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Signs of the times: Blank dates in news dispatches.

No home is so humble that it cannot afford a flag for the window.

Incidentally, it is another shower of gold for the telegraph companies.

All eyes on Washington and all ears alert for the president's message!

Get close behind the spring cleanup drive! Otherwise, the dust is your's!

Least said is soonest mended. The Zimmermann note, the better. It simply cannot be satisfactorily explained.

In appraising the various symptoms of patriotism the devotion of the lawmakers in working for glory should not be overlooked.

His majesty the hog at 15 per on the hoof suggests to those who carry home the bacon the need of police protection along the route.

With congress monopolizing the spotlight there is nothing worth while in sight to detain state lawmakers. A motion to adjourn sine die is strictly in order.

Colonel Roosevelt, Colonel Bryan and Colonel Waterson hold down different sections of Florida, yet the state insists it is at peace with itself and the rest of the world.

When Florence is annexed to Omaha it will lose its separate postmaster. That's nothing, however, for South Omaha's postoffice was merged before that city was annexed.

How fast the world moves! The most strenuous advocates of a declaration of armed neutrality today are the very same ones who were vigorously opposing such a declaration one month ago.

The golden anniversary of taking over Alaska at 2 cents per acre is a cheery reminder of Uncle Sam's success as a master realtor. So long as he confined operations to the mainland returns invariably crowded the profit side of the ledger.

The rush for land bank loans is moderate, considering the bargain terms. Five per cent money is such a rarity in the west that demand may tax resources as soon as borrowing land owners acquire working knowledge of the system.

With every product of the farm bringing top prices and federal money available at bargain rates, the boy or girl who leaves the farm for the town or city virtually exchanges wealth and independence for a mighty uncertain prospect in the jostling crowd.

Herr Zimmermann insists that Uncle Sam possessed himself of that Mexican plot letter in a "not unobjectionable way." It is not the way that is objectionable to the plotters, but our unexpected possession of the information and its exposure to the world.

If the street railway, or the telephone, or the railroads, or any other public utility habitually disregarded complaints about service the way the postoffice does, what an outcry there would be and how irresistible would be the demand for public ownership!

The opening of the British imperial congress in London marks the beginning of an epoch in the government of the empire. The war knitted the various parts of the empire together as never before and makes possible the realization of the dream of imperial federation and a representative parliament. That such will be the outcome of the steps now under way admits of little doubt if the lessons of the war are heeded.

Federal Farm Loans

In fixing a uniform rate of 5 per cent on farm mortgages throughout the country, the Federal Farm Loan board makes a bold bid for business.

It is a radical departure, in view of the existing range of average mortgage rates from 5.3 per cent to 10.5 per cent in the various states. The disparity in the rate will be more pronounced in the southern and western sections. Here in the east, the 5 per cent rate will doubtless not make such a strong appeal, since banking facilities are broader, and the salutary interest rates range lower than in other parts of the country.

Naturally a new competitor in the field must be prepared to undersell the market. In the case of the Federal Land banks this is particularly necessary, because in addition to the decided novelty of the enterprise, the fact that farm loans are to be made by the new institutions at not exceeding 50 per cent valuation, and 20 per cent on improvements, will stand out in relief in the eyes of prospective borrowers. The rate must be attractive to offset this disadvantage.

Nevertheless, there is no gaining that this is a tremendous benefit now offered to the farming community. The opportunity will be readily seized. To be able to borrow at 5 per cent, and with the loan amortized, easily, over a period of forty years, is an undoubted boon to prospective land owners. For the country as a whole, it means enhanced production of the soil.

Farm development in this country has reached a stage, under the ordinary credit machinery, which admitted of relatively slow future progress. There is still a large field to be developed, which the regular banking standards could not reach. Now, new facilities and fresh sources of credit have been decreed, opened up to hitherto neglected fields, and good results should be manifest for many years to come.

What Answer Will Congress Give?

Congress will meet in extraordinary session today, having before it the most momentous and important single question to answer ever presented to that body.

What response it will return may only be surmised, but some points well established in advance seem to warrant a prediction. If President Wilson frankly and definitely states his wishes, it is almost certain he will be granted what he asks. If he refers the German question to congress without specific recommendations, we will probably be treated to interminable debate, and weeks may elapse before a conclusion, if any, is reached.

Beyond this all is conjecture. Mr. Wilson has been feeling out public sentiment ever since the adjournment of the Sixty-fourth congress, and his action in setting ahead by two weeks the date for the extraordinary session, after he had once called it to assemble, may be taken as an indication that he had made up his mind what to do. Cabinet conferences since then, as well as consultations with leaders of his party, must have confirmed him in his conclusion. He is aware of what opposition he will encounter within the democratic circles, and he knows what support he may look for from the republicans. His address, therefore, ought to be given with confidence as to its reception.

Something will depend on the speed with which organization is effected in the house. If the democrats hold the support of the five "independents," congress should be in working order in a very short time after it is called to order today, and we should know before the week is out what the immediate course of the United States in reference to the war is to be.

"Sweet Bells Jangled Out of Tune."

Americans of today are agreed on single point, that war should be avoided if possible. When this point is passed opinions and beliefs begin to diverge, and as the quest for information or support proceeds the ways to obtain and secure peace multiply until the inquiring observer is lost in the maze. Leaders of thought, real or imaginary, point in every direction, until the bewildering of honest, patriotic citizens seeking the right road is made complete. In all our history such another situation has not been encountered. It is not because the devotion of the people to American ideals is lessened, nor that patriotism is weakened as a controlling impulse; it may be for lack of some one great leader, whose personality and influence can command attention and crystallize opinion into concerted action.

Our president has moved for four years in a valley of indecision; statesmanship for him has been a process of experiments rather than of positive action. His party associates and advisers have acquired from him something of his vacillating ways and the resultant discord obscures the issue and prevents conclusion. Outside administration circles voices, more or less impressive and potent, are heard, each giving advice, but not one supporting another. For nearly twenty-three months this nation has quivered on the very brink of war, with never a chance to draw back, fully realizing that any serious efforts to maintain national dignity or to secure the safety of citizens in the peaceful pursuit of their own affairs might plunge us into the maelstrom of conflict, and we are as far away from a decision, apparently, as ever.

We still agree that we do not want war, that we prefer peace and friendly relations with all the world, but the "sweet bells" of the nation's reason are sadly "jangled out of tune." What shock must we have to solidify public sentiment and set us all moving along a definite course?

Farm and Factory Workers.

The April bulletin of the Department of Labor contains quite a bit of useful information, dealing mainly with questions of wages and cost of living. Conclusions based on tabulations of prices and wages are that the city workers actually receive less pay now than ten years ago, because of the sharp advance in cost of living. This has been well recognized, as is the additional fact that the workers are not alone in feeling the effect of the extraordinary inflation of values. What is of curious interest in connection with the price and wage movement is that the farm worker has a decided advantage over the factory worker. While farm wages have not advanced so fast as those paid by factories, the important items of board and lodging generally are included in the farm hand's contract. He, therefore, has not as yet felt the uplift in the cost of feeding himself. His money will not go any farther than the city worker's in the purchase of clothing or similar articles, but his way of life requires less of him in this regard, he is relieved of the charge of transporting himself to and from his place of employment and evades a number of fixed charges that must be met by the city worker. Viewed from this standpoint, the farm hand is much better off under existing conditions than his fellow who toils in the workshop.

Crime and the "Food Card."

How certainly the systematic arrangement of the German internal administration directs all things to the end that no citizen may overreach another at a time when all are subject to strict regulation is shown by the effect of the food card. From Berlin comes the information that this government arrangement for distributing provisions, that all may be fed, that each may have enough and none too much, has had a decided effect on reducing crime. The explanation is simple enough. One criminal, whose course had baffled pursuit, surrendered himself to the authorities. He had found he could not get anything to eat without a food card and he could only get the card by applying at the police station. Rather than starve he ended the chase, which had not been especially energetic, for the police felt certain he must either go hungry or come to them. When the authorities generally get such control over the conditions of life crime will largely vanish.

Once in a while the knocker's hammer becomes a boomerang. The esteemed Clarence H. Verner, broker, bond buyer and welcher, essayed recently to block the plans of a railroad by the injunction route. After much heated argument the court ruled against Verner and taxed him with all costs and \$1,666.67 each for the personal counsel of eight defendants. Mr. Verner's opinion of New York justice would doubtless shrivel asbestos paper.

If the conversational peace plan of Colonel Bryan is all that the maker represents, no time should be lost in giving it a practical tryout. The strained relations between the liquor interests and the colonel urgently calls for a trial test of the hot air harmonizer. A grave situation needs heroic treatment.

The Stake of Czarism

"The autocracy of Russia," said Jaakoff Preloker, the author of many revolutionary books and the last editor of the Anglo-Russian, a monthly periodical published in London just before the war, "is like the head of a family grown too large for personal direction and control. Successive autocrats, or czars, have attempted to preserve personal control through members of their family and those in sympathy with them until an immense bureaucracy has been evolved which is entirely apart from the people except as it controls their life and property in the name of the czar. The autocrat, because of this bureaucracy, would grant no rights to the people which would transfer its power to them any more than the father of a family would surrender any of his domestic rights to his children without abdicating as their head."

In the many ways in which the czar and his family and their servants of the bureaucracy have managed to maintain the autocracy, the land question and the imperial revenues are said to offer a striking example for immediate adjustment by the revolution.

Since the treaty of Portsmouth the Russian Empire has occupied 8,647,657 square miles or one-seventh of the land surface of the globe. It has a population of about 200,000,000, or fewer than twenty-five to the square mile. Nominally the autocrat "owns" both land and people, but he and his family out of the immense total of 948,063,763 acres actually own and receive the revenue from 680,938,927 acres, about 70 per cent of the whole land area of Russia, one-tenth that of the world. The balance, or 267,124,836 acres, is distributed as follows, according to the 1910 report of the Department of Agriculture, the latest:

Table with 2 columns: Category and Acres. Nobility: 181,606,519; Merchants: 36,321,303; Peasants: 35,141,886; Landed proprietors: 8,381,839; Other classes: 5,673,289.

Total: 267,124,836. The nobility number about 1,400,000, the agricultural classes (peasants and landed proprietors) 110,000,000. Thus the tiller of the soil and taxpayer possess on the average about one-third of an acre; the Russian nobleman, who does not pay taxes, possesses on an average some 128.

To put the case in another form: From every 384 loaves of bread produced by the Russian agriculturist the noble land owner alone takes away some 383 loaves for himself, leaving one loaf for the producer, from which the latter has yet to devote a part to satisfy the state or autocratic tax collector.

In many instances, aside from the tax, there is an autocratic prerogative in kind; as, for example, in the trapping of fables. About every one in ten is a jet black sable. These from time immemorial have been the property of the Romanoff family, and may be worn in Russia by no one else under severe penalty. Other penalties are attached to attempts to export the black pelts. Concerning the autocratic power of the czar and how it may be used independently of any legislative functions of the Council of the Empire, or Duma, M. Preloker has cited the following instances:

"An action was brought against Princess Imperetinsky by her late husband's heirs. The princess privately petitioned his majesty to intervene on her behalf, and he ordered the plaintiffs to be sequestered, against the decision of the law. Similarly, in a case when the Tula bank was charged with the sale of the estates of a bankrupt to satisfy the claims of creditors, the czar interfered, issued a personal order stopping the sale and suspending the operation of the law.

"Again, in another case, some nobleman sold his estate to a syndicate of merchants; the transaction was properly carried out, and legally ratified. But Czar Nicholas II, by his autocratic power, canceled the deed of sale, and ordered the property returned to the original owner, whose only desire had been to obtain the use of the purchase price for a few months."

Nobody knows exactly the amount of the czar's enormous income. The expenditure of some of it is traceable to certain public works whose budgets are matters of public record, and a large part is known to be absorbed by his family and their dependents, who number about 3,000, and are entirely apart from the noble class, which has no Romanoff affiliations. According to M. Preloker the czar "takes" an annual salary of \$12,500,000.

"I use the expression 'takes' deliberately, for there is no one, no law or institution in Russia that could veto the assignment by the czar to himself of any sum he is pleased to name. Besides this enormous revenue, he derives yet another annual income from his private estates and mines, the latter being worked by common and political convicts."

According to the "Almanach Hachette," the czar enjoys an annual income of \$42,500,000, or \$85 every minute.

There is still another source of income which, with the consent of the czar, is more or less devoted to the support of his immediate family. This is from the Romanoff property of 680,938,927 acres, 32,000,000 acres of which are at present productive. This yields an annual revenue of \$10,000,000. This sum goes for the support of the grand dukes and duchesses, who number forty-six, many of whom draw yet other incomes from private sources, or from various posts occupied in the army and navy, or in the general administration of the bureaucracy—posts which, of course, outside of the actual working departments which extend from the ministries down to the most insignificant official, are mostly sinecures.

The Russian autocracy has been, therefore, not only a political form of government, but a tremendously paying business for the autocrat himself and all his relations, near and remote.

People and Events

Co-eds at the University of Minnesota will not do a Hawaiian dance in bare legs. A delegation of shocked mammas saw the grass skirts and ordered stockings.

John Murray's bay mare got tired of being a land-lubber in New York and started to swim to sea. John pursued in a rowboat and had a hard time wheeling her back with a halter and a wisp of hay.

President Wilson's daughter, Miss Margaret, is a good lobbyist. She got the O. K. of Governor Whitman and several New York senators on the bill permitting the use of public schools for civic forums.

To remain beautiful eat an onion, half a pound of cabbage or spinach, half a grated turnip and a handful of cranberries daily, Mrs. Anna Peterson, domestic science lecturer, told club women in St. Paul.

"Some 300 artillerymen," says the Minneapolis Journal, "who served their countrymen faithfully on the Mexican border, are now walking the streets of the Twin Cities without money, without jobs and even without clothes to wear, only what the government lets them use." Nebraska and South Dakota handed their soldier sons much the same kind of a dose. Still, all three states are strong for Old Glory.

Beginning at the foot of the newspaper ladder fourteen years ago, William H. Rankin of Chicago reaches the high goal of a newspaper advertising agency bearing his name. The Rankin company takes over the Mahin advertising agency this week and launches into a much wider field of advertising activities. Associated with Mr. Rankin are Wilbur D. Nesbit, poet and playwright, and Herman A. Groh, financier and trade expert.

TODAY

Proverb for the Day. A game is never won until it's ended.

One Year Ago Today in the War. Second Zeppelin raid on England and Scotland killed sixteen and injured 106 persons.

British steamer Perth sunk, six lives lost. French regained most of Callette word between Douaumont and Vaux, Verdun.

In Omaha Thirty Years Ago. C. V. Gallagher, the recently appointed postmaster, has just returned from an eastern trip and states that he met President Cleveland while in Washington and had a very pleasant talk with him.

Beall & Co. have purchased the well-known commission business of Fearon & Cole and will continue business at the old stand.

Fireman John Taggart of Truck 1 has secured a ten days' leave of absence and will, during that time, lead a bride to the altar.

Mr. and Mrs. E. Currier gave a birthday reception in honor of their daughter at their residence, Twenty-fifth and Woolworth. The following guests were present: Messrs. and Mesdames Darrell, Barr, Weber, George, Swartz, R. A. Clancy, R. H. Clancy, Patterson, L. A. Rhodes, Stephenson, Misses Minnie Messers, E. Brown, M. Green, C. Rath, Mergan, C. W. Moulton, George Rath, R. M. Patterson, William Rhodes, Henry Rhodes and Arthur Ballard.

The funeral of Patrick O'Grady occurred at St. Philomena's cathedral. The following were pall bearers: John Rush, T. E. Brennan, Dominic Mulhain, John Ward, E. J. Brennan and Thomas McGovern.

J. B. Carmichael and E. A. Benson have returned from Davenport, where they have been settling up their interests.

This Day in History.

1781—United States ship Alliance captured two British privateers.

1792—United States mint established at Philadelphia.

1801—British Admiral Lord Nelson bombarded Copenhagen and destroyed Danish fleet.

1847—Alvarado, Mex., surrendered to the Americans.

1856—Grant assaulted and carried the works at Petersburg, Va.

1866—President Johnson proclaimed the war between the States at an end.

1886—Great meeting in London to protest against proposed Home Rule for Ireland.

1891—General Albert Pike, who distinguished himself in the Mexican war and in the confederate service, died in Washington, D. C. Born in Boston December 29, 1808.

1898—The Spanish fleet, having sailed from Cadiz on the eve of war with the United States, arrived at Cape Verde islands.

1899—British captured 600 British officers and men at Reddersburg.

The Day We Celebrate.

Judge William A. Redick is 68 today. He was born right here in Omaha and practiced law with his father for many years prior to going on the bench.

Dr. Andrew Johnson, physician, was born April 2, 1840, in Sweden. He was superintendent of the Nebraska Institution for the Feeble-Minded at Beatrice, under Governor Dietrich, Savage, Mickey and Sheldon.

General Sir O'Moore Creagh, one of the most distinguished living veterans of the British military service, born in County Clare, Ireland, sixty-nine years ago today.

Lieutenant General Sir Bryan T. Mahon, commanding the British forces on the western front of Egypt, born in County Galway, Ireland, fifty-five years ago today.

William B. Wilson, secretary of labor in President Wilson's cabinet and one of the mediators in the recent railway dispute, born at Blantyre, Scotland, fifty-five years ago today.

Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia university, born at Elizabeth, N. J., fifty-five years ago today.

Prof. J. Laurence Laughlin, for twenty-five years a member of the faculty of the University of Chicago, born at Deerfield, O., sixty-seven years ago today.

Dr. Carl L. Alberg, chief of the bureau of chemistry of the United States Department of Agriculture, born in New York forty years ago today.

Hugh A. Jennings, manager of the Detroit American League baseball team, born at Pittston, Pa., forty-seven years ago today.

Timely Jottings and Reminders.

Called together in special session by President Wilson, the two houses of the Sixty-fifth congress will assemble at noon today to receive from the chief executive "a communication concerning grave matters of national policy."

Thirty-five years ago today Alfred C. Bradford started his career in the employ of the Standard Oil company, of which great corporation he was recently elected president to succeed the late John D. Archbold.

The preliminary session of the Mexican home of the annual meeting of an official Mexican City. According to an official statement the gathering will have no international significance.

The 175,000 mine workers employed in the anthracite field will keep a holiday today in celebration of the first anniversary of the granting of the eight-hour day, which they won in their agreement with the operators a year ago.

Steps to give the American lumber industry a new impetus, through better co-operation between the various sections of the country, are to be taken at the annual meeting of the National Lumber Manufacturers' association, which opens today in Chicago.

Storyteller of the Day.

Jerome S. McWade said of the management of children in a recent Sunday school address: "Diplomacy succeeds best with the little ones. A lad of 9 came puffing and rosy in out of the cold the other night and said: 'Pa, I'm tired. I've sawed enough wood for this evening. I'm 17 I'm awful tired.'"

"Tired!" cried his father, looking up from his paper with an air of surprise and disappointment. "Why, I bet your mother a quarter you'd have the whole pile done before supper."

"Did you?" shouted the boy, taking up his hat and mittens again. "We've got to get up at 5 o'clock if the saw holds out. Nobody ever bet on me and lost."

"And he rushed back to his hard task again, his eyes flaming with enthusiasm."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

The Bee's Letter Box

Who Will Write to a Prisoner?

Denver, April 1.—To the Editor of The Bee: Ours is a generous-hearted country and the sympathy of our people is easily aroused when causes of distress are made known to them, giving abundantly of their dollars.

There is a form of distress to which few give a thought and for which I am asking something far more subtle than money. I am appealing in the cause of friendless prisoners to whom a word of sympathy and hope is more than all the dollars in the world. Everyone knows how quickly the so-called friends depart at the first sound of reverses and how quickly the world turns up its nose. Friends are good in prosperity, but who has not known the greater value of a friend in adversity?

Who will be that agent of mercy and correspond with some of these friendless ones? Many today are earnestly asking for correspondents. Their names may be obtained from Dr. H. N. Stokes, the O. E. Library, 1207 Q street, Washington.

NELLIE RANDOLPH.

Still Nineteen Wooden Indians.

Omaha, March 30.—To the Editor of The Bee: Upon my return from the senate, two years ago, I had occasion to refer to the "nineteen wooden Indians" in that body who served—not the interests of the people. It seems that there still remain on the same number. Thank God that one of those to whom I referred two years ago, from this county, has taken a higher position at this session. Senator Howell alone of the delegation from Douglas county has maintained a creditable record throughout this session.

Senator Robertson, however, true to his past unprogressive record, he remains the leader of the "wooden Indians."

It is somewhat amusing to hear Senator Albert speak of the failure of a law that has not public sentiment back of it. He is the author of the Albert law. Had that law been submitted to the people of Omaha, among whom it was chiefly designed to operate, at the time of its introduction it would have gotten few votes.

Senator Beal still remains the fearless and splendid character that he proved himself to be two years ago.

The words of Senator McAllister upon the amendments to the "dry" bill, introduced by Robertson, in referring to "prohibition" as the virgin being clothed in the garments of the harlot and desecrated by libertines, fitly describe the situation. It is to be hoped that the house, rather than accept the amendments of the senate, will defeat the bill entirely and leave the Slocum law to deal with the situation.

Again I have good reason to ask why is a "sitting" committee? and why is a senate? The solution is the abolition of the state senate, retaining only one legislative house.

L. J. QUINBY.

Somebody in a Flag.

There is something in a flag. And in a little burnished case That is more than emblematic— It is glorious, it is regal.

You may never live to feel it. You may never be in danger. You may never visit foreign lands And play the role of stranger.

You may never in the army check The march of an invader. You may never on the ocean cheer The awfully cannonader.

But if these should happen to you, Then, when you are in danger, You may never visit foreign lands And play the role of stranger.

You should tell him, "Son of mine, Be your station proud or frugal. When your country calls her children And you hear the blast of bugle.

Don't you stop to think of Kansas, Or the quota of your county. Don't you stop for pay or bounty. Don't you stop for pay or bounty.

But you volunteer at once, And go where orders take you, And obey them to the letter. If they make you or they break you.

Hunt that flag and stay you with it. Be you the first to strike a blow. Let the women sing the dirge. Scrape the lint and chant the psalm.

Though the magazines and journals Team with antiwar persuasion And the stay at home and cowards Glibly take the like occasion.

Don't you ever dream of asking Is the war a right or wrong one? You are in it and your duty is To make the fight a brave and strong one.

And you stay until it's over. Be the war a short or long one; Make amends when the war is over— Then the power with you is lying. Then if wrong do ample justice. But that flag, you keep it flying.

If that flag goes down to ruin, Time will then, without a warning, Turn the dial back to midnight. And the world must wait another morning.

Let The Omaha Bee help you with your Spring Shopping

The Bee maintains its Shopping Service as a convenience for those of its readers who cannot come to the city to shop, or for "shut-ins" in town who are unable to see for themselves the new things displayed in the stores. Polly The Shopper will gladly help you with your needs, so there's no reason why you should shop hazily through Eastern catalogue houses when you can have someone personally superintend your shopping for you in the metropolis of your state, where merchandise is arriving daily from New York. Watch for the gossipy notes of the new things in the shops and about town by Polly The Shopper in the Society Section of The Sunday Bee.

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO CHARGE TO OUR READERS FOR THIS SHOPPING SERVICE.

Persistence is the cardinal virtue in advertising; no matter how good advertising may be in other respects, it must be run frequently and constantly to be really successful.