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AN ISSUE DROPPED.

As the democratic forces throughout the country begin gathering their issues for the next national campaign, it is a noticeable fact that the matter of trusts and monopolies show an appreciable absence. At least present indications point toward another political slogan in the fall of 1904 instead of the cry against monopolists tendencies which was a forcible and paramount question in the last campaign.

As an excuse for this apparent negligence on the part of the democratic leaders, it may be presumed that Roosevelt's decided stand against the greed of monopolies and his advocacy of stringent laws to control them has served to dampen the ardor of those who are opposed to the present administration. Or it may be that new international relations have furnished the pot in which to boil the stew. Anyway the trusts have received their share of the political turmoil and the next campaign will undoubtedly see them rest in peace.

But over it all may be seen the lime light of progressive circumstances. The American people, inclusive of the democratic party, becoming convinced that no great nation, striving as has this nation for commercial supremacy, can exist in this age of fierce competitive strife, without the aid and prestige of combined wealth. From earliest history advanced conditions have displaced labor in proportion, but in figuring up the commonwealth has gained in incalculable measure from these momentary hardships so difficult to swallow. And after all, it is labor's cry that in the majority of cases strikes the wedge of discontent and furnishes issue for politics to struggle with.

That there are bad trusts and good trusts no one denies. That the bad trusts should be controlled by good laws is another question that fails of dispute. But to completely annihilate these great combines which have made America what America stands for in every country on the globe would be a telling step toward the destruction of the greatest of all nations. And these facts are gradually being recognized. Whenever and wherever inventive genius has put a labor saving machine on the market, just in proportion to the displacement has there been a cry of the poor becoming poorer and the rich becoming richer. And nowhere can this inventive genius, which has revolutionized this

public, be more readily detected than in the great leviathans of trade and commerce which have conquered nearly every industry in the United States. But still the old republic forges ahead, forcing its way into every port, every city, every mart of commerce in the world. Uncle Sam is no laggard and he walks ahead with gigantic strides. No backward steps has he taken since his birth a hundred years ago and the residents of his incomparable domain are carried forward to better ways of living, better conditions, and higher planes of thought. Inventive genius, perhaps less easily recognized covered up in the immense aggregations of capital, has nevertheless been instrumental in bringing about this change. Then who shall say that the average American citizen is not in better circumstances as a whole, surrounded with greater luxuries, and partaking of more of the comforts of life than his worthy ancestor during the strenuous days a century ago.

SAD BUT TRUE.

The Crook County Journal can see nothing to rejoice over in the announcement that the Columbia Southern railroad will advance to Bend next year. It affects to believe that the announcement was designed to stimulate a townsie boom or something else—but that there is no intention of building a railroad. We regret to see such spirit exhibited. Why cannot Prineville rejoice with Bend at the railroad prospect?—Bend Bulletin. Just a trifle misconstrued, Prineville, along with the rest of the county, will stretch its ribs in rejoicing when a railroad comes. Just at present, however, there is no occasion to go into hysterics over a mere report.

Black headlines, big ones, too and official and semi-official reports of railroad building have been in vogue here for many years. Some of the oldest moss on the juniper trees remember these. They have been current topics since 1885 or thereabouts. A year ago last July Mr. Lytle said arrangements for the extension of the Columbia Southern had been completed and that the contracts for building the first 20 miles would be set on August 1, 1902. Remember that? August 1, 1902. First twenty miles of the extension. Prior to that time, and once since, two reports made a miraculous escape and came sailing down into the interior. Remember those? Two of them. Big, fat, healthy reports.

Way back in the early '90's the Corvallis & Eastern was to have been extended. Scores of persons rushed over to the Deschutes river and took up homesteads, desert land claims, etc. O, yes, road was coming, sure. Survey had been made, so why shouldn't it. Line was run clear across the desert from the Cascades. Hubs and stakes are still there, but the railroad isn't. Remember that?

Three times in the annals of the past decade have that many electrical lines been constructed from The Dalles. Three times.

Remember those? Three times, and Crook county's strained and over taxed eyes bid fair to contract a seasons growth of cataracts.

No, indeed. Pass around some other virtuals besides this hysteria traps that makes the head dizzy. This railroad business has played monkey with Central Oregon and made her first cousin to the giraffe when it comes. Prineville will be there, shouting, but as Uncle 'Liza said, "This ain't no time to be dealin' in these here pesky air castles."

CUTTING IT OUT.

It is presumed that you, along with a tolerable number of others, will swear off tomorrow on doing or saying something. It doesn't make much difference what that something is just so it's something. It will ease your conscience, perhaps rejuvenate your purse and make the family generally feel happier. Do it anyway whether it falls under this category or assumes another psychological form.

Fashion long ago set the first day of the year as the time when vacillating American humanity should turn the tables on itself. A new leaf is supposed to be turned upward, and the swearing off process is part and parcel of the transaction. So by all means, swear off on something. Don't be dilatory when all your neighbors are in the van. Cut out some ugly phase of your life which is making existence a burden. The smoking gag is an old one, too old. Get something new. Swear off on the mother-in-law tri-weekly visits, which extend over a period of two days each, or the midnight perambulations with the one-year-old, or the sudden expostulations and blue colored expletives when a real sharp tack takes kindly to the bare toe. Use a little discretion and judgment, and drop out something that has not in years past been worn down to the color of a chestnut. Be original in your swearing off, and above all things, don't forget to do it. Tomorrow's the first and last chance of the year.

LOOKING FORWARD.

The western timber states, and particularly Oregon, have welcomed with no small measure of joy the recent order from the department of the Interior which annulled the suspension of land entries and ordered them to be passed up for patent.

Secretary Hitchcock was, in this instance, the figure head through which the order was transmitted. It is not necessary to inform the public again who originated that order. It came, its results will be felt, and the 58 special agents, who have torn up the sod in this state during the past eight months, will, no doubt, be transferred to fresher and more verdant pastures. The Pinkerton Aid Society has been dissolved.

It is a noteworthy incident that the aforesaid 58 "specials," with the persistent aid of the Oregonian,

have utterly failed in proving an allegation. Of the charges preferred by Uncle Sam's sleuths not a single one has been substantiated by a conviction, and most of them have fallen flat on the griddle. There was a split egg some where. Its location must still be designated as an unknown quantity.

Perhaps President Roosevelt realized this when he issued through his secretary the revocation of suspended land entries. Perhaps he realized that the special agents were going at the business backwards to unearth fraud, if such gigantic breaches of the statutes existed as alleged.

Perhaps he realized that if the government was being cheated of its domain the bulk of the guilt lay with the timber syndicates and not with the individuals whom the law seeks to protect.

Perhaps he realized that the lien law was working a greater hardship on timber and homestead seekers, and robbing the government of thousands of acres of its most valuable land far more than any individuals could have done.

Perhaps—but then, suppositions enough have been quoted. The fact alone remains that the order has been issued, and that the shrewd eye of the president has penetrated to a more distant point than the one covered with the gauze of fraudulent land entries. Perhaps this is the case. Do you know?

THE SITUATION IN THE EAST.

War preparations now being indulged in by Russia and Japan point to an early conflict between these two powers. The immediate cause of the trouble is Russia's aggressive policy regarding Corea and Manchuria which has become more marked of late. But the real cause is the popular opinion of the Mikado's forty-million subjects which has been directed against Russia for a number of years and is now rapidly forcing events to a crisis. It is universally believed that their trouble can result in nothing but war.

Such a conflict will have features many and harrowing. It will pit against a Caucasian race of very low order, generally speaking, the highest standard the Mongolian race has ever reached. It would demonstrate once for all whether the Japanese proven superiority over the Chinese entitles them to rank with the progressive

powers as warriors. In commercial circles their rapid advancement has been a source of amazement to the civilized world and has made possible Japan's present stand against Russia.

A noted authority said recently that Japan's present preparations for war were undoubtedly the most complete, thorough, and detailed the world has ever seen. If Japan can live up to her present reputation of efficiency, the fact that she has a superior fleet and magnificent army organization, and a proximity to her base of supplies may make the final outcome of the impending trouble opposite to the general prophecy. If so, Japan will be the agent to evangelize not only Corea and Manchuria to Anglo-Saxon methods and institutions, but the Chinese empire as well. If Russia is successful the dominion of the Mongol countries will fall under the control of a government notoriously corrupt and vastly inferior to those from which Japan has copied. In either case, whenever the Chinese branch of the Mongolian race show the same disposition for assimilating western civilization and methods as the Japanese, their aptitude and countless numbers will make the "Yellow Peril" a reality and not a dream of the future.

From the latest household reports most of the Christmas turkey has been consumed, but the bone soup season is now at its height.

Liquid air does not seem to have quite filled the place in the commercial world as has its brother hot-air. The difficulties over in the Philippines seem to have jumped from the frying pan into the fire.

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