

COAST MAIL.

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GOOD FOR ROOSEVELT AND ODELL

Every good citizen will wish good luck to President Roosevelt and Governor Odell in their efforts to bring about a settlement of the coal strike. While not much progress appears to have been made so far, the conferences seem to have brought out some facts very clearly, and have helped to crystallize public opinion.

It is plain that operators do not want any settlement which does not involve the complete surrender of the miners on every point. They will not submit the questions in dispute to any sort of arbitration. They do not want justice; they want a cinch. And they expect the state and general government to help them enforce it.

On the other hand, the strikers are willing and anxious to submit the whole question to reasonable arbitration, agreeing beforehand to abide by the result.

It appears that the average earnings of the miners are about \$368 per year each, a trifle over \$30 per month. How can they feed, clothe and educate their families?

We talk about "ignorant foreigners"! What but a plague-spot of poverty and and ignorance can be a section where the earnings of the people will barely keep body and soul together?

The operators take the position that it is no one's business but their own; yet the first thing they do when their workmen revolt against intolerable conditions is to howl for troops to protect their property and oblige the strikers to sit down and starve peaceably.

If it be no concern of the government, state or general, how the operators treat their workmen, then the same rule should work both ways. If government have no right to interfere for the benefit of the workmen, then it has no right to interfere for the protection of the operators and their "property."

If the coal barons were dished with their own medicine for a while, they might be willing to concede that the rest of the country may legitimately have something to say in the controversy between them and their workmen.

The energetic action of Roosevelt and Odell may have the effect of decreasing somewhat the contribution of the coal barons to the next Republican campaign fund, but the shortage will never be missed. It takes votes as well as dollars to elect a president, and even from the standpoint of political expediency, it is sometimes well to do the right thing in full confidence that the American people will appreciate it.

GIVE US A REST.

The Myrtle Point Enterprise copies from the Florence West an abusive song and dance about the woman, for outraging whom the negro, Tucker, recently met a richly deserved fate here in Marshfield. Coupled with condemnation of the woman is a still more abusive attack on the man Dennis. The animus of the article is a desire to show that the negro was presumably innocent and that a lawless mob perpetrated in the streets of Marshfield the blood-thirsty and unprovoked murder of a defenceless human being, whose only offense was his color.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Of the negro's guilt, there was ample evidence, and not the slightest doubt exists among those best acquainted with the facts. All that the West has to say is entirely beside the question. Even if it all be true, which the MAIL doubts, it does not in the least effect the question of the negro's guilt, the evidence of which did not lie in the unsupported word of the woman, but in indisputable corroborative circumstances. The negro was guilty, and he got exactly what he deserved. The MAIL's protest against lynching him, at the time, was based on other grounds.

The West is, perhaps, excusable for stopping over, as it is some distance from the scene and is not directly interested in the good name of Coos Bay. With the Myrtle Point Enterprise the case is somewhat different. The Enterprise is a Coos county paper and one would expect it to have some care for the reputation of Coos county. It is said to be an ill bird that defiles its own nest. Perhaps, however, the sectional jealousy, which is not entirely absent from the office of the Enterprise, has carried it off its feet in this case, to the extent of giving needless publicity to the senseless screed of the West, which can do no possible good and may do harm among those not acquainted with the facts. Very likely the Enterprise itself is numbered among the last named, for we are constrained to remember that, two days after the tragedy here, a day after it had a correct and circumstantial account in the Daily, a day after the Coquille Bulletin had published one nearly as complete, the Enterprise gave to the wondering light the following account of the manner of the negro's death.

"The negro was being pursued by the mob and ran to the second story of a building, locking himself in one of the rooms. The mob broke the door down, riddled him with bullets, and then threw him out of the window on to the street below, later taking the body to the scene where the outrage was committed and hanging it to a bridge."

This matter should be allowed to rest. The black beast, who met a much easier death than he deserved, was unquestionably guilty. The circumstances surrounding his death were such that endless, useless and expensive complications with the law were happily averted. Now let this matter alone.

THE PEOPLE HAVE A SAY.

Whatever appropriation is made by the legislature for the Lewis & Clark Fair will have to run the gauntlet of pub-

lic opinion; and if 5 per cent of the voters petition for its submission to popular vote, it will have to be submitted.

This is a long step in advance of the old system, whereby the legislature could dish out the public funds in any quantity it pleased, and the people had no recourse.

The probability is that the legislature will take no chances on the appropriation being held up until the next general election, but will make the best guess it can at what amount the PEOPLE want to give, and then call a special election for its ratification.

And that is not the only measure that will stand in the same position.

PLAYING WITH FIRE

(Oregonian)

The attitude of the would-be oligarchy of coal-mining plutocrats in Pennsylvania is only one of the signs of the times. Passion for wealth-getting for the sake of the idle pomp or brutal power it implies surges in the veins and arteries of American life. This vulgar passion for wealth wrongly won is at the bottom of the St. Louis scandal; it is the attraction of cohesion that vitalizes the trusts; the cold-blooded greed it breeds is behind the policy that enrages workmen and stimulates them to strike, to wage long and bitter battle with President Baer and his associates, whom he describes as "God's anointed" guardians of labor and the hard-coal monopoly of the country. The impiety of Baer is not more in evidence than his insolence when he told President Roosevelt in spirit that it was the President's business to enforce the laws rather than to offer the mine operators unasked-for and unwelcome advice. One of Baer's associates, President Fowler, of the New York, Ontario & Western Railway, is reported to have said: "We will brook no outside interference of whatever nature, political, humanitarian or any other."

Upon what meat has this imperious Caesar of the hard-coal monopoly fed that he has grown so great that he can afford to fling his defiance at the law, at the church and the people? This kind of talk shows how much easier it is to get rich out of a coal mine and coal-carrying monopoly than it is to acquire brains, for brains is a gift direct from God, while money may be stolen within as well as without the law by a combination of mediocre men who are saturated with the passion of insane acquisitiveness. If there was a man of genuine brain power among this coal-mining conspiracy he would see that when he assumes the present attitude of President Baer he is playing with fire and inviting ultimate ruin at the hands of the very people he defies and the public sentiment he insults. There are some 25,000,000 of American wageworkers, and they all sympathize sufficiently with the present quarrel of organized labor. The wageworkers of this country will ultimately rout the coal-mining and railway transportation plutocracy with the close and deadly fire of their ballots.

The plutocrats in this country can

buy bayonets, but they cannot buy men enough to capture the ballot-box, for when the people once become roused to the conviction that the private ownership of railways and coal mines means an increasing public danger, National ownership will surely follow. When that ultimate day of wrath comes, the wealth of Morgan & Co. will not be able to elect a Legislature or even buy one, to corrupt or cajole a Governor or a court of final resort. Why not? Because when the people are angry and feel that they do well to be angry no man dare sell them out; he cannot afford to pay the price that will be exacted of him for his treason. Dooley tipped with truth his sarcasm when he said the "decision of the highest court was always affected by the election returns." Well, the American people have the ballot and they will take such good care of the election returns that no banded plutocracy in coal or railway transportation will have any chance of a long and riotous life.

We are a patient people, but we are intensely practical, and in the last analysis if we cannot untie the knot of difficulty we shall cut it without hesitation or regret. We are a people who believe that imperfect and even unjust government is better than no government, so will not recklessly trample under foot the laws whose shelter has been used and abused to the injury of the public weal, but if these stupid, reckless plutocrats continue to play with fire they will burn up their own plant. Denis Kearney, a commonplace, cunning demagogue, led an insurrection in California in 1879 which elected an iconoclastic Legislature; it behaved like the Puritan soldiers, who not only killed godless enemies, but stupidly destroyed precious and noble works of art. If the railway transportation conspiracy to leech the public, the oppressive trusts, the coal monopoly, do not heed the notes of warning that begin to fill the air, they will wake up some morning and find their real master, the American people, is wide awake too.

The Government, if forced to it, will take their railroads and take their coal mines, not at their inflated price, either. These plutocrats will call that socialistic revolution; so it will be, but a peaceful revolution won through the ballot-box which makes and unmakes Presidents and Governors and Legislatures and courts in this country. It will be a peaceful revolution because the people will be behind it with nothing to oppose them but a few plutocrats, who, having used their exceptional opportunity to fill their moneybags, are now disposed to sandbag the public with their sack at every turn of the road. But there is no army in this country that cannot be dispersed by the ballots of the people, and it is high time that the plutocratic combinations in all the states ceased to invite trouble with an irritated impatient people. President Baer and his associates recall Dean Swift's bitter saying: "You can judge what God thinks of riches by the kind of fellows he gives them to."

A REMARKABLE UTTERANCE

Attention is called to a remarkable editorial from the Oregonian, which we print on the fourth page of this issue. It is remarkable, not only for its strong arraignment of the inordinate greed and sordid mental equipment of President Baer and his ilk, but for its suggestiveness of a possible solution of the difficulties when Nature's gifts are monopolized, bottled up and corked down by individuals.

No one will accuse the Oregonian of being a Socialist organ, yet the Appeal to Reason itself would hardly make a stronger plea for government action in such cases.

This illustrates, for those who are able to see it, the radical revolution that is taking place in public thought in these United States.

People have ceased to be scared into convulsions by the socialism bugbear, and it is no longer sufficient to denounce a measure as socialistic in order to make men avert their eyes and minds in horror. We are beginning to look things squarely in the face and to size up certain ideas on their merits. We are approaching the point where if it be proven that government ownership of any particular thing would be best for a large majority of the people, we won't care a tinker's anathema whether government ownership is "socialistic" or "paternalistic" or "monarchistic."

The American people are level headed and conservative enough to take a step in any direction, whether it be toward socialism, imperialism or any other ism, without going any faster or farther than their best cool judgement sanctions. In fact they might be called sluggish in taking up with new ideas, but as the Oregonian points out, when they do get thoroughly waked up—stand from under,

MAKE IT EFFECTIVE.

If the referendum amendment to the constitution of Oregon is to be a dead letter until the legislature enacts laws for putting it into effect, then the sooner Governor Geer calls a special session of the legislature the better.

The people do not want to be fooled on this proposition, as the people of South Dakota have been fooled. In that state, a referendum provision was incorporated in the constitution four years ago, but has never gone into effect because the legislature has failed to make provisions for the necessary action on the part of the voters.

In this state, direct legislation will be fought to the last ditch by the spoilsmen whose grafts will be diminished, once the people get a whack at them, and if they can render the amendment a dead letter by preventing or postponing the necessary legislative action, they will not neglect to do so.

Governor Geer has given assurance that if he had any doubt of the referendum amendment being effective as it stands he would call an extra session. It would seem that this means an extra session, for it is hard to see how the people can act under the amendment, unless the legislature provide the method of doing so.

Governor Geer should remember that his strength lies with the people of Oregon, not with the politicians, and if he fail them in this, the number of his admirers will notably decrease.