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REPUBLICAN HOT AIR.

The Portland Oregonian, under the heading, "Spoiling Bryan's Hot Air," says:

"Now comes Theodore Roosevelt, president of the United States, and orders the army reduced at once to 56,980 enlisted men, the minimum authorized by law."

There was never a worse fake practiced on mullet head voters than that order just before an election. It furnished the republican spell-binders more hot air than Bryan ever emitted in all his life. The fact was that the army was below the minimum number before the order was issued. For months, as all the reports of officers commanding military departments show, the enlisted men had been deserting by the hundreds and notwithstanding that bill boards of the cities were covered with posters of the recruiting officers, they could not induce enough young men to enlist to fill the vacancies. It is the farmer boys who have always done the fighting and they have no liking for imperialism.

The question may be considered one of the things of the past, but The Independent wishes to say that the recent decision of the supreme court refusing to issue a writ of mandamus against the board of equalization to compel it to raise the assessment of the railroads of the state was not only sound in law, but was in direct line with the populist position concerning the power of the courts. Of late years the courts have been extending their jurisdiction in every direction and The Independent has often predicted that the time would come, if that tendency was not checked, when they would be issuing mandatory orders to legislatures and governors. In this instance the court stood by the old principles. Notwithstanding the assertions in the republican papers, the Missouri court took the same position. Where the law confers discretion on an officer, the discretion is to be exercised by that officer and not by the court.

The millions of money given over to the bankers by Secretary Shaw without interest is not his money. It is money belonging to the whole people of the United States. So we have this condition. The people turn over to the bankers hundreds of millions without interest and then go and borrow their own money from the bankers at high rates of interest. If that is not idiocy, what is it?

The editor wishes to call the attention of the readers to an article in another column printed under the head, "Forty Years a Republican." During the last few years hundreds of old men have written similar letters to The Independent. There can be no doubt that thousands upon thousands of men who were republicans when Lincoln was elected and for some years after Lincoln's death have left the party and joined themselves to the reform forces. The editor of The Independent is one of them himself. But the republicans have more than made good the loss to their party from the desertion of these men who believed in the Declaration of Independence, by importation of ignorant swarms from southern Europe and other places, who are simply controlled and voted as the bosses direct. They have not been able to do that with the more intelligent immigrants from northern Europe, though they have captured many of them.

There will be many thousands of dollars of expenses to pay for the arbitration committee appointed by the president. A great many people are asking where the money is to come from. None of the men on that commission will work without a salary unless it is Bishop Spaulding. Carrol D. Wright has a big salary from the government as labor commissioner and as this work is right in the line of his official duties, he is provided for. It is probable that the president will ask congress to make an appropriation. That will make it arbitration by the authority of the United States government. It will be seen that Teddy can do some things without law and there are other things which he says he can't do, although he has a law to back him—that is, he can't prosecute the coal barons under the criminal section of the Sherman act.

The money that the government has given to bankers without interest to hold and loan out during the last four years would have built a government railroad clear across the continent. That would have settled the freight and passenger rate question and there would be no further need of interstate commerce commissions or merger suits. Besides lowering the rates to a just and equitable basis the government could then have a revenue sufficient to pay all its expenses without any tariffs or any internal revenue taxes. There would be fewer millionaires and more prosperity and happiness among the people. But it seems that a majority of the people don't want any such happy conditions to prevail. If they did they would all vote for the establishment of populist principles.

Nebraska is God's own country and there is nothing like it for the longevity of its inhabitants. Neither balmy southern California nor the flower-covered south can compare with it for the large number of happy, energetic old people that can be found in almost any community in the state. Out in York county the other day there was a little party for old people and sixty-nine citizens of that town assembled to enjoy the evening, ranging between the ages of 70 and 85 years, and all their names and ages were printed in local papers. Another young lady sent a poem which was written on her 94th birthday. The rhythm and rhyme was perfect and its literary quality far above what passes for poetry in many of the great dailies.

The increase and reduction of the internal revenue tax has been a mine of gold for the trusts. It is said that the tobacco trust has already made millions by that operation. When the tax was raised from 6 to 12 per cent, the trust raised prices accordingly and besides that, cut down the size or

weight of its packages. Now that the tax has for some time been reduced to the old rate, the trust is still selling the reduced packages at the price it fixed when the full tax was levied. The retail dealers say that they are going to bring a suit against the trust under the Sherman act.

If the trust should succeed in electing one of their managers president of the United States, he might follow out his natural instincts and buy up South America or sell us at \$2.50 a head some European monarchy, just as we bought the Filipinos at that price. A president certainly has just as good a right to sell the inhabitants of this country at \$2.50 per head as he had to buy subjects of the Spanish king at that price.

The Paris courts do not have the respect and profound reverence for American millionaires that they ought to have. The other day one of them sentenced W. K. Vanderbilt, jr., to two days in jail and to pay a fine of ten francs for speeding his devil wagon over the streets of that city faster than the law allowed. But young Vanderbilt had fled and was convicted on default. He will have to keep out of Paris after this or serve his sentence.

The British have finished their Pacific cable and the first message sent over it was to King Edward, October 31. The time of a message from London to Australia is five minutes and 100 words a minute can be sent.

There is a cattle feeder out in the state who has one steer which he says eats everything in sight and never gains a pound. He calls him a "mullet head."

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