

EDITORIAL PAGE

Government Should Take the Loss.

Wheat will bring the high war prices this year because the United States government contracted with the farmers for the crop at a stipulated price. This contract, like all other government contracts, should be kept and we believe it will be kept to the letter.

Then the question arises, what will flour sell for? A very important question to the hundred million people of the nation. Shall the flour prices be based on the high price of wheat or shall the price of flour go to a competitive basis and the government stand the loss of the difference the wheat will sell for on the market and the war price set by the government during the war. There is no good reason why flour prices should remain exorbitant, and there is every reason why the government should pay outright the difference between the market price of wheat and the war guaranteed price.

Consumers are to be considered. But, you may say, the people have to pay the difference, anyway, and that is true. But the people should not be compelled to pay it in the extreme high price of flour.

This government has a handsome loss account already from mismanaged war work and lax methods, and the difference which the wheat deal will pile up in the loss column will be no greater than some of the other ventures of which far less has been mentioned.

It will be a crime for either political party in order to save its face, or in an attempt to save its face, to plaster on the flour consumer an additional price for the staff of life which is not justified.

THE LATEST "MANN ACT"

Congressman Mann was defeated for speaker of the house of representatives. He appeared as a good loser and all seemed lovely. But Mann is crafty and with his craftiness he got through a resolution ordering that a man from each of the different states be named on the committee on committees, whose duty it is to select the committees for the next house. When it all shook out Mann has about thirty of his men on the committee and proceeded to name committees that suited him. It would look as though the Republican congress had been gyped at the starting place, but it will probably find a way to overcome this latest "Mann act."

A WORD OF GOOD CHEER

The Observer would be calloused to all feeling or sentiment whatever if it did not feel the deepest sense of appreciation of the following from Editor Walter Henry of the Elgin Recorder:

"Beginning the first Sunday in this month, the La Grande Observer issued the first number of the Sunday Morning Observer.

"The first number was so good one wondered where there could be room for improvement, but the second number was still bigger and better.

"Giving, as it does, news a day later than Portland papers arriving the same morning, this edition should be popular along the branch, as well as in La Grande and vicinity."

Idaho's legislature killed the direct primary law, investigated Governor Alexander and put him on the carpet, dissolved a lot of useless state jobs, levied some good roads tax and went home. Yet some newspapers say Idaho is a state that does not do anything.

Some of the most interesting articles that have appeared in the Saturday Evening Post are now running. They are from the pen of "Marse" Henry Watterson and tell of his personal experiences. They are as different from the average made-to-order reading matter as the real drama is different from the picture show.

According to Senator Kiddle, who is quoted elsewhere in this issue, La Grande lumber actually competes with southern pine on the Iowa market and sells below prices asked for the product from the south. This must be a source of joy to lumbermen, for few of them believed they would ever live to see the day when such a condition should prevail.

The dollar-a-year man found that he had to give in his salary to the income tax man. But all dollar-a-year men had to pay excess profits so the amount of a year's salary did not mean much to any of them.

Major General Wood talks with about the most sane use of any prominent man on the Republican side of the house and if Pershing will not, it is quite likely General Wood might be the presidential candidate.

Something must have happened to Plummer. His pleasant noise about his five stock pavilion has not been heard for two weeks.

Governor Olcott issued some soothing syrup to state job holders, telling them they would not be molested and now the moon shines brightly over the state house dome.

It is to be hoped that Attorney General George Brown will fill off all semblance of bitulitic patents and then Oregon can pave without scandal.

Those little flurries of snow are just to remind you what a dull climate California must have with sunning the year round.

Thinking of the spring garden—it's about time.

Uncovered



THERE WAS OPPOSITION TO THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

(From the New York World)

Former President Taft, at the Metropolitan opera house meeting, answered the legal and nationalistic objections that have been advanced against the constitution of the League of Nations. President Wilson presented the moral and international case for the proposed covenant. Seldom has an issue of such vast importance to the future of mankind been dealt with so adequately by its champions.

When President Wilson, however, said that he was "puzzled by some of the criticisms"—by the fact of the criticism—he must have forgotten for the moment that he was a historian before he became a statesman. The criticisms of the constitution of the League of Nations do not differ in kind from the criticisms of the constitution of the United States, when it was before the states for ratification in 1788.

The Lodges and the Knowses, the Borahs and the Reeds, the Shermans and the Thomases, of that generation were as vociferous, as clamorous and as vehement in antagonizing the constitution of the United States as are their successors in antagonizing the constitution of the League of Nations.

They conjured up the same fears and the same doubts, the same tyrannies and the same oppressions. Nothing has changed except the name of the instrument that is assailed.

The constitution of 1787 was a thing of terror to thousands of honest and well-meaning Americans. Its very preamble was a revolution, according to Patrick Henry, who demanded to know by what right the convention spoke "the language of 'We, the people,' instead of 'We, the states.'" It is an aristocracy and was intended to be so by the framers of it, he said.

Senator Lodge is no more insistent today about the paramount duty of the peace conference to confine itself to the bare question of terms to Germany than Patrick Henry was in regard to the fundamental mistake of the convention of 1787. As he declared to the Virginia convention:

"The federal convention ought to have amended the old system; for this purpose they were solely delegated; the object of their mission extended to no other consideration."

What Philadelphia C. Knox of Pennsylvania complains about the language of the constitution of the League of Nations, we are reminded of another Knox who told the Massachusetts delegates that Boston would have liked the constitution of the United States much better "had it been higher toned."

On April 21, 1787, some of the delegates to the Maryland convention headed by Luther Martin, issued an "Address to the People of Maryland, in which they said:

"We consider the proposed form of national government as very defective, and that the liberty and happiness will be endangered if the system be not greatly changed and altered."

Said James Lincoln to the South Carolina convention:

"What have you been contending for in the ten years past? Liberty! What is liberty? The power of governing yourselves. If you adopt this constitution have you this power? No; you give it in the hands of men who live 1000 miles distant from you. Let the people choose their own representatives out of their own ranks and what will be the consequence? First, a hereditary, imperious aristocracy, and ultimately a hereditary monarchy."

Senator Reed is no more terrified by the plans of Europe than Singley of Massachusetts was by the character of the men who favored the constitution of the United States. This is the picture of them that he presented to the Massachusetts convention. These "lawyers and men of learning and moneyed men, that

talk so finely and gloss over matters so smoothly to make us poor, illiterate people swallow down the pill expect to get into congress themselves; they expect to be the managers of this constitution and get all the power and all the money into their own hands, and then they will swallow up all us little folks, Mr. President; yes, just as the whale swallowed up Jonah.

Senator Borah's notion that he would not support a League of Nations if requested to by "the Savior of Mankind" is that of a delegate to the Massachusetts convention described by Elliott as "the Hon. Mr. White," who said that—

"We ought to be jealous of rulers. All the golly men we read of had failed; nay, he would not trust a 'flock of Monsees.' Nor was President Wilson a whit more disloyal to the American people in the opinion of Senator Poindexter than were Washington and Franklin and Hamilton and Madison in the opinion of Tredwell of New York:

"In this constitution, sir, we have departed widely from the principles and political faith of '76, when the spirit of liberty ran high and danger put a curb on ambition. Here we find no security for the right of individuals, no security for the existence of our state governments. . . . Sir, in this constitution we have not only neglected—we have done worse—we have openly violated our faith—that is, our public faith.

Is there a solitary senator who is more secure as to the unconstitutionality of the League of Nations than General Thompson of Massachusetts was in regard to the unconstitutionality of the constitution itself? Compare the senate speeches with his:

"The convention were sent on to Philadelphia to amend this confederation, but they made a new creature; and the very setting out of it is unconstitutional. And what did Smith tell the New York convention about that noble and august institution, the senate of the United States?—

"Can the liberties of 3,000,000 people be securely trusted in the hands of twenty-four men? Is it prudent to commit to so small a number the decision of the great questions which shall come before them? Reason revolts at the idea. Yet we have managed to survive over a century of ninety-six men, but Smith of New York was an optimist as compared with Rawlins Lawndes of South Carolina, who confided these opinions to the convention of his state:

"On the whole, this was the best preparatory plan for a nonarchical government he had read. The constitution of Great Britain, one he had ever perused; and this new government came so near to it that, as our changing from a republic to a monarchy, it was what everybody must naturally expect. How easy the transition! No difficulty occurred in finding a king; the president was the man proper for this appointment. The senate calling him as a king (constituted according to Mr. Adams's description from the well-born) will naturally say to one another: 'You see how we are situated. Certainly it is for our country's benefit that we should all be lords,' and lords they are!"

George Mason pointed out to the Virginia convention how the constitution must inevitably destroy the country:

"Will the people of this great country submit to be individually taxed by two different and dissimilar powers? Will they suffer themselves to be doubly harassed? These two concurrent powers cannot exist long together; the one will destroy the other."

Is it to be supposed that one national government will suit so extensive a country, embracing so many climates and containing inhabitants so very different in manners, habits and customs? It is ascertained by history that there never was a very extensive country without destroying the liberties of the people.

How reminiscent of the recent debates in the senate on the League of Nations!

Senator Lodge's opinion of the executive council of the League of Nations seems to have originated with Mr. Jones of Bristol, who confided to the Massachusetts convention that—

By this power to regulate elections congress might keep themselves in to all duration.

Major Kingsley had similar fears for he told the Massachusetts convention that—

STATEMENT AS TO POLICIES OF GOVERNOR OLCOTT

In assuming the duties of governor, I am keenly appreciative of the unusual responsibilities devolving upon the office of chief executive because of the reconstruction period now before us. In my opinion this is a time when there is as great need for a vigorous flow of patriotism and loyalty as when we were sending thousands of our boys overseas to fight for the cause of liberty.

Time after time, under the leadership of our late governor, Oregon has demonstrated the depth of her patriotism by her splendid record in furnishing her manhood, in subscribing for Liberty loans, the Red Cross, and other war activities. Those records were made possible because the people of the state learned to pull together in a common cause as they had never done before.

The many serious problems incident to this time of reconstruction can be solved with credit to the state if we can have the same oneness of purpose, the same sort of co-operation by patriotic citizens, the same sort of willingness to subjugate selfish interests for the good of a great cause as Oregon has displayed throughout this war period.

For the sake of the well-being of this state, I feel that this united support should be given to the governor regardless of the individual who might occupy the office of chief executive. This is no time for the display of factional strife. It is no time for putting politics above patriotism. It is a time for all of us to put our shoulders to the wheel for the good of common cause.

It is a time for Oregon to forge ahead. The legislature has provided for a big road-building program. The people will soon have opportunity to express their opinion of a commendable reconstruction program. I believe the people, on June 5, will approve the reconstruction bond issue. It is important that they should. They ought to lend impetus to private enterprise. It ought to encourage capital to seek opportunity to connect up with industry. And if some employment is provided by the expenditure of public funds until industry again catches its breath and hits a stride in step with the times, the most urgent and immediate crisis of the reconstruction period will have been bridged.

It shall be my endeavor to encourage industry to the fullest extent of my power, and to use the influence of this office to promote that harmony and fairness between employer and employe that are necessary for industrial success and a happy citizenship.

There is to be no upheaval in the state government, caused by the removal of appointees and their replacement with new appointees. I shall expect business efficiency from all departments and positions coming under the jurisdiction of the governor. I shall expect each appointee to give the state the same conscientious service which would be required of him if he were in private employment. If there are any who cannot do this, they will be given opportunity to find employment elsewhere. In these matters I do not expect to deviate from the policy which I have consistently followed while serving as secretary of state.

State institutions, with the exception of the state penitentiary, are under the jurisdiction of the state board of control. As a member of that board I shall continue favoring the policy of giving the various superintendents a free hand and to hold them entirely responsible for proper business management. They shall have complete control over the employes under them. The warden of the penitentiary will have equally as complete authority to employ and discharge his help, but as the responsibility for the administration of the prison will rest upon me I shall expect to direct its policy. I hope to do this in a manner that will be approved by the people of the state.

In stepping into the office of governor as a result of a vacancy caused by death, under the provisions of the constitution I also remain secretary of state, entitled to draw the salaries of both offices. But, as I have already announced, I shall draw the salary of only one office. If a way can be found for immediately presenting to the courts the question of whether I may resign the office of secretary of state without forfeiting my right to continue to hold the office of governor I will take advantage of it. I wish to have that point settled as early as possible, and if the courts hold that I may do so I shall resign the office of secretary of state and appoint a successor. But if this cannot be done, then I shall not draw the salary of secretary of state unless it should be for public purposes to meet some emergency which might arise in connection with the official duties of one or the other of the two offices now held. I shall not draw the salary for my personal reason.

The most urgent reason why I wish to obtain an early determination by the courts of this question, is to make it possible to again have three members on the board of control, with three independent funds, and to consider state problems, but if it should develop that I cannot resign the office of secretary of state, without forfeiting my right to retain two votes of the state board, I wish to secure the possession of Oregon that I shall not be a basketball team.

the great power which has been vested in me, but shall always use it to the best of my judgment for the interests of the entire state.

BEN W. OLCOTT, Governor of Oregon.

LABOR CONDITIONS REVIEWED.

Having traveled in the last six weeks all states in the union except those of the southeast, Henry N. Teague, field agent for the United States department of labor, reports to the information and education service that industrial and labor conditions show a marked improvement during the last sixty days. This results, in Mr. Teague's opinion, from the fact that state and municipal authorities have come to appreciate the necessity for better employment for labor and the possibilities of stimulating business through extensive public improvements.

Mr. Teague has traveled, during the last six weeks, from Boston to San Francisco, and from Seattle to New Orleans, calling on all the governors and on the mayors of the principal cities and carrying a personal message to them from Secretary of Labor Wilson. When asked to state his outstanding impression from his trips, Mr. Teague said:

"There is to be a great deal of public building during the next six months, and I am convinced the public improvements program for 1919 will equal that of any five years in the country's history and the road-building activities from the Atlantic to the Pacific, once under way, are to be tremendous.

"I have been much surprised to find the scope of improvement work in the west larger than in the east. Perhaps this may be accounted for in the fact that the west needs more improvements than the east. It is never country. The governors and mayors of the west, almost without exception, realize the prudence of going in for public improvements as a source of buffer employment for labor and a means of stimulating general business. The west, too, is much interested in reclamation and is anxious to make land, heretofore arid and waste, available and suitable for farming by such former soldiers as wish to go back to the soil.

"Most of the governors of the agricultural states," Mr. Teague said, "are anxious to get men from the army to settle in their states. This is because they believe the army represents the best manhood and brains of the country and if the respective states can absorb soldiers, the governors believe the states will get the highest type of citizens and the best blood of the nation."

Mr. Teague says there is much criticism in the west of the federal government's failure to go ahead with its own building operations. In many localities federal buildings, for which sites, plans and appropriations were had before the war, are now held up because the original appropriations will not cover present construction costs on the buildings desired. Mr. Teague says in such localities there is resentment over the fact that the government has not been granted additional money to carry on these building activities and the fact that this has not been done is exerting a harmful influence on many private interests which feel that if it is prudent for the government to refrain from building at this time, it also is prudent for the private interests to follow the same course.

"There are more building activities in New Orleans than in any other city I visited," Mr. Teague said. "New Orleans is spending \$74,000,000 on the municipal docks. More than 10,000 men are employed in this undertaking.

"I anticipate no labor crisis throughout the country, for the communities are awake to the situation. There is just as much unemployment today as thirty days ago, and yet the situation is much improved because local initiative is being brought to bear on local problems and as soon as the cities and states get under way with their improvement programs, for the time being at least, our unemployment problems will be far less pressing."

La Grande's Western Union office closes at 8 o'clock now. Night letters are delivered by mail the following day. Long distance telephone rates to Baker used to be on a 25-cent minimum and are now on a 40-cent minimum. A little more of Mr. Barleson and the business of the country will do a little revolting without any assistance from the Bolsheviks.

Building for the spring season is getting somewhat of a setback when the cost is figured, but even at that there may be some building before the summer is over.

From the tone of some of the soldiers' talk as they pass through La Grande there is going to be a serious house-cleaning in this country if the boys all get some in time.

Wiskey is said to have reached a market price of \$15 a quart. Will soon be up with beefsteak.

Among the many good things the state board, I wish to secure the possession of Oregon that I shall not be a basketball team.