Sunday Oregonian

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THE 15-14 ISSUE.

Validity of the exposition measures, as they have come from the special session of the legislature, may well intrigue the historian and the follower of congressional procedure. The precise issue has perhaps never been earnestly raised in Oregon before, though we doubt not that many bills received a majority of living members in the past but without comment were held to have failed because they did not have approval of a majority of the full membership.

To recite again the situation: The membership of the Oregon senate is fixed by law at 30. It is provided in the constitution that bills shall have passed when approved by a majority of the elected members of each house. When the senate convened there was a vacancy due to the death of one member. The exposition measures after having been passed by the house were passed by the senate by a vote of 15 to 14. The question is whether 29 or 30 constitute the elected membership of the senate in such circumstances. If 29, the measures passed; if 30, they did not.

If it be true that 15 out of 29 living members cannot enact legislation then we have a condition rarely, if ever, possible under parliamentary procedure wherein a majority can block any act. And if the rule which thus applies to majorities applies also to quorums, then 11 members of the senate by resigning can wholly block the functioning of the legislature. In other words, a quorum would then be 20, and if only 19 members were left there would be nothing doing. A bloc of 11 senators could hold the threat of resignation over the majority and virtually have the majority at the mercy of the bloc.

On the other hand, if a constitutional majority is a majority of the members who have not died or resigned, and if 27 resigned, the three left could logically transact business, for two would be a quorum and two a majority. Or the membership might even be reduced to one man and this one man would have a voice in legislation equal to that of the 60 members of the lower house.

Whatever theory be adopted there is opportunity for extravagant speculation, but as a matter of fact the illustrations given are not so extravagant as they may seem, in view of what Oregon legislative history actually reveals.

It has been indicated herein that the rule generally observed has probably been that a constitutional majority is a majority of the full membership. Specifically the legislature in the past has assumed that a quorum is two-thirds of the full membership of house or senate, as distinguished from two-thirds of the members living and in good standing.

The legislative session of 1868 was a bitter partisan affair in Oregon. It is not necessary now to relate the details of differences that arose, except to say that after the session had been prolonged to 43 days the general appropriation bill had not been passed, but it appears was withheld by the democratic majority to force acceptance of a plan to re-canvass the vote by which Governor Woods had been elected in 1866. On the forty-third day 12 republicans resigned from the house. Three others submitted their resignations but they were not accepted by the governor and were withdrawn. The house, however, expunged the names of the last three from the rolls and bodily ejected one of the three when he sought to answer the roll. As the full membership of the house in those days was 44, the resignation of 12 and the virtual expulsion of three more left less than two-thirds of the members on the roll. It was assumed that there was no quorum, the members went home and there was no money for conducting state business for two years.

It is an interesting phase that the Oregon senate, which then conceded that it was helpless to transact business, reached this conclusion only a few years after a similar issue had arisen in congress where it was decided in a wholly different way. Incident to the civil war congress lost numerous members by withdrawal and by secession of the southern states. The national constitution relating to the quorum of house and senate is similar in wording to the provision in the Oregon constitution, except only that the national constitution fixes a quorum at a majority of each house whereas in Oregon it is two-thirds of each house.

While a majority of both house and senate apportionments were elected and sworn, the reduced membership soon made it necessary to determine what number constituted a quorum. In both houses it was ruled that a quorum was not a majority of the apportionment but a majority of the members elected and sworn. Congress apparently transacted business on that theory but the rule was not so definitely promulgated as to cover all circumstances until 1890. Since then the rule in the house has been that a quorum after the house is once organized "consists of those members chosen, sworn and living whose membership has not been terminated by resignation or by action of the house." The senate rule is virtually the same.

Had the Oregon house in 1868 followed the precedent set by congress under a similarly worded constitution, the 29 members left after the resignations and expulsions could have continued in session and even by the stricter interpretation of a constitutional majority they could have passed the appropriation bill by the affirmative votes of 23 of them. It may be suspected that the legislature in that year, however, was not looking for precedents or loopholes. The big idea of each party, after 43 days of conflict, seem to have been to invoke a calamity on the state and blame the other party for it.

Unlike the state constitution the national constitution does not define the majority necessary to pass laws. Only from the provision which empowers the vice-president to cast the deciding vote in case of a senate tie, and those provisions requiring a two-thirds vote in special instances, such as on impeachment, may it be inferred that only a simple majority is required to pass bills. And in a decision of the supreme court, sustaining a ruling by Speaker Reed, the court uses this language: "And here the general rule of all parliamentary bodies is that when a quorum is present, the act of a majority of the quorum is the act of the body itself."

Were it not for a provision found in the Oregon constitution, which is absent from the federal constitution, there could hardly be doubt as to the validity of the exposition bills, in view of the rule recognized by both congress and the United States supreme court. The Oregon section in question is: "A majority of all the members elected to each house shall be necessary to pass every bill or joint resolution . . ." If that provision means that a majority of the senate necessary to pass a bill or joint resolution is 16, no matter how many members have died or resigned, and if the congressional rule as to what constitutes a quorum is safe guidance, then in this state senate membership might be reduced to 15 by death or resignation, and 15 or even two-thirds of them could meet but could not transact any important business for lack of the 16 votes necessary to pass bills. But the constitution is to be literally construed. If it presents incongruities, it is subject to easy amendment if we do not like them. This discussion, in any event, is not intended to support or combat the validity of the exposition measures, but to submit a few matters of historical interest to those who like to mull over unsettled issues.

A NEW ORDER OF MERIT.

In bestowing upon Georges Carpentier the Order of Physical Education, the French government on January 1 will do more than recognize a boxer who has proved his merit in the pugilistic ring. The honor goes to him also because he has created a new interest in the subject of athletics in general. It is said that this has already made a noticeable impression upon the health of the French.

It is a mistake to suppose that the body can be neglected with impunity, even on the theory that more time ought to be devoted to the development of the soul. The inclusion of physical training in the curricula of elementary and secondary schools of Oregon, which has been prescribed by law since 1919, marked a step in advance for education as a whole, and no state in which the method has been tried would surrender the advantages thus gained. They are stated with great fullness in the Oregon law. "This course of instruction," says the statute, "shall consist of such activities as will promote correct physical posture and bearing, mental and physical alertness, self-control, disciplined initiative, sense of patriotic duty and spirit of co-operation under leadership."

The fact of importance as to physical training is that it not only benefits those who participate in it, but also the whole people. Our instinctive admiration for physical prowess, which we manifest in a thousand ways, is based on a sound principle. We know that the adage, "mena sana in corpore sano," contains an eternal truth.

France will yet have occasion to rejoice that the new order has been established. If it stimulated interest only in professional athletics, not so much could be said for it, but the announcement of the forthcoming decoration of France's physical idol says that it is expected also to result in a revival of outdoor sports of every kind. The nation which possesses a robust and healthy citizenry is equipped to solve the problems of peace as well as those of war.

MODERN ALCHEMY.

Professor Irving Fisher of Yale, whom the news dispatches report to be on his way from London to Berlin to investigate a rumor that a German chemist has discovered a method of making gold synthetically, is undoubtedly aware of the existence of a vast volume of literature dealing with the general subject of the philosopher's stone. Of all the pursuits of scientists, empirical and philosophic, none has more deeply engaged them than the romantic adventure which seemed to promise something for nothing—which only goes to show that scientists are but human beings, after all.

"Modern chemistry," says an encyclopedia writer, "places metals in the list of elements, and denies the possibility of changing an inferior metal into gold." But even as the words are written, new authorities assert that the possibilities in this direction have not been exhausted, and that perhaps synthetic gold is only a matter of time—although they are careful not to say how much time. The great physicists are doing a good deal to resolve what were formerly regarded as the original elements into still new elements, and under their researches and experiments science becomes, if not more satisfying, at least less dogmatic than it used to be. We are no longer content with the old formula for air and we discover strange and previously unthought-of ingredients in gases and in the spectrum of the sun. There is no finality about science nowadays, so that Professor Fisher does well, if he has time to spare, to look into that exceedingly interesting tale from Berlin.

Quite beside the alchemy of the problem, and beyond it, is the human equation involved. The motivating idea of the seeker of a synthetic process for making gold out of dross, of course, is that he will thereby vastly add, first to his own wealth, perhaps afterward to that of the world. But the curious anomaly is created that if he does succeed, he will defeat his own purpose, unless he is able to guard his secret from the rest of the world and unless he exercises a self-repression wholly abnormal and not at all to be expected from men of his type. For a flood of cheap, easily made gold would be the reverse of a boon to the world just now, and it might be the one thing needed to force us to take refuge in the new economic doctrines of Henry Ford.

It is more credible, however, that even if the chemist has explored a new field in synthetic chemistry he has discovered nothing of practical value, because all profit is likely to be absorbed in the cost of extraction. This was so with the extraction of gold from sea water, which was demonstrated to be theoretically practical a quarter of a century ago, and more recently in diamond synthesis and that of pearls. There are gold mines today in which the metal exists in its native state but which do not pay for the working. It is a violent assumption that gold will be manufactured more cheaply than it is mined—an assumption that in view of the catastrophe which the discovery would invite we shall hesitate to make.

There is nevertheless a good reason for continuing the work that the ancient alchemists began. It is not to be forgotten that practically all that we know about chemistry, with its many ramifications in every human field, is the result of the labor of these old-time empiricists. It is not possible to overestimate the good that may be done as the by-product of continued search. It is to these side issues, indeed, that we shall look for whatever good that comes out of the effort as a whole.

WHAT PEOPLE READ.

There is a good deal of significance in the result of a recent "referendum" conducted by the Outlook to ascertain the taste of the average American in reading. Rudyard Kipling stands well at the head, with Booth Tarkington second, and H. G. Wells (doubtless in part because of the vogue of his "Outline of History") third. Among the first twenty-five there are few that would be classed by an impartial jury as not worth while. Harold Bell Wright, being among the few, and there is a distinct refutation of the widely accepted idea that readers of the present day strongly incline toward the morbid and curious or eternal triangle and the psychology of sex. Henry Van Dyke, for example, is close behind Wells, and Joseph C. Lincoln, Mary Roberts Rinehart and W. J. Locke are well up on the list. We can hardly find fault with a ballot that ranks Joseph Conrad as high as eleventh, and surely not with one that accords Abe Martin only a single vote. John Galsworthy, George Bernard Shaw, Winston Churchill and Edith Wharton, to mention others among the first fifteen, are sane and wholesome and corrupting neither of morals nor good taste.

There is nevertheless a good deal more to be said concerning taste in reading than is revealed by a mere list of dominating preferences, as R. D. Townsend, author of the article in the Outlook, points out. "The scattering vote was amazing," he says, and gives particulars. In addition to sixty-four authors who scored more than twenty points each, no fewer than 228 received some votes, making 292 "favorite authors" in all. The force of the figures will be more apparent from the fact that the voters numbered but a thousand. Among the millions of buyers of books and patrons of libraries in the whole country, the total of favorites must be truly amazing. It is not probable that a list of a thousand is even fairly representative, nor is it claimed that it is, although it probably is reasonably indicative of certain things, as for example, that the minority, too, have good taste and that an excellent list might be made up of those who failed to attain high points in the competitive score. Among these are Leonard Merrick, William McFee, St. John Ervine, John Drinkwater, Alice Brown, G. A. Birmingham, Arthur Benson, George E. Woodberry, Kate Douglas Wiggin, W. R. Thayer, Romain Rolland and Eden Phillpotts.

It is curiously illustrative, too, of the fact that readers really care less for the personality of the author than they do for his work as they know it that in a referendum which was supposed to have been confined to "living authors" a considerable number who are no longer living received votes. Tolstoy was among them, and so were Henry James, Mrs. Humphry Ward, John Fox, Edward DeMorgan and E. P. Roe. To their readers these authors evidently still live, which is perhaps as sincere a compliment as could be paid them, while there is something to be said as to Conan Doyle's capacity for vivifying his characters when "Sherlock Holmes" appears as the favorite "living author" of one of the Outlook's electors.

With 292 favorites among only a thousand readers, as indicated by the test in question, one is able to glimpse the difficulties that librarians face in meeting the demands of a public even less aristocratic in its predilections. The problem of giving intelligent service without resorting to offensive censorship is enormously increased by the multiplicity of books, only a portion of which can be procured within the average library's means, and even the list in the Outlook, encouraging as it is on the whole, leaves something to be desired. What shall be said, for illustration, of the vogue of Harold Bell Wright, with total sales of 7,250,000 volumes to his credit, when there are so many others to choose from? It is a situation that obviously cannot be ignored by librarians, however they might wish that it were otherwise, and so many "campaigns of education" in matters of reading have failed that the bravest may well despair.

It is interesting to note that the Oregon state library, though earnestly seeking to supply the wants of a wide variety of lovers of reading, has taken a stand upon this very issue, and that it uses the works of Wright, which are only typical of a considerable class, as the test for a recent explanation of its policy of restriction in certain instances. Some time ago Owen Wister wrote in the Atlantic an article on "Knack Novels and Democracy," an extract from which the library now finds peculiarly applicable to present-day conditions:

> Speaking of the author's poor English, he quotes: "He doesn't like for anyone to see the pictures"; "I like for people to hear my music"; "I would be very glad for such an engagement"; "Neither Mr. King nor Mr. LeGrange are at home"; "'Tis not like the mob is the thing." These sentences are from Mr. Wright's latest book, "The Eyes of the World." . . . "The Eyes of the World" gathers into its 464 pages, I think, all the elements of the quack novel; one element appearing rather more conspicuously than in any of Mr. Wright's preceding stories. This is the sensuous suggestion, the carnal preoccupation, the somewhat frequent (but scrupulously pious) reference to illicit sexual relations. Such is the typical quack novel; stale, distorted, a sham, a puddle of words. . . . I have taken you wading through this mess of mildewed pap, because unless you touched it, smelt it, tasted it yourselves, how could you know the flavor . . . ?

So it is possible, it seems, since not all the books that are published can be purchased out of a limited fund, to guide the popular taste somewhat, even though such a policy runs counter to the "best-seller" idea. There are other reasons for restricting buying, all of them wise. The book that deals with the sins and vices of the idle rich, for illustration, is demoralizing, not alone because it panders to a taste for vice, but also because it creates unworthy emulations and fosters a wrong sense of proportion; the stories that make heroes of criminals are obviously unfit, even as studies of "life as it is," means of justifying books that picture life as it never was and probably never will be. The recurrence of Wright's name among lists of "favorite authors" would doubtless an excuse much overworked as the be less observable if a similar rule were followed more generally, and the result would be attained less by suppression than by the offering of worthier authors in its place.

A NEW MENNONITE INVASION.

The advance guard of a great Mennonite immigration from Canada to the southern states, which has just arrived in Alabama, brings with it a new problem for the public schools. The peculiarities of the sect are not objectionable on the whole, although the strong pacifism of its members and their supposed leaning toward Germany made a good deal of trouble for them in Canada during the war, but there is a prospect that sooner or later they will come in conflict with the established customs of their new home. For "non-conformity with the world" is one of the cardinal doctrines of the particular branch which is now overflowing the border and there are extremes to which, even in a free country, nonconformity cannot profitably go.

Menno Simon, who founded the sect, was born in the year that Columbus discovered America, and the vitality of his teachings is shown by the circumstance that the church has so long survived its beginning, more than four centuries ago. But it will be wondered whether not a little of this has not been due to thrift and industry which, along with adult baptism and other theological matters, are part of the Mennonite creed. The Mennonites, wherever they have settled, have proved hard workers, excellent farmers and honest folk who pay their debts. But on the other hand they are clannish in unusual degree, they contribute little or nothing to the social development of the communities in which they reside and they not infrequently incur the hostility of local authorities because of their opposition to "man-made laws."

These newcomers originally planned to settle in Mexico, where a large tract of land was bought for the purpose, but they seem to have changed their minds in favor of the United States. In view of their clash not long ago with the Canadian authorities because of their insistence on conducting their schools "without molestation or restriction," it will be wondered whether there was not a careful design in their selection of a home in the region which pays least attention to education of any state in the United States. But even here the immigrants are likely to encounter the campaign for the Americanization of aliens. They are bound to be included in the sphere of influence of the American school, and it is pretty well established that the plan and scope of our schools will be dictated by the American people themselves.

LO AND THE AUTOMOBILE.

We get a glimpse of the rapidity with which the Indian is being assimilated, after the many years in which we almost despaired of civilizing him, from a paragraph in the report of the United States board of Indian commissioners for the fiscal year 1921. The point under discussion is the propriety of freeing Lo from all government restrictions in the management of his property, and the question arises whether he will be prudent, thrifty and sagacious if left to his own devices. As to this, the report says:

> The automobile has intruded its compelling allurements into the scheme of separating the new citizen of Indian blood from his property. It seems to possess the same irresistible fascination for the Indian as it has for his white neighbors. To own one seems to be the particular desire of a majority of the tribesmen who have been placed in possession of the lands and money which had been held in trust for them by the government. Formerly the craving for alcoholic stimulants and love of gambling were regarded as dominating causes in the impoverishment of Indians. But evidently in these days gasoline to a large degree has usurped bad whisky, pneumatic tires have displaced the galloping hoofs of racing ponies and a book of road maps has been substituted for the poker deck as the active elements in the process of transferring the ownership of the broad acres and bank accounts of newly citizenized Indians to their white neighbors.

In this respect it will be seen that the Indian does not differ vastly from the white. A good deal of thrift literature has been written—and mostly wasted—at one time or another in efforts to persuade white men to buy necessities first, then put a nest-egg in the savings bank, and postpone the acquisition of luxuries until after those matters have been attended to. On the whole nothing much has come of it. Consequently, although the Indian bureau has developed a wide difference of opinion among its field agents upon the issue whether Lo is ripe for the experiment in self-determination, we have a strong leaning toward the views of the minority, who say that "they are in favor of releasing from government supervision some of the young, capable Indians, now spending their time in idleness, on the ground that if such Indians lose their land and money they will be compelled to go to work, and will thus be forced to begin a new life which may lead to self-supporting independence." The fact of importance is not that the Indian sells his land and buys a high-powered automobile with the proceeds, but that in no other way can he acquire the independence and initiative that are so necessary to his ultimate spiritual and material salvation. Separated from land and cash, but retaining youth and health, the young buck will be no worse off after his gasoline jag than many a white man has been who has matured into a thrifty and useful citizen.

There is, however, a pleasant medium between the policy impetuously put in practice about 1917, which carried to its logical conclusion would have freed all Indians from government supervision, and that which would keep them perpetually under the governmental thumb. Three-quarters of a century of official misunderstanding of Indian character has created an obligation which the white man's government is still bound to respect, and to turn some Indians loose to shift for themselves would be a plain act of inhumanity. But with the next generation it ought to be different, for, as the board points out, "the solution lies in the education of the Indian children."

Here is a tangible policy, and one that ought, in thirty years or less, to effect a final separation of the tribesmen from government control. About twenty-five Indian children of school age are now not attending school, largely for lack of facilities, as the report makes plain. The want of foresight which congress shows in failing to make provision for more Indian schools is indicated by the following:

> It seems obvious that real economy will be found in the use of larger appropriations now for Indian education, because more money means more school facilities for more children and the greater the number of children of the present generation we can put in the Indian and other schools the sooner the day will come when there will be no supervised Indians, and, consequently, no bureau of Indian affairs.

If the Indian bureau half a century ago had exhibited a small part of the wisdom here compressed into a sentence, there would be no Indian problem today.

EARLY GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES.

Twenty-five years ago, as was recorded in The Oregonian at the time, an effort was initiated by certain residents of Douglas county to change the name of Cow creek, substituting therefor the more mellifluous appellation "Azalea," in honor of a beautiful wild flower indigenous to that region. It is suggestive of the great difficulty with which people are induced to relinquish names that are fraught with early—though sometimes forgotten—associations that the name Cow creek persists to this day, although the post-office in that locality, which is named Azalea, still stands as a partial triumph for their cause. But we are reminded also that Cow creek—this particular one of many Cow creeks in Oregon—has meanwhile almost lost its identity through confusion of local geography by people less familiar with the contour of the country than the old-timers were. The so-called Cow creek canyon, as a well-marked defile on the Pacific highway is called, is not Cow creek canyon at all, but Canyon creek. The Cow creek valley through which the highway leads has a wide and pleasant vista, which the automobilist leaves when he passes the site of old Galesville. The real Cow creek canyon begins in the vicinity of Riddle and ends near Glendale, and used to be famous as a terror to railroad men. Twenty-five years of intermittent effort have failed to change the name of the creek or the canyon and there is no brighter prospect of success today.

Only occasionally did the old-timers, engrossed in the serious business of making a living under dificulties, give much thought to the cultural or even the historic aspects of a name. There are as a matter of fact at least seven Cow creeks in Oregon, each named, as we may suppose, after some local incident in which livestock was involved. There are at least four Antelope creeks in the state, half a dozen each of Camp, and Mill, and Pine, and Dry and Cottonwood and Elk creeks. Standard atlases list six or seven Bear and Beaver creeks as well, but counting them all, little and big, there is probably at least one in each of two-thirds of the counties of the state. Not much originality was displayed in the early nomenclature. The names of animals are apt to predominate in the regions where hunting was good in pioneer times. Antelope, Big Sheep, Deer, Rabbit and Wolf creeks abound. Eagle, Fish, Goose and Grouse creeks testify to the prevailing want of imagination of the folks who named them. There may be the material for a story in the naming of Mule creek, but if so it has been lost to history. Rattlesnake creeks meandering across the landscape here and there tell of no uncommon phenomena, for there is a Rattlesnake creek in almost every county of every western state.

The legends out of which these names arose are quite commonly forgotten. There was an interesting dispute some years ago over the origin of the name of Three Lynx creek, one party to the controversy contending that it grew out of the loss by a surveyor of three links from a chain. The other held that an early settler had so named it because he had come upon three wild cats while hunting there one day. A board of savants gave the matter weighty consideration and decided the dual issue of orthography and geography in favor of "lynx." The true significance of "Skookum" creek is apprehended by few. "Skookum," in the Indian tongue, commonly means "strong" or "stout," in the sense of the physical attribute which the Indians most admired, but it also was applied to powerful spirits from the other world, and it is to the fancied presence, particularly at night, of these "skookums" or wraiths, that our Skookum creeks and lakes in all probability owe their designations. There are two Lookingglass creeks in Oregon, the names of which in all likelihood have widely different origins. The one on the divide between Umatilla and Union counties undoubtedly was called after the famous Indian chieftain of that name; but we may suppose that the Lookingglass creek in Douglas county originated in some story about a mirror, for the fame of the celebrated Nez Perces warrior had no association with southern Oregon.

We note an occasional variation in the regions first explored by miners, as, for example, Coos and Curry counties. Euchre creek, not far from Sisters rocks, has a peculiarly mining flavor, and so does Pistol river. There probably is a tale behind the naming of Calamity creek, which historians have failed to set down. An effort was made about half a century ago, if memory serves, to change the name of Stinkingwater creek, on esthetic grounds, but it failed in Oregon, although Montana once succeeded in substituting Ruby as the name of a similarly sulphurously evil-smelling stream. In our researches into the origin of the appellations of our creeks and rivers, we look to the Indians in vain for aid, for the Indian had no names for streams as such. Aboriginal fancy, usually active enough, seems to have been unequal to that particular task.

A curious mystery attends the early name of the peaceful stream now called Mary's river, which Corvallis has made famous. Its modern name is explicable enough, but this in all probability dates back no farther than the early forties. Prior to that time the fur trappers and first settlers had given names to many of the important streams, as they did to the Pudding river, which dates back more than a century, and to Long Tom, which was the Lumtum of three-quarters of a century or more ago. Somewhere in the broad valley of the Willamette, as Duflot de Mofras, the French explorer, and Joel Palmer, the pioneer, have recorded, a Mouse river was known to the early residents. If, as some suppose, this was the stream now known as Mary's river, it appears to present one of the few instances in which the name of a stream has been successfully changed—and the record of that change has been lost.

Lord Riddell, the British journalist who has been attending the disarmament conference, returns home, he says, under the impression that the Americans are in a fair way to become the politest people on earth, thus affording a pleasing variation from the old practice of foreign visitors of mentioning only the things they find fault with and wholly overlooking the pleasanter phases of American life. Yet a little reflection convinces us that Lord Riddell's praise is probably wholly sincere and founded on close observation. There is quite as much real politeness, we think, in America as in any other country on the globe, if by politeness we mean willingness to be of service to others and not only the superficial graces in which a pioneering people have been too busy to perfect themselves. But this opens the entire question of what politeness consists of, as to which there are many opinions. Lord Riddell evidently alludes to the spirit rather than to the outward semblance, and with his conception we are content.

The demand for a further three years' restriction of alien immigration seems far more than reasonable, in the light of the statement of the commissioner of immigration that more than 800,000 aliens entered the country in the twelve months preceding the enactment of the present law, and in view of the figures showing that immigration reached a total of more than 400,000 in the calendar year of 1920. The largely mythical character of the "melting pot" was revealed under the scrutiny of war conditions and it is clear that we have many problems to solve before complicating them further, as unrestricted immigration would be sure to do. We ought at least to have time to put the machinery of Americanization in working order, to assimilate all the elements now in the country and to complete the plans now on foot for eliminating illiteracy among the native born. The American Legion, which champions the three-year movement, would do well to make it thirty years instead.

The new revenue law contains 1404 sections, the most impressive of which to the average man will be those extending the exemption to folks with small incomes and repealing the so-called "nuisance taxes."

The purchasing power of the dollar is increasing in one respect at least. According to the news from Moscow it will now buy 145,000 rubles, by comparison with a little over two roubles five years ago.

Sooner or later everybody but a train robber is sure to like the marines. Senator Pomerene finds that Haiti is well satisfied with their rule and that everything is serene in Santo Domingo.

Before bemoaning the evils of overproduction, as some folks are already beginning to do, wouldn't it be well to find out whether it isn't really under-production that is troubling us?

The astrologers are now predicting that the world will be "shaken to its foundations" in 1926. What do they call the ordeal through which the world has only recently passed?

The ruling that an income taxpayer may deduct his bad debts from his return to the government is hardly a satisfactory substitute for a creditor who pays his bills.

Lloyd George says that Great Britain has gone absolutely the limit in the Irish peace treaty, which seems to be exactly the objection that Ulster makes to the treaty.

Professor Lambert's assurance that the poles have never been more than sixty feet out of position confirms Mr. Browning's statement that all's right with the world.

The Eskimos have learned to make whisky from potatoes, and it won't be long before we are hearing of the great potato-growing possibilities of the Arctic zone.

Poland's purchase of several thousand American auto trucks makes it look as if that country expected to raise something before long to transport.

Of course resolutions are in order on New Year's day, including a special resolution to keep some of those which usually are broken about the second day.

Life is just one paradox after another in Russia. Beople are said to be fleeing to Siberia, where they used to be sent for punishment.

The idea seems to be to put the battleships into a sinking fund out of which the obligations of the world may be redeemed.

The latest warship to be launched is named the Concord—a peculiarly appropriate name for a war vessel in times like these.

It isn't as hard to swear off as it used to be, with really good liquor bringing around $10 the quart.

The Listening Post.

By DeWitt Harry.

ABOUT a week ago C. B. Williams of Seattle started something by writing in and asking for words to the song starting "Frog went a courtin', he did ride—sword and a pistol by his side." Since publication of the request a flood of answers have poured in, the words of the old song recalling nursery rhymes of olden days, the fond mother as she sang to her child, an old negro mammy crooning to her pickaninny, homesteads in the sunny south, the chanting of the field workers—the pictures were legion.

That "Frog went a courtin'" should take rank as a favorite nursery rhyme now nearly forgotten, and that it originated in the south, seems to be the preponderance of opinion. It is seldom heard these days, but it bears the stamp, in ready response, of having been very popular a generation or more back. How many men and women of today have been crooned to sleep by its plaintive melody?

* * *

Mr. Frog went a courtin',
He did ride,
Uh huh! (like a frog croaks).
With sword and pistol
By his side.
Uh huh! Uh huh!

This seems to be the accepted version, each couplet of the song having its accompanying croak of Mr. Frog for a refrain. And then the song continues, the regular croaking after each two lines, about as follows:

He rode till he came
To Miss Mouse's side,
Showed his sword and pistol
With artful pride.

He took Miss Mouse
Upon his knee,
And said, "Miss Mouse,
Will you marry me?"

"Without Uncle Rat's
Consent
I would not marry
The president."

Away they went to
Uncle Rat,
To see what he would say
To that.

Uncle Rat he laughed
Till he shook his sides
To think that his niece would
Be a bride.

"Bless you," he said.
"You've my consent."
"Miss Mouse cost me too
Many a cent."

Oh, Where shall the wedding
Supper be?
Down in the grove
In the hollow tree.

What shall the wedding
Supper be?
A slice of cheese and
A cup of tea.

This is the end of
The story book,
So we will leave them
In their nook.

The book lies on
The kitchen shelf
If you want any more
Just help yourself.

* * *

But this is a happy version, and it doesn't agree by a long ways with several others that refuse to allow Mr. and Mrs. Frog (nee Mouse), to "live happily ever after." They nearly all agree that Miss Mouse was properly wooed, "sat on his knee," but thence on we find quite a few differences of opinion. One answer says that the lady asked "What are you going to maintain me upon?" and Mr. Frog answered "Three green pease and a grain of corn." The final verse has the tale end this way:

As Frog was swimmin' across de lake,
Tuh-a-huh!
He was swallowed by a moccasin snake,
Tum-ahuh! Hauh!

Different kind of frog evidently, for the tone of his song seems more resonant and there is no explanation as to why the coward did not use his "sword and pistol."

* * *

One of the "Constant Readers" writing from Reedville, says that "the kitten and the cat were wedding guests, and the cat caught the rat and the kitten caught the mouse, while the frog went gallopin' to his own house." Forrest L. Maus, an Oregonian carrier, seemed to have the best information and sent in two most excellent versions, and Mrs. C. E. Hoak says there may be yet other verses.

One "Subscriber" has the cat and all in his recollections and also the man at the end and says that he is certain that it was a kindergarten song. An answer from Salem has a bumble bee mixed up in the story who "tuned a banjo on hi knee." Mrs. Beidelman of Portland has the frog's end as the act of a milk-white duck that "gobbled him up" as he was crossing a brook. Mr. McMinnville injects a trace of sadness into his song by telling how an old gray cat ate Miss Mouse soon after her wedding and Mr. Frog was left a widower who mourned but a few minutes until he also met an untimely end at the hands of the big black snake.

* * *

Some of the aftermaths of Christmas: Detectives searching for bad check operators who took advantage of the holiday shopping rush to shove their paper. Secret service operators picking up a flood of $10 and $20 bills passed by counterfeiters. Reports of most all agencies and police departments reveal that bad checks and phony bills are certain at this season.

And the change in the makeup of the newspapers. Now for the stiff pull of winter's hardships in a period of depression and unemployment. The help wanted columns have shrunk to a few inches while hundreds are seeking situations through the want ad. The yearly shopping rush is over and the display ads start sale campaigns. The seeker after gifts now can buy far below the prices of a few days ago. But the gripping fact about the advertising pages is the number, both men and women, who beg for work, "odd jobs," "anything" they say.

Whether it's good spirits or carelessness is a difficult matter, but the lost and found columns are also prospering. Everything seems to have been lost from "a gray hair switch" to a "rosary." Much currency is wanted, even to single bills, many of these ads bearing an undercurrent of hard luck. As usual the proportion of founds to losts is ten or more to one.

There is always a pleasant surprise in the arrival of the belated Christmas present. Postoffice reports show that the "mail-early" campaigns seem to bear fruit in increasing ratio. It's admitted to be an excellent plan to mail presents early for the reason that they may not be expected and their arrival a few days before gives the recipient a chance to come back.

Futility of Words.

By Grace E. Hall.

Dear love of long ago, how oft indeed
I've said you were as nothing now
to me,
That nevermore could heart of mine
fresh-bleed
Because of what can never, never be.

But just today I saw a sturdy boy
Who has your eyes—the self-same
merry eyes;
One glance—and they had killed my
present joy,
And now I know my words were
lies—were lies!

THE CRYSTAL FOREST.

When the chinook blows above us
Some two thousand feet or more,
And the cooler low winds above us,
And play round us all, galore;
Down the little mist of raindrops
Fall from up the warmer air
To the colder, lower stratum,
Here to freeze on branches bare.

Then the winds begin to quicken,
And the woods, no longer free,
As the gleaming linings thicken,
Weave a silver filigree;
Soon we have a crystal forest,
As the trees of every strain
Sway and creak as if in protest,
Though their protest be in vain.

Every tree is clothed in crystal,
Every plant a glass house takes;
Chilling winds through branches
whistle,
While the ice is on the lakes.
Woods are bound in icy fetters,
Both the green tree and the gray;
Now we have our "spell of weather,"
Though it lasts us but a day.

Boughs are drooping, bending, breaking,
While the sea-wind skyward flies;
Rattling branches to the wayside
Drop their loads of forest gems;
Twigs are tipped with shining silver,
Icy sheaths each tree and bough;
Tubes and pipes of purest crystal
Crush beneath our feet e'en now.

Let not winter's visit mar us;
We can bear his reign a while;
Woods of ice or crystal forest,
When King Sleet sets up in style.
Old Jack Frost must have his inning,
Making havoc of our fun,
And for once we see him winning
Ere we put him on the run.

—JESSIE M. M. MARTIN.

JUST MILLING AROUND.

We're milling around in this restless
word,
But always going to bat;
Though we've wasted time in doing
this
When we should have been doing
that,
We curse the heat in summer time
And later on the snow,
And in between we yearn for both
Or either—and so we go!

John and Bill were country boys
And knew the farming trick;
They both could plow and sow and
reap,
Knew the shovel and the pick.
John chose to stay upon the farm,
Dame Nature'd be his chum,
He'd raise his sheep and cows and
hogs,
He'd never starve, by gum!

But William said he'd try the law,
It looked a better way,
He'd gather in the tempting fees—
"Let John go pitch the hay!"
But later on he saw the farm
In quite a different light,
And yearned for pigs and cows and
hogs
As a source of sheer delight.

But John saw William there in town,
As in his office chair he sat,
With polished shoes upon the desk,
All dignified and fat,
And wished he'd never seen a farm
With its endless life of endless
trudge—
He should have gone into the law—
He'd have made a splendid judge.

So we're milling around in ceaseless
whirl,
Each pushing each to get above—
Thousands who can't love what they
have,
And others can't have what they
love.

—T. T. GEER.

MY VESTAL OF THE SNOWS.

The frost with her pale fingers drapes
A curtain on my window pane;
Of flowers in strange and mystic
shapes,
I search for on the earth in vain.

Along a ghostly border path,
Are plumy ferns, all dazzling white;
Some icy harvest harvest's aftermath
Are sheaves of wheat, aglow with
light.

And near the edges of the brook,
She hangs a fringe of purest pearl;
In every secret woodland nook
A thousand snowy fronds unfurl.

And when the savage north wind
blows,
And drives his shaft of sleety hail;
I see my Vestal of the Snows
Walking alone, all wanly pale.

Over the trees she throws a shroud,
And binds each bud in a crystal cell,
And sifts the snow from a passing
cloud,
And wraps the world in mystic
spell.

Nor for crushing grief, nor weary
care,
Nor joy of love she knows;
With star frost in her floating hair,
My Vestal of the Snows!

—MARY ALETHEA WOODWARD.

SOLITUDE.

I am standing on a barren beach,
A level, vast expanse.
I am alone.

In the sky a pale sun pours a light
On sands as wan and white—
A frosty gleam.

And a tired tide eddies at my feet,
Its fretful ripples bear
The myriad sound

Of an empty wish, unspoken thoughts,
The sighs and songs of men,
And peace and strife.

I am standing on a barren beach
And looking past the tide.
I am alone.

In the sea a mighty current takes
Its way, forever on—
Relentless stream.

With a surging movement gathers in
The petty, whispering tide,
Then casts it forth

On the margin of the sea I stand—
The merest speck—and watch.
I am alone.

—KATHRYN EASTHAM.

A HAUNTED HOUSE.

I spent one night in a haunted house
With scorn for all ghost stories
Alas! for every boastful man
Who in his courage glories.

The hour of 12 had barely struck
When sounds so weird and ghoulish
Began to fill those empty rooms;
I screamed, then thought how
foolish.

For none could come to comfort me—
Alone I was and frightened,
And so remained hour after hour
Till dawn my chamber brightened.

Then with the day, steps fled