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MONDAY, - - DECEMBER 27, 1897

PENSION ABUSES.

The present necessity of retrenchment in government expenditures will prove of great value if it should not only stop further pension extravagance, but lead to a revision of existing laws and of the pension roll itself. Hitherto congress has paid little heed to warning voices from the great public, and none at all to various presidential suggestions as to the need of preserving the honor of the pension system. It was thought a few years ago that the highest point in pension expenditure had been reached, but the annual bill is increasing again, and promises to go several millions higher. Every congressman now sees that care in making appropriations is necessary lest the monthly deficit be continued definitely.

During President Cleveland's first term it was extremely unpopular to criticize the pension system. It was taken as offensive to the veterans, and as indicating lack of sympathy with the great service they rendered the country in restoring the union and making the United States free from slavery. Since Republicans of the stalwart type in both branches of congress are now calling attention to the need of keeping down the pension appropriation by guarding against abuses of the generous provisions of the laws, it may not be considered unpatriotic to urge the cause of pension reform. Many abuses have recently been pointed out, and it is clearly made the duty of congress to provide a remedy.

An elaborate article in the New York Sun will afford many hints to working reformers. It makes a careful estimate of the survivors of the civil war on the basis of the commonly received statement that 2,063,391 individual actually served in the union forces. Of these 304,360 died in battle or in hospital. According to the census of 1890, there were then 1,034,073 survivors, showing a natural decrease, up to that time, of 724,958. Since 1890 it is estimated that from various causes the list has been reduced to 727,122. In addition are widows and dependents of dead soldiers. From the pension list it appears that there are 947,542 pensioners, including 65,860 children and 27,559 dependents, leaving 854,114 survivors and widows, or 40,745 more than the whole number of soldiers and widows surviving. In addition 187,505 survivors are demanding pensions.

Remembering that there are many actual survivors who are not receiving pensions, it must be admitted that we have here a problem in arithmetic which is not easy of solution. Pensioners are proverbial for longevity. We still have on our lists not only pensioners of the war of 1812, but also of the war of independence. But it would appear that participants in the civil war have the power of coming to life again, and that the list of survivors by some unexplained miracle is increasing year by year, notwithstanding the expectations of an accelerated death rate among them.

There are on the pension rolls 378,000 who receive their pensions under the provisions of the act of 1890. Of these, says the Sur, not one received an injury during the war, and not one was able to trace any disability back to service in the war. Their disability, when they had any, arose subsequent to the war

and from absolutely independent causes. So with the widows who are drawing pensions under that act. Their husbands died of diseases and causes not in any way traceable to their war service. But, as has been shown and as is plain by the records on their face, more "survivors" are drawing pensions than there are survivors, and, as everybody knows, thousands upon thousands of real veterans counted among the 727,000 survivors of the war are not drawing pensions.

The probability, if not the certainty, of great fraud, is sufficient to make the duty of congress an urgent one. The temptation is a strong one. Many argue that as it is public money, and some are getting it fraudulently, they might as well have their share. The roll should be revised so as to make it an honest roll, and the many special acts of congress making the way to the treasury easier and the pay larger should be examined, and some of them repealed.

THE CHINESE IN NEW YORK.

Industrious, Temperate, Peaceful and Charitable to One Another. There is a Chinese population of nearly 10,000 in New York city, but it is a rare sight to see any Chinaman applying for help at any of the public charitable institutions of that city, says a Gotham exchange. The Chinese are always ready to assist each other in all the emergencies of life. Most of them belong to societies of mutual assistance on the Chinese plan. When one of them is penniless he can borrow money. When one is ill nurses furnish the needed service and if he dies the expenses of the burial are always easily obtained. Several hundreds of them have become well off through the business of their washhouses. There are no loafers among them; they are all noted for their industrious lives. Few of them are addicted to the opium habit, though many of them occasionally indulge in the fumes of the drug. It is mainly the wealthy men among them who enjoy the luxury of Chinese wives, but others who desire to form white matches find no difficulty in doing so, as far as obtaining mates is concerned. As a rule the children born of these unions adopt the American style of life. The Chinese of New York boast that they produce proportionally fewer criminals than any other element of the population.

Notice is hereby given that bids will be received by the county court for keeping the county charges for the week for the ensuing year. All bids must be filed with the clerk on or before the 5th day of January, 1898, at 9 o'clock a. m. Court reserves the right to reject any and all bids. A. M. KELSEY, County Clerk.

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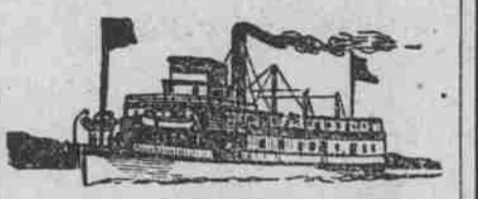


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