

THE TIMES

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STOPPING LEAKS.

Most of us are familiar with the story of the Dutch boy who discovered a leak in the dyke and stuck his thumb in it to keep the sea from breaking through and whelming the land below. The fable has it that the leak grew in size, and the lad was forced to thrust in his fist, then his arm, and then his body. At that point the tale ends, as we remember it, and nothing was said about later repairs, or the lad's funeral. Recent activities in Portland's civic life recall this tale to mind.

Portland has a habit of discovering leaks in her mental or business dykes, and for a while she thrusts thumbs, arms and body into them. Then she discovers another leak, and forgets about the first and what may be buried therein. Whether or not her dykes are ever repaired with reinforced concrete is still to be discovered. It might be well to investigate this matter, and evolve some system of coordinated effort in all lines. Such action would save a great deal of energy that is now expended in useless and ineffective spurts.

For instance, some moons ago Portland discovered that Seattle was carrying on a trade with Alaska that this city rightfully should have. There was a tremendous to-do about it, and finally a ship was marked up for this port, to establish regular sailings to the Far North. Eventually the ship did not come because Portland couldn't raise 200 tons of freight.

From certain quarters we are now being entertained with the chimerical idea that Portland needs a municipally-owned steamship line to the Orient. There having been much upheaval about this, the matter seems to be subsiding again. In time people will realize that Portland needs more than a municipal steamship line to recover her Oriental trade, and they will realize why.

Periodically Portland wakes up to some great wrong that is being perpetrated, and seeing the waters of destruction spurting through her dykes, goes and sticks her thumb in. Fist, arm and body soon follow, and then the matter is lost in gurgles and coughs, and Portland pulls herself out of the hole and looks for more trouble. And usually she finds it. She was all wrought up over an auditorium less than a year ago; less than a month ago she was having spasms about bridges. Within recent history she had a quick succession hysteria about the need of labor in the city, and then a similar attack about her duty to the central part of the State.

Portland, it would seem, needs a balance wheel. She needs to have her commercial bodies remade, and made useful to herself, instead of being made mere stepping stones to society for some few folk. Portland needs to take calm and reflective stock of her position, she needs to realize her greatness and her limitations, and having done this, needs to map out a sober and sane program. If she does this, she will make less sport for her neighboring cities, and will accomplish more in the line of fulfilling her destiny.

POOR BUSINESS.

It is peculiar to what an extent one man can sometimes dominate such a body as the City Council. When the dictator is a man of strong character his leadership is not so much to be marvelled at; but when the leader is a man of but casual clay, seeking public laudation rather than the good of the city, his rule is a thing both surprising and to be regretted.

The passage by a majority vote of the Council of a number of measures designed to embarrass the local transportation and power company is one of those weird examples of accomplishment on the part of a councilman not usually considered as far-sighted or wise. Councilman Clyde, by the use of a peculiar variety of intimidation, forced the majority vote upon these measures. As a result, he is basking in the light of his own self-satisfaction; but the people of Portland have not gained any remarkable victory.

While this city needs better streetcar service, and should have it; and while Portland is paying more for light and power than many other cities in the Northwest, "baiting" the local electrical concern is not the way to remedy matters. The Council was quite within its rights in demanding an all-night car service; but it is a very grave question whether any of the other measures that were passed will accomplish the reforms which they were supposed to be designed to bring about.

It is poor business for a wife to "nag" a husband who is out of work; and it is equally poor business for a city councilman to force his fellows to "nag" a corporation that is not giving the service to the city that it should. Real reform in either case can be more quickly accomplished by more direct methods; and Councilman Clyde's brother solons should have borne this in mind and refused to be intimidated by his journalistic appeals.

SLOVER, RELIGIOUS, SEES NO DANGERS IN FIGHT PICTURES.

Common report hath it that Acting Chief of Police E. A. Slover is a religious man, and that nothing would be dearer to his heart than to go forth over the land, exhorting the weary and ill at ease to come to the peace that surpasseth all understanding, and which is supposed to emanate largely from the mourner's bench. At various times the titular head of the police department has given evidence of his ministerial inclinations; and it is therefore all the more surprising to read in one of the afternoon papers that Capt. Slover personally, is not opposed to the display of moving pictures of the Johnson-Flynn prizefight. Interviewed upon the subject,

the acting chief said that he saw no harm in such moving pictures. In this view Captain Slover seems to stand almost alone upon a pinnacle, for all who pass to regard with wonder. Other duly religious people, and quite a number who never let their religion bother them very much, are holding aloft hands in horror because these same pictures have been exhibited in our fair city. They declare that the influence of such "movies" upon the young is far from inspiring, and that much of the brutality of present-day life can be traced directly to them.

Maybe pictures of prizefights are bad for us, and maybe representations of the manly art of self-defense—Heaven save the term in this case—may teach us valor and uprighteousness. That is a question altogether apart from others. But there are lots of people in Portland who have read Acting Chief Slover's remarks who are trying vainly to make them jibe with other remarks he has made upon kindred subjects.

Boy Scouts Cleaning Up The New York Tenements



Photo by American Press Association.

FOLLOWING the example set by boy scouts in other parts of the country, those of New York city recently engaged in the work of a "cleanup week" in the most thickly populated regions of the metropolis. Handbills were distributed giving householders such advice as "Better to raise babies than flies" and "Dirt fattens flies and kills babies." But the scouts did not confine their activities to peddling advice; they delved into rubbish heaps, explored dirty back yards and cleared refuse from fire-escapes, as the illustration pictures them doing. The movement was begun by the Brooklyn bureau of charities, which had the co-operation, not only of the boy scouts, but of the New York Charity Organization society, the Babies' Welfare association, the University settlement and other organizations.



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