

EDITORIAL PAGE

"Incompetent, Visionary, Extravagant"

The work of Bruce P. Disque on the Pacific coast during the wartime period is now being investigated. Every witness in the Seattle inquiry asserts that the work of Disque was "incompetent, visionary and extravagant."

It was a case of a man, not knowing his business, but with remarkable nerve and an apparent belief that he could "bull" things through, taking charge of the largest pieces of work the government had to be done.

The title of Colonel has been given a man who deposed the timber, who built railroads that are of no value, who amassed millions in expensive machinery unsuited to the work, who used man power in the most extravagant manner when the country needed every bit of production possible, and who succeeded in getting no results for the country that he was serving.

So long as time shall last, the Spruce Division will be under an odium that cannot be lifted. And as congress goes deeper into its work the smell will increase and the people will know that inefficiency stalked over the Pacific coast in the personage of Disque, who lacked the first essential of manhood to admit that he knew nothing about what he was doing.

It is little wonder that every timber worker and lumber manufacturer holds a malice for a man who will enter the great forests of the coast and destroy the timber, to say nothing of the terrific waste in money used in trying to do things of which he knew nothing.

There should be a punishment. The fool-killer should get busy. Rich America is the only country in the world that could stand such men as "Col." Disque, and the pity of it all is that this nation will refuse to punish such men as the crime they have committed demands.

LA GRANDE'S WATER.

Several days ago the water master for Union county issued a statement to the effect that the water in the upper country where La Grande secures its domestic supply has all been filed by prior rights and that in fact the city, at a low water season, apparently has no rights whatever to water except what has been impounded by the city.

The Observer has no technical knowledge of this matter. We have no disposition to doubt the water master's opinion. On the other hand, the city of La Grande has proceeded, under legal advice, and spent a large amount of money on a water system. That system cannot be junked, not even if it is found necessary to pay reasonable damages to water owners during the growing season.

Let the legal phase of the matter not be worried over until the court's determine La Grande's rights, then abide by the court's decision. But, first of all, begin preparations for securing more water regardless of opinions, so that next summer this city will not be in the condition it is today.

BURGESS, THE NEW COMMISSIONER.

It was wisdom on the part of Governor Olett to appoint Newton J. Burgess, of Umatilla county, to a place on the Highway commission which will be vacated by W. L. Thompson soon. Mr. Burgess is a big man in every way. He is financially able to take such a place which carries no salary, for he has made a thorough success of his own business. He is broad-minded and square. Every section of the state under his administration will receive fair treatment and there will never be a time when he will not be ready to drop his own work and serve the state.

Eastern Oregon has long been proud of the work of Mr. Burgess when he was state senator. In his every official act he was fair to all and legislation received his personal consideration before he affixed his approval. He is a man who takes nothing for granted and is always keenly alert to the welfare of others. As a highway commissioner, Mr. Burgess will do good work.

When a camper sets a forest fire he should report it at once. Failure to so report constitutes a crime that is punishable by law. Only a few days ago campers went above La Grande and failed to extinguish their camp fire. A fire was started, and as a result of that, a large area of timber has been burned. Also the work of an entire summer by several men who were manufacturing cordwood was burned. Such an offense is serious and the light-hearted picnicker or camper should be more careful.

A new French wireless message will send a message 12,500 miles, which is a big way around the earth. That distance is covered in a small fraction of a second. In fact, soon the wireless senders will be so powerful that messages will circle the earth, meeting themselves coming back before they're fairly started.

The Plumb Railway Plan As a Challenge.

(From Christian Science Monitor.)

Perhaps there is nothing more surprising in the fact that the dropping of the Plumb plan for railroad management in the midst of a public consciousness that had apparently prepared itself to see the railroads restored to private ownership has had very much the same effect as the dropping of a bomb in a crowded city. For there is no denying that the Plumb plan made something of a sensation, any more than there is any use in denying that the Plumb plan is an object of considerable size and to many people, of most forbidding aspect.

Clearly what the railroad men offer is no ordinary proposition. It is fundamental. It could hardly be adopted for railroads without affecting practically all other industries, at least so far as they are highly organized and closely related to public welfare or convenience.

Similarly, it is as easy as it is ridiculous to inveigh against the members of the railroad brotherhoods as Bolsheviks, threatening the country with the red terror of Russia because of their proposition with respect to the railroads. Such statements can only weaken the position of those who uphold private ownership and wish to stand against any radical change.

Why not, then, look the proposition in the face, and deal with it for what it really is? And what is it, stripped of all disguises, but the long-expected challenge, in concrete form, of collectivistic labor to individualistic capital?

have ground for asserting that it has not had proper consideration.

All sorts of untenable assertions are being made against the labor representatives, too often in place of the arguments or facts that might be expected to show the fallibility of their proposal. They are accused of threatening to cause a general strike unless their government ownership plan should be adopted, and many persons seem to have a notion that the railroad strike now in progress is some how concerned with the railroad ownership controversy; yet the proponents of the Plumb plan have stated explicitly that they were "not thinking of a strike" as a means of compelling congress to adopt their project, rather that they are counting on the education of public opinion and the usual electioneering methods to secure a congress that will favor adoption. As for the present strike that, of course, is based on wholly other interests, namely, the interest of certain classes of railroad men: just an end to what they feel is unwarranted delay, on the part of the Railroad Wage Adjustment Board, is passing upon their demand for higher wages.

Similarly, it is as easy as it is ridiculous to inveigh against the members of the railroad brotherhoods as Bolsheviks, threatening the country with the red terror of Russia because of their proposition with respect to the railroads. Such statements can only weaken the position of those who uphold private ownership and wish to stand against any radical change. For the true Bolshevik, of course, would overthrow the government as the very first step in setting up his new social order, and the worst that the railroad men propose, apparently, is that the railroad influence upon government, always more or less obvious in this country since railroad-ownership, shall hereafter be exercised by worker groups rather than by investor groups. It is only dodging the issue to contend that this is an assault upon the national form of government. It is nothing of the sort. We have here the American democracy, capable of being dominated by whatever groups or classes can manage to swing the greatest political influence. That one sort of group has been dominant in the past does not, of course, mean that the government is breaking down merely because, at times change, another sort of group comes to exercise dominating influence. And the claim is equally unwarranted that the railroad men, representing 5 per cent of the people of the United States, are undertaking to thrust their proposal upon the other 95 per cent of the population, as if the entire 95 per cent were definitely aligned against the Plumb plan. No body knows at this juncture what proportion of the 95 per cent would vote either way if the opportunity were given it.

Why not, then, look the proposition in the face, and deal with it for what it really is? And what is it, stripped of all disguises, but the long-expected challenge, in concrete form, of collectivistic labor to individualistic capital?

Must Abolish Serfdom in the Army.

Says Brigadier-General Samuel T. Ansell, formerly judge advocate general of the army, and the man who exposed the injustice of the American court-martial system:

"We will never fight another war successfully unless congress radically changes the methods of organization and discipline in the army; and this applies particularly to the courts martial."

The American public has learned a good deal in the last few months about the practical working of the present system. A sincere effort seems to have been made by the army authorities, since the armistice was signed, to mitigate the severity of the sentences imposed during the war. It has been impossible, however, to remedy all the injustice under the present mode of procedure. Thousands of the undeserved sentences were served in whole or in part, before the reviewing court got around to them. Many of the wrongs cannot be righted under the present law. And it is a significant commentary on the system that Gen. Ansell was not able to accomplish his reform work within the organization, but had to leave the army to do it.

"The whole system," he says, "is out of tune with our democratic government. Our military code was taken bodily from that of the British back in 1774; and the British in turn took theirs from old times when the soldier was but a serf."

"The British have revised that old code until there is little left of it. But we, in free America, have kept it substantially as in the days of the eighteenth century. As a result, too many soldiers are tried who ought not to be tried at all. Too many are tried on charges that as a matter of fact do not specify any offense known to the articles of war. Too many are tried on flimsy evidence. Too many are tried by officers not properly qualified to pass judgment, because they do not know anything about law. Too many have sentences imposed on them absurdly out of proportion to their offenses."

The public agrees with Gen. Ansell that "our soldiers are not serfs, but citizens," and that congress ought to make it impossible hereafter to repeat the wrongs under which supposedly free Americans have suffered in this war of freedom, as members of an army supposedly the freest on earth.

Spending Like Drunken Sailors.

William M. Lewis, director of the savings division of the U. S. Treasury Department, says that consumers themselves, despite all their complaints, are largely responsible for the profiteering. They have encouraged it by their reckless expenditure. They have been indulging, he says, in a "spending intoxication."

Dealers, admittedly, have been in the habit of charging "all the traffic will bear." But how do those dealers form their estimates of how much the traffic will bear? Clearly enough from the way the public spends its money.

If patrons spend carefully, counting the dimes and dollars and making sure they are getting the best value possible, the dealers will naturally hold down profits to a pretty reasonable basis. But when patrons spend as carelessly as drunken sailors, buying by preference the most expensive goods and making no question of the cost, the dealers naturally inflate prices all along the line, and account themselves to a higher percentage of profit than they formerly expected.

"Everyone must begin," says Mr.

Lewis, "at once to curtail expenditures for luxuries now selling at exorbitant prices." Let buyers cut out the expensive luxuries, and buy carefully, not necessarily blaming the dealer for high prices, but demanding the most for their money that he can afford to give. Then there is likely to be a double saving—the money formerly devoted to luxuries will go for necessities, and those necessities will drop in price.

Wise, sober buying will encourage honest selling.

The Limit in Mexico Has Been Reached.

Recent events in Mexico have certainly neared the limit of tolerance. When American sailors were held up and robbed by Mexicans, it was bad enough. When American army aviators are seized and held for ransom, national self-respect demanded action.

Carranza continues to palaver as pompously, verbosely and ineffectively as ever. In a recent reply to a Washington note demanding protection for Americans in Mexico, he said:

"The Mexican government has been and continues to be animated by the best of intentions to eliminate all those difficulties which disturb its good relations with the government of the United States, and wishes its citizens to enjoy greater protection."

Any profession of good will toward the United States on the part of Carranza certainly sounds like a joke. Possibly that exasperated old dog has a hidden sense of humor hitherto unsuspected.

Granting that Carranza would like to stop all those crimes and indignities for the practical advantage to his own government, it is clear that he is not able to do it. He cannot suppress the brigandage. He cannot restore order in Mexico and place that distracted country on a basis where it can play its proper part in international relations and guarantee foreigners the treatment expected in any civilized country.

Americans have kept on hoping against hope that the Mexican people would put their own house in order if they cannot do it, the task is up to Uncle Sam.

When One Cow Is Equal to Five.

It may sound like an exaggeration to say that one good cow is worth more than five poor ones. The assertion is proved, though, by an incident related in a U. S. Department of Agriculture bulletin.

A New Jersey farmer had five cows, just ordinary cows, which were not very good milkers, but with which he was pretty well satisfied. He got as much milk from them as his neighbors got from their cows.

His son, however, was not satisfied. He bought a high-grade cow, and paid \$155 for it—a price which his father regarded as extravagant.

When those six cows came fresh in the spring, the one high-grade cow produced more milk than the other five together, and kept it up longer.

There was five times the product for one-fifth of the labor and feed.

Does good stock pay? Anybody in that neighborhood will agree now that it does. The farmers there are selling off their old stock and buying a better breed.

Why not government regulation of tips? In many restaurants a patron has to tip the waiter nearly as much as the food bill amounts to, if he wants to get anything to eat.

Chicago delicately calls its landlord profiteers "rent hogs." Wonder what it calls its packers.

Save the pennies. No use trying to spend them, anyway, because you can't buy anything with them any more.

DEER SEASON OPENS SEPT. 16.

The open season for deer in Wallowa and Union counties is from Sept. 16 to Nov. 16. In other parts of the state it runs from Sept. 1 to Oct. 31. Heretofore the open season began in the middle of August, when the weather was too hot and the country too dry to hunt. The bag limit remains as before, that is two deer with horns for each hunter.

Carnegie Pension Fund.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching provides retiring pensions for the teachers of universities, colleges and technical schools in the United States, Canada and Newfoundland, which are on their approved list. The pension is given to a teacher who has reached the age of sixty-five years and has given specified service or to one who has served twenty years as a professor or 30 years as a teacher or lecturer. In the case of physical disability.

Observer ads are 10¢ per line.

School Notes

The City of Pendleton was made defendant in a suit for \$1500 damages, the plaintiffs being J. C. Crummins and Mrs. Ida Crummins, his wife, of Freewater. Mrs. Crummins fell and broke her forearm and dislocated her wrist while walking on Court street on July 1.

Half the Umatilla county wheat crop is estimated to be sold at this time and sales to a present are being made with considerable frequency. The larger growers have contracted for their fields at prices said to have been at the basic figure.

Fifteen different forest fires raging in various portions of the Whitman and Malheur reserves could be seen a few days ago by the government man on watch at Lookout mountain, southwest of Lehman.

Josephus Daniels, secretary of the navy, has extended to Governor and Mrs. Olett an invitation to join himself and President Wilson in reviewing the Pacific fleet from the deck of the battleship Oregon in San Francisco harbor on Labor Day, September 1.

DEMONSTRATION HELD WALLOWA SUNDAY AT 8 A. M.

Three Quad Cars Sold After Leader Nash Truck Climbs Steep Hill.

Three Nash Auto Trucks were sold within an hour in Wallowa after the truck demonstration which took place last Sunday morning in Wallowa. The demonstration was held Sunday morning at 8 o'clock on the C. A. Hunter farm where the trucks were put to the test on huling wheat and the Nash truck made such a wonderful record that soon converted several of the farmers that here was the machine for them, a machine that can pull a load and that can make the speed.

The Nash dealer in Wallowa had invited any truck to participate in the demonstration and several rival cars turned out, Louis Graham of Walla Walla, better known as "Shorty", the Nash Company demonstrator, was in Wallowa to put the Nash "over the top" in the capacity contest, the Nash was also put through a demonstration on plowed ground. The last test was when the Quad, loaded with 4 tons, 100 per cent over capacity, pulled out and made for a steep hill. Every one doubted the chance of the truck making the hill, but as the Nash went up and over the top of the hill, leaving its competitors stalled at the foot of the hill.

Those buying the cars were J. P. Johnson, one-ton regular equipment Quad; H. W. Cole, two-ton regular equipment Quad; and C. A. Hunter, one-ton pneumatic cord tire Quad. Mr. Hunter was the first to buy a Nash car in Wallowa county and after the truck demonstration placed an order for a new sport model Nash automobile.

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FOUR L'S WILL MEET

The District Convention of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen will be held in the Oddfellow's Hall on Saturday, August 30th, when all the lumbermen in the district, employer and employe alike, will get together to discuss the great issues of the day as they affect the lumber industry.

This great organization of one of the nation's greatest industries, although in its infancy, now comprises over two thirds of the men and women who make their living from it.

These are they days of big things and this organization comes forth with a great big new deal, of the relations between employer and employe, which is so simple, and yet so broad, that it leaves no room for argument.

The various committees in charge have arranged for a big time, for expense having been spared for the entertainment of visiting delegates.

Music will be furnished by a five piece orchestra. In the evening there will be a big dance at the Zuber Hall and refreshments will be served. All members and all their friends are invited to join in this big celebration. So be sure and come. Everything is free. Among the speakers who will be here is ex-Mayor Albee of Portland, the man who, more than any other, helped to put the Loyal Legion on the map. The opening ceremonies, and address of welcome will be by Mr. H. E. Coolidge of this city.

O. A. REITAN, Secretary 4 La

Adv.—8-24-19.

GIRL'S CONFERENCE THIS WEEK

The older Girl's conference for Eastern Oregon will be held at Allendale August 29, 30 and 31. All girls in Union county between the ages of 15 and 24 are urged to attend this meeting. It will be in charge of Mrs. Ida Niven of Carson City, who is state director of Girl's Work for the Oregon State Sunday School Association. There will be several good speakers there among whom are Mrs. Ormsby, General Secretary for the Idaho State Sunday School Association and Harold F. Hunter, General Secretary for the Oregon Association.

Conflicting Thoughts

