

Polk County Observer

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A TEST OF SINCERITY

Among the entente allies the comments on the president's peace note seem to be rather harsh and critical. This apparently is based on the feeling that the president practically endorses the German proposal for a peace parley, which in a sense is true.

Even so, however, calm reflection will convince the entente nations that the president's suggestions accord no less with their own position than with the position of Germany. The latter has offered not exactly peace, but a peace parley—a proposal that the belligerents get together in a discussion of terms, to see whether there is any possibility of agreement.

The suggestion made by the president is really an endorsement of this idea, no less than of the German proposal itself. It declares that both sides should make a frank and open statement of position and aims, thus to permit a comparison which not only will help the belligerents to know whether there is a possibility of agreement, but will allow neutral nations to understand the objects sought to be accomplished and form conclusions as to responsibility for the war's continuance; also to properly shape their own course if the war does go on.

It therefore would seem the allies should welcome, rather than repel, the suggestions of the president, for his proposal accords no less with their own plans than with the offer of Germany. He wants an open avowal of peace terms, which they themselves demand from Germany, and as Germany has taken the initiative and must, therefore, speak first, it cannot logically be argued that the president's plan is inimical to the interests of the allies.

UNIVERSAL SERVICE.

It is a significant fact that practically all the real military experts of this country strongly support the plan for providing universal training, as a measure of national safety and a needed precaution against unpleasant surprise. General Scott, the present chief of staff of the United States army, and General Wood, his predecessor in this office, both have testified that they regard universal military service as a highly important, even essential for the welfare of the nation, and this opinion appears to have the support of all the other army experts.

Of course it is true that a different opinion is held by some prominent citizens, a notable example being Mr. Walter A. Fisher, former secretary of the war department. Testifying before the same committee Mr. Fisher...

service it would actually increase this burden and unjustly interfere with private duties and responsibilities. This, in turn, was denied by both General Scott and General Wood, who also held that the creation of an adequate and efficient military force is a vital necessity to render the United States immune from foreign aggression and that the volunteer system as exemplified by the national guard has proved, as General Wood phrased it, "a terrific failure."

This question is indeed one of much importance to this nation, and it should be decided solely with a view to safeguard national interests and welfare. If a time of dire peril should come to this country and find the latter unprepared, there would be no end of criticism and denunciation of leaders for neglecting to have the nation ready for such a time of menace.

MUCH LAND STILL LEFT

That the government still has a large amount of land subject to entry in customary form is shown by a statement made by the secretary of the interior. The latter declares there are about 250,000,000 acres of available government land which still is unoccupied by settlers, although it is being taken up at the rate of about 10,000,000 acres a year.

While much of this unoccupied land is classed as rough land and a good deal of it is arid, these handicaps do not mean it is worthless or incapable of being converted into profitable farming tracts. On the contrary, experience has shown that so long as land is not so badly broken up that it is impossible of leveling except at prohibitive cost, it always is possible of cultivation.

It therefore is likely that a large portion of this unoccupied government land will yet be settled on and developed, and, as already noted, this process steadily is going on. Some of this government land may never be brought under cultivation, of course, but all that can be utilized probably will be gone in another generation or so.

There also is something for the American people to think about, in the plain official intimation that this nation steadily is being drawn toward the vortex of war.

After all, the belligerent nations should not feel miffed at the president, simply because the latter has called for a show-down.

Aside from having too much gold and too much cold, this country seems to be getting along very nicely.

Did you write it 1917?

SOME THINGS

How About It, "News?"

The Falls City News arrived at this office last Saturday night. It looked natural. There was nothing suspicious about it. A place of honor was given it and it was placed on top of a pile of papers for the editor's perusal long about Tuesday morning. Monday morning chance brought a member of the editorial staff into the editorial office. Something had happened to the Falls City News. It had enlarged. It looked bulky. Suspicion was aroused and the Falls City News was investigated.

County Parent-Teachers Club Active.

Though one of the youngest of the state county parent-teacher associations the Polk county organization is active. F. C. Ewing of Brush College is president and Mrs. C. V. Johnson of Airlie is secretary-treasurer. The next meeting of the association will be held Saturday. The slogan of the society is "Education is public service and social uplift."

Repairing Donkey Engines.

Two donkey engines from the Black Rock camp of the Willamette Valley Lumber company are being repaired at the Dallas S. P. shops. Engine No. 1 was finished last week. Henry Smith, Dallas,

OTHERS' OPINIONS

Monmouth Has Prospered.

While Monmouth will begin the new year with Main street torn up, the paving project is the one distinct gain for 1916. The growth of the Normal has been steady, the past year being the best in point of attendance the state school had yet had. Harvest in the neighborhood has been good and crops have sold at good prices. There has been plenty of work, especially through the latter part of the year, and no one is suffering in our midst from want.

The Only Salvation.

The only salvation of the road program for Oregon is to increase the auto license fees. Not a trifling increase, such as is recommended by a so-called Oregon Road committee which is being manipulated by adroit road-fighters to scuttle the highway program, but an increase that will yield a fund sufficient to finance a fair and reasonable adequate plan of thorough highway improvement directly benefiting all the principal sections of the state and indirectly benefiting even the remote counties.

To merely double the auto license fee will not accomplish. The so-called Oregon Road committee has committed itself to the limitation of doubling the fee. To make meet the situation, its recommendations must be disregarded. Auto owners can each save the price of one tire a year if given better roads to travel over, and each auto should contribute an annual license fee approximately equal to the price of a tire.

Many auto owners realize this, and feel liberally disposed towards a heavy increase in the fee. Others oppose this extra expense, mainly because they do not feel like paying for roads if the over-burdened taxpayers will provide them free.

Auto owners and auto dealers must wake up out of their dream of the overtaxed property owner taxing himself more and bonding himself further for auto roads unless the autos themselves contribute reasonably to the cost of the roads they tear up. The taxpayer is crowded to the wall and will fight big highway expenditures unless the automobile traffic can be made to carry some part of the burden.

Auto dealers urge that horse vehicles wear out the roads and should be required to pay a license fee if autos are subjected to an increase. This claim sounds fair on its face, but it will not bear examination. The horse vehicle traffic is amply provided for by small taxation; the great road burden that has come in recent years is because of the auto traffic. Would it be fair to tax the horse vehicle extra to build the costly roads that are needed for autos?

Horse vehicles do not wear the roads as do the autos. The impact of horses' hoofs and narrow iron tires does grind the surface of a macadam road, but the heavy damage is done by the autos in sucking the tiny particles out of the road to be blown away by the wind, in tearing the roads at sharp turns which can be negotiated by horse vehicles with little extra wear, and in raveling the thin edges by turnouts.

An autotruck in one trip often damages one road many hundreds of dollars, and the property owner has to make repairs at his own expense. Repairing the damage done by horse vehicles is a trifling cost in proportion.

Analyzed, the claims that horse vehicles should pay a license fee resolves itself into an injustice towards the traffic for which the less expensive roads of former years were built. The autos cannot justly shift to the humble horse-drawn vehicle a portion of the extra cost incurred solely to provide for auto traffic. Auto owners

have enjoyed the benefits of through roads; they will enjoy the principal benefit of using further improvements; they save expense money for tires, repairs and gasoline when horse vehicles are replaced by auto highways, and they should carry part of the expense burden. If, in a spirit of narrow opposition, they defeat the move to charge a heavy increase in the license fee, they are defeating road improvement and will be compelled to pay the cost over and over again in tire wear, repairs and gasoline. A liberal attitude by auto owners is true economy for themselves, as many of them realize.—Oregon Voter.

One half the study course of the college at McMinnville has been abolished. The president announces that after New Year's cigarettes will be banished. Now if they would cut out basketball there would be nothing left.—Corvallis Gazette-Times.

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Willamette Valley Lumber Co.

Saturday, January 6 Dr. Freeze, the eye specialist, will make his first trip for the New Year to Dallas and will continue to do so each month as usual. One price alike to all and fair treatment assured. Those who take advantage of the doctor's technical knowledge and fourteen years' practical experience should get relief from headaches any eye troubles. Consultation free and all work guaranteed. One day only. 87-89

CANCERS AND TUMORS No knife and loss of blood. No plasters and pain for hours or days POLYPUS, GOITRE, PILES, FISTULA DISEASES OF WOMEN DR. TOEL ELECTRO-THERAPIST AND ELECTRO-SURGEON DALLAS, ORE. OFFICE SUITE 10 DALLAS NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

Specialism Wins

In this age of complex business the "generalist" as well as the "handy" man, is handicapped. The specialist in trade as well as business or other professions, wins nowadays. We are in business to serve you efficiently, we specialize. We are plumbers and tinner nothing else.

Rich & Ellis

Oregon Life BEST OREGON

OREGON'S SUCCESSFUL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY Furnishes Superior Service to Policyholders and invests all funds in Oregon securities exclusively HOME OFFICE—CORBETT BUILDING, Fifth and Morrison Streets—PORTLAND, OREGON A. L. MILLS C. S. SAMUEL E. N. STRONG President General Manager Assistant Manager D. V. Poling, District Manager Polk and Yamhill Counties.

ANNOUNCEMENT

IT IS WITH PLEASURE THAT WE ARE ENABLED TO ANNOUNCE THE NEW SCHEDULE OF MEAL RATES AT HOTEL GAIL: MEALS 25c AND 50c WHEN FOOD PRICES WENT SOARING A FEW MONTHS IT WAS NECESSARY TO RAISE OUR MEAL RATES. THAT THE H. C. OF L. HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT REDUCED WE ARE ABLE TO GO BACK TO THE OLD RATE. HOTEL GAIL - DALLAS, OREGON BY CHARLES BILYEU, MANAGER

OUR PIES.

Our Pies are just as good as the "kind mother used to make," and sometimes better. We rather like to brag about our Pies, and Cakes, too, for that matter. And lots of folks say we are justified. We want you to try them.

YOUR BAKER WINTERS

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JOSEPH A. FINLEY

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