

THE OBSERVER

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PENSION BUREAU HAS WORK AHEAD.

Every war in which the United States engages is followed by thousands of pensions to those who fought or were injured in the country's service. The amount of money raised by indirect taxation and disbursed to pensioners reaches many millions annually. And in this view of war, it is as expensive that it makes universal peace desirable, if for no other reason. According to the commissioner of pensions, about 418,000 applications for increase under the new law passed at this session of congress have been filed in the pension office. These claims are being passed upon at the rate of five hundred a day. At this rate it will require nearly three years to reach the last claim so far filed, eliminating Sundays and holidays upon which no claims will be adjudicated. The claims are taken up by the commissioner says, in the order in which they are received. That will benefit the first few thousand claims filed, but since all of the more than four hundred thousand were filed within the first month, those who fell behind only a day or two may have to wait a year or two before receiving the relief granted by congress in the passage of the bill—or the relief that congress intended that the veterans should have. As a matter of fact, with the slow progress being made upon the claims, the bill will not afford the relief to all of the old soldiers entitled to it. These veterans are dying at the rate of thirty or forty thousand a year. So at the end of two years sixty or seventy thousand of them will have passed on and a single penny of the appropriation intended for them by the act of congress. No greater injustice has been done the old soldiers for some years than this delay in adjudicating the claims. To wait two years or even six months, means that the relief will come too late in thousands of cases. It would seem, therefore, that the bureau ought to arrange some method of disposing of these cases more rapidly. Five hundred claims a day may seem like rapid progress, and ordinarily it would be. But it must be understood that this is an extraordinary situation, with men dying every day who are entitled to the relief that is theirs as soon as the department passes upon the cases.

THE EXPRESS BUSINESS.

A sweeping order made by the interstate commerce commission does away with many of the objectionable methods used in the express business, and proposes a radical reduction in rates, to be made effective after a public hearing. This doesn't settle the problem of the relations of the public with the express companies. Only an out and out parcels post system that will do for the people through the postoffice service the express companies are now doing for the inordinate profit of their owners, will settle that problem. But the report furnishes matter that will help make people think about the conditions that prevail, and that ought to help toward making the demand for a parcels post system so emphatic that congress will no longer dare deny it. "It is a matter beyond contradiction," says the interstate commerce commission in its report, "that beginning six years ago, practically with no exceptions whatsoever other than favorable contract with one or more railroads, the express companies out of their own and the profitable investment of the proceeds of their operations have been able to pay large dividends upon shares representing no investment." From a shoestring—from practically nothing—out of the rates they have charged the public the express companies have built up a tremendous capitalization, on which they pay and always have paid big dividends, and

an enormous surplus represented by investments in the securities of railroads and industries. Through these holdings the express companies, powerful already because of the sheer bulk of their riches, are able to accustom to their aid the strongest kind of influence. This explains why the parcels post has been delayed so long. Last year the thirteen express companies investigated by the commission had a gross income of \$149,311,485, out of which they paid to the railroads \$73,956,455, leaving to themselves \$75,355,030. Operating expenses were \$67,996,759, and net earnings were \$7,358,271. A tidy little sum, this, to earn in one year on a property that represents practically no investment at all. Another set of figures presented by the commission helps to show why this enterprise is so richly profitable. The express companies carry about 300,000,000 parcels a year. This is eight or ten packages a year for the average family of five persons. The average charge is 50 cents per package and the average haul 200 miles. With the profit inordinate on every parcel carried, it is easy to understand how the express companies have built up such an immense quantity of wealth on an original investment of nothing, and why it is that they have gained outside holdings which give them influence in a wide variety of industries.

Why not attend the ball games this week and show your appreciation of the national game? The Boy Scout movement in this city is a commendable one. Why not help it along? It is worthy of the united support of the entire community. Why not keep in touch with the outside world through the columns of the Observer. In passing along the street why not always make it a point to pass to the right of anyone you meet? This would save confusion and a whole lot of embarrassment on your part. Why not? After the band boys have rendered a selection on the street give them an applause. Surely you appreciate the music or you would not stop and listen to it and it would not take very much energy to get your hands in motion and clap them a few times. I know the band boys would appreciate it. The grouse season will soon be on, so why not get your gun and dog and get into your neighbor's back yard and practice up on his chickens? Surely the neighbor would not object, but if he did a promise of a grouse or two would surely console him. And why not? If you have not been for a few days' outing this summer why not? Surely a few days' outing would do you good. It always relieves that grouch which always comes and stays tired feeling and takes away the during the hot summer days. There are a thousand and one ways in this world in which you could make life more pleasant for yourself and fellowman. Why not try and do some of these and by so doing if you are not a crank, you will surely be well repaid by your act of kindness. Why not?

Almost invariably at noon time at the North Fir street crossing, there is a switch engine with 20 or 30 cars blocking the way, causing working people who live across the track to wait from five to 15 minutes in going to dinner and returning to work. Why not have this remedied?

BUGGY FOR SALE—Light two seated buggy, but slightly used. Will sell at real bargain. A. C. Huntington, 1710 Fourth street. 8-15-6t

FOR SALE—Few beds, tables, chairs and a stove. Call Black 1011. 8-13-12

A LITERARY RIDDLE.

Who Was It Wrote the Tragedy of "Troilus and Cressida?"

Andrew Lang has just pronounced a puzzle in circumstantial evidence "Who," he asks, "wrote Troilus and Cressida?" You may answer, as you please, Shakespeare or Bacon. If you answer Bacon, Andrew Lang comes back with the query, "Would Bacon have said that Aristotle lived before the Trojan war?" Bacon was too learned a man to make such a mistake, which would be as bad as placing Abraham Lincoln among the signers of the Declaration of Independence. If you answer Shakespeare, Andrew Lang shoots another query at you: "The author makes Ulysses and Achilles quote 'an author' and discuss a pretty long and strange passage from that author, who was Plato. How could Shakespeare have read Plato?" For Shakespeare knew no Greek, and in his day Plato had not yet been translated into English. It is quite conceivable that Shakespeare might imagine that Plato and Aristotle lived many centuries before Homer, but it is inconceivable that the erudite Bacon should fall into such an error.

Andrew Lang does not pretend to solve the riddle. He frankly says, "I give it up."—New York World.

RISKY POSTAL SERVICE.

In Russia the Government Opens All Suspicious Packages.

Our own service of mails is well organized. There is little doubt in the mind of the average person that when he posts a letter it will reach its destination. But in other lands he might well fear for its safety. In Russia, for instance, any letter or parcel that is regarded with suspicion is immediately opened and its contents noted. A clever machine gums it up again, so that the recipient does not know that it has been tampered with. In Lapland the mails are carried in sledges drawn by reindeers. In the wilds of the Caucasus the postman holds a post of danger. He must be protected against brigands and against the weather, for he often has to climb mountains more than 12,000 feet high. Asiatic Russia, which is apt to be marshy, has the buffalo post, and, of course, the progress made is very slow. Buffaloes are more powerful than oxen, and they are also used in Siberia for carrying the mail. Other postmen in foreign lands are the swimming postman of India and the sking letter carrier of the Andes. For the latter place the Argentine government specially imports Norwegians.—Exchange.

Mexico's Smoking Mountain.

In 1897 I climbed two volcanoes in Mexico, Popocatepetl, or "the smoking mountain," about 17,800 feet, and Orizaba, the former the most famous because within view from Mexico City and thus a source of especial pride and admiration to the inhabitants, who have been loath to believe that any other of their mountains could be higher. Popo has a really splendid crater, about half a mile across and 1,000 feet deep. The walls are generally vertical, but in one or two places it is possible to descend. When workers are engaged in collecting sulphur machinery is used to hoist them up and down. From Popo's summit there is a glorious prospect, not alone of the immense crater, but of the beautiful "White Lady" (Iztaccihuatl) reclining a thousand feet below, of Orizaba on the far horizon and of the charming valley of Mexico.—Annie S. Peck in Christian Herald.

Wellington's Integrity.

The Duke of Wellington was noted for his rigid integrity. Here is an instance which occurred in reference to his large estate. Some farm adjoining his lands was for sale, and his agent negotiated for him for the purchase. Having concluded the business, he went to the duke and told him he had made a capital bargain. "What do you mean?" asked the duke. "Why, your grace, I have got the farm for so much, and I know it to be worth at least so much more." "Are you quite sure of that?" "Quite sure, your grace, for I have carefully surveyed it." "Very well, then; pay the gentleman from me the balance between what you have already given and the real value of the estate."

Strong Circumstantial Evidence.

A young wife was in tears a few mornings ago when her mother called. When asked what was the matter she replied that her husband was out late the night before and had been to a drinking party. "What makes you think he had been to a drinking party?" asked the mother. "He came home," sobbed the young wife, "wearing a phonograph horn for a hat."—Kansas City Star.

More Careful Now.

The young wife had given her husband a dance. "You've improved wonderfully, Jack," she said as they sat down. "Don't you remember how you used to tear my dress?" "Yes," he replied. "I wasn't buying them then."—Boston Transcript.

FARMERS TELEPHONE

(Continued from page 1)

But I guess if the truth were known the Bell bought them out, for they owned 51 per cent of the Home Independent stock so I have been informed) but at any rate the spirit of independence still prevailed to such an extent that they turned the Farmers' Union delegates and committees down with but slight courtesy; would not grant anything of importance asked and in an instance or two, said "the farmer be damned." They didn't care if they all cut off for the cost of upkeep and service of the country lines was more than they got out of it. They cut off a great many of them and began to hold meetings and devise ways and means to get from under the heel of oppression, that had become very oppressive. The farmer, you know, is a funny animal; he differs from a dog—the more you kick and cuff the dog, the better he likes you, but the farmer responds to considerate treatment almost as readily as city folks and resents insults by minding his own business, which he commenced to do in Elgin and vicinity by organizing a co-operative company to build and maintain a telephone system. Well, after they had pretty well covered that country, and Pumpkin Ridge, the Bell people sent their representative down to try and effect (what they were pleased to term) a compromise; they offered to let the co-operative bunch have what they already had, if they would only quit. Well, he went away, saying they did not use him right because they just went on minding their own business (which I might say was building a telephone line). Everything went along all right. Elgin, Summerville, Imbler, Alice, Cove and Union are all covered by good live committees that have them well lined up and watching down the road for the new line. Some are over-anxious and think it comes slowly, but all large bodies move slowly. It goes faster than any other phone line that has ever been built in the country. While there are at the present time only about 500 subscribers to the shares, it is a conservative estimate to say that in 12 months from the present date there will be 90 per cent of the farm homes of the valley connected by this line and the towns are all in favor. I think if a vote was taken in the city of La Grande, the Co-operative company would get 75 per cent of the vote, although the company received its first setback at the hands of the city council of La Grande. On Wednesday evening, July 31st, the Co-operative Telephone company petitioned the city council for a franchise and there was a motion made to refer it to a special committee. The vote being a tie, the mayor cast the deciding vote in favor of the special, and appointed Jones, Lincoln and Finley, and on August 7, the committee reported adverse to granting said franchise. And after considerable discussion as to the advantages and disadvantages of the company being allowed the same rights given their predecessors in the field, a vote was taken. Jones, Lincoln, Lilley and Finley voted for the report against granting the franchise, Campbell, Fitzgerald, Mackey and Davis voting against the report, they favoring the franchise. Being a tie, the mayor cast the deciding vote against the franchise. He could hardly do otherwise, being a heavy stockholder and a director in the Home Independent Telephone monopoly, and farther in view of the fact of a petition numerously signed by the business men and others, we hope through misrepresentation or mis apprehension for it does not seem possible that any unbiased man who had the facts laid before him could so far forget his duty to the county and surrounding country, that he would allow his name to appear against an institution that would go farther toward establishing a friendly get together spirit than anything that

In a Big Tent Friday, August 16, 1912 ADAMS AVENUE NEAR HEMLOCK STREET. WEST BROS.' RAILROAD SHOW. A TEXAS RANGER SEE THE Cowboys, Soldiers, Indians, Mexicans, Rangers and Cowboy Girls. Watch For the Cowboy Band ONE PERFORMANCE AT NIGHT ONLY. Friday, August 16

T. G. WHEELWRIGHT Cement work of all kinds. Sidewalks and curbs a specialty. All work done under my personal supervision. PHONE RED 3952

COFFEE As far as possible all coffee should be ground just before using. Otherwise it may lose a great deal of its original strength and flavor. If you don't grind the coffee at home why buy coffee that was ground by the roasters and has been out of their hands no telling how long? Let us grind your coffee for you just before you get it. We have CHASE & SANBORN'S high quality line. It's always freshly roasted the day shipped to us. 43 PHONE 43 J. G. Snodgrass Sole Agent

Comfort Going Home and comfort that wife will appreciate, is a box of our delicious and pure Ice Cream, the most tempting and satisfying you ever tasted. We have it in all the popular flavors and as we make it ourselves, in our own model kitchens we can positively guarantee the purity of every ingredient and perfect cleanliness in the handling. One trial will make you a regular buyer. Selder's - La Grande

