

The Athena Press.

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER.

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ATHENA, AUGUST 8, 1905

MISSOURI'S EXPERIMENT.

The legislature that met in January, 1903, appropriated \$35,000 for a binding twine plant to be maintained in the penitentiary. In accordance with that law the legislature just adjourned appropriated \$125,000 more to be known as a "revolving fund," to be used only to purchase raw material required in the manufacture, handling and marketing of twine. All moneys derived from the sale of twine are to be collected and paid into the state treasury by the penitentiary warden, and kept in a separate account. The warden is empowered to sell the twine to the farmers of the state for cash, free on board the cars at Jefferson City "and at a price per pound sufficient only to indemnify the state against loss." State twine in bulk may also be sold for cash by the warden to persons in each county who shall be required to sign an agreement to sell the twine to actual consumers at a price not greater than 1 cent per pound over its cost, with transportation from the state capital added.

Manufacturing of the twine has begun, and the price has been fixed at 10 cents a pound. The trusts, it is said, sell the same article for from 12 1/2 cents to 14 cents a pound. It will be some time before the working results of this special branch of state industry can be ascertained. So far the appropriations have amounted to \$160,000. The farmers who get the twine at a reduced price also pay taxes, and the money that has established the plant, and is set apart for the "revolving fund," all comes from general taxation. Public ownership rests on public taxation. What it may return in public revenue is an open question. It remains for actual practical experience to strike the balance.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

"HANDS OFF!"

(Weston Leader.)

Pendleton and Athena are in the throes of a Sunday-closing movement. At Athena last Sunday every business house was closed all day, as well as the saloons, which would not stand for making fish of one and fowl of another. At Pendleton every saloon was closed at front and rear.

The Athena Press, in discussing the situation, deprecates the business injury done to Athena. It also relates with some gusto the case of one of the Sunday-closing petitioners who tried last Sunday without avail to get some repairs for his pump at the hardware stores, and failing, had to draw water for his stock by hand.

The Press avers that some consolation would be found if other towns were treated the same as Athena by the Civic League, but as it is Athena must bear the stigma of being the only town in the county which declines to accommodate customers on Sunday.

All this trouble may not last long for Athena. Sunday-closing reforms

are usually short-lived. But let it be said right here that Weston wants no reform wave to break over the bill, short-lived or otherwise. We want no Sunday-closing agitation. We have troubles enough just now. Let the Civic League which is at present experimenting with Athena leave us entirely alone. Its interference with our affairs is not invited or desired. We can care for the situation ourselves.

The Leader does not desire just now to enter into discussion of the ethics of Sunday-closing. It merely serves notice on the Civic League, which is reported to be casting its eagle eye in this direction, that Weston is well satisfied to shove along in the same old rut that it occupies at present. The front doors of saloons are closed here Sunday, and business houses kept open until noon. A law is broken thereby, but we do not want it enforced here unless it is simultaneously enforced in every other town and city in the state of Oregon. It's not good law for us and a poor one for the rest of the commonwealth.

We believe that most of Weston's people are satisfied with the present arrangement. Customers are accommodated Sunday forenoon, and in the afternoon business men enjoy the rest that every man should have. Nobody has been heard to complain in this community, and outside of it we think nobody has a right to complain.

SWEDEN AND NORWAY.

Some facts regarding Sweden and Norway, condensed from a recent statistical bulletin are of interest just now. The area of the peninsula is nearly 300,000 square miles and that of Sweden 172,000 square miles about the size of Oregon and Washington combined. Norway contains 124,000 square miles and is a little larger than New Mexico. The population of Sweden in 1903 was 5,221,291, as compared with 4,828,150 in 1893, a gain of 8.2 per cent in ten years, although during that period 259,711 Swedes emigrated, 176,857 of them to the United States. Sweden has about the same population as the state of Illinois, though three times as large in area.

Norway's population increased from 2,032,100 in 1893 to 2,228,535 in 1903, or at the rate of 14.6 per cent, while 124,338 Norwegians emigrated during this period, 120,311 of them coming to the United States. Norway has about the same population as Michigan or Iowa, in a territory twice as large as either.

Sweden is chiefly an agricultural country, only 22.3 per cent of its population dwelling in towns, while in Norway fisheries hold about an equal place with agriculture, each furnishing an annual income of about \$15,000,000. The average value of Sweden's agricultural products for the years 1898-1902 was \$65,338,000, while Norway's was scarcely one fifth this amount. There being no minerals of industrial or commercial importance, Norway is obliged to import considerable breadstuffs and it needs or desires a different tariff law from Sweden—and in fact, has it, there being custom houses along the boundary line of the united countrie. During 1903 Sweden imported breadstuffs amounting to \$16,331,000, and Norway to \$15,329,000.

Forests abound in both countries, and the lumber industry is the principal one of importance common to both. The timber is largely spruce and pine, valuable in British and continental markets. Of the total exports those of timber, lumber and manufactures thereof, such as wood pulp and matches, constituted in 1903 51.7 per cent in the case of Sweden and 40.4 per cent in the case of Norway. The mining industry is also important in Sweden, 30,731 persons being employed in it.

Norway's advantage, aside from its fisheries, lies only in its merchant marine, which is fourth in size among the marine nations of the world, being exceeded only by the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany. Its total tonnage is 1,500,000, as

against Sweden's 625,000; its earnings \$29,700,000, as against \$13,400,000 for Swedish merchantmen.

NO PANIC IN SIGHT.

(Portland Journal.)

The time for the usual ten-year panic or period of depression, counting from the beginning of the last such period, has now gone by two years, and the country remains prosperous. Crops will generally be great, prices are generally good, industries are all active, the people have an immense amount of money in savings and other banks, and the pessimist perforce sings low in the land.

The last period of depression, however, was much more prolonged than previous ones, lasting approximately four years, so that a longer period of prosperity was due and reasonably expected. The panic makers cannot afford on their own account to have a prolonged panic too often.

It may be that there will be a reaction and a subsidence of abounding prosperity in about two years, 10 years from the time the panic makers climbed off the lid in 1897 because they got men in office who suited them; but it may be impossible to bring about a panic even then. With a continuance of great crops and a greatly increased consumption, with the people well fixed for a long rainy day, and with the country so rapidly developing in so many ways, it may be that the panic period will not recur at all, or at least for many years.

The country is bigger and stouter and wiser and more independent of the panic breeders than it has ever been before. Ever so many big failures, and ever so great a break in Wall street, will not affect the country so much as like incidents of half the magnitude would have done a few years ago. The country is getting too big to be scared by Wall street bulls and bears, or by the antics of frenzied financiers, perhaps acting in collusion with political bosses. There may be, doubtless will be, periods of comparative depression, but perhaps never again such a panic as that of 1903-7.

Present prosperity is due chiefly to the great cornucopia of nature. The west is harvesting a record-breaking wheat crop. The corn crop promises to be 300,000,000 bushels larger than ever before. In most sections of the country there are bumper crops of oats, barley, rye, rice, flax and potatoes. The south has a tremendous cotton crop coming on, and the tobacco crop was never better.

Not only so—throughout the country manufacturing industries are rushed with work. The steel industry is many months behind its orders. Every ship-building plant is working to its full capacity. The railroads have all the business they can possibly do. The wholesale houses never did so large a business. Retailers are registering their best records. Cities everywhere are building up rapidly. The country is filling up, too. People are working as never before, and spending more money in play than ever before.

Under such circumstances no period of depression is in sight and it is not worth while to strain one's vision peering into the future to discern one.

PHARAOH'S CORN A FAKE.

European Scientists and Journalists Find That They Have Been Deceived.

Some time ago there was a wonderful story in the European journals about certain grains of ancient Egyptian corn which had been planted in Germany and had come to life.

The grains, they said, had been found in an Egyptian sarcophagus and had been planted by a Dresden florist. Some days later the corn appeared above ground, much to the surprise of scientists, who did not suppose that there was any life in grains which were from 4,500 to 5,000 years old. The corn, however, was certainly growing, and even the most incredulous among them soon became convinced that grains have a lease of life to which there is practically no limit.

Alas! A boy employed by the Dresden florist has now confessed that he planted some other grains in the same place where his master had planted the Egyptian ones, and only a few hours after the florist completed his work. This was sad news for the scientists and for the numerous journalists who had written enthusiastically about the miraculous qualities of the ancient grains of corn.

BURIED BEAUTY IN PARIS.

Magnificent Stonework in the Foundations of the Louvre in the Old City.

It has been known for some time that the roadway in front of the cathedral of Notre Dame, in Paris, is much higher than it originally was, and that the view of the entrance suffers in consequence. The architectural expert of the Louvre museum, M. Redon, has discovered that the Louvre is also buried beneath the ground to a far greater depth than the original plans warranted, writes a Paris correspondent of the London Telegraph. M. Redon concludes from his first investigations that, as planned at first, the Louvre was to have been encompassed by a moat, the excavation of which was prevented by the he-holes that surrounded it at the time. Afterward, when the houses were got rid of, the idea of the moat was forgotten, and the land rose naturally to its present height, hiding over 24 1/2 feet of the building. The committee for the preservation of old Paris intends, under M. Redon's supervision, to clear away the earth and disclose the magnificent stonework of which the base is constructed.

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