

MR. BURLESON AS A BUSINESS MAN

Harvey's Weekly.

The Weekly has often criticized Mr. Burleson for errors he has committed in the execution of the heavy responsibilities which the President has thrust upon him. But the criticism has invariably been specific and constructive—never general. Of late a part of the press has shown a marked tendency to criticize Mr. Burleson in the most general manner. All sorts of charges, as irrelevant as they were destructive, have been made. Some writers have stated bluntly that Mr. Burleson was altogether without business experience and that the errors charged against him are the result of the lack of such training rather than of political mania or personal idiosyncrasies. Nothing better could be expected of one whose life has been spent upon public affairs, to the exclusion of business, they inform us.

All of this is to be deprecated. It is untrue and unfair. Politics has been an avocation—a side line—in Mr. Burleson's career. Business has really been his principal interest in life. He has prospered. He is rich. His success as a business man has been far greater than as a politician. Compare, for example, the creation of a personal fortune—variously estimated at a million and upwards—out of Texas farm lands as a sample of his business acumen, with, let us say, the results of the last Congressional campaign, which he helped to direct.

As an evidence of his thoroughly developed business ability—his capacity for getting a dollar's worth for every dollar paid—consider the manner in which Mr. Burleson developed 2,000 acres of indifferent land into the most profitable plantations in Hill and Bosque Counties, Texas.

Take, for example, the contract made "by and between the Texas State Penitentiaries" and Mr. Burleson and his brother-in-law. This contract is an extremely long document and cannot be reproduced in full, but a few of the more important sections will satisfy any fair-minded person that it represents the handiwork of no business novice.

It is provided that the State would furnish Mr. Burleson and his brother-in-law with 125 convicts, "whites and Mexicans," who would work the plantations on the "share system," whereby the State would receive sixty per cent of the profits and the brothers-in-law the remaining forty per cent.

In specifying the detailed financial arrangements, the contract provided that any moneys the brothers-in-law advanced for running expenses would be repaid to the "parties of the second part with interest at the rate of eight per cent," and that "they shall pay 70 cents per day" for each man who might be employed solely by the brothers-in-law, on work in which the State had no share.

These arrangements indicate an uncommon degree of business acumen. Which of Mr. Burleson's critics can show a contract that compares with the document in question?

But this was not all. Anyone might sign up for a bargain, but it is the wise business man who takes precautions to insure its consummation. Mr. Burleson and his brother-in-law saw to it that the men they hired would do their work honestly and faithfully—there was to be no chance for shirkers. Section 10 of the agreement guarantees that "the guards in charge require each and every convict, when physically able, to do and perform good and sufficient work and in such manner as shall be required by the party of the second part."

There is no labor union nonsense

here. Each convict did a day's work and the hours were set by the sun; in the summer, twelve to fourteen; in the winter, ten. Any fair-minded man should be convinced by even these few sections of the contract that Mr. Burleson knows how to engineer successfully business deals of considerable size. But objection may be made that while he is capable of planning major operations, he is incapable of handling details.

To offset any such contention, reference need only be made to Section 14: "The parties of the second part shall pay to the parties of the first part the sum of twenty-five dollars per month for the slops."

Frankly, there is no way at this distance from Bosque and Hill Counties to estimate whether or not Mr. Burleson got \$25 a month out of this bargain, and it is presented merely to show that his mind covers the most minute details when he is concerned with business. There is no reason to believe that the profits from the pigs and the stys was disproportionate with that from the land and the convicts. While it is impossible to render a detailed accounting of Mr. Burleson's profits, there is available the statement of "Captain" J. L. Brooks, who was in charge of the convicts, and this should satisfy any unbiased mind that the State lived up to its bargain. Here are a few sentences taken at random:

"I think a man is entitled to good, wholesome food and plenty of it to give him strength to carry on farm work."

"We never have religious services."

"There is no kind of school on the farm for the convicts."

"There is no effort made to teach them at all."

"I have been working convicts sixteen years. I know when a man is working or not."

"When it is necessary I believe in corporal punishment. I whipped Luce and Oliver on the fourth of this month. My record shows B. F. Luce eighteen licks, offense laziness; Joe Oliver seventeen licks, offense laziness. I whipped them on the rump. In whipping them I don't throw them on the floor and strap them. I didn't have to. Their bodies were exposed and they were red and bruised up a little."

So much for discipline, education, and religion. Concerning hours of labor, the Captain said:

"I take the men out to work about daylight. It is light enough to see a

man well. We work until noon. We try to take an hour off at noon. Then we go to it and stay until dark." From all of which it would appear that Mr. Burleson got seventy cents worth of work out of the convicts for each day they were employed, and tolerated no nonsense from preachers or teachers.

If this chapter of Mr. Burleson's life, partial and incomplete as it is, does not present ample proof of his business capacity and his ability to carry through large and profitable affairs, with due attention to details, then we give up.

BRAINS UNNECESSARY.

Being dismissed from various employments on account of some mental deficiency, Pat recently consulted a brain specialist, who, having examined the contents of his cranium, said: "These brains want to be washed and cleaned, and if you leave them with me for a day or two I'll make a job of them."

"All right, sir," agreed our hero. "I'll come back for them at the end of the week."

He failed, however, to redeem his promise and on receiving a reminder from the medico, sent the following note in reply:

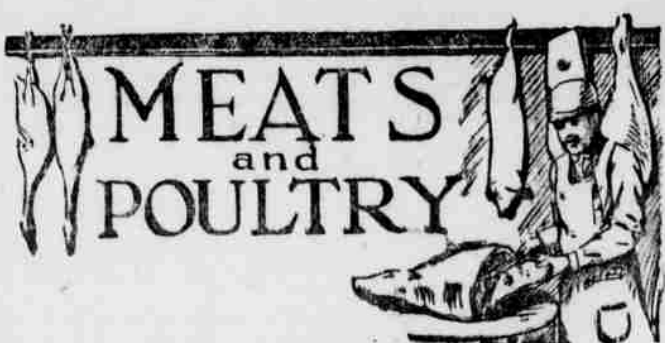
"Dear Sir: Ye can keep them brains altogether. I've just got a government job, an' so do not want them any more."—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegram.

LOST OR STRAYED.

One Shorthorn bull, dark red, 4 or 5 years old, branded 7P connected on left rib, crop off left ear, 2 dulpas on neck. May have right ear marked, and may also have some other brand. If located please notify ALCY. J. MADDEN, Lone Rock, Oregon. Suitable reward paid. a24-4t



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