

THE OMAHA BEE
DAILY (MORNING) - EVENING - SUNDAY
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THE BEE PUBLISHING COMPANY, PROPRIETOR.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION
By Carrier: Daily and Sunday \$4.00 per week, 13 weeks \$52.00
By Mail: Daily and Sunday \$3.50 per week, 13 weeks \$45.50

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REMITTANCE
Send by draft, express or postal order. Only 2-cent stamps taken in payment of small accounts. Personal checks, except on Omaha and eastern exchange, not accepted.

OFFICES
Omaha - The Bee Building, 221 N. 9th St.
Chicago - People's Gas Building, 120 N. Dearborn St.
New York - 30 West Ave.
London - 11, Abchurch Lane, E.C. 4.

CORRESPONDENCE
Address communications relating to news and editorial matter to The Bee, Editorial Department.

NOVEMBER CIRCULATION
58,715 Daily - Sunday, 51,884

Subscribers leaving the city should have The Bee mailed to them. Address changed as often as requested.

As a business revolutionist Uncle Sam is going some.

After all no gifts with more character and individuality in them than good books.

Here's hoping the white Christmas of the boys abroad completely fulfills the prophecy.

The swelling list of alien plotters bagged fore-shadows an early bulge in the country's penitentiary walls.

It does not necessarily follow that railroad rates must go up. The federal treasury knows how to care for deficits.

It is a rare day in war time when the Pacific coast fails to emphasize its patriotism with a labor shut-out or a labor strike.

And the democratic party is supposed to be the party of states rights as against centralization of power in the federal government.

Still must one dance barelegged in public to be entitled to keep a private stock of liquid refreshments for personal use in a dry town?

Austria is ready to let go, without annexations or indemnities. The admission might be interesting if Austria were master of its own mind.

Intimations from high quarters indicate that federal fixed steel prices will continue in force for three more months at least. Do your shopping early.

Ten days in jail for one reckless auto driver who did not hurt anyone but himself. That is setting an example though, which other speeders may well take to heart.

The temper of John Bull carries sufficient pressure to kick an admiral upstairs. Uncle Sam's "kicking machine" should take on more steam and end the muddling.

Another pertinent question: Will Uncle Sam as railroad manager maintain a paid lobby at Washington and at each of the 48 state capitols whenever the lawmakers are in session?

"Do we realize what this war means?" inquires a congressman back from the front. Speaking for Nebraska the answer is "yes!" Realize it so well that shudders radiate from the statehouse to Columbus and Omaha.

The story of Herbert Hoover's great work in succoring the Belgian people shows with reasonable clearness that the systematic obstructions and annoyances of Prussian rulers scarcely surpassed the tactics of a badgering Missouri lawyer.

Official warnings of threats of stock poisoning sent to stock growers in the southwest indicate a situation calling for extreme vigilance. Advocates of sabotage and those who practice it voice increasing desperation, owing to government prosecutions, and every possible safeguard should be adopted to circumvent malicious mercenaries.

The United States senate unanimously adopts a resolution offered by a democratic senator from a democratic state, reciting the "unquestioned proof" of clothing shortage in cantonments and calling on the secretary of war to take "immediate steps" to supply the deficiency. Must be some basis then for the complaints of inadequate provision for the men in the training camps, after all.

Graveyard of Reputations

The Balkan-Macedonian campaign is a grave of military reputations for Allied chieftains. The fame of several British generals was buried on the shores of the Dardanelles. When the center of activity in that region was transferred to Salonica, the British general command, having received a very black eye, stepped aside, and the French general, Sarrail, who had won an excellent fighting reputation in France, and particularly at the battle of the Marne, was put in absolute charge.

UNCLE SAM TAKES OVER RAILROADS.
By far the most sweeping industrial change resulting from our entrance into the world war is the taking over of the operation of all the railroads of the country for operation by the government. That such a momentous innovation involving so colossal an undertaking is brought about by mere proclamation of the president is wonderful testimony to the tremendous authority we repose in the executive power of our nation.

Many Puzling Questions.
The taking over of the railroads projects many questions which are easily asked but not readily answered. It substitutes the government ownership and operation for private ownership and operation of the largest and most vital and widely ramified single field of industrial activity.

What Effect Upon Investments?
How will government control and operation affect the investor? Will the proposed guaranty of returns on a basis of three years' average standardize all railroad stocks and securities and put them on the same market level?

What Effect Upon Railroad Employees?
What will government operation do to the army of railroad officials, employees and laborers? In what way will their relationship be changed by becoming employees of the federal government?

What Possibility of Operating Economies.
In the matter of operation, how far will the government go to stop duplication and waste? Will it pool rolling stock and motive power and distribute cars and engines regardless of the roads to which they used to belong?

Will Construction Be Stopped or Eliminated?
Again, what about new construction and improvements? Will the government, while in control, make extensions and build additional lines and provide long-needed terminals?

Is it to Be Temporary or Permanent?
Finally, how long will government operation continue? Is this to be a temporary expedient for the duration of the war only, or is it an experiment to lay the foundation for permanent public ownership?

"Retaliation" That Helps.
Iowa has "retaliated" on Nebraska by ordering the inspection of breeding stock shipped from this state to that. This "comeback" is called forth by the fact that Nebraska for a long time has had a similar regulation affecting Hawkeye stock.

Another of the notorious stations in the cocktail route of San Francisco is closed. At one time the Richelieu saloon was the meeting place of local politicians who fixed elections in advance and "premier" planners run the political road roller for himself and friends.

Our New Pact With Japan
By Frederic J. Has in

Washington, Dec. 26.—Some authorities regard the recent exchange of notes between Secretary of State Lansing and Viscount Ishii over the Chinese situation as the most important American diplomatic move in far eastern affairs since the enunciation of the Hay doctrine of the open door. Others look at it as unimportant. One Japanese editor, for example, characterizes the discussion of it as "much ado about nothing."

The far eastern problem has of course been pushed into the background by the war, and there is a disposition deliberately to forget all else until we have defeated Germany. This is probably the only reason why the new agreement has not been more thoroughly discussed in America.

The terms of the agreement have been interpreted in very different ways. It is not a treaty, strictly speaking, since it was not ratified by our senate; but the exchange of notes between the secretary of state and the ambassador extraordinary has all the binding force of a treaty.

The real puzzle in the documents lies in the meaning of the first clause. The United States recognizes that Japan has special interests in China. Just what will this mean in actual practice? The question is rendered more difficult by the second half of the notes. Having recognized a special interest in the first half, the second portion goes on to exclude very carefully every interpretation of the term "special interest" that would naturally suggest itself—the right to commercial advantage, to territorial interference, to objection to existing treaties, to political penetration.

While it is true that Japan has repeatedly gone on record as upholding the open door, she has never before pledged her co-operation in the Hay doctrine so definitely to the United States, since the far eastern situation has taken on its present outlines. In this light, the second portion of the agreement may be regarded as desirable from the American point of view. It puts the question on a clear and definite basis, and not in a document addressed to the world at large or in a treaty with no power, but in a note addressed directly to the United States.

The good points of the agreement are plainer than most of the critics care to admit. In the first place, it recognizes Japan's geographical position in the Orient. This is perhaps too plain to need formal recognition, but at least it should clear away suspicion in the minds of the Japanese people as to any "designs" of which they may have suspected us in the far east. In the second place, it puts Japan directly on record with the United States as recognizing all the fundamental points of the Hay doctrine.

People and Events

Prof. Thomas N. Carver, political economist of Harvard, wants the people to give up tobacco and candy and help win the war. What would become of the tobacco dealers and candy makers? Calloused must be the heart which would turn "em out into a cold unfeeling world."

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TODAY

Right in the Spotlight.—When the American Association for the Advancement of Science meets in its seventeenth annual session in Pittsburgh today the gathering will be opened by an address by Dr. Charles R. Van Hise, the retiring president. Dr. Van Hise occupies a foremost place among American educators.

One Year Ago Today in the War.—Barrala came under German fire for the first time. Russians retired to positions along the Rinnic river. Paris reported the repulse of a German attack northwest of Verdun.

In Omaha Thirty Years Ago.—The smoke house attached to the meat packing house of Messrs. Stevens, Hamilton & Co., located in the southern part of the city, caught fire last night and was scorched to the extent of the roof.

Why Hay is Held.—Pender, Neb., Dec. 24.—To the Editor of The Bee: An article in today's Bee is of unusual interest to many farmers in this locality as hay dealers charge the farmers with holding their hay for higher prices.

This Day in History.—1788—Enoch Lincoln, representative in congress and governor of Maine, born at Worcester, Mass. Died at Augusta, Me., October 8, 1829.

The Day We Celebrate.—Rev. Philatus Harold McDowell, pastor of Emanuel Baptist church, was born in Montgomery county, Kansas, 44 years ago today.

Timely Jottings and Reminders.—Greetings to President Woodrow Wilson, who is 61 years old today. A conference of all sections of the British labor movement is to be held in London today to discuss a program of war aims and peace policies.

Storyette of the Day.—Ben was 10 years old and thought it altogether ridiculous to treat him as a baby any longer. His father had a lawyer friend who did not seem to have any of that knowledge of Ben's growth, and so usually addressed him in the same way in which he had spoken to him five years ago.

CHEERY CHAFF.
Mrs. Doe (to caller): Our neighbor Mrs. Schmidt has a new baby, another little girl—she did so want a boy.

The Bee's Letter Box

The Man for the Place.—Omaha, Neb., Dec. 27.—To the Editor of The Bee: By all means we should have Theodore Roosevelt for secretary of war, he is far ahead of any other man in the United States for the position.

Charged Against Germany.—Omaha, Neb., Dec. 28.—To the Editor of The Bee: Great Britain has two charges against Germany that cannot be settled until Germany has been brought to her knees: (first), the invasion of Belgium; (second), the enticing of Turkey into the war.

Stand by Vanderlip.—Omaha, Neb., Dec. 28.—To the Editor of The Bee: When Mr. Vanderlip pleaded for us to give up our wish or desire to purchase some article and leave it on the storekeeper's shelf, so that its absence would not bring another order to the factory in competition with the government, he stated the principle by which this war will be won by Americans.

Democracy and the Man to Be.—Omaha, Neb., Dec. 24.—To the Editor of The Bee: The American Association for the Prevention of Cruelty teaches us that humane education means justice for all. Primitive development of altruism shows in parental attachment among animals and crops out in the tactics of the co-operative offense and defense in the pack and the herd.

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