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MONOPOLY AND MUSCLE SHOALS.

Cynical and carping observers have professed to see in Henry Ford's support of President Coolidge a bargain concerning the Muscle Shoals project. What will these say when they read the assertions of Edward B. Almon of Tusculum, Ala., who represents that district in congress? He charges that the counter-proposition submitted for the purchase of Muscle Shoals is intended to consolidate the monopolistic control of the water power in the hands of a concern that is now operating there.

Almon is from the section most concerned locally. Tusculum is very near where the work is carried on, and its congressman should be well informed as to the hopes as well as the needs of the people in that vicinity. He knows, among other things, that the great power company which is principally owned in Canada, will bring little of additional service to the public if it obtains possession of the big plant that will be used to operate when the Wilson dam is completed.

Henry Ford's proposition naturally contains certain speculative elements, tending to favor the proposer. He is not suspected of being altogether a philanthropist, for he really is a shrewd investor. That he has accumulated a very large personal fortune is entirely due to his special gift for organizing the production of an article that finds much favor with the public. Other things engage his attention, and he sees in Muscle Shoals an opportunity to set up an industry, from which great benefit will flow to the farmers and some profit to Henry Ford.

Likewise the power concern, which has quietly obtained control of most of the "white coal" in the south. Whoever handles Muscle Shoals must have enormous capital resources to begin with, but it will be of great advantage to the public if there be competition, as well as for the great project in which so much of the people's money has been invested. Almon has given the critics something to think about.

ILLITERATES IN OMAHA.

One of the disclosures following the inquiry of the Woman's club into conditions of illiteracy in Omaha challenges the mind. From a survey conducted by the club with the assistance of the public school authorities it is developed by the club that illiteracy prevails to an alarming extent in Omaha. In the report it is stated that 2,700 men and women who can not read and write have been located, and estimates are made that 4,000 such actually live in the city.

Assuming that this survey shows the actual facts, the situation is grave. In a county so wealthy and progressive as Douglas, with such lavish provision made for public education, there should be no illiteracy. Of course, the answer to this will be that these unfortunate men and women have been imported. That is true, but they should be encouraged to take advantage of the schools that are open to them, and as quickly as possible relieve themselves of their remedious handicap.

No disgrace attaches to the condition of illiteracy where the victim has not had an opportunity to attend school. To continue in that state when opportunity is offered to escape is to voluntarily accept all the inconvenience and handicap that attends such ignorance.

MORE DRYNESS IN THE NAVY.

When Josephus Daniels, as secretary of the navy, issued the famous order that banished the punch-bowl from the officers' mess and substituted innocuous grape juice for the effervescent juice of the grape, there was great rejoicing in certain quarters, and much weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in other quarters. Now comes Secretary Mellon with a proposal looking to a genuinely dry navy. He suggests an appropriation of \$23,000,000 to build and equip speedy cruisers whose only purpose will be to chase down and capture the run-running ships that keep more than 20 miles inland about as wet as the ocean for 12 miles out.

It is only natural that congressmen who are always anxious to grab off a few millions for political improvements in their backwoods should stand against the proposal to spend all that money where they could never hope to profit. Equally natural is it that congressmen who personally oppose prohibition and lack the nerve to say so to their constituents, should deprecate the idea of spending so many millions, or any millions, in curtailing the supply.

But Secretary Mellon's solution of the problem of damming out the illicit liquor is the best yet offered. The only thing it lacks is the positive assurance that the men who are to be in charge of the dry navy shall be men who will tackle the job honestly. To date the public has had reason to doubt the sincerity of official efforts to stop the illegal traffic.

DONKEY'S TROUBLES IN NEBRASKA.

As a strategic as well as a tactical advantage, the democrats of Nebraska always endeavor not only to choose the battleground, but to name the leaders for the republicans. We do not blame our brethren for this; only we would regard the republicans as imprudent, to say the least, did they permit the chief opposition to have its own way in everything.

Just now the sachems are tentatively thumping the tomtoms and preparing the medicine that will be exhibited when the moment arrives. On this ground we may account for the excessive apprehension exhibited by the republicans last fall among themselves. Having determined that both Coolidge and Johnson will enter the primaries in Nebraska, the democratic big chiefs express themselves as uncertain as to which will be favored by the voters, and so are gradually working up a sweat that might

be more easily acquired by a visit to the medicine lodge direct.

What really is going on behind the scenes is the discussion of ways and means to prevent the Nebraska delegation going to the convention, wherever it is held, in the leash of a former resident who now gets his mail in Florida. If W. J. B. could be eliminated in some way, the rest of the problem would be simple enough, but how to get rid of him without a fight is not easily solved.

So, while the brethren of the other side really are perturbed over their own affairs, they profess enormous solicitude for the welfare of the republicans. Maybe it will be as well for them to wait and see which of the champions the voters of Nebraska favor, whether it be Coolidge or Johnson. In the meantime the talk of Morehead as a leader is not giving any comfort to the Bryanites.

SPEED FARM RELIEF.

When President Coolidge took the stand that the first thing to be done to help the wheat growers was increase the tariff on wheat, he showed that he understood the situation. He has done all that he could under the law, in ordering the federal tariff commission to investigate the costs of production here and in Canada.

It is fairly to be expected that their finding will agree with the opinion expressed by Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, and with that of the president. In the event that the tariff commission reports favorably, Mr. Coolidge has announced the intention of putting into effect as high a duty on wheat imports as he can under the law, leaving other remedies of a practical but less emergent nature to follow.

Much quicker action, however, could be obtained through congress. If the people's representatives in Washington are really in favor of assisting the farmer, they could enact a law without delay, increasing the protective tariff and clearing the way for other remedies such as feeding that part of Europe that is starving, even though we had to give them the food.

Official endorsement of this program is found in the report of Secretary Wallace to the president, in which he concludes:

"The sale or gift of a substantial part of our surplus wheat to countries which are not able to buy, and which would, therefore, take out of the ordinary channels of trade and competition the wheat sold or given, would unquestionably have a helpful effect upon domestic prices of wheat, provided largely tariff protection were given."

What the wheat farmers want is an end of real jamming in congress and some real financial relief. No plan could be so more practical and beneficial both to the people of America and of Europe than this proposal.

AROUND THE WORLD BY AIRSHIP.

What looks like the most spectacular of all man's undertakings is the flight around the world, planned by the air service of the United States army. On April 2, next, a group of fliers will hop off at Seattle on a journey that is intended to encircle the globe, the route for which covers 29,000 miles, or nearly three-fifths greater distance than the equatorial circumference of the globe.

The first leg of the flight will be from Seattle to one of the Aleutian islands, near the tip of the chain. This will be almost due west from Seattle, strange as that fact may seem. Next jump is across Bering sea to Kamchatka, and southward to Nagasaki. On to Calcutta from there, and thence to Constantinople. London is the next division point, and then comes Iceland, Greenland, Labrador, and back over Canada to Seattle.

Quite a lesson in geography. Take down your atlas and study the route, and see what a wonderful part of the world is covered by this 29,000-mile route. Foreign governments already are interested in the projected trip, and are giving all needed assistance in arranging the preliminaries.

What does it mean? Well, folks wondered when Stefansson claimed for Canada certain islands in the Arctic, asking what he was about. Then it developed that these islands would make splendid landing places along an air route to circle the globe. It was found the distance from London to Tokio would be cut more than in half, for example, and that other advantages might follow. Circumnavigation of the globe by airship is considered practical, and American fliers are preparing to demonstrate the fact. What it may lead to is another matter entirely.

Senator Magnus Johnson will soon address a gathering of bankers, and says he is going to tell them how to run their business. Wouldn't it be a joke if some banker should interrupt by shouting, "Go learn to milk a cow, Magnus?"

The word blizzard may have been coined in Iowa, but it has been counterfeited by New York newspapers every time there was a light fall of snow west of the Mississippi river.

Blisters on the hand are not a compensatable accident in Nebraska. If it were so, then the casualty list could be greatly extended.

A hard-boiled judge is now going to annoy Nina Wilcox Putnam, just because she fibbed a little in her effort to get a divorce. Darn it!

And perhaps those California mountains are clipping around trying to locate some of that boasted climate.

No matter what the stork is racing against, it is always safe to bet on the stork for first or place.

The Bok plan was intended to bring sweet peace, and just look what a row it has cooked up already.

It is very generally agreed that somebody has plugged up one end of the open winter.

Homespun Verse

—By Omaha's Own Poet—

Robert Worthington Davie

LOOKING AHEAD.

We're looking ahead when morning dawns, we're looking ahead at night;

As weeks and months and years go by we follow the fleeting light.

Of happy thoughts of days to be, and ardently, hopefully tread

Beyond the Present and Used-To-Be, dreaming and looking ahead.

We're looking ahead in buoyant youth and fashioning future dear;

We're looking ahead as manhood comes and gleams of zest appear.

When duty calls and strength replies,—when childhood's bliss has fled—

A vision is foremost in our eyes, we're joyfully looking ahead.

And when the zenith of life is past and dusk comes calmly on,

And dreams of old, wrought true at last, have followed their course and gone;

When faith alone remains to mourn life's garlands willed and deemed—

We gladly await the Resurrection Morn, dreaming and looking ahead.

"THE PEOPLE'S VOICE"

Editorial from readers of The Morning Bee. Readers of The Morning Bee are invited to use this column freely for expression on matters of public interest.

Farmer Against Tax-Exempt Bonds.

Pender, Neb.—To the Editor of The Omaha Bee: I know The Bee is a very strong republican paper. I, being a farmer, am one of the many who are bearing the burden of taxation and feeding the rest of you, and am sick hearing so very much advice.

The republicans, by adding one law to our constitution, and that is to tax all bonds and all securities, can help lift our national burdens. Every farmer wants this done. This would get all farmer votes, and one-half of the democrats as well.

We farmers see President Harding and also President Coolidge have, by their statements, left the farmers to shift for themselves, without any help. How do they expect the farmers' votes?

Tax all capital; be fair, and get all votes. Scatter the other farmers and just want to help the farmer and all the rest of smaller business.

LEWIS EATON.

A Plea for the Bonus.

Kearney, Neb.—To the Editor of The Omaha Bee: An article in the Bee's "Voice" column, written by Elliott Loomis of Gibbon, Neb., may carry some truths, but I will deny some of his statements and I think other service men in the states we received a \$30 bonus and one month's pay besides. We received \$600 bonus if the wants to call it that, but no extra month's pay. The other \$300 bonus, as I wore out civilian clothes amounting to \$45 before I was issued army clothes.

And still they want more. We don't ask for charity; just make up the difference between the man that stayed at home and the man who went into the service.

Elliott is very considerate in stating that the disabled veterans should be properly cared for. We all heartily agree to that. But better make it snappy, so they won't be dead before it gets to them.

He also says that the average mother does far more for her country, raising a family, than a soldier does. We all know Mr. Elliott is right. A large per cent of men endured untold hardships and all kinds of suffering while in the service. The graveside of a soldier is a very noble monument to the state.

He states we spent two or three years in the service on good pay. Question? What did the man get that was as good as the same length of time? Not that one of us would trade places with the stay-at-homes. But we would like to be compensated fairly.

How far could a service man get if he had saved every dollar while in the service and started farming, say in the spring of 1920? I might quit the price of grain, stock and machinery in the spring and fall of that year for Mr. Elliott's benefit.

Those who spent their money for luxuries should not expect to be returned to them. Well, listen, brother, after you pay the barber, tailor and insurance, just the necessities so you can look like a human, then if you have very much left of the \$30 per for luxuries you are a wonder.

As to waiting till old age before you help the veterans, I will add, in passing, a little help when out of the service and still able to work would fix a lot of service men so they would be independent in life.

MILTON H. FRANK.

Business Conditions Last Year.

Omaha.—To the Editor of The Omaha Bee: I attach an item of news appearing in the Blair Tribune concerning "Douglas County Prosperity of 1923," which contradicts your paper's contention.

I am inclined to place more faith in your contentions with respect to the prosperity of 1923 than that which the Blair Tribune attempts to show as "Inflated Propaganda."

The Douglas county records show that 64,609 mortgages, leases and artisans' liens were filed in Douglas county during 1923, and that 15,618 were released. This compares with 19,197,775.18 that was added and \$11,659,351.93 released by 15,618 mortgages. It appears to me to represent a condition of prosperity.

Now with respect to the Douglas county figures, I do not believe that an analysis, based on the figures that the Blair Tribune furnishes, can be made to determine whether that county is or is not in a period of retrogression. Primarily they do not show the number of mortgages filed and released and I doubt, from my personal knowledge of conditions in that county, if any of the amount represented in increased amount of mortgages is due to financing of new building projects.

On the whole, I do not believe that your paper furnished very conclusive evidence of prosperity in Douglas county during 1923 and I might not be far from the mark in my personal impression that your figures may have left in the minds of your Washington county customers a third party move.

Object to Bok Plan.

Omaha.—To the Editor of The Omaha Bee: Edward Bok must have a lot of "money to burn" to give some one the old "league of nations" straw through the hopper again. This thing called attempt to get a popular endorsement of the "misguided" offering of the Y. M. C. A. treaty may prove a two-edged sword.

The judges (with one exception) are old league advocates so it's no wonder that the prize was shared by the way it did. The question is will this political scheme help President Coolidge or Hiram Johnson, or is it not really a heart for the people?

Queer coincident coming now just in time to get an abortive expression per the straw vote, to influence public opinion in favor of the new league plan. It would seem more charitable to let the dead rest in peace, but no, its ardent though few admirers must bring it up every time the league is revived in the 1924 political campaign. The plan will not catch many, but of course will very likely force the democratic party to make another run on it, and thus receive a second trimming by the G. O. P.

Democrats and republicans may clash on many things. Yet there is enough of us who can agree on this one question to make another re-run. Hear victory sure, or greatly assisted a third party move.

McAdoo imagines that this straw vote endorsement coming at this time will help him get the nomination and also help him keep us out of all wars; just like his father-in-law did in 1914. It is to be sincerely hoped that some day these great international league plans will find time enough to review our federal constitution, and find out where under that immortal document such a grant of power lies, that would permit of the creation of a super state

such as the league of nations covenant proposes. If Mr. Bok and his colleagues could only realize when they were outwitted and outvoted, much embarrassment would be avoided at home and abroad.

The average American wishes to preserve intact the Monroe doctrine and the magnificent isolation of our forefathers. Thus our national security and liberty of action is made possible. This isolation has been our bulwark and has created a condition of respect abroad. Note what the League of recent date says, "That the American mind will certainly remain true to Washington" and quoting from his farewell address, "It is very unlikely to enroll itself in the ordinary combinations and coalitions of European friendships and enmities," and then adds, "But there are other ways in which the United States can lend a hand. This British view we can not afford to overlook."

In a nutshell the question resolves itself into whether we are to follow the League of recent date, or adhere to the wisdom of Washington. S. ARION LEWIS.

Would Uplift the Movies.

Bohler, Neb.—To the Editor of The Omaha Bee: Another movie scandal, whose duty it is to amuse, entertain and instruct, to enact soul-searching scenes upon the stage or screen, to feel the pulse of the nation, to be a head. "I am innocent," shrieks this fair model of ours.

"From State and Nation"

—Editorials from Other Newspapers—

The Costness of Winter.

From the Minneapolis Journal. Snow the scientists define as water particles in the air congealed when the temperature goes down to 30 degrees or lower above zero. This definition may serve the physicist, but how poorly does it describe the change of mood, the sense of cosiness that comes when the great snow blanket covers the land and stands as if in silent prayer.

Now the wind comes out of the north. The poplars reach out with longer fingers toward the chilly sky. Wheels crack in the snow. Icicles hang where lilacs bloomed but a few months ago. In the starlit nights the moon shines upon the earth with a frosty gleam of smile.

Despite the wind in the north and leagues of billowy snow stretching far and wide, winter is a cozy season. Bulls rest quietly under their snow blanket and dream of summer. Hibernating animals sleep warmly under their frost-bound covers.

The earth is robed like a glorified saint, and stands as if in silent prayer. Familiar sights take marvelous shapes, and the white drifts know no division lines of fence or walk.

When the sun in his snow-garment and gray, the lone life takes on added zest. As the snowflakes come trooping down in phalanxes, there is a new vigor in our bodies, and our minds feel themselves to the serious work of the year with new zest. When a gray sky is above and a hush is upon the earth, the hand of hospitality is more warmly outstretched, hearts are drawn closer to hearts. Books are taken down from the shelves and story telling begins. The children's souls long for the warm glow of a close companion of the evening hours.

Few poets have caught better than Whittier did in his "Snow Bound" the cosiness of winter. He tells of the zigzag dance of the blinding storm and how the white drifts piled the window frames, until there was no air and no earth below, but a universe of snow.

Then he contrasts with this chill and somber world, the kindling of the domestic spirit in his snugly England home. Perhaps it was because the night wind shrieked, and the tree boughs moaned, and the sleet beat upon the windows, and our minds felt that the domestic life about the open hearth became a liquid music. The ragged brush cracked and whitened walls and sagging beams burst into rosy bloom. The red logs beat the frost line back and the great throat of the chimney roared with the roaring draught. The merry older singer hummed slow and the apples sputtered in a row. A basket of nuts and fruit brought October bounty into winter's chill. Even the dog felt the cosiness of winter, as he laid his drowsy head toward the merry fire.

Conditions may change, but not the human spirit in reference to the winter seasons. There may be fewer fires and places and more thermostats, fewer sagging beams and better supported ceilings, but the cosiness of winter does not cease. It invites to easy chairs, good books, quiet hours with the mind and happy ones with the family through which one can make the pomp of kings ridiculous.

Peace Work of the Army. From the Salt Lake Tribune. "Military preparations," says Secretary Weeks in his annual report, "cost us roughly one-eighth of what we spend for luxuries, amusements and mild vices." The army does many things in time of peace to justify its maintenance—and the army does not advertise its activities. Yet from the beginning it has been a profit-sharing enterprise.

The whole northwest was opened by army assistance. Army engineers conducted nearly all the preliminary explorations, constructed the roads and trails leading west, built canals and bridges, conducted surveys, and made the maps. They even built and operated the earlier railroads.

Beginning with the construction of the old Chesapeake & Ohio canal and the Erie canal, army engineers continued their activities upon every navigable waterway, and their work has been of such excellence that there is general agreement that our governmental engineering projects are unexcelled anywhere. The corps of engineers have expended more than a half a billion dollars with a consistent record of integrity and economy.

The army first organized the weather bureau, using the discoveries of the naval scientist, Matthew. Today it is rivaling the navy in perfecting the art of flying, with too narrow appropriations and a heroism among the younger officers not different from that which war demands.

French Prosperity.

From the Salt Lake Tribune. The French franc has been following the course of the German mark here of late. At the same time the people of the republic are generally prosperous in the midst of a great economic revolution which has paved the way for industrial activity above agriculture in furnishing employment. A great part of the enlarged industrial activity is applied to the transformation of imported raw materials into manufactured goods, largely destined to the export trade. Before the war, imports into France regularly exceeded exports, but the balance remained favorable on account of the large amount of French holdings

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Approach of Evening

By CATHERINE E. HANSON.

The sun slants through the trees, A chapel bell is heard, The night is drawing nigh With swift-winged fairy feet, And in my heart a peace Reigns tranquilly and sweet.

The flowers close their eyes, The songs of birds are stilled, And evening's gentle breeze Creeps through the meadow grass, And steals a tiny kiss From a wee country lass.

In you far vale the owl Chants in her lonely tower, And boasts that she is queen Of the approaching night, While in the deepening gloom The angels' lamps burn bright.

I bid farewell to day— Day with its many cares That I would fain forget, Oh, let me now drink deep Of all this quiet peace, And lose myself in sleep!

abroad, money spent by tourists and other so-called "invisible factors" in the balance sheet. At the time of the armistice these factors had materially changed.

Since then, however, marked improvement has been noticeable in the balance of French trade. The excess of imports over exports in the first seven months of 1923 aggregated roughly 1,000,000,000 gold francs or 3,000,000,000 paper francs reckoning at present value. It was reduced to 392,658,000 francs during the same period in 1922 and to 73,837,000 francs for the first seven months of 1923. The French customs' administration considers that if invisible exports were taken into account France would be found to have a favorable balance at the present time.

No matter what we may think of Poincare's occupation of the Ruhr, policy, credit must be given the French government for the rehabilitation of their country to the fullest extent possible with their limited means. Whole towns have been rebuilt and a great number of factories are running on full time. As a result there is very little unemployment in France, and the people appear to be satisfied with their lot in life, for the time being at least. The Parisians may be impetuous in temperament, but the French people as a whole are frugal and industrious. They have furnished the world with a magnificent example of fortitude, courage and self-reliance since the signing of the armistice.

Casual. "What did you say when he told you he loved you?" "