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MAINE, SPAIN, CUBA

No Reliable Information Given Out Regarding Cause of the Maine Disaster.

PURSUES A POLICY OF DELAY

Administration Hopes the Matter Will Die Out If Given Time.

Cubans Making Headway.

Two weeks ago yesterday the battleship Maine was destroyed in the Havana harbor.

This is a long period for such an awful affair to hold the concentrated attention of a nation and still remain a mystery, but so far as any reliable information is at hand, the people in their anxiety have as little satisfaction as to the cause as they had the morning after the disaster.

It is not the policy of this paper to manufacture a startling story of war, blood and clashing calamity that will inflame the reader with a thrill of exciting patriotism for a moment and pass off in a feeling of disgust as soon as he learns we are only drawing on our imagination. This is why The Independent has said so very little in its news columns on the Maine disaster.

Two weeks ago we might have predicted a speedy settlement of the Spanish-Cuba affair, but our habit of confining our news to facts debarred any such speculation.

After two weeks we are in possession of no news on the subject further than that the Maine was sunk in the Havana harbor, and that 250 American sailors lost their lives in the horrible affair.

It is an established fact, however, that plenty of information is at hand tending to show that this government is pursuing a policy of delay and hesitancy that can have no other object than the final pigeonholing of the whole matter. Our readers will undoubtedly see reason for this suspicion when they remember that the president has declared up to this date, notwithstanding two weeks have passed since the disaster, that "the state department is in receipt of absolutely no information on the subject," and that "it is the belief in official circles at Washington that the awful disaster was purely an accident."

If they have no information on the subject why do they jump at the conclusion that it was an accident? If it was an accident, and they can easily prove it such if so, why have they not ended the suspense long ago? No sane person will be liable to believe that it would necessarily take fifteen days to learn what had caused a vessel to sink when she is still partly out of water and easily accessible from any point.

The state department is evidently pleased to be able to give out the information this morning that "the restive public is calming down and hot-headed inquiry into the catastrophe is dying out." This seems to be the chief aim at Washington, to have the matter drag along until the public turn away from the spectacle in disgust.

If it is found the people will not suffer this thing to be carried on in secret high-handedness, then a sham pretense at demanding indemnity will be made. Spain will plead that she is not amenable unless it was caused by an act of her subjects, and the United States may prove a whole litter of torpedoes and mines were exploded beneath her grand battleship in the Havana harbor, but unless she proves conclusively that it was the work of Spaniards she will lose her point. All this parley will take up the entire summer. Then the people of this country will have lost the fire of their interest in the matter, the administration hopes, and will submit to acquiescence in such a terminus of the investigation then when they would revolt were such a dismissal of the subject made now.

It is probable that all this talk and preparation for war is based on desire to get liberal naval appropriations and big contracts for building war vessels.

One thing is certain, that the administration and the whole people of this nation should to-day be in full possession of the facts in the case. Those carrying on the investigation know as much as to the cause of the disaster now as they ever will, and if it is an accident there can be no harm in saying so right now. We do not claim that secrecy in the investigation and handling of evidence is either wrong or unnecessary, but that it should have been concluded and its findings made public long ago.

The Cubans are having remarkable success throughout the island during the past week. The Spanish troops in the island are in a state of demoralization and Gomez is working within range of the railroad in the province of Santa Clara.

The affairs between Spain and the United States has nothing to do with Cuban successes.

The Cubans are well posted on the Maine disaster and hope war will result. It is their hope to attack Havana by land as soon as the United

States assails the city from the sea. This is a glittering prospect to the untiring Cubans, and if the opportunity comes there is little doubt that Havana would be compelled to surrender early in the contest, for the Cubans would fight like demons under such encouraging auspices.

Description of the Maine.

The Maine was a battleship whose keel was laid in 1888. It was of 6,682 tons displacement; 17.4 knots speed per hour; of 9,293 horse power, and cost \$2,500,000.

Her armament consisted of four 12-inch breech loading rifles; eight 8-inch breech loading rifles, twenty 6-pounder rapid fire guns; four 1-pound rapid fire guns and four Gatling guns.

The Maine had an armor of 12 inches at her sides, and eight inches on her turrets. Besides this she had four torpedo tubes and her coal carrying capacity was of 900 tons.

Twenty-nine officers and 370 men were her complement of sailors.

BARTLEY BONDSMEN RELEASED.

Jury Finds for Defendants After Fifty-one Hours Deliberation.

The jury in the case of the state against ex-State Treasurer Bartley's bondsmen, after being out fifty-one hours, brought in a verdict for the bondsmen Sunday evening.

The verdict was received with manifestations of delight by the attorneys for the defense. Attorney-General Smyth was surprised and disappointed. The people of the state will now be convinced that there is absolutely no hope of recovering any of the money embezzled from the state by Bartley. The case will go to the supreme court, it is true, but it might as well be dismissed from public speculation now, for there isn't the ghost of a probability that the supreme court will stand up for Nebraska and justice in this matter when it has gone out of its way to overrule and reverse decisions which were for the state and against the embezzlers. The people will simply have to be content to wait and reverse the supreme court at the first electoral opportunity.

The jury was composed of men who were out of work and hard up, and their sympathy for the bondsmen in their liability for so large a sum was probably augmented by their appreciation of the thirty or forty days remunerative employment they secured as jurymen. Some of them are known to have expressed opinions on the case before the trial commenced, but their desire for employment led them to deny that they were influenced by sympathy or prejudice when examined.

It might be well to call the attention of the republican press to their premature boasting about the great work the republican courts had done in convicting and punishing republican defaulters. All this self praise falls very flat since Moore has gone free and Bartley's bondsmen are released. Bartley, to be sure, stands convicted, but so did Eugene Moore. Bartley has one more republican court to make his apologies before, and it is more than probable that he will also slip out of the toils. The people see through the farce the republican courts are carrying on in convicting and sentencing their republican thieves only to turn them loose after the program of judicial deception has been carried out. Bartley's releasing and acquittal is looked forward to as closing the chapter of republican robbery and rottenness in this state. A new chapter of this story of republican official disgrace will not be opened in this state's history for many years to come. The people will see that these escaped criminals are hedged out of the states preserves.

In the meantime, will Joe Johnson please tell us what he is talking about when he refers to the prosecution, conviction and punishment of republican criminals by republican courts? Will he please cite us one case where a republican defaulter has been punished for his misdemeanors?

The republican papers are now springing another chestnut by saying "it may be possible for the state to recover something from the Omaha National bank as part of the \$201,884.05 Bartley paid illegally into that institution." This is the way they talk when a bank fails. The Journal, for instance, always declares upon the occasion of a bank failure that "it will probably pay out in full." Not a bank has failed in Lincoln in the past ten years but what the Journal has spring this chestnut. Not a republican embezzler has been turned loose by republican judicial injustice but that the Journal has said "it may be possible to recover him this way or that way." It now suggests that the state go after Bartley first bondsmen. What rot! Why should the state assume further expense in a hopeless attempt to make republican thieves punish their co-operators? The only thing the state can do will be to turn out the thieves and keep them out. It will do this. It has the work completed up to the supreme court and has commenced to remodel that institution by substituting for an uncertain and morally feeble member a man of honor, ability and fairness. It will make the other two changes at the first opportunity.

When bilious or costive eat a Cascaet candy cashartie, cure guaranteed, 10c, 25c.

You cannot do better than to purchase potatoes at prices named by F. G. Ferguson of Beaver Crossing, Neb., in his ad and you had better order now if you want pure vigorous seed to plant.

TELEGRAPH QUESTION

Overhead Wires Fail When Most Needed and the Public Is Inconvenienced.

UNDERGROUND CABLES BEST

Let the Government Put Them In and Be a Simple Competitor With Others.

How Can It Be Done.

The last sleet storm which went over the whole United States has unmistakably demonstrated that in this country we have the most inadequate, miserable telegraph and telephone systems, as all internal connections and communications were interrupted. For instance, New York and Boston could only communicate via London, England. Years ago it was demonstrated that the only safe connection is by an underground cable which resists all influence of the different elements. Therefore in all the states where the government owns and operates the telegraph and telephone for the benefit of the people, the always dangerous overhead wires were and are successively replaced by underground cables, thereby securing a better uninterrupted service. But here in the United States which are ruled by, and for the profit grabbing private corporations, telegraphs and telephones are only operated that these companies may extort the highest possible tribute from the people with the least possible expenses for the companies. For this purpose they overwork and underpay their operators and keep their rotten overhead wires and poles in cheap repair. And then if this rotten concern breaks down through any influence of the elements, whereby the communication is just interrupted at a time when the service is most needed, this people, with its sheepish patience, which pays the highest taxes for such service which should entitle them to the best service, sends its messages without any remonstrance, through an extra messenger, as they used to do years ago. Until these companies find it convenient to again patch up their rotten line for shearing their sheep again.

This last sleet storm has evidently demonstrated two facts: First—That the people will never get a satisfactory telegraph and telephone service without the government owns and operates the telegraph and telephone for the benefit of the people.

Second—That a satisfactory service can only be secured by underground cables which resists all influences of the elements.

These facts are in so far valuable for these people as it shows them that it would be useless to buy out the old companies with their old rotten overhead wires. The only way for the government to acquire an effective telegraph and telephone system is to immediately construct and lay its own underground cable.

Against this proposition our monopolists will demonstrate that the government has no right to destroy the well acquired sacred privileges and property of the telegraph and telephone companies without to compensate these companies to the full amount of their sacred privileges and property.

Monopolists always have clergeries to impart blessings on their property privileges and acts and to stamp them with the stamps of sacredness. This forbids profane hands to touch it again. Not long ago General Booth of the Salvation army put his stamp on the United States senate.

But even with the stamp of sacredness on them all such claims for indemnification are void, as we live in the time of free competition, where everyone can do what he pleases even if thereby thousands are ruined and nobody has misused this competition more mercilessly for their own profit than our monopolists.

What indemnification did the owners of steamboats pay to the owners of small boats, the railroads to the teamsters, the department stores to the small store keepers, packing house to butchers, the telegraph and telephone companies to the messenger for taking their bread away?

All this, the monopolists never thought to compensate anybody which they had squeezed out and misused, they just said we won't interfere at all with your business. You may continue to do business just as before, but these gentlemen think there is a big difference if the government will compete with the monopolists. Then they cry out that their sacred privileges, rights and property are destroyed for which the people must pay indemnification to the full amount, especially to innocent widows and orphan shareholders. But that's all hush. Privileges, rights and property of widows and orphans of monopolists are not a bit more sacred than rights and property of widows and orphans of common people, which never have any privileges. Contrary, by a close examination, we would find out that most of the share of such companies are in the hands of the devil, whereas not one of the many anxious and saints has ever owned a single share.

The Goulbs' boys and girls, the innocent orphans of the notorious Jay Goulb, robbed wealth enough together through the telegraph that they don't

need to go bare foot and hungry, even if you break down their old, for every passerby dangerous, rotten poles and wires, therefore it would be the greatest foolishness to either buy out these companies or to pay them indemnification. Better give them once a dose of their own medicine by declaring we don't interfere at all with your business. Just go on and do business in the same way as you did before.

Now arises the question how can the people urge the government to construct its own underground telegraph and telephone system?

Most people will say by a mass petition to congress, but the president of the Coxe army has shown that it is not very safe for common people, who wear neither diamond breast pins and rings, nor silk socks and silk cylinder hats to go to Washington without a good club; therefore I have not very much confidence in a petition. Most all petitions which were ever presented to congress had nearly the same fate. Congress either throws them in the waste basket, or if congress should grant a petition, the president kills it with the veto, and if congress should vote the veto down, then the supreme court will declare it unconstitutional, therefore what's the use to petition for that which we have a right to demand?

The petitioner is always a subordinated, lawless subject to the petitioner, and the latter one has always the right to grant the petition, in which case he is entitled to gratitude, or he may draw the petitioner in the petitioner's fate and give him him a kick so that he tumbles over and over again. What our congress has done with the poor, but decent and respectable members of the Coxe army. Without that a single one of our representatives had the courage to protest against such careless, tyrannical brutality and to defend the constitutional rights of these petitioners.

Considering these facts I believe that no free, liberty loving man, which possesses some self respect, will ever humiliate himself again to put his name under any petition, thereby wishing to be insulted and abused by these fellows at Washington, which after all are only our servants. The free man never pays for his rights, but he demands his rights. The right possessing right-demanding man, is not a subordinate to the officer, but he is his equal and therefore he stands on even ground with him, and if the officer will refuse him his rights then he is entitled to enforce the same. But these gentlemen at Washington either don't know or don't want to know it, therefore it becomes necessary to give them a little better instruction about their duties and rights. A German proverb says the servant always rides the horse faster than the boss.

The declaration of independence is so clear that there cannot be the least doubt that a government is only the servant of the people. Therefore let us act as free men and boss instead of humiliate ourselves by putting up and signing a petition to our servants; let us put up and sign a categorical order in which we demand the immediate construction of an underground telegraph and telephone system, to be operated by the government for the benefit of the people. Then if our servants at Washington should despise our order, instead of being knocked down and kicked off the grass by some brutes, let us take the club in our own hands and use it next November to knock down every one of those fellows who have despised our orders.

FRED SWEIZER.
Woodlawn, Feb. 16, 1898.

Big Klondike Expedition.

Mexico, Mo., March 1.—One of the largest Klondike parties that ever left the United States for the gold fields in Alaska left this city yesterday afternoon over the Wabash, in five North-eastern Pacific tourist sleepers. Ninety-seven people are in the party. On March 7 the party will set sail on the steamer City of Seattle for Dyea, Alaska. Captain R. F. Purcell of High Hill will act as guide and director of the party, he having been through the country before.

Mutual Fire Insurance.

Mutual Fire Insurance is like Fraternal Life Insurance, the only sensible thing for business people to do. Few people realize the enormous waste and loss from our present and defective fire insurance method and how vast a sum could easily be saved annually by insuring all our property ourselves either on the mutual plan or still better have it done by the state. Good authority estimates the average annual loss by fire in the United States at one hundred and twenty millions of dollars.

The New York Insurance commissioner report for 1891 shows that the fire companies reporting to him for 1890 collected eighty-three millions of dollars and actually paid in losses \$41,687,000. While their expenses were over thirty-three and one half millions. At the usual expense rate of Mutual Fire companies three and one half millions would have more than covered all necessary expenses leaving a net saving of at least thirty millions each year. A rate war has just broken out in Chicago, the Western Union, a combination of the stronger companies, in cutting rates fully one third showing what a tremendous margin they work on. Let the war go on, the people will profit by it and ultimately learn to carry their insurance themselves. The rate war is going on in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Indiana, and Wisconsin, and insurance papers estimate the yearly saving to those five states from the cut, if it is maintained, will be \$9,000,000. Let war rage.—Helping Hand.

PRODUCTION OF SUGAR

Interesting Statistics Published by the Secretary of Agriculture.

AMOUNT OF SUGAR IMPORTED.

Probable Competition From the Product of Hawaiian Islands.

Industry Should Be Developed.

The Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. James Wilson, has recently sent a letter to the senate giving a statement of the sugar importation production and consumption in the United States, and interesting information concerning the important industry. It is an industry deserving of every encouragement possible because the importation of sugar forms one of the principal items in the balance of trade against this country. If the \$100,000,000 now sent abroad annually can be kept within our own borders nothing should be left undone to accomplish it. In his letter to the senate Secretary Wilson says:

The average amount of sugar imported into the United States annually from 1893 to 1897, inclusive, was 1,890,482 tons of 2,240 pounds each, valued at \$101,575,293. The importation during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1897, was 443,323 tons more than the average of the four preceding years, which was 1,752,617 tons, owing to the desire of importers to anticipate the effect of the tariff act pending in congress during the last months of that year.

The average importation of sugar from the Hawaiian Islands from 1893 to 1897, inclusive, was 149,456 tons, valued at \$9,973,724. The importation for the fiscal year of 1897 was 192,508, being 43,052 tons above the average of the preceding four years. During 1897 the Hawaiian sugar was 9.1 of the amount consumed in the United States. From 1893 to 1897 it was 7.1 of our consumption.

The best sugar consumed in the United States in 1896 was 18 per cent in 1897, it was 45 per cent of the total consumption. The disturbed condition of Cuba doubtless caused much of this marked increase but the best sugars from countries in continental Europe are those from which we may expect the most active competition. The production of best sugar in the United States in 1897 was 41,347 tons of 2,240 pounds each; of cane sugar, 289,009 tons; of maple sugar, 5,000 tons, and of sorghum sugar 300 tons.

The total domestic product was 335,656 tons. The total refined product of imported sugar was 1,760,607 tons, making the total annual consumption 2,096,263 tons.

A prominent question is, can this Hawaiian production be greatly increased in competition with the American farmer? Free entry into the United States from these islands has given great encouragement to the production of sugar and the industry has been developed very rapidly. We must take into consideration methods of civilization in Hawaii before we can certainly conclude what the future of the industry will be in that direction. Sugar cane is growing continuously on the same land in Hawaii, and for this reason the soil is being exhausted. The planters are now compelled to buy commercial fertilizers. The three elements of plant food most necessary to vegetation are nitrogen; potassium and phosphoric acid. Hawaiians will find saltpeter in Chile, potash at the States salt mine in Germany and phosphates in Florida. Guano on the islands of the Pacific is being exhausted and is quite expensive. When it becomes necessary to fertilize the soil in order to grow a crop, the expense becomes a considerable item and must be considered in determining what the effect of competition would be on American sugar growers.

Sugar will be grown in the United States by American farmers. The Department of Agriculture has been experimenting in two-thirds of the states of the union during the past year, and will experiment in all the states during the coming year to ascertain where we can grow sugar producing plants most profitably. A detailed report now being prepared for congress will show the results of the work. The indications that come to us regarding our past season's work are that there is a wide extent of country from the Atlantic to the Pacific where sugar beets can be profitably grown as an additional money crop.

The \$100,000,000 now paid for sugar is a great incentive, and numerous factories are planned and arrangements for growing beets are being made in many states. The per cent of sugar in the beets in many parts of our country is much higher than the average in Europe. Sugar beets will be grown most profitably by the American farmer in connection with dairying or meat production. They will be a great successively on any one piece of ground but will become a feature of rotative systems, alternating with the grasses, legumes, and the grains that recuperate the soil and store it with plant food suitable for growing the best on any one piece of ground once in four or five or six years. Nitrogen will be replaced by the clovers and other legumes. Potash and phosphoric acid will become available in most of our soils while they are resting in grass.

The American farmer can grow the sugar beet profitably for the dairy cow, young animals, and fattening stock if the sugar is not extracted at all. The Hawaiian has not these auxiliaries. The pulp of the sugar beet contains all the nutritious matter of the plant. If this is taken back to the farm and fed to stock, and through that instrumentality returned to the soil, sugar beets can be grown perpetually on the same farm, without at all reducing the fertility of the soil, because the sugar comes from the carbon dioxide of the atmosphere and takes no element of fertility from the land.

The first sugar beet factories established in the United States imported machinery from continental Europe. The ingenuity of our people has been at work and has gradually supplanted every piece of machinery imported, so that both in the field and factory American machinery is superseding the foreign and enabling the American farmer and factory owner to do the work more expeditiously and economically.

These considerations lead me to conclude that the system of agriculture pursued in Hawaii, which is certainly reducing the fertility of the soil, cannot compete with a system of farm management in the United States where the fertility of the soil is not at all reduced. We consume in the United States about 2,000,000 tons of sugar. Something like a million acres devoted to this purpose would produce all the sugar we import into our country at the present time, or 10 acres grown on each one of 100,000 farms in rotation with other crops would meet home demands and do no injury to the soils.

The American farmer will use this crop to diversify the farm system. The Hawaiian sugar grower is a one crop man, and wherever one crop is perpetually grown, be it wheat or maize, beets or cane, cotton or tobacco, the available plant food in the soil is certain to be reduced below the point of profitable production, and fertilizers are required.

With regard to the ability of the United States to produce sugar, the states north of Virginia and including that commonwealth have demonstrated within the past year that the conditions are all favorable for profitable production. We intend, during the coming year, to ascertain where the sugar beet can be profitably grown in the states south of Virginia. Where it may be ascertained that the sugar beet will not grow profitably in the south, and where ribbon cane will not succeed, we will introduce the sorghum sugar cane seed. The department of agriculture has been selecting and developing this plant during the last seven years, until it contains as high a per cent of sugar as is found in the sugar beet. The average sugar content necessary to the profitable production of the sugar beet is about 12 per cent.

The Lohi factory in Utah has been running for several years profitably with an average of sugar in the beet of 12 to 13 per cent. Our selected sugar cane gives us an average of 14 per cent, and runs as high as 20 to 22 per cent in some cases. The department has been using the same methods of selection in developing sorghum by the polariscope that have been in vogue in France and Germany for forty years past in the selection of molar beets. Wherever we find that sugar beets will not grow profitably in the southern states, we propose to introduce this high-heredity sorghum seed. Sorghum molasses is made extensively all over the United States. The census of 1890 shows that in 1880 the United States produced 24,235,219 gallons of sorghum molasses, and in 1897 we made 300 tons of sorghum sugar. It is popular with the people; it is made in small neighborhood mills, and the manufacture is being greatly extended.

An additional reason why the department of agriculture proposes to encourage the growing of first-class sorghum in the south is that the farmers of that section require a carbonaceous forage plant to feed with their cotton-seed cake. The state of Georgia, for example, produced 600,000 tons of cotton seed in 1897. If properly balanced with carbonaceous fodder, the cake of that one state would have furnished the 390,000 cattle exported from this country last year. The sorghum plant is highly carbonaceous and will answer this purpose admirably. It grows vigorously in dry soils where maize and other grasses do not thrive. Whether sugar is produced from beets or cane, it is done most profitably in connection with farms having all the departments properly balanced. The northern states have the dairy and feed yard; the southern states may have them as well. The production of sugar can be incidental in both sections of the country to the feeding of animals. Hawaii has nothing of this kind. The cane is grown; it is hauled to the mills; the bagasse is not returned to the soil; the available plant food is reduced, and the planters must search to the ends of the earth for fertilizers. This is expensive, and they cannot permanently compete with farmers who make the growing of a few acres of sugar beets or sorghum incidental to other agricultural operations on the farm.

Sugar production in Hawaii is carried on with coolie labor under contract systems. That will vanish if the islands become subject to our laws, when the laborer there will receive the same wages he now gets in California.

Hawaii then will not seriously compete with sugar producers in the states. When the people of these islands come to consider, with scientific assistance, the possibilities of coffee production that can be extended over much of the limited sugar belt, it will be found that in that industry they have a monopoly with which no state in the union can interfere. It is a singular fact that no scientific improvement of the coffee tree with regard to the excellence of the berry and increased yield of the tree through intelligent selection has ever been made. The climate of these islands is admirably adapted to the production of many fine fruits that cannot be grown in any of our states. They can grow many choice subtropical and tropical fruits that have never been scientifically developed, the improvement of which would lead to very profitable production. In these directions the farmers of the states could not compete with Hawaii.

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