

# CONCERNING MEN AND MATTERS

Every lover of the national game in Lincoln will regret to hear even a rumor that Donald Despain contemplates the sale of the Antelopes. That the season has proved unprofitable has in no wise been his fault. That Mr. Despain has managed to pull through without a heavy loss is a tribute to his good business judgment, for not since the history of the game locally has a team been so persistently pursued by the hoodoo of bad luck. In a season noted for its dryness the Antelopes have lost more than twenty games on account of rain, several of them Sunday dates that would have meant big money, and one of them—the Denver gala day date—meaning more than \$2,000. During all this run of ill luck Mr. Despain has kept smiling and has done his utmost to give Lincoln a winning team.

Now that the season is about to close, with the Lincoln team far in the ruck, despite its former winning stride, it may not be out of place to "talk turkey." The whole trouble with the Lincoln team is internal dissensions. Forgetful of what they owe to a manager who has treated them liberally and been on the level all the time, the players have quarreled among themselves; jealousies have cropped out; there has been backcapping without limit—with the usual result. We have played a little ball in our time, but never professionally. But from a somewhat extended acquaintance among professional ball players we have arrived at the conclusion that the average ball player possesses about the average amount of human nature. And we know that it is not human nature for a man to give his best efforts when the foreman is a insulting and abusive, and given to "roasting" for fancied mistakes and never according a good word for tasks well performed.

So deeply ingrained in human nature is this feeling that a foreman can easily offset the virtues of a really good employer. The fact that the Lincoln team has struck a losing streak is not the reason for the dwindling attendance upon the games. This is due entirely to the fact that the baseball loving public is pretty wise to the fact that there are men on the team who are "sloughing," who are trying to play even with certain team mates, forgetful of the fact that in so doing they are throwing the harpoon into the club owner who, above all other club owners in the league, has treated them like gentlemen. If the players were doing their best under evil circumstances the "fans" of Lincoln would be just as loyal today as they were in former sea-

sons when the home team struck a losing streak.

As a lover of the game, as one who appreciated what he has done for the game in Lincoln and throughout the western circuit, Will Maupin's Weekly earnestly hopes that Mr. Despain will retain the ownership of the Antelopes. So far as his management could bring it about he has made the game under his management synonymous with squareness and good behavior. He has spent money freely for good material, and has pocketed losses brought about by bad weather with the smile that betokens the "good sportsman." He has given to the game the best efforts of a man desirous of making good with the public. He has performed his part to the entire satisfaction of all who love the game.

There remain but a few more games ere the season ends. The baseball enthusiasts of Lincoln owe Mr. Despain the patronage that will recoup him in some small measure for the losses sustained by reason of unfilled dates. What if the team is disorganized by accident and by internal dissensions? What if some members thereof are guilty of laying down on a management that has treated them square? Let's get together at the wind-up and give a live, boosting, enterprising and gentlemanly manager a closing series that will convince him that his efforts have been appreciated.

If the shopmen on the Harriman system strike now they will merely be playing into the hands of the railroad's managers, and into the hands of the politicians. We lay claim to some little knowledge of the "labor game," and we unhesitatingly declare that in our opinion the Harriman management would welcome a strike at this time. Why? Because business is dull, because there are thousands of men out of employment, thus making it easy to recruit strike-breakers; because business conditions are such that any party that wittingly or unwittingly adds to the depression will forfeit public sympathy, without which no cause can win in the end. We believe that wages average too low on all railroads, but a public suffering business depression is not going to give much of a hearing to men who quit \$3 a day jobs in order to enforce recognition of a new union or a wage increase of 10 or 15 per cent.

We wouldn't give a continental for a labor union that had no strike clause in its constitution. We believe that there are times when the strike is justifiable—

yea, that there are times when not to strike is a crime. But it should always be as a last resort, and it should be so engineered as to be called when there is at least some chance of winning. To strike in the face of certain defeat may be heroic, but it is damned foolishness just the same. And we frankly assert our belief that for the shopmen of the Harriman system, or any other system, to strike now, at the very beginning of winter and in the face of what seems to be a growing and general business depression, is criminally foolish. We are not considering the interests of the railroads for a minute. They are pretty well able to take care of themselves. Regardless of whether the shops are operated, or the trains run, the managers will eat. But what about the wives and children of the strikers? What about the men and women and children in other lines of industry who will suffer the minute a railroad strike is called? What chance is there of winning a long-drawn out strike, with business depressed, winter at hand and more than a million idle men clamoring for work?

We believe the employes are justified in their demands. They are working too hard for too little money. Their conditions of employment are not what they should be. But is this the right time to try conclusions with the employers? We believe not. And so believing we plead with the railroad employes to go slow. Better bear with conditions as they exist, bad as they are, for a time, and while thus bearing with them prepare to take advantage of the psychological moment when it arrives.

We've been through this strike game. There isn't a railroad man in America who can tell the writer anything about its sufferings and its trials. We've seen too many wan-faced women and too many children shivering in the cold, while husband and father were out on strike, to stand up and advocate a walk-out under anything short of conditions positively hellish. It's all right for the young men who have given no hostages to fortune, and who can pack their grips and hike out to places new, but what about the men who have given hostage to fortune in the shape of wives and children who have no other support than the daily wage of husband and father? Don't imagine for a minute that the railway managers are not wise to conditions among the wage earners. Nor do not imagine for a minute that the railroad managers are the only ones the strikers would have to fight. A powerful combination will stand behind the railroad managers in an ef-