

I. C. C. DRAINING OFF THE WATER.

The ruling of the I. C. C. in the valuation cases, affecting the Salt Lake, Los Angeles & San Pedro and the Atlanta, Birmingham & Atlantic lines, will probably have far-reaching effects. It should lead to a clarification of a situation that is at present rather complex. The commission declares a principle that must touch every transportation line coming before it for rate-making purposes. This is the declaration:

"In the determination of a value for rate-making purposes, we are not limited, and can not be confined to a mere formula."

Rigidly adhered to, this will do away with the stock issues that rest solely on earning capacity. A distinct difference should be drawn between the stock that represents actual investment of capital employed in the creation and maintenance of the transportation service, and that which is set off to represent certain elements that do not figure in a material sense, and which can not be presented in tangible form as a factor in production of reproduction cost. Earning capacity, present or future, is one of these elements, generally relied upon, and having the effect of fastening on the public definite and continuing charges based on estimates that may or may not be realized.

Ordinary business theory at least regards the proper charge for service as that figure which will return a reasonable revenue on the capital employed in carrying on the business. Practice has extended this theory to mean whatever profit may be obtained, and the capitalization of earning capacity has followed. Usually this is referred to as "water," and nobody knows how much there is of it in the billions of stock representing corporation activities today.

A cut of \$33,000,000 in round numbers from the claims of two minor roads, one of them described as an attempt to realize a dream that has not yet come true, if pursued proportionately, will set the valuation of the railroads on which they are permitted to earn revenue well under the tentative figure of \$18,500,000,000. Disturbance of value will not follow to any great extent, for the stock list shows that prices have already been very well discounted by the investing public. What may be looked for is such a readjustment as will restore public confidence in the commerce carriers of the country, and make it possible for them to secure the new capital so much needed.

Wall Street control has been the greatest blight that ever fell on American railroads. No granger legislation ever had the influence to destroy the trust of investors as has been that of the manipulators who run the railroads from a board room just back of a broker's office.

OUR VANISHING FORESTS.

Another reason why the public should take a greater interest in tree planting is that the scarcity of timber is being felt in the home. Col. William B. Greeley, chief of the United States bureau of forestry, says that not only are there fewer homes, but that the homes being built are poorer, because of the depletion of forests. American forests have been reduced from five trillion board feet to 1,600 billion board feet, virgin timber, and 600 billion feet of culled and second growth. This is being reduced at the rate of 60,000,000,000 feet per year, so the end is not many years ahead, unless some vigorous steps are taken to replace the growth and check the depletion.

Soft wood timber is being cut six times as fast as it is replaced, and hard wood timber three times. Less than 25 per cent of the cutover area is being replaced. In the east the famine is not a matter of speculation; it is present. The west is feeling the effect of the scarcity, and will continue to note it in the ever increasing difficulty of getting lumber with a steadily mounting price for what is furnished.

Japan is expected to get from the Pacific northwest the lumber it will require for rebuilding the cities shaken down by the earthquake. A closer source of lumber is unavailable, because the forests of Siberia are not yet being worked on a scale that would assist Japan in the emergency.

The answer for America is in tree planting, the systematic, intelligent forestation of waste places. Unless this is done, 1975 will see our country at the end of the timber supply. Thirty-one states, as well as the federal government, have forestry bureaus at work, but Nebraska has none.

YOU CAN ALWAYS TELL THE WINNER.

Omaha is talking "hoss" again, with as much zest as ever, the reason being the presence of Ak-Sar-Ben fall racing meet. Numerous kings and queens of the turf are present, and their performances are pleasing or not, according to how you have judged them before the clerk of the course hangs out the name of the winner and the time.

It is worth while going out to the track, just to see what beautiful examples of horse flesh still exist. After gazing at stream line models all day long, while dodging "silent sixes" and barking eights and being distracted by the rattle and snorting of the gallant little fours, it is a comfort to look at something that is just as beautiful as far as lines and grace are concerned, and immensely superior because of being endowed with sentient life.

It seems quite a stretch from the 2:40 days of Dexter, and the world renowned team that Robert Bonner made up from that famous trotter and his great rival, Rarus, down to the time of the 2:00 speeder, and the racers that turn in heats but three or four seconds over the flat time. Along the way we pass Maud S., Alix, and a great parade of nags whose names are graven deeply on the tablets of the track.

If the modern "bike" sulky does not greatly resemble the old-time high wheeled affairs it serves; if the garniture of hobbles and harness the racer wears to correct faults or assist pace seem to denote a greater application of mechanics than the ancients knew, they too are modern adjuncts of the great game, and finally the outcome depends as ever upon antiquity so remote that no one knows the beginning comes that difference of opinion that begets horse races, and that deep, keen zest that can be satisfied in no other way.

NATURE'S SECRETS COMING TO LIGHT.

As if the earthquake, the typhoon and tornado, with TNT and the secret explosive of the United States government were not enough, men are at work trying to loosen even more terrible forces. This is all in the interest of progress, though, for along with the loosening it is planned to develop the method for binding, so that when the double secret is obtained, great benefit will follow, because man will be able to make the elements do tricks that are only possible to nature now.

Speaking to the summer school at Columbia university, Dr. Paul D. Foote of the United States bureau of standards said that if the hydrogen in two spoonfuls of water were converted into helium, the energy set free would represent \$20,000 worth of electric current. The mind can not grasp the amount of energy here represented. In a spoonful of water, so changed, is contained the power to devastate cities. Carrying this along a little further, the brain swims at the thought of what may happen when the alchemists succeed in tearing from nature the secret of transmutation.

In the suggestion is found an inkling of what happens when one of the dread events of nature sets out on its career of terror. On the other hand, if the research results in unlocking the door to a new world of physical facts, and man can master and control the forces he knows to exist, a future of wonderful range is opened. Just as the thought of the energy now bound in the atom staggers the mind, so it bounds with the picture of the power that will come with the knowledge.

If nothing else will be gained, the science of aviation will be made absolute, through possession of helium in ample quantity for balloons, and a motive force that will be exhaustless to drive the cars. Inquiry is broadening the opportunities for civilization, and the twentieth century is just beginning to realize its triumphs and rewards.

FAILURE OF THE LEAGUE.

One achievement of the League of Nations, as announced at the present convention, is the salvation of Austria. This is all to the credit of the league, but it was accomplished by the generous co-operation of nations, including the United States, furnishing funds on which the rescue of the Austrians was effected.

This is a very pretty picture to display, but it will not hide the ugly spectacle of Italy, throttling Greece and defying the league to interpose its authority. Italy has gone a step further, as might have been expected, and warns the league against any attempt at intervention in connection with Fiume. In a sense this is more important than was the Grecian incident, for the treaty of Versailles that creates the league of nations also designated Fiume as a free port, whence the people of Yugoslavia would find access to tidewater.

D'Annunzio flouted the league and the government of Italy by his hairbrained adventure in seizing Fiume and holding it against all authority. Now comes Mussolini, filled with high ambition, and proposes to take and hold the port permanently for Italy. He disdains his pledge to get out of Corfu on the submission of Greece. Having received the pledge of Greece to carry out all that the ambassadors in council ordered, the Italian dictator now tells the world he will stay in Corfu until he has settled matters with Yugoslavia, which dispute he aggravates by his announced determination to seize Fiume and again shut the Balkan states from the sea.

Anything that takes place at Tangier is subsidiary to this. Plainly the matter is one for the league to deal with, as it involves the possibility of war, as contemplated under article fifteen of the covenant. But Mussolini does not care for this, nor for the league, and the small nations appeal to the great in vain for protection.

Is this twentieth century Napoleon to overawe the whole of Europe as did his predecessor in the eighteenth? Will a "whiff of grape shot" again lead the way for a dictator to pass to empire? While the league is busy congratulating itself over the saving of Austria, it will do well to find out if it has any control whatever over Italy.

The normal school at Peru has the biggest enrollment in its history, no doubt due to the fact that it is the center of one of the biggest rows that has disturbed the Bryan administration.

Italy now declines to evacuate Corfu on account of the attitude of Serbia. After that some other pretext will occur, for Napoleon Mussolini does not intend to let go anything he has seized.

British praise the heroism of the men on an American destroyer that carried relief to Japanese stricken. Our men never count the cost in such emergencies.

Ireland is now a full member of the League of Nations, and the rest of them will learn that "Erin go Bragh" means something.

One thing is becoming quite well understood—nobody is ever wholly satisfied with the outcome of a boozey raid.

The money question is being debated again. Another sign that we are well back to normalcy.

Let us hope the new pump sticks to water.

Homespun Verse

—By Omaha's Own Poet— Robert Worthington Davis

THE WIND.

Hear the whistling of the wind; Hear it rise and hear it fall— O'er, before you and behind, Terribly common—that is all.

Hear the sighing of the trees, Gentle, and caressing too, And suggesting melodies That would thrill the heart of you.

If your love were sweetly singing Songs of a familiar strain, Dreams and tender memories bringing From that rendezvous again.

But it is the wind that's blowing, And the lifeless trees that sing; There is little in the knowing The diversity they bring.

There is nothing to amuse you, You know not the things they say; Life must evermore enthrall you, And you turn the other way.

There is beauty in the swinging Of the wind, and there is song; There is music in the sighing Of the trees the whole day long.

There's a moral that is splendid, There is purity sublime, And the world shall be befriended While the zephyr wafts in rhyme.

"The People's Voice"

Editorial from readers of The Morning Bee, in regard to the Nebraska state fair, and the use of this column freely for expression on matters of public interest.

Modernizing the State Fair.

Omaha.—To the Editor of The Omaha Bee: I was much interested in reading the editorial entitled "State Fair Falling Short." Having covered the fair for six days, paying attention to every feature, some of our ideas along this line may not be out of place.

In the first place, we desire to state that we mingled with the crowds on all parts of the grounds and never once did we have occasion to learn that, according to The Omaha Bee: "Visitors from the state were sorely disappointed and visitors from outside were amazed at the scanty display." The quotation refers to the county agricultural exhibits of corn, grains, grasses, etc.

We heard scores of folks say that the 1923 Nebraska state fair was the peer of any previous fair in its exhibits and, having attended fairs in many states, we can vouch for the fact that it did not disappoint anyone who was really looking for the things it featured.

True, there were but 13 counties represented at the fair, but these 13 counties were situated in so many different sections that they practically featured all of Nebraska's crops, grains, fruits and grasses. There was Douglas county on the extreme west, Kearney on the extreme east, the largest in the state. There was Dawson and Box Butte, and Lancaster and Thayer, and Dawes and Kearney. We will wager that practically every species of native grass was on display, every variety of grain grown in Nebraska and every variety of fruit. There might have been more counties, but we see little use in having scores of booths presenting a duplication of pumpkins and grains and grasses as would be true if many more counties exhibited.

Then again, there are various ways of representing counties. The Nebraska state fair has never in its history had a better exhibit of the work of the boys and girls of the various counties and men who know Nebraska state that the boys' and girls' club work was the most instructive part of the fair. Dixon county was not represented with scenery and grains and grasses, but Dixon county secured far more publicity and imparted far more educational interest due to the fact that the champion baby, exhibited by Dorcas Norris of Laurel in that county, and also because of the fact that the Sunrise Baby Beef club had six baby calves which sold for more than \$300.

Adams county had no agricultural booth, but Adams county sent a trio of boys who won the state dairy judging contest and a trip to the National Dairy show at St. Louis.

Clay county had no agricultural exhibit, but Clay county had a better exhibit in the shape of two club boys who came without doubt the cleverest pig club members in the state ever staged on the grounds. Webster county had no agricultural exhibit, but Webster county's live stock judging team, led by H. H. and they won the state championship.

The facts of the case are that folks are more interested in spending their money in seeing boys' and girls' club teams and in seeing the champion baby with grains and grasses and fruits. Then, as we wandered everywhere around the grounds we noted that folks were more interested in the work of the boys and girls than in any exhibits of the fair. We believe that where 10 minutes was spent in viewing agricultural exhibits an hour was spent in watching the demonstration.

The Omaha Bee reporter could not have seen the county extension exhibits, the most complete exhibits of their kind in any state, and could not have seen the county extension building there were county extension exhibits from the following counties: Douglas, Dawes, Furnas, Saunders, Cuming, Greeley, DeWitt, Hamilton, Richardson, Thurston, Clay, Cass, Dodge, Webster, Red Willow, Adams, Phelps, Gage, Nance, Cheyenne, Washington, Frontier, Polk, Dakota, Dawson, Thayer, Valley, Buffalo, Hall, Johnson, Otoe, Howard, Kimball, Morrill, Lancaster, Colfax, Lincoln, Fillmore and Custer. In all, this makes 40 counties represented, and a striking way by exhibits which called attention to the constructive work being done by the county agents and farm bureaus. As an educational feature and as a county extension feature, worth while, they could not have been excelled. They drew thousands every day.

Besides these exhibits, there were school exhibits of value, and also exhibits from the different counties of the various breeds of live stock. If anyone can cite to any state fair in previous years in Nebraska that had more real educational exhibits, we would like to hear from them, and we say this after talking over the fair with the scores of scores of towns and country localities in Nebraska.

Nebraska had a better display of agricultural exhibits than the great Iowa state fair at Des Moines, and the fair management demonstrated credit for the showing. The new idea of fairs is not to crowd exhibit halls with pumpkins and grains, and grasses and corn in endless confusion, but to stress the more interesting and educational lines, such as the work of the boys and girls and the work of the organized farmers. And that to our mind is much more of interest.

H. HOWARD BIGGAR.

Intermediate Credit.

Red Oak, Ia.—To the Editor of The Omaha Bee: I am enclosing a clipping from The Omaha Bee, issued the first part of the week, which I think, in justice to the country banks, should be corrected.

This article states that the rate of interest charged the farmer by the Federal Intermediate Credit bank is 5 1/2 per cent, whereas the rate charged, unless the bank is to do business for nothing, is 7 per cent.

Immediately after this article appeared, we had requests for the 5 1/2 per cent rate, and if this article is to prevail in the country it is going to keep us busy explaining.

A. O. NORENE.

Center Shots

When congressmen start out to fix the price of a product the public will understand in advance that it is done for political purposes and not in the interest of economics.—Toledo Blade.

Now one of the croakers says the national anthem is a teacher of hate. And as yet there is no cure for that kind of dyspepsia.—Milwaukee Sentinel.

Lima Beans says the man who says "I'm going to do this" or "I'm going to do that" or "I'm going to do this" or "I'm going to do that" is against his prejudices.—Toledo Blade.

If the next war is really fought in the air as predicted, we can name several politicians who will be in the front rank.—Portland Oregonian.

Senator Marcus Johnson says the president shall call an extra session of congress immediately to settle the coal, agricultural and gasoline questions. The senator's childlike faith in congress will undergo a change after he has been a working member of it for a few years.—Detroit Free Press.

NET AVERAGE CIRCULATION

for August, 1923, of

THE OMAHA BEE

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Sunday ..... 75,138

Does not include returns, left overs, samples or papers spoiled in printing and includes no special sales.

B. BREWER, Gen. Mgr. V. A. BRIDGE, Cir. Mgr.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 4th day of September, 1923. (Seal) Notary Public



Firemen in Omaha 50 years ago were kept pretty busy, but they yet had time to enjoy themselves occasionally in their own free and easy way. One of the things they never told day, who have to take physical exercises as a part of their training, and drill in many ways, will be interested in reading the following account of how the firemen's company was "initiated" as told in The Evening Star of February 9, 1913.

"FIREMEN'S FUN."

"They Initiate a New Member."

One would naturally suppose that to become a member of the fire department is a very easy matter—that the only requirements are to be elected and sign the constitution—but such is not the case in Omaha, at least as a new member is not accepted till he is proven worthy and capable of becoming a fireman.

"Last evening Engine Company No. 2, at their engine house on Tenth street, initiated a new member named Jim Greenwood, who for some time past has been desirous of becoming a full-fledged fireman—good and true—so that he could run 'wid der machine.' The initiation was conducted with a great deal of dignified ceremony, and was witnessed by a BEE reporter, who made his observations from a key-hole in the door.

"The applicant was first blindfolded and brought into the presence of the firemen assembled and sworn to the utmost secrecy and subscribed to the following: "Am an American, 22 years of age; never was sick; don't belong to any secret society; never stole anything but a loaf of bread; never was in jail, except when necessary; never in love, and will never let the tender passion interfere with my duties as a fireman; promise to be punctual in giving the alarm; will not be afraid to take hold of the dirty end of a hose; will obey orders, etc.

"The applicant was then removed and prepared and instructed to receive the first degree, which consisted in taking a shower bath in the hose tower, and then going over to Phil Mohrling's and carrying a couple of dumb bells, weighing 25 pounds each, across to the engine house, where his lifting and carrying powers were thoroughly tested.

"The second degree was the lung test, in which Dr. Hanlon belted him on the breast with an Indian club and pronounced him sound. The third degree was received by the applicant drinking beer and other water, and endeavoring to blow off steam enough to fill the engine. The grand bounce (fifth degree) was conferred by 12 folks, who sat around and tossed him to the ceiling 22 times in a buffalo robe. The applicant was then refreshed by a drink of salt water. The sixth and last degree, which made him a full member of the company, was the hardest, and was composed of several ceremonies—eating a sponge the size of a man's head; walking up the stairs carrying a sliding ladder; a rough nine plank into a tub of water; a repetition of the grand bounce; an other shower bath; gymnastic exercises; instructions in the grip, etc.

"Jim Greenwood, who then declared to be a member of the company by the Hon. Max Meyer, grand master of ceremonies, and was then escorted about the room by Beallo, Reed, Walker and other bouncers, to receive the congratulatory grin of his brother firemen. A grand collation, consisting of old rubber hose and salt water, was then spread in honor of the new member.

"There is not the least doubt but that after having undergone these severe tests, Jim Greenwood will make a splendid fireman, and the company can congratulate themselves upon the valuable acquisition to their ranks."

"From State and Nation"

—Editorials from Other Newspapers—

Helium a National Asset.

A timely summary of the uses of helium, and an outline of the government's efforts to conserve a valuable natural resource, are contained in an address made by Dr. Richard B. Moore, lately chief chemist of the bureau of mines, before the geology section of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers at a meeting of that organization in Montreal. Not only is it true that Americans generally have little conception of the value of helium in peace and war, but it is true also that we have let large quantities of it go to waste. The habit of national wastefulness persists. Hence the importance of the government's plan to conserve this element, and increase the supplies of helium available for whatever uses may present themselves.

Helium is invaluable for use in airships. As the number of airships increases, its commercial value will also increase, as will also its value to the government in war time. So far as is known today, the United States contains the only large sources of natural gas containing helium. Outside this country, Canada and Italy can produce helium in commercial quantities. For this reason, declares Dr. Moore, it is, "of great importance, from the national defense standpoint, that our monopoly be retained; therefore the exportation of helium is inadvisable." Before the war, he says, probably not more than 15 feet of isolated helium was in existence. Now the government has a plant at Fort Worth is producing 15,000 cubic feet a day, and this output will soon be increased to between 30,000 and 40,000 cubic feet daily by the recently established Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the bureau of standards have carried on experimental work in helium for the bureau of mines, and some two and a half years ago the cryogenic laboratory of the bureau of mines was established to co-ordinate all this work under one organization. The present plans of the government in general call for construction and operation of three refrigeration plants, the operation of the production plant at Fort Worth, and in general the continuation of research both in pure science and the application of results so obtained to various engineering projects. Such a program, declared Dr. Moore, will eventually put the helium problem where it belongs, "namely, as a great asset to this country, both in time of war and in time of peace."

There is a great need, moreover, that our helium supply be conserved instead of wasted, as is the case at present. Official investigations have shown that considerably more than 50,000,000 cubic feet of helium are annually going to waste in connection with the ordinary use of natural gas. Not all of this, of course, could be extracted for commercial purposes, inasmuch as there is a wide variation in the percentage of helium in natural gas. "However, it would be quite possible," points out Dr. Moore, "to extract yearly 50,000,000 cubic feet of helium from gas which is being regularly used, if sufficient plants were available." In view of the importance of helium, in peace as well as war, it would certainly seem to be the part of prudence to prevent any such waste as that which is now taking place.

Home Runs and He-Men.

From the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. It argues a healthy condition in public affairs of America when the

Ottawa can permit that condition—if it exists outside of the imagination of the writers—to continue. We in Detroit know perfectly well that the condition described by the Star exists. The armed smuggler, and the hijacker are unfortunately no figments of the imagination. They are ugly, menacing facts that are growing uglier and more menacing all the time. The Star is quite correct when it says that Ottawa cannot permit the condition to continue. Though the offenses of these outlaws may be committed within the boundaries and against the enactments of the United States, the persons themselves do not cease to be criminal in their lives and habits when they are in the Dominion. They constitute a disreputable class whose very presence is noxious and detrimental, and whose example and influence are injurious; and any country that tolerates their presence is certain to be infected, and suffer more or less as a result.

League Has Fifty-Two Varieties.

From the Philadelphia Public Ledger. A Cuban has been chosen to preside over the deliberations of the League of Nations. Of the six nations which have not sent delegates to Geneva this year, five are in South or Central America. The selection of the Cuban may serve to emphasize to his own country and to the Latin American absentees the particular importance to these lands of the settlement for disputes by arbitration instead of at the edge of the machete. There are 52 countries in the league, and their population is three-quarters of the entire number of the earth's inhabitants. Young as it is, the league represents a public opinion too considerable to ignore.

There is nothing radically wrong with a man as long as his interest in sports keeps up.

Abe Martin

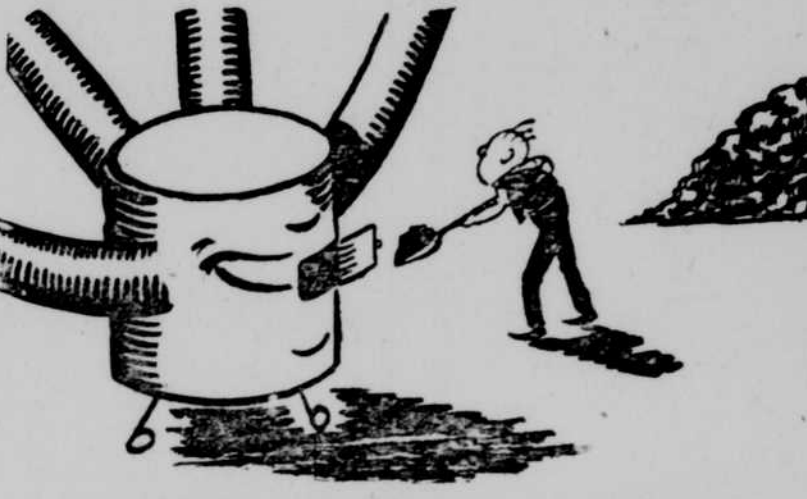


Mrs. Tilford Moot's paw dropped dead 'd'ay. He was havin' his car fixed an' when he w'en' t' get it he found it reddy. Th' easiest o' all th' man killin' jobs is bootleggin'.

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nation can take such interest as it evidently is taking in the race between the big league baseball players for home run honors. "Did Babe Ruth get another homer today?" is asked by half the business men you meet, and the battle between Ruth and Cy Williams for the heavy hitting supremacy is quite as absorbing a topic as stock ticker quotations or affairs in Europe.

There is nothing radically wrong with a man as long as his interest in sports keeps up.



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