Lowry & Henry roof garden. At this latter meeting some twenty-five were present, who listened with great interest to a scholarly address by the man who drew up the law permitting cities of this class to adopt the plan. Mr. Aylsworth's address followed the same lines as a previous address given at a noon luncheon of the chamber of commerce. He gave the theory of the plan, a centralized, responsible government; gave reports from various city managers of the success of the system in their respective cities, and gave a number of reasons why the plan should, theoretically, at least, result in a more economical and business-like administration of city affairs.

Among the new points that he made was the fact that the city government is more close to the average citizen than any other. A larger share of the tax burden he is compelled to bear goes to the city, Professor Aylsworth said, arguing therefrom that reforms and economies in city administration were especially desirable.

The telephone company has made no campaign for the ratification of its franchise, and presumably, after its two-year wait, is beyond caring how the election comes out.

It is probable that there will be a light vote cast, just as was the case at the election on the constitutional amendments. The women voters will probably remember to exercise their new franchise, and this may bring up the totals somewhat. Both of these questions are important, and every voter should cast a ballot. Unless a majority of the voters do come to the polls, a minority of the citizens may have the final say. If a representative number of citizens express an opinion on the two questions, the verdict will not be wrong, no matter how it reads.

OUTLOOK BETTER FOR OPERATING POTASH PLANTS

COMPANIES HOPING FOR RESUMPTION OF BUSINESS.

Intimated That Fertilizer Companies Will Resume Buying Within a Month or Two.

The future of the potash industry in Nebraska depends upon the ability of the big fertilizer concerns of the east and south to resume the contracts that they recently broke, a procedure that has closed all of the plants at Antioch and sent the American, in which a million or more of Lincoln money went, into the hands of a receiver in bankruptcy. Before the orders to discontinue sending potash arrived all of the plants were operating on a small but satisfactory margin of profit, made smaller than usual by the advance in coal and oil, says the State Journal.

W. E. Sharp, head of the American, said Wednesday that the prospects were good for a reopening of business by the first or middle of February, and that this would come about through the resumption of purchases by the big five concerns in the fertilizer trade, the American Agricultural Chemical company, the Virginia and Carolina company, Armour, Swift and Roysters.

Buying by the fertilizing companies was halted because the money shortage prevented them from financing their own purchases, of which potash is only a part. Fertilizer is sold largely throughout the south through the country merchants. The farmer buys on an installment note, and the fertilizer company is paid by the country merchant attaching this note to his own. The manufacturer, in turn, borrows on these notes from his own banks. The cotton planter of the south is on the same sort of a strike as the wheat farmer of the west, and is not paying his debts any faster. He did not pay his fertilizer note, and the banks that bought these and the other notes not only refused further accommodations, but insisted on payment of the outstanding obligations by the guarantors.

Mr. Sharp went through the books of the big chemical company to satisfy himself that it was lack of money to pay for potash that caused the cancellation of orders, and from the same source he is receiving intimation that conditions will have so bettered themselves that the companies can re-enter the field of purchasing.

The American Potash company was adjudged a bankrupt on Tuesday. This course was taken in order to prevent the small, individual creditors from suing, getting judgment and taking parts of the plant under levy. By this plan it is hoped to preserve the property intact until such time as business can be resumed. The market, however, is limited to a comparatively few buyers. If it is impossible to do otherwise, a reorganization of the company will be effected, tentative plans for which have already been discussed by heavy stockholders.

The failure of the banks at Antioch to promptly clear all of the labor checks that were issued when the plant was closed has resulted in some hardships to former workers at the plant. When the checks were issued there was money in bank to meet them, but by the time a part of these reached Lincoln the money had gone into the custody of the receiver. These are all preferred claims, and will be paid out of the cash on hand just as soon as the court orders this done.

So far as known here the original potash plant at Hoffland, next to Antioch, is still running, this company having made a big cleanup during the war and having ample cash resources. It is storing its stuff for the market that is bound to open later because fertilizer is a necessity in the south. The Heber Hord plant at Lakeside was also, at last reports, finishing up running through some stuff on hand. Mr. Hord has sued the Armour company for breach of contract resulting from its cancellation of a long-time order.

REPORTS OF A MURDER AT SCOTTSBLUFF LAST NIGHT

Reports reached police officers in Alliance early this morning of a murder at Scottsbluff last night. According to the stories, a Mexican and two other men escaped in an automobile, and were headed toward this city. One of the fugitives was found in the car, it was said, and had been abandoned on the road six miles out of Scottsbluff. A telephone call to a Scottsbluff newspaper brought the information that they had heard the reports, but had not verified them.

CITY MANAGER CLASSIFIED AS A "RARE BIRD"

BUSINESS MAN AGAINST PROPOSED CHANGE

Says City Should Not Risk a Four-Year Experiment—His Advice Is "Let Well Enough Alone"

An Alliance business man, who for reasons that seem sufficient desires to preserve his anonymity, writes the following letter to The Herald for publication. He is opposed to the city manager plan, and cites a number of objections to it. Among these are the difficulty of securing a competent manager, the fact that all the good things that have been said about the plan came from the men who are its chief beneficiaries—the city managers themselves, the expense and long term for which the system must be tried. He answers certain arguments made by the advocates of the plan, and calls attention to what he regards as questionable methods adopted by those who would have it adopted. He charges that a resolution endorsing the plan was railroaded through the T. P. A. when seven members were present, and that of these seven, some were opposed. His letter follows:

ALLIANCE, Neb., Dec. 30.—To the Editor of The Herald:

Having listened attentively at Commercial club and other meetings to the constant distortion of facts put out for the absorption of a dear, unsuspecting public, I ask some of your valuable space for presentation of the other side of the question.

In little of New York exists a school that is said to dig from the gutter these rare pseudo city manager birds, polish them off for compensation, provide them with rare and ample credentials and hoist them into a position where they may elevate their heels to desk and arbitrarily scatter public simoleons. Then too the city managers have a little association to promote and protect their own interests. About all we have heard and read has come from these fountain heads.

One of these wise, desirable managers of many and varied accomplishments is not coming to a place for test at less than a salary of from \$3,600 to \$5,000 per annum and a contract to remain a year or more. While here on the job he has absolute control of city affairs, except the making of the city's laws. This city manager plan, if adopted, must endure four years, according to present laws. Does Alliance want to be, trussed up and take the European method of one man domination four years? Or would we prefer the present American plan in which all may have a hearing and part? Alliance has existed something more than thirty-two years, prospered and progressed without a high-priced city manager. Would it not be wise to let well enough alone? Where is the money coming from to pay a high-priced man, except in a further increase of taxes. We start for 1920 with the assessed valuation of most citizens very materially increased. The total tax levy is 17.1 cents on each dollar. This high taxation is no fault of the present city administration, but due to some of the acts, perchance mistakes, of the very men who are the most persistent promoters of this proposed change. Mr. Voter, it might be wise for you to dig under the surface and learn just who these men are, and see if you place implicit confidence in their integrity and judgment. Listed in the items that are cause for this taxation, might be mentioned the following bond issues, fathered by some of these very self-same reformers:

Sanitary Sewer and Septic Tank bonds	\$45,000
City Park bonds	5,000
Funding bonds (to pay old debts)	47,000
Paying for worthless Electric light franchise	55,000

(For this latter item city received nothing of value except the wiring about city.)

In your annual taxes 19 mills per dollar goes to pay for these doubtful values.

A careful study of the situation convinces one that back of all this clamor for a change, a few men started systematically, to create sentiment. Perhaps they are men who have never been known to make special effort, except for personal gain. Who is putting up for the cost of these various city manager educators, who come to Alliance from a distance, but always urge adoption of this plan? Their time, railroad fares, hotel bills, hall rent, handbills, etc., must all be paid for. Certainly the

(Continued on Page 4)

ALLIANCE HOTEL WILL OPEN A CABARET ROOM

The Alliance hotel will, shortly after the New Year, open up a cabaret room in connection with their hotel and various dining rooms. The new place of entertainment will occupy the store room to the north of the building, and will be fitted up for dancing and special parties. The floor will be put in condition, and waxed, and a number of small tables will be placed along the walls, leaving the center of the floor for dancing.

Plans for the new cabaret are not complete, although the work of getting the place ready is now under way. Mr. Miller desires to secure some extra good music. The present idea is to have the room open for dinner dances from 8 to 12 at least three nights a week. The room will also be available for special parties. These added facilities will make the Alliance hotel still more popular as a place for entertainment. The Palm Room is now the best known place in western Nebraska, and the new room, which has not been named, will permit choosing between a formal banquet and a dinner dance. The evenings it will be open to the public for dancing will undoubtedly meet with instant favor.

BANKER URGES MORE BUILDING FOR ALLIANCE

CONSTRUCTION WILL BE A HELP TO BUSINESS IN GENERAL.

S. B. Wright Declares That It Has Always Led the Way Out of Periods of Depression.

S. B. Wright, cashier of the Guardian State bank, is of the opinion that the one step that will mean most to Alliance in getting away from the present period of business depression is to speed up the building program, which came to a halt some months ago and has been practically at a standstill ever since. "Renewed building activity throughout the United States is forecasted for 1921," said Mr. Wright, "and more activity along that line is bound to help business in general." "At the present, there is a shortage of fully one hundred houses in Alliance. It is to the interest of everyone to speed the construction of homes, office buildings, mercantile buildings and some manufacturing plants, and soon things will be in full swing," Mr. Wright said.

"The merchant who has dry goods to sell, the professional man and the workers in the railroad shops are just as interested in seeing building take a boom as are the real estate men, the contractors and the building trades workers. The United States today is in the midst of what economists term a business depression. The term no longer has a fearsome aspect. We all realize now that business goes through the cycles of prosperity and depression, and that prosperity follows depression just as surely as depression follows prosperity. It is very interesting to the average man to learn that new building and new construction has always led the way out of the period of depression. It has always been the forerunner of another period of prosperity."

"The nation is safe financially and distress is vanishing, according to Secretary Houston. The United States is better able to weather the storm than any other country and is today the greatest economical power. It is better able to care for itself than any other nation on the globe. The United States is the greatest financial and economic power in the world and will continue to wield its power in the future. This was the Christmas message Saturday from the secretary of the treasury."

"Increase is shown in retail buying, according to Bradstreet's. The favorable features of the week in distributive trade are seasonal increases in retail buying, stimulated by holiday purchases of seasonal goods, a slightly enlarged distribution of heavy wearing apparel, due to colder weather; the snow north and west and some belated activity on the part of the jobbers in shipping goods to fill in broken stocks. The trend otherwise has been toward increased quiet at wholesale and in manufacturing lines."

"Nebraska produced a bumper corn crop. The average yield in the state was the highest since 1906. The estimate of the Nebraska crops during 1920, as approved by the bureau of crop estimates at Washington was 7,000,560 acres, compared to 7,030,000 acres last year. The average yield of 33 bushels, against 26 last year, is the highest since 1906. Crops in Kansas, our adjoining state, are valued at nearly one billion dollars. The volume of production in Nebraska exceeded all records."

MAYOR RODGERS IS OPPOSED TO A CITY MANAGER

GIVES HIS REASONS FOR NOT MAKING CHANGE

Says Important Improvements Would Have to Be Passed Over Because of Expense of Plan

Mayor A. D. Rodgers, in a communication to The Herald, explains his opposition to the proposed city manager plan, which will be voted on at Tuesday's special election. The mayor is not much in favor of hiring outside men, to assist in running the city's affairs, and points to the fact that Alliance has, since 1909, paid out over \$20,000 for expert assistance. The mayor lays the blame for most of the mistakes made by city administrations to this high-priced outside advice. He advises that citizens vote "No" on both propositions. His letter follows:

"ALLIANCE, Neb., Dec. 30.—To the Editor of The Herald: May I use some space in The Herald to explain where I stand on this city manager plan of government? There has been a lot of advertising that our city has been poorly run, and there are charges of gross extravagance, incompetent help, misappropriation of funds, and that claims have been allowed for goods purchased for the city by persons without authority. It is said that these evils can be cured only by 'changing doctors.' The new physician would be called a city manager, and he alone would have the right kind of medicine to cure all administrative ills."

"The city manager must be a sort of a Monkey-Ward man, because he must have the right credentials to prove him a competent civil engineer, electrical engineer, water commissioner—in fact, he will know everything, and everyone may learn from him. Yes, this is so—for we have had one of these fellows every three or four years to pull our legs for all he can. In fact, he has pulled out of our city over twenty thousand dollars for his knowledge of engineering and recommendations that he has made to various boards since 1909, besides the extra money it has cost our city in grades and lawsuits, and the extra expense to which the citizens have been put."

"In 1909 he surveyed our city and established grades which caused the rebuilding of nearly all of our sidewalks. He constructed one perfectly good septic tank that has caused us more grief than any other mistake that he has made. Up in West Lawn his survey there calls for a subway under the railway tracks to carry the water away from that part of town, and the crossings put up in this part of the city are one foot under the surface."

(Continued on page 5)

NEWMAN AN ENTHUSIAST FOR POTATO EXCHANGE

William Newman, who lives in the Yale Siding vicinity, was an Alliance visitor Thursday morning, and dropped into the potato exchange headquarters to pay his respects. Mr. Newman is one Box Butte county potato grower who is enthusiastic over the results he has received from the exchange, and he isn't the least bit backward about telling the world about it.

"The exchange has resulted in at least three hundred dollars' additional profit for me this season," Mr. Newman told a Herald reporter, "and I have several cars yet to market. There isn't a single doubt in my mind that this extra money came from my connection with the exchange. Out of five cars I sold, two of them went through the exchange, and realized me from 14 to 17 cents per bushel above prices paid by trackside buyers. The other three cars were all ready to be turned over to the exchange, but the buyers were so insistent that I let them have them—at exchange prices. They howled quite a bit when they heard the figures, but I wouldn't weaken a notch, and they came through. I never sold one of those cars that I didn't call up the exchange and learn the day's quotations, and every car sold at top price for the day."

Mr. Newman thinks the exchange will grow in value to the growers the more they learn about the way it works. "Many of the growers don't know what it will do for them," he said. "If they would only take five minutes off the next time they are in Alliance and call at the exchange, they'd find it the most profitable five minutes they ever spent."

The manager of the potato exchange hints that Mr. Newman is co-operating with them in the careful way in which he sorts and packs his potatoes. "When we have spuds like

(Continued on page 4)