

THE OMAHA BEE

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ARMAMENT AND THE LEAGUE.

Senator Poindexter's criticism of the League of Nations' covenant because of its limitation of armament clause indicates that he has given it the most extreme interpretation. That may be good practice, but it works both ways, and the provision objected to is susceptible of a far different understanding.

Regulations laid down by the league must be unanimous, and in relation to land and naval forces must be accepted by the nation affected before becoming operative. Under this no good reason can be found why the United States can not have as big an army or navy as its people deem necessary for protection.

The plain intent of the covenant is to prevent the secret building up of a great military machine by any nation; it discourages the private production of arms and munitions, so as to remove the element of profit such as has been alleged against the munition makers of the world.

Nations unable to supply themselves with means for defense from their own resources are to have the right of purchase to the end that they be not left helpless. Finally, each ten years the situation is to be reviewed, and the regulations revised in accordance with the project.

As the main intent of the League of Nations is to abolish war if possible, one of the first things to be dealt with is armament. If the world can be made safe without armies, if private interest in warfare can be removed, by processes so simple as those suggested in the covenant, then the league will confer on mankind a boon sought through the ages.

None can tell exactly what the result will be until it has been tried. The world has had enough of war, and the people yearn for something that is different from what we have had for the last four years. Senator Poindexter mistakes public sentiment sadly if he thinks that Americans will not give assent to any reasonable plan that holds out a prospect for a future safe from armed conflict.

Burleson Confesses His Failure.

Mr. Burleson's desire to return the cables, telegraphs and telephones to their private or corporate owners comes with a suddenness comparable only to the impulse that led him to grab them as a "war" measure after the war had ended. Power to take control of the wires was originally granted that the federal government might have unrestricted use and also be made secure against enemy use of this means of communication.

Maybe it was tintured to some extent with the general incapacity that characterized the democratic congress, finding its outlet in a shifting of everything onto the president. It is not doubted that Mr. Wilson sought absolute authority in the emergency, and congress with alacrity responded by not only giving to the executive assistance asked, but also going to the extreme of abdication, and permitting him to exercise freely functions constitutionally imposed on the legislative branch of the government.

The postmaster general's confession of failure, a virtual admission of his incapacity to manage the business he undertook, is not to be in any sense accepted as a test of government ownership. It only proves the infinite capacity of the present head of the postal service for making a mess of things. He already had demonstrated to the satisfaction of the business of the country how little he knew about managing the mails. In order to cover up his blunders he threw out a great smoke barrage, alleging that critical newspapers were merely pursuing him because he had forced the publishers to pay for the service the government rendered. This case has never been established, although it has been made very clear that the postmaster general, to defend himself, did put an enormous burden of extra cost on the publishing industry.

His sally into the field of wire and wireless communication has been quite as disastrous as any of his experiments with the mail service. It only proves that a man temperamentally unfitted for the work should not be allowed to get hold of big things to play with.

High Prices and Money.

A statistician for the United States Chamber of Commerce is quoted as telling a convention at St. Louis that prices were kept high without the slightest reason. He further asserts that the law of supply and demand, once put into operation again, will shortly regulate matters to the satisfaction of everybody. Recalling Gladstone's classification of statisticians, little surprise will be expressed at this one, but it is odd that one accustomed to playing with figures and making 2 and 2 foot up 3 or 1 1/2, as best suits his purpose, should allow himself to fall into an error so palpable.

It was the very exact operations of the law of supply and demand that sent prices soaring in the beginning of the present era of inflation. In 1914 the European war suddenly created an abnormal demand for all staples, and prices rose accordingly. As the war progressed, the demand increased faster than the supply, and the selling price responded promptly. When America went into the war, the boost was even more noticeable, although the federal government put a stop to the upward movement by practically commandeering various articles. This control is now removed, but the extraordinary demand has not disappeared, deferred private request being substituted for that of war.

Aiding in the advance of the cost level has been the inflation of credit currency. The circulating medium of the United States has increased almost two billions of dollars since the spring of 1917, and the basis for credit has been broadened by the addition of \$18,000,000,000 of federal bonds, to which four and one-half billions of short term notes are being added. We never had so much money or such extensive and reliable credit in our history as today. This has added nothing to the wealth of the country. To sell a bushel of wheat for \$2 today that in 1914 sold for less than a dollar has not increased the supply of wheat by a single grain.

How any man can say there is no reason for the maintenance of inflated prices is beyond understanding. Until credit is restricted and currency contracted the price level will remain high.

With Wilson as the first president of the league and its first meeting to be held in Washington, who will say the Yankees did not get something at Paris?

Socialists appealing for the release of 'Gene Debs should keep in mind that he was sent to prison for the abuse, not the exercise, of free speech.

Allies Must Remain Friends

From the Washington Post. The peace delegates at Paris are going forward with wonderful optimism, on the assumption that the denial of guarantees of security and equality to certain great nations will not prevent the making of peace and the creation of a league of nations, which will take control of the entire world upon the ratification of the peace treaty. One of the aims of the United States when it entered the war was to "make the world safe for democracy," but when the American delegates entered the peace conference there was an immediate charge that they were preventing the democracies from making themselves safe.

The last desire to be denied the safety it seeks is Italy. In this case there is no disguising the fact that it is President Wilson himself who seeks to prevent Italy from making its borders secure against another invasion by the German and Austrian Huns. President Wilson appeals to Italy to accept his decision, which is the decision of the people of the United States. There is nothing of record to indicate the position of the people of this country, however, except the general expression of the elections last November, which Mr. Wilson announced beforehand would constitute a repudiation of his policies in the eyes of Europe if the people should fail to elect a democratic congress. Therefore, when the Americans suggest that President Wilson and Baron Sonnino do not represent the real opinion of Italy, it is quite logical for the Italians to retort that President Wilson does not represent the real opinion of America.

There is now a breach between the United States and Italy. It is pregnant with danger—not the danger of direct war, but the greater danger of permanent estrangement and hatred. That would be a most deplorable outcome of the Paris conference, more destructive in its consequences than a failure to make peace with Germany. Germany is down and out, and if the United States did not make any formal peace for several years, this country would not suffer. Italy, however, is one of the few trustees of the world's civilization and liberty, and an estrangement between Italians and Americans would make impossible a league of nations worthy of the name.

The friendship of France, England, Italy, Japan and the United States is the prime factor of the world's peace and security. That friendship has just saved the world from slavery to the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg systems of absolutism. The first duty of these nations is to preserve their mutual friendship. This duty stands before peace with Germany. The greatest desire of the Hun is to break up the friendship of the allies. During the fighting the dire necessity of survival compelled the allies to work together. When the peace conference marked the opening of the period of greatest danger to the allies, which was duly pointed out by the Post at the time. We expressed the ardent hope that the allies would appreciate the danger that surrounded them. We suggested that the enemy would strain every nerve to drive the allies apart, in the critical period when they would be required to adjust their claims and formulate their demands upon the enemy.

Nothing can ever take the place of friendship and confidence among the five nations that have formed the league of liberty. If they fall apart, the enemy thrives. They need not make alliances with the enemy in order to upset the world. The mere estrangement of the allies is enough for the Hun and the bolshevik. In that estrangement these savage enemies, representing the extremes of autocracy and anarchy, would find ample opportunity for attacking and slaughtering human liberty, now here, now there, and perhaps everywhere.

No paper league of nations and no peace with Germany will keep peace in this world if the five leading nations become enemies. We all know that peace with Germany is not genuine peace, but a truce until Germany can go on the warpath again. We all know that a league of nations which fails to include Italy, Japan, Germany and Russia is a declaration of war against those nations which will compel them to become allies. Better that each nation should stand alone than to form a league which would provoke war.

America's first attempt to interfere in European affairs is a sorry experience, indeed. Few are the Americans who do not wish the president had kept the country out of the position of dictator to all the allies, and that he had not sought to deny to the allies the fruits of their claims against the enemy. The inevitable result of such action is the growth of unbridled feeling toward all the people of the United States and the well-nigh universal belief, which we believe to be utterly unfounded, that the United States has deliberately shielded the world's enemies from the punishment which he so richly earned.

Let us hope that the patience and genuine friendship of all the allies toward Americans will not fail in these trying days.

In South Africa

Any superficial simplicity in the South African question disappears when one asks if the nationalists—whose leaders are here in route to Europe—would have the Transvaal and Orange Free State freed, or the whole union loosed from the empire. The statement issued by the delegation is more emphatic than logical. The "Dutch republic" was a forcibly destroyed "never have healed." No lasting peace is possible "not only until violated rights are restored but until the whole union is entirely independent." The area of the union is 475,000 square miles, of which the Transvaal and the Orange Free State are 60,000 square miles, and there are to be considered other British-ruled territories accessible only through the union. It is not upon grounds of history that the nationalists can prove that all South Africa ought to be as free as a portion of it was in 1898. Grounds of self-determination would offer an unassailable footing. The Herero delegation declares that 65 per cent of the white population is Dutch—nearly four-fifths of the whole being colored; but to point to this percentage is not to prove that anything like a majority wishes for greater independence than South Africa already possesses.—New York Post.

TODAY

The Day We Celebrate. Will W. McBride of the Omaha Life Insurance company, born 1862. Dr. Wilson O. Bridges, physician, born 1856. Princess Juliana, heir to the throne of the Netherlands, born at the palace of Het Loo 10 years ago. William H. Crane, dean of the American stage, born at Leicester, Mass., 74 years ago. Mrs. Mary Scott Lord Harrison, widow of President Benjamin Harrison, born at Honesdale, Pa., 61 years ago. Homer S. Cummings, chairman of the democratic national committee, born in Chicago 49 years ago. Maj. Gen. Henry G. Sharpe, former quartermaster general of the United States army, later in command of the Southeastern department, born at Kingston, N. Y., 61 years ago.

In Omaha 30 Years Ago.

The centennial anniversary of Washington's inauguration was observed in Omaha. Gen. John L. Webster represented Nebraska at the celebration in New York city. The Omaha Board of Trade was enthusiastically received today at Newport, Atkinson, O'Neill, Oakdale and Albion. Nebraska's Loyal Legion celebrated the inaugural centennial with a banquet at the Millard hotel. Among the guests of honor were Bishop Newman De Garmo, Dr. Duryea, Dr. George L. Miller, Gen. J. C. Cowley, George Groff, Hon. J. M. Woolworth and L. M. Bennett. Maj. J. S. Clarkson of Omaha was elected commander for the ensuing year.

Our Free Legal Aid

State your case clearly but briefly and a reliable lawyer will furnish the answer or advise in this column. Your name will not be printed. Let The Bee Advise You Specific Performance of Oral Contract.

J. C. B.—In March of this year I entered into an agreement with a neighbor to purchase from him 80 acres of land. Price was agreed upon and I paid \$500 down and was to pay the rest when the deed was delivered to me, which was to be as soon as his wife returned from California, where she was visiting. I moved on the land and put in my spring trap. The party now refuses to give me a deed unless I pay a higher price than was agreed upon. I claim that his wife will not sign the deed and that I cannot hold him to his agreement because not in writing. Is there any way I can compel him to deed me the land according to our agreement, or will I have to pay what he asks to keep the land?

Answer—Under the facts as stated in your letter, my opinion is that a court of equity will enforce specific performance. The general rule that a contract for the sale of land is not enforceable unless in writing does not apply where verbal agreement is clearly established and under which possession of the premises has been had and acts of part performance done. It is a general proposition that specific performance of an oral agreement will be a court of equity where one party has wholly, or the other party, partly performed it, and its non-fulfillment would result in a hardship to the party who has parted with or fully performed it. If the party still continues to refuse to make the deed as agreed, you should consult a lawyer who will be able to advise you properly how to protect your interests.

Partition of Real Estate.

H. L.—My brother and two sisters and myself each have an equal interest by inheritance in a quarter section of land. My brother has sold our interest in the land for 20 years and has a lease which does not expire until two years after March 1, 1919. My sisters and I wish to sell our interest in the land but the brother in possession refuses to join with us, and claims we cannot sell until his lease expires. What are our rights in regard to the land?

Answer—In this state any one of several joint owners of real estate may bring an action in his or her name for the partition of such real estate. If upon the hearing the court is satisfied that such real estate should be divided, the partition to the suit and that all parties interested in such land have been made parties to the suit and duly notified, a referee will be named by the court who will determine the practicality of partition. If it appears to the referee that such real estate cannot be divided without great prejudice to the party who does not will so report to the court, who will thereupon enter an order directing the referee to sell the premises. In your case the sale would be subject to the lease in favor of your brother and should be taken into consideration before the suit for partition is instituted.

Mechanics' Lien.

C. B.—What is necessary to be done to file a mechanic's lien? And at what time must it be filed and when can it be foreclosed?

Answer—Any person entitled to a mechanic's lien must make an account in writing of the items of labor and material furnished, and after making oath thereto shall file the same with the clerk of the court within four months of the time of performing such labor or furnishing such material, or within four months from the date of the last item furnished. The account must be filed in the office of the register of deed of the county in which said labor and materials were furnished, and such account shall operate as a lien on the property therein described for a period of two years after the filing of such lien, and the person holding such lien may be elected action proceed to obtain a judgment for the amount of his account thereon at any time within the time of such lien, and when suit is started, before the expiration of the lien, such lien will continue in full force until such suit is finally determined and satisfied.

SMILES

Friend—The office boy was just confiding to me that he wanted to be boss some day. "The boss with a high—Queer, isn't it? I was just giving the office boy his job."—New Haven Register.

People and Events

The marvelous seal of Ohio in forwarding the wherewith to mitigate the thirst of African suggests that the Buckeye heart is a corker! "Cheer up! Don't worry! Consider the troubles of the map-makers and be happy." The January style of Medicine Hat is by far the most popular winter wear assigned in that arctic factory. Distance swells its charms. Keep it on!

One of the big new hotels of New York, with 2,300 rooms, boasts of a staff of 2,300 persons, or one employs for every guest room. Should any guest feel like kicking on the bill, prudence suggests holding off until beyond a range. Publisher Curtis of the Philadelphia Ledger announces that next year a new home for the Ledger will be built at Sixth and Chestnut streets, occupying the entire square. The present Ledger home is 50 years old, quite out-of-date for a modern newspaper.

New York authorities turned down the appeal for a boost in traction fares to 8 cents. Five cents is the contract rate, and the Interborough system is coldly reminded that the contract governs the rate. President Shontz of the company murmurs in shrill tones, "Where do we go from here?" And the feeling public responds, "Ball out the water."

DAILY CARTOONETTE

PAHE! THIS HOUSE IS HOT! I'M GOING DOWN AND TELL THE JANITOR WHAT I THINK OF HIM!



Little Folks' Corner

DREAMLAND ADVENTURE

By DADDY.

"THE VANISHING FISH"

Billy bets Kingfisher, Blue Heron and Lonesome Bear, he can beat them fishing, but when he and Peggy and Pat, a boy they find at the fishing hole, hook large fish, the fish disappear.

CHAPTER III Billy Throws Stones.

No, I don't think this place is haunted," declared Billy as they tried to figure out where the three fish had gone to, "but I think it is mighty odd how they have disappeared."

Partition of Real Estate.

"So have I," shrieked Peggy. "I can scarcely hold him." "Fishes as though I've caught a shark," gasped Pat.

Out of the Ordinary

Ararat, where Noah's Ark went aground, is in the new Armenian republic. With modern conditions and enterprise there should soon be a "corker" railroad to the summit and a "Noah's Inn" with "fresh sandwiches of all kinds."

The birth of quadruplets makes Mrs. Ammina Lizzi, 42 years old, of Philadelphia, the mother of 13 children, 13 of whom are still living. She is also the grandmother of five children. Each of the quadruplets weighs about seven pounds. Two are girls, blondes, and two boys, brunettes.

The story is told that when one of the phonograph companies asked John McCormack to sing for a record of "Tipperary," the famous Irish tenor stipulated for a fee of \$20,000. The company refused, and instead gave him a percentage on sales of the record. These sales have so far added up to 2,500,000, netting the singer \$250,000.

Friend—The office boy was just confiding to me that he wanted to be boss some day. "The boss with a high—Queer, isn't it? I was just giving the office boy his job."—New Haven Register.

Mrs. Nurtch—Edith, what are you reading? Daughter—Petra's poem, ma. Mrs. Nurtch—Edith, haven't I warned you against the vulgar habit of shortening men's names? Say Peter March—Boston Transcript.

"The office should seek the man." "Maybe so. But when that time comes our leaders won't get no credit for electing him."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Daily Dot Puzzle



Can you finish this picture? Draw from one to two and so on to the end.

Buy to the Limit

The officers of this bank take this opportunity to recommend that its patrons—all of them—buy to the limit of their resources of the forthcoming issue of

VICTORY BONDS

This loan offers you not only an opportunity of expressing your patriotism, but of participating in the most attractive investment ever offered by our Government.

Those who are not patrons of this bank are invited to address their bond subscriptions to us and avail themselves of the facilities of our Liberty Bond Department.

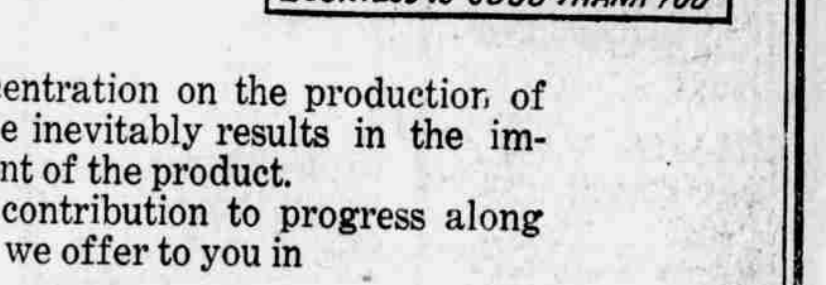
Capital and Surplus \$2,000,000.

The Omaha National Bank

Farnam at Seventeenth



The Essence of Effort



Concentration on the production of an article inevitably results in the improvement of the product. Our contribution to progress along this line, we offer to you in Two Good Gasolines: CRYSTAL BLITZEN (high test) 27c Vulcan (dry test) 24c FILLING STATIONS: 38th and Farnam, 29th and Leavenworth, 12th and Harney, 17th and Davenport, 24th and H, South Side. L. V. NICHOLAS OIL CO., President. Locomotive Auto Oil. "The Best Oil We Know." Our Electric Pumps Insure Accuracy—Your Protection and Ours.

Were Not Caught Napping

The various confessions that the men who were responsible for Germany going to war and keeping in the war are now making as to why and how they did it would prove more valuable if they only would tell the whole truth. For instance, Von Jagow, one of the most tricky of the group which managed the Berlin foreign office during the war, is now telling an anxious world how war continued after 1916, because President Wilson did not respond to a hint from the kaiser in October, 1916, that mediation would be welcomed. But when you examine the Von Jagow statement critically you find that Von Jagow and Bernstorff carefully concealed from Colonel House—to whom the note was handed instead of Dr. Gerard or Secretary Lansing—the important fact that the note was of cold fact, that Von Jagow and Von Bernstorff were trying to do was to use the United States as a stool pigeon or a cat's paw to save the situation for them when they had begun to realize that the game was up. But even their necessities would not allow them to tell the truth or to let the president know that his sword-rattling kaiser had had enough. So their diplomacy overreached itself, the president was not caught napping and did not respond to the German advances, the ruse was not successful and Germany had to continue the war to the bitter end. Yet even in the face of the fact that all those involved in these negotiations can expose his clumsy efforts to hide the truth, Von Jagow seems to think that his sinister endeavor to show how the president could have settled the war in 1916, of course in Germany's favor, will impress the world at large. It will, but in just the opposite way from what he intended.—Philadelphia Ledger.