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County Bonded Indebtedness.

The report of the state auditor touching the bonded indebtedness of Nebraska counties presents some interesting phases. It reveals the fact that two-thirds of the counties of the state have no bonded indebtedness and that the debts of only five exceed a hundred thousand dollars each.

Nearly every county having voted bonds for public improvements is very productive and rich in natural resources and, computed upon the basis of the actual or assessed valuation of taxable property, every one of the counties is well able to support the debt incurred and to liquidate it in good time.

A cursory analysis of the statement indicates the taxpayers of Nebraska counties have exercised unusual moderation in the matter of mortgage indebtedness. The showing is very good evidence of the antipathy of the farming element to the specter of debt, be it public or private.

Thus we see that the financial condition of Nebraska counties as political entities is excellent. The presumption is that most of these debts were incurred for the promotion of public improvements, including public buildings, good roads and drainage projects.

While every intelligent and patriotic American must agree that our public schools, and our private schools, too, for that matter, must not be used to propagate subversive alien ideas or promote disloyal sentiments through the teaching of the German language, common sense does not prescribe complete cessation of the study of German or refusal to use the German language where it can be put to good and desirable use.

The Study of German.

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For a generation past the German language and literature have been widely taught in the schools and colleges of the United States. In some parts of the country the study of German has been given a preferred position by law or by municipal action.

No country can have a homogeneous or a safe basis for its public opinion and its institutions unless these rest upon the foundation of a single language. To protect the national unity and security no community should be permitted to substitute any other language for English as the basis and instrument of common school education.

When this point is guarded there can be no reasonable question not only as to the desirability, but as to the necessity of continuing the study of the German language. German literature and German history when this war shall end, there are, perhaps, 120,000,000 people in the world who speak German.

A prophet with ministerial connections in New York takes his outgivings seriously enough to print and mail out a sheet warning the world to prepare for three and a half more years of war. Looks like a pretty tough sentence for humanity, but since the prophet prophesies the death of the kaiser and the devil at the finish doubtless the spectator will patiently bear the delay for such an admirable climax.

While the chase for "slacker dollars" is on wastage of good money in political campaigns deserves attention. The fusion campaign in New York cost over \$1,000,000 and two rivals for the mayoralty of Pittsburgh burned up \$170,000.

Keys to the Mysterious House

By Frederic J. Haskin

Washington, Dec. 15.—So far Colonel E. M. House is known to the public chiefly as a man of mystery—one whose thoughts and motives are unknown, whose movements are secret or obscure.

Colonel House seems to resemble no one but himself. His unique place in the public mind has been gained largely by the simple expedient of keeping his mouth shut when so many others are open. Most of the sketches of him so far have been elaborations of this fact, with the added information that he lives in Texas, where he deals in lands and "makes" governors, senators and cabinet officers for recreation.

But if the man will not talk of himself, his friends will occasionally talk of him, and there is beginning to grow up a little body of House legends, which are passed from mouth to mouth and occasionally blossom into print.

House was an Englishman, who settled in Texas, built a mansion on a mission, and lived like an English country gentleman, devoting his time to farming and sports, for which the Texas wilderness was then a virgin field.

Young House was a crack shot, a daring rider, and loved the outdoors as do all westerners. His youth and young manhood, his formative years, were spent largely on the prairies and in the mountains with summer visits to London and the continent.

House was educated at Cornell university and made a special study of economics. He remained a student all his life.

This is all the direct evidence that we can find as to the man's intellectual attainments. There is no one in public life who has so sedulously refrained from putting himself on record. But certainly he has identified himself with progressive men and measures.

The meeting of House and Wilson, according to Harry Wilson Walker, who is a friend of both, was the result of the search by House for a man of national caliber who had the courage to be progressive.

Next to his silence, the thing which has rendered Colonel House most incomprehensible to a people accustomed to self-seeking politicians, is his apparent selfishness.

Austria and Her Loot

The proposition that a robber ought to be clubbed, but that the robber's title to the loot he has stored away in a cellar or a cavern must be held inviolate, is a joy to students of vaudeville major premises and minor premises and conclusions.

Poles, Czechs, Bohemians, Hungarians are virtually ruled from Vienna by a power they hate. Two-thirds or thereabout of the population of Trieste and the Trentino are speakers of Italian and love Italy.

Thirty-one bills, including the "Haley" bill, have been passed over a president's veto. No bill has ever passed a veto until Tyler's administration.

TODAY

Right in the Spotlight.

Sir Robert L. Borden, the fate of whose administration is at stake in the Dominion elections today, has been premier of Canada since 1911.

One Year Ago Today in the War. Von Mackensen's army forced Rumanians back over broad front in eastern Wallachia.

In Omaha Thirty Years Ago. The Orchard Hill Terrace building association is the title of an incorporation which was also filed.

The Christmas Present Problem. Omaha, Dec. 15.—To the Editor of The Bee: It is time to turn our thoughts to the annual Christmas gift problem.

This Day in History. 1734—William Floyd, a New York signer of the Declaration of Independence, born at Brookhaven, N. Y. Died at Weston, N. Y., Aug. 4, 1821.

Timely Jottings and Reminders. The American Red Cross Christmas membership drive opens today and will continue until Christmas eve.

HERE AND THERE. The oldest woman preacher in the United States is Mrs. Mary Goddard of Braintree, Mass.

Storvett of the Day. The children happened to be present when mother received an applicant for the position of nursemaid.

THE OMAHA BEE INFORMATION BUREAU. Enclosed find a 2-cent stamp, for which you will please send me, entirely free, a copy of the book "The Corneal Book."

The Bee's Letter Box

Politics Makes Postal Inefficiency.

Omaha, Dec. 15.—To the Editor of The Bee: Washington dispatches in The Bee of December 6 inform us that Postmaster General Burleson is not friendly to labor unions and that the suggestion to contract the post office withdrawing rights now possessed by postal employees.

As to the danger of strike among postal employees, owing to a dilution of public funds for postage to be disposed could inform himself in 10 minutes that postal employees in union have absolute control over their own affairs, and that no outside body has the right to order or dictate what they shall do in any given case.

When it is charged that postal organizations are a menace to the government business, we point in answer to the testimony of every postal general for the past 20 years, acknowledging publicly and with gratitude the material assistance such bodies have been to them in their administration of the postal department.

The Christmas Present Problem. Omaha, Dec. 15.—To the Editor of The Bee: It is time to turn our thoughts to the annual Christmas gift problem. What does the coming of Christmas mean to us? Do we greet the approach of what should be the occasion of unclouded good cheer with happy and joyous anticipation?

Loquacious Locomotive. The world was a grace before me. The ground was not covered with white. The snowflakes came down so peacefully. It was a wonderful sight.

Locomotive Auto Oil. The Best Oil We Know 55c Per Gallon. The L. V. Nicholas Oil Company. GRAIN EXCHANGE BLDG. President.

To Chicago. Take the "Milwaukee" Road. AN appetizing dinner upon leaving Omaha at 6:02 p. m.—a good night's rest in a "longer, higher, wider" berth—a breakfast that starts the day right—and you step off The Chicago Limited—"No. 6"

Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Ry. Three other trains for Chicago leave Omaha at convenient hours. Eugene Duval, General Agent.

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ly produce, and of giving the recipient the true happiness of mutually getting something that will give him real pleasure. There are, of course, ways and ways of giving, but there is no reason why money cannot be presented in so gracious and acceptable a way that none of the sentiment of the gift is lost.

WAR-TIME LIFE IN BRITAIN. Food profiteering is risky business in Great Britain. Excursions of food prices are admittedly numerous, but those who "get away with the goods" are never sure of holding the money.

MIRTHFUL REMARKS. "What did you say your age was?" he remarked between dashes. "Well, I didn't say, I merely returned the compliment, but I've just reached 21."

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER. This morning I woke me at daybreak. The ground was all covered with white. The snowflakes came down so peacefully. It was a wonderful sight.

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