

Pessimism is reported to enfold the economic conference at The Hague. The chief reason for gloom is that Uncle Sam is not pulling up a chair to the green baize table. Having a greenhorn take chips in the game is the only thing that could liven up that party.

Meanwhile the French mission to arrange for funding the war debt of \$3,716,000,000 owed to the United States is preparing to journey to Washington. "The mission will not make the slightest request for a cancellation of the war debt," a Paris cablegram announces, "but on the other hand it will inform the American government that there is no prospect of France paying a dollar of interest on the principal for years to come." In addition to turning its empty pockets inside out, this French mission will exhibit a hole representing a 4,000,000 franc budget deficit.

Americans who are wondering what solution can be found for this bankrupt condition which exists not only in one of our debtors but in all, might well consult the little volume by Robert Moutier, called "Our Eleven Billion Dollars." A few passages from this up-to-the-minute book are sufficient to explain much:

The \$11,000,000,000 and more that many Americans, congressmen included, expect Europe to pay us in the next 25 years, are not coming back to the United States. Those billions, and other billions, that will accumulate are abroad to stay, no matter whether Europe and America have peace or war.

For Europe of today the cancelling of inter-governmental debts would mean freedom to continue wasteful methods and to spend larger sums on preparations for war.

"Stabilize exchange" is the cry that has gone up throughout the world, as if stabilization were the cure-all for the world's post-war ills. But under the present economic and political conditions it would be just as impossible to stabilize exchange as to stabilize Lloyd George.

In particular, cancellation would mean more for Great Britain than for any other country, and in this unrevealed fact may lie the reason that London has fostered the cancellation idea and has kept it before the world.

A proposal that the United States should cancel its debts against the allied governments would simply result, in effect, in the cancellation by one of the principal creditors of its claims in order that the claims of the other creditors might remain intact, and would transfer from the peoples of the debtor governments to the shoulders of the people of the United States the taxes necessary to liquidate the outstanding obligations of the United States government representing the loans made by it to the allied governments.

As the chief creditor and the principal banker the United States has a right and also the duty to teach the lesson that balanced budgets, minus armaments, minus currency inflation, plus long time credits, investments and increased production equal economic recovery both in Europe and the United States.

In the main Mr. Moutier contents himself with recording and summarizing the facts concerning the debt of 18 European states to the United States. Two suggestions are made, however, one that instead of cancellation, America, through its investors, lend a sum equal to the international debt to the industries of Europe, thus putting the money to work. The other proposes a real world economic conference, to be held in Washington, dealing squarely with facts and not theories, and ending all illusions and uncertainty.

A GOOD FIGHTER PASSES.

Few men in Omaha were known in local politics over as long a period as William J. Broatch, who died yesterday.

Captain Broatch—the title won by active service in the civil war—lived in Omaha forty-eight years. His first political victory was his election to the state legislature in 1881. Six years later he was elected mayor of Omaha for a three-year term. Again in 1895 he was elected mayor, serving two years. In 1892 he was a presidential elector from Nebraska. At other times he was a member of the fire and police board and other civic boards and political committees. In 1912, after a period of relative retirement in politics, he came to the front as an ardent Roosevelt supporter and sought election as a republican elector, being refused a place on the ballot because of his allegiance to Roosevelt, by that time a candidate outside the republican party.

During these many years Captain Broatch was a friend to be valued and an antagonist respected.

GHOSTS AS RAILROAD BUILDERS.

"Playing hunches" is a thing often done in a game of poker, and sometimes done in business. However, the statement of Arthur E. Stilwell, a veteran railroad builder, that he was guided by spirits in laying out the route of his lines beats any story of a miraculous four-card draw.

Kansas City owes its belt line railroad to Mr. Stilwell. It also is a terminal of the Kansas City Southern and the Kansas City, Mexico & Orient system, two other Stilwell roads. This latter is only partially completed, a magnificent dream, but not as yet a financial success. Its western end was designed to tap the Pacific coast at the Mexican port of Topolampam.

It would seem that the spirit advisors of Mr. Stilwell had a bias in favor of north and south routes and did not care overmuch for immediate returns from traffic. One question that if whippers in the night advised a route from Kansas City to Alaska they would have found hearing.

The story he tells of a premonition against putting a terminal at Galveston can be believed without acquiescing in the credit he gives supernatural advice. The fact that a tidal wave destroyed Galveston a few days after his yards had been completed in Port Arthur gives a dramatic touch. Many others have acted on similar hunches and found them justified, but no one ever hears of the much greater number of premonitions that prove false.

Common sense is not yet ready to accept spiritualism, even though it must admit that there are happenings now and then that seem inexplicable by human reason. When a builder and financier of the

rank of Mr. Stilwell risks ridicule and rises up in a spiritualist meeting to give testimony some idea of the prevalence and strength of these notions is gained. But still, the popular explanation is that when Mr. Stilwell went to bed he forgot to turn off his brain, and that his visions proceeded from his own active mind rather than from ghostly activity.

EXONERATING THE RETAILER.

That retail business as a whole has been rather unjustly pictured as profiteering is indicated by a forthcoming report of the Joint Commission of Agricultural Inquiry, according to Representative Sydney Anderson, the chairman.

A chart shows the distribution of the consumer's dollar in the retail dry goods, grocery, shoe, clothing and hardware trade. For 1913, the gross margin taken by the retailer out of the dollar received from the consumer was 29.16 cents, of which 6.8 cents was profit, while for 1921, the gross margin was 26.16 cents, of which 1.13 cents was profit. In 1913 expense, exclusive of profit, was 22.36 cents, and in 1921 it was 25.03 cents, showing an average increase in operating cost of 2.67 cents and a reduction of profit of 5.67 cents, while the proportion of merchandise cost included in the consumer's dollar was 4 cents.

That is to say, during the period of rising prices from 1913 to 1921, the percentage of margin for operating expenses and profits did not increase. As operating expenses advanced, profits decreased.

"Our report will show," says Chairman Anderson, "that clothing retailers took their largest profit from the consumer's dollar in 1913. In 1921, the industry showed a trade profit of 1.3 cents per dollar of sales. The report will show that the average profit of clothing retailers during the entire period, 1913 to 1921, was 6.10 cents per dollar of sales." The highest profit made by shoe stores was in 1919, when it reached 9.36 cents. Retail dry goods profits were found to average 5.3 cents for the period, and were highest in 1916, when they averaged 7.3 cents per dollar. The highest hardware profit was 8.3 cents, in 1916.

The investigation on which these figures are based has been exhaustive, and it is not to be believed that any unfavorable facts would be concealed. Criticism is made in the report of the accumulation of surplus stock, as adding to costs of operation. It recommends that retailers co-operate more closely with community organizations whose purpose it is to improve social and industrial conditions. In agricultural communities the retailers are advised to keep in touch with those who are striving to improve marketing, transportation and social conditions on the farm. Emphasis is given the belief that the more consumers concentrate their purchases in their community, the lower will be the operating expense of local dealers, and that consumers will be benefited thereby through the lower prices made possible by lower selling expense.

ENLISTING FOR LIFE.

A time of momentous decision for innumerable young men arrives now with the ending of school. In spite of the lightheartedness with which they enter the workaday world there are certain grim aspects that are more easily seen in retrospect than in anticipation.

Blind alley occupations open on every hand. Very often their pay to newcomers is higher than that afforded by jobs giving a chance of future promotion. Perhaps they allow one to dress in a white collar and his best clothes, secure from dirt and grease. Less physical or mental effort may be required, and the hours may be short.

Sooner or later, however, as the boy advances farther into the blind alley, he comes up against a solid wall, high and without exit. At that late day he may retrace his path and guess once more what his life work is to be. The chances are that he will drift again into the same sort of impassable course, and drift and drift and drift. If he develops the right stuff he may in time make for himself a scaling ladder, rising as some few before him have done over what appear insuperable obstacles.

Even this can not be done without seeking the advice of some one who has made the passage. Faithfulness and industry are not enough in a blind alley profession. It is much better for a boy to consult some successful man before he sets out in business life. And it is nothing less than a duty that every man should try to give intelligent help to these recruits.

DIVORCE COURT BICKERING.

As a spectacle of what some men and women will do for money, the divorce court has few equals. Almost greater even than the tragedy of a broken home, the wrecking of the children's ideal, is the utter abandonment of all finer feelings in the gross desire for more dollars per month on the part of the wife, and the husband's efforts, no less keen, to keep her from getting a few more paltry silver pieces.

Devoid of consideration each for the other, forgetful not only of "love's young dream," but sacred vows taken at the marriage altar, are they. Intimate details of marital life, narration of which has no place in a public court room, are bared before the most nondescript assemblage.

Surely this is a crucifixion a sensitive woman would scarcely survive, or any self-respecting man have a part in—except for money.

RADIO POLICE CARS.

Omahans who feel the need of increased police protection—which classification includes every non-criminal resident of the community—will hardly endorse the proposed equipment of police automobiles and motorcycles with radiophones until more thorough tests have demonstrated the value of the plan.

Radio telephony undoubtedly is a great invention and has great possibilities of future development. The fact nevertheless remains that it is still in an extremely experimental stage. No sending station today can be certain of reaching any specific receiving station with all its messages and no police captain could depend upon the response of any particular police car to an emergency call sent by radio. That may come in time, but the time is not yet.

Meanwhile, there are methods of improved police protection which have been tried and proven worth while. If Omaha has the money, there are plenty of ways in which it can be spent to certain advantage. Principal of these is the patrol booth system for the protection of residential districts. This has been approved by police officials and by civic organizations; it has not been put in operation because of lack of funds. If funds are available, let us use them for this trustworthy protection, not for experiments.

A plague of locusts is menacing crops in southern Europe. The Italians are showing their ingenuity by sending soldiers with flame throwers and poison gas against them.

If it is correct for the state of Nebraska to own a gravel pit, it certainly is all right for it to make use of it.

The gasoline reserve supply may be high, but its altitude is no greater than that of the price.

The Bee's LETTER BOX

Give Pedestrians a Chance.

Omaha, June 12.—To the Editor of The Bee: Every one walks, even automobiles. This alone should have assured popular approval of a police judge's recent outburst against motorists who crowd that seemed to stretch into eternity your long vigil was finally rewarded by hearing a small voice pipe under your nose: "O-o-o-o-o-hoo! Come on out. Circus just got in!" If you were a "regular feller," in other words, "one of the bunch," you surely would not have been so surprised by this announcement. It only comes a few times in a lifetime.

But not a representative of the Chamber of Commerce traffic bureau argued that it would not be feasible for traffic officers to leave their posts to force motorists back. And our chief of police announced he would issue new instructions to traffic officers.

"They back 'em up in Los Angeles," argued the irritated police judge. "If all we want for an automobile to be driven beyond the property line when the street is closed by the officer, and pedestrians are crowded to the sidewalk, we are asking for trouble."

Apparently, however, what is done in Los Angeles, or for that matter in Kansas City—yes, even in Council Bluffs—is enough to convince the Omaha, for many motorists continue to pay little or no attention to traffic officers. The Chamber of Commerce traffic representative probably is right. If a traffic officer were to start "leaving his post" to drive motorists back where they belong in Omaha he never would be at his post.

But why should a traffic officer leave his post to make a motorist back up and allow the light to pass? The officer is in charge of his corner, even as a captain is in charge of his ship. A wave of his hand should be enough to convince the most impatient of motorists. He is paid his salary for making the intersections safe. If he doesn't do this, why pay him? FAIR PLAY.

Short and to the Point.

North Platte, Neb., June 14.—To the Editor of The Bee: We notice in your newspaper of recent date that our government is about to take action in Cuba to stop graft.

If our legislators in the United States have a remedy for graft, allow me to suggest they be put to the test in our own country. J. H. MARKS.

Tariff and History.

York, Neb., June 14.—To the Editor of The Bee: Why should the people get so worked up over the pending tariff bill? It is periodic and was here 40 years ago. The owners of the steel industry have asked congress for a tariff of 5 cents per pound on wire nails that were sold at 8-13 cents per pound. The tariff was 5 cents. Now the democrats say it can not be done. But it was done! And the nails are used as a sample of the principle in action.

But under the Wilson bill of 1894 our factories closed and the soup houses opened. And under their free trade the government did not receive income enough to pay the household expenses, let alone payments on the national debt which they caused! Which we were paying off at a nice rate. But they used up our reserve fund and floated \$25,000,000 in bonds and at the same time the interest rate that we were paying.

Then came 16 to 1 to raise prices which the McKinley bill did not do. We could not do except 16 to 1. Well, we got them both, in flat contradiction to what those "wise and good friends of the great common people" told us. Then, 10 years ago, we had the same bunk over again, and got the same results. When some one asked Mr. Wilson where they would get funds for governmental expenses under free trade, he said:

"Who said anything about free trade? We cannot live under free trade here; we must have revenue for the cost of government; but that doesn't mean protection, but just tariff enough for revenue only."

Well, what did we get from his administration but free trade and the highest rates on some things of southern production they ever had? "Oh, but one fellow told me they put cotton on the free list along with wool. I told him we imported no cotton but exported tons of it, and we imported wool from places like Australia and Argentina, where the sheep needed no winter feed or shelter, but in their tropical climate, and with \$5 to \$7 a month herders, they could lay the wool down on our shores for half what our people could raise it. Then he said, 'Well, then, we could get our clothes cheaper, could we not?' And that is what we are after. Then I told him to go there and herd the sheep instead of charging \$8 for eight hours work here."

But back to that much-lamented administration. They gave all kinds of cotton goods protection (they have the child labor cotton mills down there), some of it in women's and children's garments as high as 35 and 40 per cent. And whiskey (good old Kentucky bourbon) \$2.50 per gallon, champagne \$9.50 per dozen quart bottles, and wraps of bacco \$2.50 per pound. They did not want the competition from "cheap labor" tobacco from the Nile valley to touch the south. Now get this: Under the Underwood bill, under its free trade provisions, our experts felt flat, while our imports raised to such a volume that instead of a heavy balance of trade in our favor, it soon came as much the other way, and as the gold was being drawn from this country and banks began to tumble investors were hedging and business at a standstill.

Mr. Wilson said it was only a condition of the mind. Say, brother, how would his face have looked in one of those long bread lines waiting in the cold for the bread of life? It is not out of place or respect to say there would be a good place to cure some of those fellows with good incomes who are so sure to die that some one else's expense or sacrifice.

Take one more example of free trade cheapness: Paper was put on the free list and went up next to nothing, while the money to pay for it and the labor went largely to Canada, and then came in free, and some big papers that are in this fight for free trade have their own mills "across the line" and bring it in free and sell much more to others than they use.

Is that "past all understanding" why some big republican papers have turned free traders? I think not.

Now, back to 16 to 1. Then they were quoting the "greatest statement of the old republican party" as saying the "crime of '73 was a conspiracy of the money power to rob the people." And when asked why

OPINION What Editors Elsewhere Are Saying

Barnum Wrong About Circuses.

Remember the time when, as a youngster, you spent a certain sleepless night anxiously awaiting the coming of dawn after the circus had been placed upon child care that the subject deserves. And in many cases even now poverty and ignorance still stand in the way of child welfare.

But there will be no legitimate excuse in this country now on. If baby is not well the dispensary wants to see him and tell you why and what to do for him. Visiting the clinic carries no obligation of any kind, except the obligation of parents to their children, and the dispensary goes more than half way.

Child Labor and the Law.

There is just one effect of such an amendment which we would prophesy with conviction; that is, it would spawn a whole new bureaucracy, to persecute private citizens at public expense. The question of child labor it would leave, for all practical purposes, in statu quo, because that question is one of economics and not of politics. While for thousands of families the choice continues to lie between letting their children starve and putting them to work, child labor is likely to continue, and constitutional amendments designed to prevent it will be about as effective as the amendment to the constitution to prevent drunkenness. We are all for freeing the children, and we think the best way to go about it is to make sure that the children are not exploited by their own labor.

Traveling Clinics.

The Cleveland Babies' dispensary will carry its services to all the important towns of the country during the summer months. A schedule has been prepared that will enable every family in the country in need of its services to secure the advantage of expert knowledge of child care without cost. The dispensary's decision

they were not on the job to prevent the grand old man of the west was made to say it was never before in the committee room, and then it stole through congress like the silent tread of a cat, or the vicious clause was surreptitiously inserted after it left the floor. Who does not remember hearing that stuff? Yet one democratic editor was overworking that line was shown in the Congressional Record that it had more time given it and occupied more space in the proceedings than any other question since the days of the slavery debates. After a few days he republished the same old story, and he is certain to ask for it he gave his head a jerk sideways and said: "Oh, hell! You fellows don't seem to know that we cannot remedy these things without the aid of the law, and we cannot get them without the votes, and not one in 500 of my readers will ever see the Congressional Record, so I know what I am about."

Now, patient reader, you have a true picture of a very large class of people who are not to be trusted. For my part, I cannot give them their certificates from the marks they have made, as their grade is 23 instead of 93, and the sheepskin is not for sale. FRANKLIN POPE.

Concerning the Senate.

Providing C. H. Gustafson enters the race for the United States senate, there will then be four important contenders for the honor in the republican primaries—A. W. Jeffers and R. B. Howell of Omaha, Clarence A. Davis of Holdrege and Mr. Gustafson. It cannot be said that the entry of either Mr. Davis or Mr. Gustafson has helped Mr. Howell's chances any. Nor is it certain to ask for it he gave his head a jerk sideways and said: "Oh, hell! You fellows don't seem to know that we cannot remedy these things without the aid of the law, and we cannot get them without the votes, and not one in 500 of my readers will ever see the Congressional Record, so I know what I am about."

While the senatorial contest is four-cornered, the odds at this time point in favor of Mr. Jeffers. He has a certain following that will stand by him steadfastly. His record of republicanism has always been of the rock-ribbed type that adheres to party regularity. For a man of his forceful nature he could not be otherwise. He has many friends, because he has placed them before himself—even on a party with his party. He is not self-im-

pressed, but rather too modest to be a successful politician. Representing, therefore, a standard of republicanism that has made his party reliable, he runs but small chance to lose his adherents.

On the other hand, Messrs. Howell, Davis and Gustafson are closely allied in principles and motives. The first-named is depending considerably on his record as manager of a municipal utility. Mr. Davis is an enforcer of the law and Mr. Gustafson as a friend of the farmer. Mr. Jeffers has not been noted for his advocacy of public utilities, but he has a good record for law enforcement and of questions affecting agricultural interests. Considering the probability, then, that the vote of Howell, Davis and Gustafson will be divided, Mr. Jeffers has, to many minds, the best chance, because his support will be united. This analysis may, of course, be out of harmony with future events, but it seems in perfect congruity with present conditions.

Electricity the Farm.

From the Portland Oregonian. Many minds are turned to the discovery of means to make life on the farm attractive in order that the drift of population may turn back from the city. Probably no means would be more effective than to supply electricity to the farmer, that with it he may run his machinery, light his house and barn, cool his house with an electric fan, lighten his wife's labors with all manner of electric domestic appliances, and generally relieve the dullness, drudgery and darkness of farm life. That is the mind picture suggested by the declaration of the Southwest Farmer of Wichita, Kan., that "electrical development is as important to the future success of the farmer as is the development of the tractor" and that "this is the psychological moment for the farmer to come into his own electricity."

No states offer a better opportunity for farming by electricity than Oregon and Washington. These states are interested by mountain ranges from which flow streams capable of generating enough hydro electric power to electricify every farm as well as every city in the two states. Both states call for more people to occupy their empty spaces, and they could not find a better drawing card than the power wire can be tapped at every farmer's front gate.

Life on the Planet.

From the Indianapolis News. As science is knowledge, and as it is the principle of science that no assertion shall be made that cannot be proved, it must be assumed that the discussion in the annual report of the Smithsonian Institution entitled "The Habitability of Venus, Mars and Outer Worlds" is mere speculation. The moon, it declares, is a waterless, airless, mountainous desert, and there is no probability of intelligent beings existing there, the sun is too hot for life to exist on it. Mercury is also an airless, waterless waste of intense heat; the temperature of Mars is 60 degrees below zero and it is drier than the Sahara; so only Venus remains as a possible planetary habitation for animal and vegetable life.

Let us conceive for the purpose of illustration, an otherwise intelligent human being who had no knowledge whatever of aquatic life, vegetable or animal, but was familiar with the properties of water and salt. Standing on the seashore for the first time and pondering the possibilities of the vast volume of salt water before him, he readily reaches the conclusion that no life can exist in it. The conclusion, based on his limited knowledge, is that the shock he would receive if he took a steamer to cross the ocean, and observed the graceful frolics of the porpoises!

The mistake of the scientists lies in assuming that all life is as our life. This is the life, of course, as frequently and loudly shouted, even in these Volstead days, is too long not to be the only one. It is too long a jump from earthly limitations to conclusions about the planets for anybody to take with safety.

Lemon Profiters in Germany.

From the London Times. Since the heat wave set in lemons have been so scarce in Cologne that even the hospitals were unable to secure sufficient for their own patients. Taking advantage of this shortage, a super-profiters sent a whole truckload of lemons to Cologne, which had a ready sale at 1,500 marks (nominally 125) per case of 220. The police, however, stepped in and confiscated the whole stock of 60,000, because the dealer who bought them had advanced 10 marks (nominally 10 shillings) each. The proprietor of a big firm in Cologne has been sentenced to three months' imprisonment and a fine of 1,500 marks (nominally \$2,500). His method of profiteering was to fill Dutch bags with German sugar and then sell it at very high prices as foreign sugar. He was liberated for a time after having paid the fine and an additional bail of 200,000 marks.

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