

OFFICERS ARE POOR ON ACCOUNT H. C. L.

Must Spend Two Months' Salary Gathering Effects That Are Necessary on the Battlefield.

The cost of army officers' uniforms and equipment, which has been rising steadily for years, has taken such a decided jump within the last six months that it will cost most of the officers being graduated from training camps at least two months of their salary to purchase the necessities of army life when they enter upon their new careers.

While uniforms and equipment are furnished free to privates and non-commissioned officers, commissioned officers make their own purchases in the retail market at prices necessarily far above those which might be obtained if the equipment were manufactured by contract with the War department.

No change has been made in the pay of officers to meet the increased cost of equipment and the rising cost of living generally.

The salaries of officers are: Major general, \$8,000 a year; brigadier general, \$6,000; colonel, \$4,000; lieutenant colonel, \$3,500; major, \$3,000; captain, \$2,400; first lieutenant, \$2,000; second lieutenant, \$1,700. Officers below the rank of brigadier general receive an increase of 10 per cent in pay for each five years spent in one rank.

Subsistence Provided. Army officers are provided with heat, light and quarters, or in some cases receive an allowance to provide for them. Mounted officers receive \$100 a year for feed of one horse, or \$150 a year for two horses. Officers of the aviation corps receive 50 per cent more than the usual pay for their rank.

The price asked for officers' uniforms, consisting of coat and trousers vary from about \$30 to \$150. Few makers of officers' overcoats ask less than \$45 at retail and prices go up to \$75 and \$100. Leather goods of all kinds have at least doubled in price in the last year. Ordinary army shoes have jumped from \$3.50 to \$7.50 and leather puttees in some cases have tripled in price.

At the army stores it was said that the high-grade army overcoat which sold six months ago at \$55 is now priced at \$60, while the officer's uniform of olive drab serge that sold for \$37.50 six months ago now sells for \$43. The following explanation was given of the rise in prices:

Rapid Rise in Prices. The increase has not more than kept pace with the advancing prices for civilian clothes. All kinds of woollens have gone up. The Australian yarn which was used in an officer's equipment a year ago is not obtainable in this country at all, because its shipment outside of the British Empire has been forbidden. An American-made substitute has been placed on the market at a higher price than was formerly paid for the Australian.

We are paying \$5 a yard now for materials which cost only \$3.25 a few months ago. The manufacturers have been rushed with orders for this kind of material and cannot turn it out fast enough to meet the demand. Officers' uniforms have always been expensive because good cloth and the best kind of workmanship have gone into them. Ready-made uniforms have been practically unknown in the past, as an exceptionally good fit is necessary, especially to the breeches, if the garment is to be comfortable.

Because of the great immediate demand for them, a large number of ready-made uniforms has been placed on the market recently by dealers who have not been in the uniform business heretofore. A representative of one of the best known clothing firms in the city said yesterday:

We are selling uniforms at from \$30 to \$60, and army overcoats from \$45 to \$75 and are carrying ready-made garments in stock as well as making them. These prices are about 20 per cent higher than they were six months ago. In ordinary lines of clothing the increase in that period has been about 20 per cent. This is due even more to the rise in cost of labor than to the rise in cost of materials. We have always figured on a smaller profit on uniforms for army and navy service than for ordinary clothing.

Bell Travels to City of Blair, Where Finds Prosperity Aplenty

By J. T. BELL.

Blair, Neb., Aug. 18.—Day before yesterday I came to this city over a railroad that I used to know as the Omaha & Northwestern, the trains drawn for a number of years, by an engine labelled "J. E. Boyd," in honor of the first president of the company.

Great change in the appearance of the country along the line of road. I was surprised to see the hills between Omaha and Calhoun lined with native forests of dense growth. Formerly that region was covered with hazel brush and small shrubs. The explanation as to this condition instead of that land being devoted to farming purposes is that it is held for higher prices by speculators.

What these owners have in mind as to "high prices" for farm lands is something of a mystery for it takes from \$100 to \$200 an acre to buy farms in this section of the country now. But these are real farms with a wonderfully productive soil adapted to growing anything that can be grown in this latitude and with a market at Omaha which assures a certain sale for all that can be raised and at profitable prices.

Locates Old Landmark. Coming over the road I looked to see if I could locate the former home of the late Judge Crouse. He had a fine orchard and I remember of his telling me about his taking a young son to Florida on account of the poor health of the boy. There was no gain in this respect and the lad got homesick and told his father that he wanted to go back home, that he would not give one apple from their own orchard for all of the fruit produced in a year by the entire state of Florida.

I find many old friends here, among them the man who, with his father, established the first newspaper in Blair, that was published in Nebraska west of Omaha and north of the Platte—Frank Hilton. His father, B. E. Hilton, was a member of the state senate that set as a court of impeachment when Governor David Butler was impeached. The paper was the Register and after a number of years successful management of it the paper was sold and for ten years was the publisher of the Drovers' Journal of South Omaha. He is a booster of boosters when this particular part of the earth's surface becomes the topic of conversation. He is now the publisher of the Blair Enterprise. He came to Blair in July 1869 and has made this his home a large part of the time since that date.

Blair Platted in 1868. This town was platted in 1868 by the Land and Lot company of the Sioux City and Pacific Railroad company. In the following spring there was an auction sale of lots and Mr. Hilton says his recollection is that \$100 was realized from that sale. The company bought a large tract of land here, only a small portion of which was then platted, but additions have since been made and some of the company's land has been sold for farms.

It is a beautiful residence town with a population of about 3,500. It has wide streets, beautifully shaded; deep lots in the residential district lined with comfortable looking homes and well-kept lawns. Indeed so many trees have been planted on the streets that hundreds of cords of wood have been obtained from those cut down. The city owns the water system; has a fine court house and city hall and a high school building which would be a credit to a community much larger than this.

Farms Easily Worked. Speaking of the fertility of the soil hereabouts Mr. Hilton says it is so easily worked that it seems to him the farmers have much time for getting service out of their autos. And there is an abundance of machines here. On one street, in a distance of a block, I counted twenty-five of them parked and with many more in motion on other blocks. Mr. Edward C. Jackson, who has lived here since along in the seventies and who has been honored by his fellow citizens by being elected to numerous terms as assistant county treasurer, as county treasurer, county clerk, probate judge and clerk of the district court, says he has seen a great change in methods on the part of the farmers of this county. Where formerly thousands of dollars worth of farm machinery would be left unsheltered from one year to another, now buildings are

provided for housing them and in other ways great improvements have been made in the management of farms and also in the improvement and care of stock.

Corn 10 Cents.

Mr. Al C. Jones, who has been in the grain elevator business here since 1878, speaking of the extraordinary prices that have been paid for corn of late, says that he has paid \$2.25 a bushel and that in 1896 he bought just as good corn at 50 cents a bushel and to the extent of 45,000 bushels in one year. Mr. Jones and his wife I have known many years and they have been very kind in extending hospitality to me on the occasion of my visit here. We all formerly knew a man who was noted for his dislike for manual toil. He was not really afraid of work for he was like that man who said that he could lie down alongside of it and sleep all day. This particular man whom we knew, according to Mr. Jones, rented a forty-acre farm one year and began plowing it on the outside. He counted the steps for a few rounds, then compared the space he had covered with the remainder of the field, figured the whole thing out and threw up the job, said he could never make that many steps.

Blair is an unusual town in one respect; it has four weekly papers and they all appear to be doing satisfactory business. One of these is run by Postmaster Tom Osterman, the Blair Democrat. He comes of a family of pioneers of this county and has an extended acquaintance the county over. Joe Cook, ex-county clerk and ex-deputy county clerk is another pioneer who has personal knowledge of the great changes that have come to this part of the state during his residence here.

Bell at Fontenelle. Fontenelle, Neb., Aug. 16.—It is a pleasant experience for one to return after many years of absence to the scenes of his boyhood as is my experience in making a visit to Fontenelle, once a town of considerable importance and one of many candidates for distinction as the capital of Nebraska Territory.

It was in 1854 that the "Nebraska Colonization company" was organized in Quincy, Ill., for the purpose of locating its members in Nebraska. That fall a committee representing the organization was sent out to look over the country. Of this committee my father, James A. Bell, was a member. After visiting various localities this committee decided that a location on the Elkhorn river came the nearest to the object in view—hence Fontenelle. The following year the town was platted, with eight lots in a block, the lots being 100x200, and streets 100 feet wide. The site overlooked the Elkhorn and Platte rivers and is in the midst of a very fertile region, as has since been demonstrated.

First Settler in 1855. In 1855 there was a drawing of lots by the members of the colony, and in 1856 many houses were built. It was in 1855 that the family of Thomas Gibson moved from Quincy to the new Nebraska settlement. In his outfit was an ox team, driven by a young German, Henry Sprick, who at the date of his death, a few years ago, was the owner of the greater part of the townsite of Fontenelle, which he had converted into a farm and was growing three splendid crops of wheat, corn and oats. He owned many other farms and was one of the wealthiest men in Washington county. His first home in Fontenelle was a modest log cabin; then he built a two-story frame, but kept the log cabin standing near by. Then, a short distance away, he built a modern, spacious brick house, with the log cabin and the frame still standing, and it is only within a few years that the cabin has disappeared.

Cemetery Set Aside. It was a considerable tract of land that the townsite of Fontenelle embraced; now only a dozen blocks remain, all of the other portions being in cultivation. When the town was platted the land in that part of Nebraska had not been surveyed, and when it was my father, then mayor of Fontenelle, entered the land in behalf of the colonization company and deeded to the owners their lots. Included in the property possessed by the company was a forty-acre tract which was set apart as a cemetery, the first burials in which were of two residents of the town who were killed just outside of the settlement by Sioux Indians.

A few miles out from Fontenelle is a half section of land that was taken as homesteads by four persons. One was the late John A. Cuppy, who died a very wealthy man; one was a widow who had a grown son and daughter. They built a house covering the junction of four eighths, and, as each member of the group had a room on the eighty, each claimed they thus complied with the law as to residence on the property. When the time was up Cuppy and the girl were married.

Arlington Prosperous. A few miles southeast of Fontenelle is the prosperous town of Arlington with a population of about 800. Three evidences of prosperity in town and country are shown—the publication of a twelve-page paper, the Review Herald, H. E. Andrews editor; two banks and so many automobiles owned by the neighboring farmers that at the intersections of business streets the drivers of the machines are warned to "keep to the right." I passed one night at Arlington in the vicinity of a tent in which a chautauqua was being conducted, there were not fewer than sixty automobiles lined up in which farmers and their families had come from the country adjacent.

Big Nursery Farm. One of the important business enterprises in the vicinity of Arlington is the big nursery of the Marshall brothers who annually send out over the entire country the name of this state with their shipments of nursery stock. The headquarters of the company are in the town where they are increasing the size of their brick building to make it cover a space of 140 feet by 180. Mr. C. G. Marshall told me a story that was particularly interesting to me. At the Omaha exposition my brother, Will, took to the fruit exhibit some apples from a volunteer tree from the town of Papillion. It was an apple of so superior a quality that the Marshall brothers

had my brother send them some scions from the tree. They have since propagated this apple and say it is one of the best in their nursery. As it was of an unknown variety they named it the "Bell" apple and now the "Bell" apple stock is sent out all over our country from a nursery within a short distance of "Bell" creek, named after the father of Will Bell in 1854.

Beautiful Auto Road. At Arlington I found J. C. Blackburn still engaged in the implement business with an honorable record in that line in that town since the early 70's and there is still living in Arlington the widow of Samuel A. Francis who put up the first building in the town which building is still standing. I cannot imagine a more attractive drive for automobile people going from Omaha than to go through Calhoun and Blair out to the western part of Washington county to Fontenelle, returning by way of Arlington.

At Fontenelle a visit should be made to the bluff from which can be had of the Elkhorn and Platte valleys, a view of surpassing beauty. And all the way from Blair to Arlington via Fontenelle, I see stretching away for miles on either side farms of value with red barns, herds of high-grade cattle grazing in pastures, with orchards and groves surrounding homes of comfort, many of these being brick houses.

Red Ames Still Pitching In the Style of His Youth. When it comes to veteran pitchers doing fine work don't overlook "Red" Ames, of the Cardinals. The one-time Giant has plenty of good pitching left, though it is many years since he first made his bow in the majors.

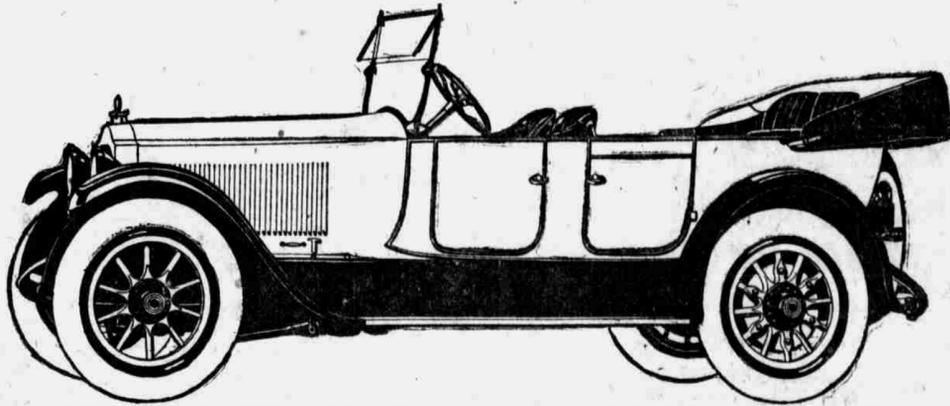
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