

**Polk County Observer**

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**IS WINNING APPROVAL.**

The federal law designed to restrict the sale and use of habit forming drugs has now been in operation for nearly three months, and during this time it has worked so well and satisfactorily that it has silenced many of its critics and converted those who originally had doubts concerning its efficacy. Already it is evident that the law is a powerful agency for preventing new victims from forming the drug habit, and also evident that it has a tendency to force those who already have acquired this habit to seek a cure, because of the difficulty of securing their customary doses. Both these influences are desirable and beneficial of course, and the law is now generally approved where at first it was received with considerable skepticism and some outspoken disapproval.

The legitimate drug trade, it appears, has been strengthened in its determination to sell drugs for medicinal purposes only, because of the sense of responsibility the law engenders. The requirements as to prescriptions from licensed physicians and as to recording all such transactions are helpful to the honest druggist, and the penalties that attach for violations are sufficient to deter the dishonest ones, who have heretofore hardened their consciences and sold freely to habitual drug-users.

All this is a distinct gain. Gradually the terrifying evils of the drug habit will be reduced, the number of its victims will dwindle, and the morale of every community in the country will be thereby improved.

The chief defects of the law are really those of the administration, and will disappear with better enforcement. Doubtless, there is much smuggling of opium over the borders, especially from Mexico, where anarchy rules. There are underground systems of distribution whose operators grow rich by supplying the stuff to "bends" at exorbitant prices. There are also the nostrums of various kinds which under the guise of "catarrh cures" and "cough mixtures" lure incipient drug-users on with mild doses.

The law can be made much more effective, it would seem, if Washington will stimulate federal officials everywhere to greater activity and more rigorous prosecution. The weapon is now in their hands, if they will only use it with unflinching vigor.

**CHURCH UNITY.**

The movement for church unity among protestants in this country and Canada is making steady progress. This is a matter that has been under discussion for years, but although strongly favored by many prominent members of the leading orthodox churches it made rather slow headway until quite recently. One of the first notable gains was when the Baptists and Free Baptists of Canada decided to unite, which soon was followed by similar action on the part of the same denominations in this country.

Now the Congregationalists, the Methodists and the Presbyterians of Canada, after considering the question for about five years, are on the point of forming a union under the name of "The United Church of Canada." No great differences of belief were discovered by the amalgamation committee, but trouble arose over matters of church polity and of names. The committee finally agreed that the control body of the new church should be called a general council, a name used by the Congregationalists; that the provincial governing bodies should be called conferences, a name taken from the Methodists; and that the district bodies should be presbyteries.

This scheme goes now to the churches for ratification. The expectation is that the Congregationalists and Methodists will agree to it unanimously, and that all the Presbyterians will agree, except a few minor churches.

**UNION OF NEUTRALS.**

The present tangle of international relations and interests has brought about the suggestion that neutral nations should unite for mutual self-protection and the preservation of their own rights. And there is something in this suggestion that is worthy of serious consideration, and by a fair chance it may be put into actual operation as one result of the great war which is absorbing the attention of the entire world. The nature and extent of this conflict is such that all neutral nations have been forced to face conditions not only annoying to them, but actually detrimental and damaging to their interests. With no part in the war and only an indirect concern in its outcome, they nevertheless find that they are "paying the price," no less than are the actual belligerents.

and perhaps highly desirable for neutral nations to confer with each other and ascertain to what extent their interests and aims are identical, and how far they can and should go in uniting their political strength and influence for the purpose of mutual protection and the protection of common interests. It might even be advisable to call a conference of the representatives of neutral nations to take up and consider this plan, and obviously the logical nation to call this conference and thus set the ball rolling would be the United States. The belligerent nations are themselves united in groups, and to successfully cope with such organization should not the neutral have an organization of their own?

The war may end soon, or it may be prolonged almost indefinitely, and many believe the latter alternative is apt to be the case. Yet as peaceful industry and trade rather than war, are the business of the world, why should the neutral nations sit idly by and take no hand in shaping policies which directly and vitally concern themselves? Must the rest of the world submit tamely to a prolonged paralysis of industry and commerce, on which the well-being of its people depends, while the brawling nations of Europe usurp the theater of the world's affairs and dictate—to a certain extent, at least—the part that neutrals must play in this savage and generally destructive game?

Neutral nations should get together and see about this. Acting alone and independently their influence is correspondingly weakened and their efforts may have little effect. Together they can accomplish much for their own welfare and the welfare of the world in general.

**PENSION SEEKERS.**

Employees of the federal government are persistently pushing the plan for a pension system to apply to members of their class and provide for old age. They are not the only ones, however, who are active in similar movements, for the tendency among public servants everywhere is in the same direction. It is a natural instinct that moves these fellow citizens of all of us to guard against the evils of their time of dependence, but there is another point of view about the matter. Government employees are paid by the money the ordinary people must give. The instinct to provide for old age is just as active among the ordinary people as among their servants, but nobody pensions the ordinary people in their old age. Plainly it is impossible that such provision could be made, because if everybody contributed to pension everybody else we would come around a circle to where we started, and we might just as well provide each for himself as we do now.

If government workers are not paid enough to allow for setting aside part of their earnings for old age, that is another matter. But even as to this we suppose their incomes are above the average, which is pretty low when all classes of population are taken into account. In short, it is not easy to understand why the day laborer who does not rise above \$700 or \$800 a year in wages and has to practice thrift with his meager income, should be asked to take from what he can save to bestow upon better situated people a blessing he wants so much for himself.

**PUBLIC SENTIMENT.**

Many persons are inclined to argue that wars usually are started by official war lords, backed by hot-headed jingoes, and that the people, as a whole, have little to say about it. In a sense this may be so, yet it also is true that not even the fire-eaters and jingoes can launch a nation into war unless general public sentiment, or at least a preponderance of public sentiment, is ready and willing to accept such decision. And often public sentiment encourages and even forces the decision to resort to strife.

Take, for instance, the case of Italy, where the government for months has been negotiating with the diplomats of the Teutonic empires in an endeavor to secure by peaceful means what the people of Italy want it to endeavor to take by war. Every dispatch from Rome for six or seven months has shown the temper of the people to be for war against Austria. Public sympathy in Italy is almost entirely with the allies—or, to put it more correctly, with France. The people of the country do not love Austria, and they see in present conditions their opportunity to gain that Austrian territory which they commonly refer to as "unredeemed Italy."

Italy is a kingdom, but one in which the people are not accustomed to accept too great a measure of autocracy. Given a strong enough cause, and public sentiment would sweep the government off its feet as quickly as would be the case in the freest of republics. There is every evidence that the king and his counselors have had the fight of their lives to hold back public sentiment.

Americans who talk about rulers always forcing the people into war have singularly short memories. It is only seventeen years since the Maine was blown up in Havana harbor. Have they forgotten the history of the next two or three months, when President McKinley and his administration had to oppose the public sentiment of practically the entire country—including a majority of the members of congress—in order to hold back a declaration of war until the United States should have enough munitions of war to last through at least one important battle?

**MINERS IN THE ARMY.**

According to trade union officials, more than 150,000 miners have been recruited into the British army since

the beginning of the war. Most of these have been enrolled as engineers or sappers, thus providing trained men for this work, which is proving of the highest importance in the trench warfare on the western front.

The capture of Hill 60 near Ypres is a case in point, where the spade played a vital part in the operations. Tunneling and mine-laying of a swift and certain nature was essential to this operation, and the sappers employed were skilled miners from Wales and the north of England.

Accustomed to working underground, with a complete mastery of the pick and prop, and an instinctive understanding of all the difficulties to be encountered in the way of cave-ins and falls of earth, these skilled miners are able to drive saps and tunnels with a speed and accuracy not to be attained in the case of ordinary infantrymen, although every infantryman is given a thorough course of instruction in spade work during his training.

**A UNITED NATION.**

In the course of his Philadelphia speech to newly made citizens President Wilson rejected in the fact that "United" is a part of the name of this country. But it is questionable whether he fully anticipated at that time the harmonious chorus of approval which would greet his note to Germany. From Maine to California and from Minnesota to Texas the newspapers of the country praised the note and predicted cordial and unanimous support of the government, whatever the eventualities. Only here and there has a discordant note sounded. Some of the newspapers have so long shown unrestrained sympathy for one side in the European struggle and have accepted the argument of that side as final and conclusive, that they could not without justification completely reverse their position on the merits of the controversy. But with only one or two exceptions they have announced their loyalty to the position of the United States, now officially proclaimed.

The newspapers of the United States have not been bellicose. So far as we have noted, only two have clamored for war, one in New York and one in Memphis. A few have opposed war under any conceivable circumstances. But the overwhelming majority have expressed hope that there might be no war, while at the same time arguing that the government must firmly maintain its position, whatever the consequences. Prior to the preparation of the note, there was less unanimity of sentiment. Many newspapers, especially in the central, middle western and western states, offered no suggestions as to our government's course, expressing implicit confidence in the president. This was the position of many Southern papers, although others demanded vigorous action. None of the prominent men quoted on the subject demanded war, although the utterances of Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Wickersham and Mr. Bonaparte were so construed by many of their critics. Some of the newspapers adopted the explanations suggested by Senator Stone immediately after the disaster, but all the vernacular papers have abandoned them since the official action. While it is apparent that all the United States wishes for peaceful adjustment of the controversy, it is equally clear that if the dreaded alternative happens the nation will stand as one man back of the administration. There will be no north or south or east or west, nor will there be any adjectives qualifying American—Globe Democrat.

Biblical prophecy affords a very interesting subject of study these days. Official statistics show that last year there were over 21,000,000 horses in

this country, yet some people have found cause to worry over the fact that half a million horses recently have been shipped to Europe.

It is pretty hard for some people to remain cheerful in view of the awful destruction of life and property by the war, and the spread of prohibition in the United States.

It is indeed a curious situation when other nations, now at war, really hate to see this nation drawn toward the vortex, on account of it being the last big power that is neutral and able to act as a go-between.

**JUDGE TEAL HAS MANY CALLERS**

New Widows' Pension Law Creates Interest Among Those Getting Aid.

"Do all the widows in Polk county take The Observer?" inquired Judge John B. Teal yesterday morning as a representative of this journal insinuated his august presence in the immediate vicinity of the head of the county government. "That item about widows having to make application anew in order to receive pension money from the county has brought a stream of interested ones into my office, and the end is not yet. However, I can find no law making it incumbent upon widows receiving pensions to file another application, even though the attorney general has suggested it," continued the judge.

The new law, which goes into effect tomorrow, will reduce the number of pensioners somewhat in this county. It is more rigid than the former measure, and its provisions will be strictly complied with. One feature of the law makes it necessary that an applicant shall have resided within the county for a period of three years before becoming eligible to receive county aid.

**POTATO PROSPECTS BRIGHTER.**

Willamette Valley Will Have Unusually Large Yield.

The potato crop of the Pacific northwest this season promises to be rather liberal. In this state the acreage is liberally increased over a year ago while prevailing prospects are for a better yield per acre than for many seasons past. Recent rains have been a most wonderful aid to the growing potato crops of the Willamette valley as well as in eastern and central Oregon. While some loss of potatoes was reported at various Willamette valley points previous to the starting of the recent rainy spell, due to the frost, still latest reports indicate that even this reported loss was far greater than present facts justify. Spurred on by the extreme price reached for potatoes during the latter part of the season, many growers increased their acreage.

**Auto Law in Effect Tomorrow.**

If everyone in the state does not know that after May 22 number plates cannot be transferred from one motor vehicle to another motor vehicle, and that upon the sale of a motor vehicle the purchaser must notify the secretary of state and pay the statutory filing fee of \$1 for noting such transfer upon the records, and the further fact that no sale or transfer of a motor vehicle is valid unless the required transfer notice is given by the purchaser and the fee paid by him, it will not be the fault of Secretary of State Olcott. The latter has addressed notices to newspapers, dealers in automobiles, county clerks, sheriffs, justices of the peace, constables, city auditors and recorders, chiefs of police and banks throughout the state calling attention to the changes in the law.

**Picnicking at Buell.**

Many picnickers from all parts of the county are today enjoying the out of door festivities at Buell, given under the auspices of the school at that place. Several automobile loads went thither early this morning, and others are following. The program, heretofore published in The Observer, is one of length as well as of merit.

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