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SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, 1902.

IT WILL CLEAR THE AIR.

After all has been said and done, the investigation of the police department, and the resultant developments will tend to do good to the city of Pendleton. They will elevate public sentiment, and compel the attainment of a higher standard. Specific results may not be apparent to the unthinking. But, notwithstanding the surface of things will bear much the same appearance as of the past, there will have been a distinct advancement.

Public sentiment is really the governing force. It is the court of last resort. It controls, although it is sometimes slow in making known its wishes. And, too, public sentiment, usually dormant, is in favor of honesty and decency in government. It needs but an arousal to demonstrate that the people desire that affairs of government, local or state or national, be administered in the same manner in which clean business men conduct their institutions.

Pendleton will have profited by this investigation. City officials will hold to better conceptions of duty. Policemen will perform their work upon a level vastly higher. Candidates for office will come to the people with platforms more in keeping with the ideal.

Would it not be well to tell the whole story of the investigation plainly to the people? Would it not be right to submit it to them for adjudication? It is a question over which those now in authority—authority temporarily given them by the people—may ponder with earnestness.

RAILROAD PASSES.

Whenever the first of January comes around comes with it the question of the giving of free passes by railroads. It will continue to come up until the practice is abolished. It is pernicious in the extreme.

Consider this—Why do railroad companies give passes to public officials? Is it an act of mere courtesy? Is it a personal courtesy? Is it a favor to the official as an individual, or to him as an official?

And also consider this—Do the railroad companies give these passes expecting a return? What is that return? Is it not that they expect the official will favor the railroad companies when their interests come into the handling of the officials?

But, why debate the question? Who does not know that the officials are expected to reciprocate to the railroad companies for all passes? Who does not know that keen, able officials of the companies know that if they give the passes they will receive back again something in the form of substantial value? Every school boy knows it.

County officials, state officials, representatives and senators, judges, officers of the courts, all must do something for the railroads or fail to receive those passes. While laws, perhaps, need not be enacted prohib-

iting all practices that are detrimental to the public weal, yet it seems almost to be true that a law preventing any official from accepting a pass from a railroad company would be a good law.

RECLAIMING THE WEST.

In President Roosevelt's first message to congress he has devoted much space to the discussion of the internal affairs of the country. Among them he has placed prominently the conservation of the forests and the reclamation of the vacant public land. In his opinion these are among the great and pressing questions that must be dealt with by congress. In this attitude he is supported not only by his advisers but by the public and the press generally throughout the country. The secretaries of the interior and of agriculture have both, in their reports to congress, devoted considerable space to the same topics, and have been equally emphatic in urging congress to take some decided action.

The anomalous condition is becoming apparent that about one-third of the United States proper, excluding Alaska and outlying possessions, consists of vacant public land, yet there is no longer an outlet for the homeseeker upon these lands. In the past the vast unoccupied public domain has served as an outlet for surplus labor, and has afforded scope for the energies of thousands of our young, able-bodied men who without financial means have had the ambition to become land owners and to grow up with the increasing development of the new country.

In that portion of the United States where the vacant public land lies, and where farms and homes cannot be made without irrigation, there are now living four or five million people. If ten times the amount of land were irrigated, it is possible that the population would be increased to at least forty million people, and possibly far more, because of the other industries which would be developed as more land is cultivated. The mineral wealth of the region is very great; gold and silver, coal and iron are now produced, the precious metals having special value. The poorer ores are for the most part neglected, because of the high cost of transportation, of labor, food and forage. With more land cultivated in scattered areas throughout the country, and greater population, better transportation facilities must come and cheaper food material, making it possible to work some of these low-grade ores. Great deposits which now are practically valueless, can then be worked, affording employment for thousands of men, and adding to the population and wealth of the country. With a regulated water supply, such as that needed in irrigation, cheap water power can be had, not only for pumping water to the fields, but for various industries connected with the handling and reduction of the ores, and thus, one industry feeding another, the West must develop its wonderful resources with increasing rapidity.

But the question may well be asked: Why is this not now taking place if there are so many people wanting land? Why is it that the settled area has actually diminished in some portions of the West and population has tended to concentrate in towns? It is because the irrigators and investors in irrigation systems have utilized all of the easily available sources of water and have developed agriculture by irrigation nearly to the limit of the capacity of these. They have demonstrated that irrigation is not an experiment, but an assured success, highly profitable to the man who cultivates his own land. More than this, they have shown by numerous failures that reclamation works on a large scale do not pay

financially nor yield the satisfactory returns that the small works have done.

These facts have been recognized by President Roosevelt, whose knowledge of the West has been gained by personal experience as a ranch-owner, business man and student. The conditions are dwelt upon by the secretary of the interior and by numerous writers upon social and economic questions who are beginning to sound the note of warning against further delay, against the policy of procrastination, which allows the speculative element to gradually acquire possession of the places where water may be stored, and to render difficult or impracticable the ultimate reclamation of the public land and the creation of homes for workers. The president, in his clear-cut, decisive fashion, has reached to the very heart of the matter and has recommended that the government, the great land-owner, should construct and maintain the reservoirs as it does other public works. He says that this is properly a national function, and that it is as right for the national government to make the streams and rivers of the arid region useful by engineering works for water storage as to make useful the rivers and harbors of the humid region by engineering works of another kind.

In opposition to this, and in strong contrast to the patriotic, outspoken utterances of the president are the opinions of men who hold that the government should not continue its policy of providing free homes, but that the agricultural interests of the country demand that no further extension of populated area should be encouraged, so that farm labor seeking employment might be more abundant and less expensive. This latter policy is that of the men who oppose the extension of the United States beyond the crest of the Alleghenies, who fought vigorously against the Louisiana purchase, and who now would restrict, if possible, the making of homes upon the land, in order that their farms may have an increased value or they may be able to employ harvest hands at low wages.

To sum up the problem, we may say that we have the vast extent of vacant public land of wonderful fertility; we have water which will make a portion of this productive; we have the people who are seeking for opportunity to make a living, and who would gladly escape the congestion of the cities. We have the public funds and the public interest toward developing our country to the highest degree, but we are a long way from bringing the powerful forces to effective action. We are allowing the lands so necessary to the development of the nation to drift out of its control; we are allowing the waters and the opportunity to conserve these to the monopolized and become subject for speculation, and we are allowing barriers to be gradually erected shutting off the opportunities for development of our great internal resources.

The call to action has been sounded by the head of the nation; it has been taken up by his lieutenants, and has been heeded in part by individual members of congress, especially those from the west. But the matter must be considered from the larger standpoint, not of immediate local benefits through the construction of a public work in one locality or another, but as a great national undertaking whose benefits reach out to every community and which helps solve some of the most difficult of the social questions of our times—Fredrick Haynes Newell, chief hydrographer.

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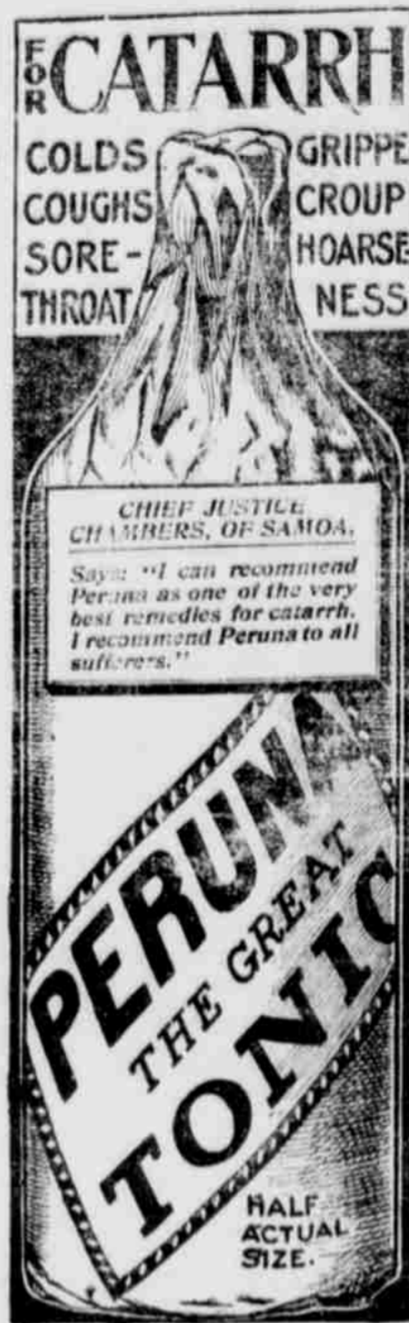
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