

THE CASUALTY RECORD

The Chicago Tribune, which has long specialized in the collection of crime and casualty statistics, announced this week that in less than six months of the present year the total casualty record of the entire year 1906 had been surpassed. With 273 deaths already and 925 injuries in railroad accidents, 902 lives lost in steamship and 355 in mine accidents, 2,240 persons killed by tidal waves, 5,100 by earthquakes, and 530 by hurricanes, "there can be little doubt," the paper says, "that 1907 will be known in history as the year of disaster." This unenviable pre-eminence would apparently be secure even if the misplaced switch, the misunderstood signal, the careless pilot, the atmospheric vortex, and all of their allies should go out

of business from now till December 31. But the same authority reports for 1907 a larger total of philanthropic gifts and bequests, with a smaller total of embezzlements and other defalcations, than for any corresponding periods in twenty-five years. Thus the apparent visitations of the last year come at a time when the human race has been behaving particularly well in respect to both benevolence and honesty. The facts might puzzle a believer in special providences. But the common consolation will be the thought that, like the weather, the succession of horrors can not continue much longer, and will be made up for later by days of exceptional safety. But will pilferings increase and benefactions fall off again when this happens?—New York Evening Post.

KILLS BEAR WITH PENKNIFE

Jay Bunch, of this city, had an experience last week that bids fair to rival Roosevelt's coyote yarn. Bunch is a filer at Larkin Bros.' logging camp on the Wishkah, and one day last week with a friend and several dogs started out to find a bee tree. They had not gone far when the dogs started up a bear. Bruin took refuge in the top of a tree, but was finally dislodged, and one of the dogs managed to get a good hold on the animal's ear and hung there. Bunch had no other weapon than a jack-knife, but he got it in working order and commenced the hand-to-hand battle. He struck the bear about forty times, finally severing his jugular vein, and Bruin, weak from loss of blood, gave up the fight. The bear's hide is literally punctured with holes around the throat. The animal weighed about 300 pounds.—Aberdeen, Wash., Correspondence of Seattle Times.

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How Municipal Ownership is Misrepresented

(From the Richmond, Va., Times-Dispatch, June 23, 1907.

Wheeling, W. Va., June 22.—Municipal ownership of light and water plants at Martins Ferry, a town of twelve thousand inhabitants in eastern Ohio, promised to be a success in the early years of the experiment, but passing events have shown that troubles are certain to multiply and possibly in the future may result in serious disadvantage to the municipality.

With the water works system costing half a million dollars and the electric light plant erected at an expense of \$125,000, the town is bonded far beyond the indebtedness it can stand, but this is not the trouble that will eventually prove the undoing of municipal ownership in the town.

The inability of the municipal authorities to deal with labor troubles has put the water works and the lighting system in jeopardy the past year, and it looks as if the worst was yet to come. Three times in the year the employes of both these plants have gone out on a strike without a moment's warning, leaving the valuable machinery and the public service system to run themselves. At present a strike is on and the strikers have been "locked out" of both places.

The town authorities claimed they were not permitted under the state laws to deal with the employes' union, and when the men did not get what they wanted through the union they laid down their tools. Later the board of public service discharged the leaders and made it so unpleasant for the other union men that they were compelled to quit.

The fight has been on now for a year, and union labor, which has the controlling vote in the town, will oust the entire board having charge of the town plants at the coming fall election. Men will be chosen who are known to be friendly to union labor, and this will mean the appointing of men to positions at both plants who are new to the business and who have little or no experience.

Already the machinery has been damaged to the extent of many thousands of dollars by inexperienced men employed on short notice to fill the places of the men discharged, and with two or more changes certain to occur within the year there is every reason to believe that the damage will be infinitely greater. New machinery will then be needed, and the city will be swamped in debt.

With the water works and the electric light plant in control of a private corporation that could deal directly with the unions, or fight them as it saw fit, all trouble could have been avoided and the two plants could have been running at a reasonable profit and without material inconvenience to the public.

The town has been enabled to run along for years by reason of the revenue received from the sale of water to Bridgeport and Brookside, two neighboring towns that laid their own pipes and paid something like ten thousand dollars each year for water rental. Now that there has been so much trouble, Bridgeport is considering building its own water works or securing its supply from some private company, and thus cut off the extra revenue that has made the Martins Ferry plant self sustaining.

(From the Mayor of Martins Ferry, Ohio.)

The following has been received by the Richmond Evening Journal, Martins Ferry, Ohio. Executive Department.

June 27, 1907.—Dear Sir: Yours of the 24th instant, with clipping from Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch enclosed, came duly to hand. In reply would say the whole communication from beginning to end is a tissue of falsehoods, made from the whole cloth. * * *

In the first place there is no strike at either the water works or electric light plant at present. About a year since we had a strike at both plants, but the trouble was amicably adjusted at the time without the town

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