Popular Subscription Voting Contests and the Way They Are Conducted

The Capital Journal takes little stock in popular voting contests, conducted by newspapers to boom their subscription lists. As a matter of fact, the subscribers pay for the prizes awarded, and the rightful winner does not always get what she wins. We prefer to make a low subscription price, cutting out the expensive prizes, and give our patrons the direct benefit of the reduced price of the paper.

Few persons, outside of newspaper offices, know just how these contests are conducted, so that the following article which apeared recently in the Editor and Publisher will be of interest to our readers:

H. H. Fris, circulation manager of the El Paso (Tex.) Herald, whose lucid and voluminous condemnation of circulation contests was given room, according to its strength, in The Editor and Publisher of November 7, writes that he has received numerous communications from all over the country regarding his article and favors us with a few more intensive words along the same line.

It will be noticed that Mr. Fris has not materially altered his opinion regarding contests.

"Long experience and careful investigation have made me opposed to voting contests to secure newspaper circulation, for many and good reasons. I have never yet seen such a contest that ended satisfactorily to the publication or to the people interested. Conduct it is fairly as you can and you will make enemies that I firmly believe are of sufficient harm to the paper to offset any advantages that may accrue as a result of temporarily increased circulation or inflated revenue. This is my principal objection, but there are others and greater ones.

"One of the very strong objections to such a contest is that it is usually put on by some 'specialist' who is a stranger to the community and without financial or personal interest in your paper. The sole object of the 'specialist' is to make as much money from the contest as possible as soon as possible, and his methods are too often those that reflect in an unsavory manner upon the paper for months after he has closed the campaign and gone to other regions. The reaction comes and the paper feels it. For the time being, the contest may add several hundred or several thousand subscribers to the list, but it is not a substantial circulation, not a circulation that stays, and the methods resorted to by the 'specialist' in coaching the contestants are such as to universally place it in the category of things that should be suppressed.

"I have given this matter much thought, in personal contact, and afar. I have been connected with papers during the conduct of such campaigns and afterwards; I have closely studied the operations of such contests on opposition papers and in every way tried to see all that is good in them, and have failed in every particular. I would outlaw them all. The work of securing newspaper circulation is legitimate and can be conducted upon business principles, and this is the only method that is permanently successful. The circulator of the paper should direct the work of all his agents or employes, and he can do it in such a way that it will not be of temporary, but of lasting benefit. In this way, he is able to look after the interests of the paper and of those brought into the fold as subscribers, neither of which interest the contest man has at heart. It is a mistake to 'farm out' a paper's good name to the traveling 'specialist' with his voting contest schemes.

"So much odium has been attached to these contests that many of the State Legislatures have taken up the matter with a view to the passage of statutes prohibiting them. At the last annual convention of the I. C. M. A. on the Great Lakes one of the delegates made the statement that Florida had already put the official ban upon such contests. In Texas, the last session of the legislature had the matter up for consideration, but the law was defeated by the efforts of one or two publishers. One of these had a contest in progress three months later, and, before it was over, he received his lesson. The man conducting the contest swindled a number of the contestants and slipped out of town with the last day's receipts in his pocket.

"As I said in the beginning, the contests are bad enough if conducted honestly, but when they are not—and this is usually the rule rather than the exception—they are little, if any, short of criminal. Even a contest conducted as fairly as possible more than likely will bring out charges of unfairness, of swindling and of selling out. The disappointed ones will invariably charge fraud. So much of it has been practiced that they have a right to be suspicious, hence I say that any paper conducting such a contest is taking chances on losing the good will of a large number of people, and is laying itself open to severe criticism and charges of dishonesty.

"The plans of the professional contest men—the 'specialist' they so often call themselves—are scarcely ever laid upon anything except deception. Let us take an example: The contest manager comes to town and calls upon the newspaper which is interested in a voting contest. The manager of the paper and the contest man come to an agreement as to the amount of money to be put into prizes and the number of new subscribers that must be secured. The newspaper is safe, of course, as the contract calls for the collection of a certain sum of money.

"The deal closed, the contest man hunts up girls to enter the voting contest. It is easy to get a list of 100 or 200 contestants. He gives to all of them about the same line of talk: 'Now, Miss So-and-So, there is no possible chance for you to lose. I know you will win the grand prize. The other girls in the contest are "dead ones." You are the only live one in the bunch.' If it is not this, it's something similar—and the same thing to all.

"True, as in every profession or vocation, there are some honest contest managers, but the requirements of the contest system make fair dealing almost impossible. Out of the 100 or 200 names that appear as workers in the contest advertisements, only a small number are active after the fifth week of the contest. The others, for one reason or another, have dropped out. The schedule of votes is printed each day, but from the number of the votes one cannot get an idea as to the running. The contest man generally runs the names of the girls who are getting discouraged at the head of the list, and keeps the winners far down. To do this he issues 'hold back' receipts, to put them in the ballot box on the last night of the contest. The contest man tells these hard working girls to get these secret 'hold-back' receipts for votes when they turn in their subscriptions. He also instructs each one of these girls not to tell anyone how many votes she is holding. He does not wish this information to get to the other contestants. Consequently, the contest manager is the only one who knows what the actual vote is.

"When the contest is drawing to a close, if the contest man has not already 'fixed' it with one of the contestants to win the grand prize, he will pick out the girl who has the father, brother, or friend with the necessary money, and tell him that the girl has only one chance to win and that it takes $690, $700 or $800 to win the first prize. The man with the money, if he is easy, then asks: 'Can you guarantee the first prize if I put that money in the box on the closing night?' The contest man's answer is: 'Mr. So-and-So, if you put in that money, and your girl does not win, I will give her an automobile, same make, and model as we offered for the grand prize.'

"The contest man has it now all 'fixed.' Miss So-and-So will win the grand prize. But on the day before the close of the contest, Mr. Contest Manager looks up each of the girls in turn, and the same story goes to all. It is this, or something similar: 'Now, look here, Miss So-and-So, you want to come across with at least so much more business to enable you to get a look in on this grand prize.' With this line of talk he 'scares the life out of them' and they get busy. Not all of them, but most of them, get what they can from their friends, and they themselves put in a bunch of their personal money before the close, each being led to believe that she has a chance.

"Then the judges start counting votes. Within a few hours the winners are announced. Miss So-and-So wins the grand prize. This is the girl who had the father or brother with the money. The other girls, who worked day and night for over two months, receive the small prizes and go home disappointed, physical wrecks from hard work and constant worry."

WORLD AT WAR

ATLAS

All who pay three months subscription, old or new, back subscription or in advance, in case their paper is delivered by carrier, will receive one of these atlases free. All mail subscribers, old or new, who pay a year's subscription ($3.00), either back subscription or in advance, will also be entitled to receive an atlas without extra charge.

This is the most liberal offer the Capital Journal has ever made.

The Capital Journal has just received a new shipment of the "World at War" atlases. They are of a later and revised edition and consist of 24 large, highly-illustrated pages, printed on heavy enameled book.

The atlas contains splendid colored maps of all the warring countries, with routes of travel and railroad lines; many tables of army and navy and general statistics—in fact, the work is a complete ready-reference library for students of the great war. It is a book which would ordinarily sell for $1.00 or $1.50, but we are having them made up in large lots and buy them at a price which allows us to give them away to subscribers on very easy conditions.

ALBANY COMPANY WANTS EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO ISLAND

State Land Board To Investigate Equity of People In the Premises

In order to determine what rights the state land board have in the control and disposal of sand and gravel in the beds of navigable streams and to what extent it can exclude the general public from the privilege of taking such materials from streams without paying for such privilege, the land board this morning took under advisement the application of the Albany Sand & Gravel company for the lease of the exclusive privilege of taking sand and gravel from a strip of land known as "sand island" in the Willamette river, off the shores of Abany. The board will investigate conditions surrounding the island and the legal status of the board and the people before action is taken upon the application.

It appears that the Albany Sand & Gravel company has been taking sand and gravel from this island for some time and has been paying the state for the privilege upon the yardage basis. It also appears that private citizens have been in the habit of helping themselves to whatever sand and gravel they needed without paying for it, and the application of the Albany firm, made through Attorney L. M. Curl, to the board for the exclusive privilege of taking these materials from the island, is for the purpose of keeping the people off unless they be made to pay for the materials upon the same basis as the company. The question is a very delicate one and the board desires to determine the exact rights of all parties concerned before taking definite action.

SECOND GRANDCHILD.

Washington, April 28.—It was whispered around the White House and capitol today that President Wilson would have another grandchild within a few weeks. Secretary McAdoo, whose household the stork was said to be about to visit, refused to confirm the report. The president likewise withheld confirmation.

Behavior hint in Baker Democrat: "Everybody wants to get to heaven but the young buck who spends his time making racy remarks about women will find it a long and rocky road to travel."

Miss Jane Addams Chosen Chairman Today

The Hague, April 28.—Miss Jane Addams, of Chicago, was today unanimously selected as permanent chairman of the International Congress of Women convening here in the interests of peace.

The selection of Miss Addams was regarded as a distinct tribute to the neutrality of the United States in the European conflict. The entire proceedings of the congress today reflected the hope that some method may be devised to bring the women of the various nations together with plans that will make war impossible in the future.

Miss Addams deferred making her opening address until tonight. She expressed her thanks for the honor shown her, saying that the women of neutral countries brought sympathy and understanding, suffering women of the belligerent nations.

Nine hundred delegates, including 60 American women, were present when the congress opened today.

Miss Rosika Schwimmer delivered a spirited speech before the congress, urging that the women work for justice. She plans to support a resolution for an immediate truce among all belligerents. It is her plan to send a delegation of women, each headed by an American, to the capitals of all warring nations to urge peace.

No Oil Land Patents For McCutcheon Brothers

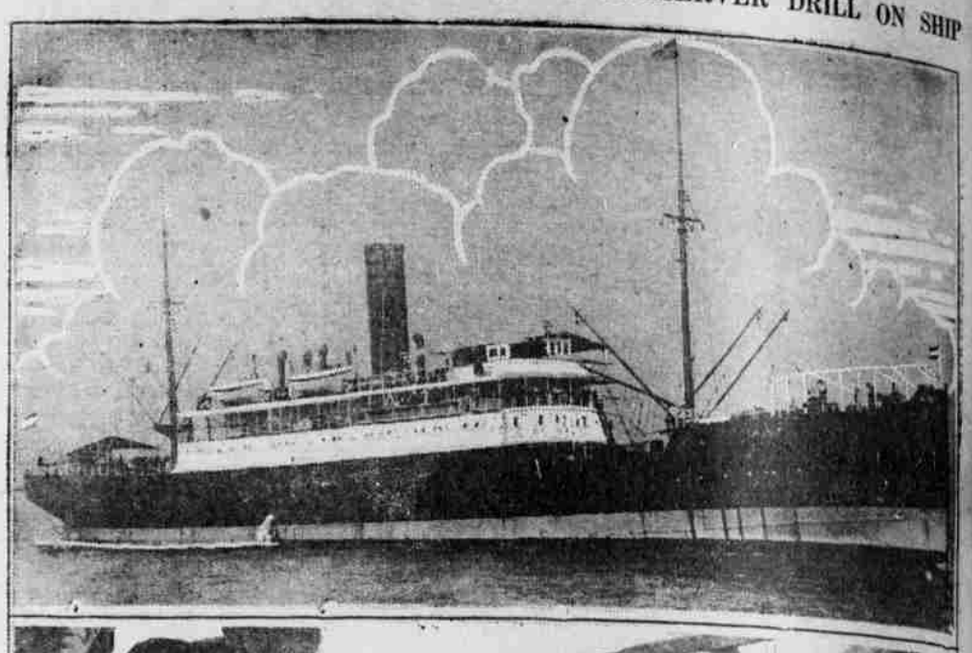
Washington, April 28.—Although the McCutcheon Brothers staked their claim on oil lands in the Maricopa and Sunset fields in California prior to the withdrawal of all such lands by President Taft, September 27, 1912, the land office has held that oil was not discovered prior to the withdrawal.

This was the grounds on which the land office denied application for patents on California oil lands, the value of which now runs into millions of dollars, it was learned today.

The decision, which was eagerly awaited by western oil prospectors, was known as the "Pacific Midway case." The McCutcheon Brothers sought patents on 160 acres, estimated to be worth about $900,000, but the adverse ruling is expected to affect claims worth millions. It is the first ruling of this character by the land office.

The Want pages go to the office and home and are consulted often and frequently clipped and filed for ready reference. The Journal Wants are valuable—that's the reason.

PRINCE MAURITZ, WHICH SANK WITH ALL ON BOARD; LIFE PRESERVER DRILL ON SHIP



PRINCE MAURITZ AND LIFE PRESERVER DRILL

Norfolk, Va., April 21.—These are lines is at the lowest ebb in the history strenuous days on the seas. Between of marine navigation. The accompany- terrific storms and the danger of sub- ing illustration shows the Royal Dutch marines life on the bounding wave is West Indies liner Prince Mauritz, far from safe. Travel on all water which was wrecked in the easter storm along the Virginia coast. It also shows how travelers on English channel boats are being taught the use of life preservers in the event of a submarine or mine wrecking the vessel.

Reconstruction Forces at Work With Good Results, Says Clews

New York, April 24, 1915.

Reconstructive forces are steadily at work. This is noticeable in many directions; and Wall Street's leaders with sure instinct and even surer knowledge have been discounting industrial recovery. For the very decided change from despair to courage which has taken place since January, many reasons have been advanced; chief of these being, as repeatedly stated in these advices, lessened hostility to big business, the successful establishment of the federal reserve system, the adjustment of our finances to a war basis and a growing belief that the end of the war is not far distant. The war will prove a favorable factor in keeping the extravagant American people at home this summer, thereby preventing about 200 millions from being spent in Europe instead of this country, the effect of which will be vastly important. To such favorable conditions as these must now be added the proved soundness of business in the United States and the wide preparedness to respond to any new and encouraging influences.

General business already shows positive improvement; slight it may be, but real nevertheless; and there are excellent reasons for anticipating its continuance. The country has been through a prolonged period of severe economy. This economy was greatly intensified by fear of serious consequences following the war. Every business man upon whom initiative depends knows to his sorrow what a deterrent factor apprehension has been in the last few months. Many people, particularly the well-to-do, have economized more than was necessary; the result being increased savings which must now come out either in the investments or larger purchases of some sort. When the purse strings are loosened and the number of unemployed is decreased, all kinds of merchandise must pass more freely into consumption; hence one must look for a better distribution in the retail trade. Already there are signs of improvement among the great department stores in all parts of the country. Our immense textile industry is exhibiting a pronounced gain in confidence, and cotton manufacturers are often refusing to sell ahead, while prices are firm and collections better. The same remarks apply to woolen goods, which are being materially helped by orders for foreign armies. A $5,000,000 auction sale of carpets this week was surprisingly successful. The wholesale grocery trade, which covers practically all food products except meats, is in excellent condition and collections are satisfactory. In the steel industry, which must still be accepted as a first-class barometer, there are decided symptoms of coming activity. Domestic orders are being placed with more freedom and prices show a persistent hardening tendency. Our railroads have not yet placed orders with any freedom for the reason that traffic is still below normal. Nevertheless, a resumption of trade must mean an increase of traffic, and as this develops the placing of a large mass of deferred orders for rails and equipment must be expected as a result of a prolonged period of rigid economy. Our railroads have fairly turned the corner; they are likely to be less harried in the future, and with the better rates now allowed, any gains in the volume of traffic must have a decided effect upon net results. Moreover, a heavy increase in summer travel is to be anticipated this year, owing to the stoppage of European tourist travel by the war. It is too early to form any opinion of agricultural prospects, but the situation is such as to stimulate farmers into the largest product possible; the liberal demand and good prices for all food products leaving the American farmer in a decidedly enviable position. For another season he is reasonably certain of good home and foreign demands at satisfactory prices.

The war continues to be a vital factor in our foreign trade. It caused heavy losses during the first eight months, such as $245,000,000 in cotton, $50,000,000 in iron and steel, $38,000,000 in copper, $36,000,000 in lumber products, $16,000,000 in agricultural implements, etc. These losses were partially offset by gains of $246,000,000 in breadstuffs, $30,000,000 in horses and mules, $18,000,000 in sugar, $16,000,000 in leather, etc. We have now reached a season when shipments in grain and cotton are naturally light; but shipments of war materials on orders placed months ago are now coming forward more freely, and for the next few months will prove a highly important factor in our international trade balance. The Russian government alone arranged for an order for $83,000,000 worth of war material this week through a Canadian concern, a large portion of which will be executed in the United States. The British and French governments are also ordering materials upon a very extensive scale; and Italy, which has been a heavy buyer, is likely to largely increase her purchases should she eventually come into the war, as seems not improbable. The returns for March showed a decrease of $24,500,000 in imports and an increase of $111,500,000 in exports; the latter amounting to $299,000,000, a new high record for March. The net result was an excess of exports for the month of $141,000,000, which explains the $5,000,000 gold imports on the way from France.

War has also been responsible for the violent advances in a certain group of stocks. War contracts are proverbially profitable, and it is known that some of the concerns have secured highly advantageous orders. The result has been a violent speculation in certain issues. There is no doubt that the speculative spirit has broken out with extraordinary energy, after a long period of repression. Thus far the rise has been confined very largely to the highly speculative issues. The better class of industrials and railroads, which have been comparatively neglected, have a less spectacular but more enduring prosperity in advance of them, and intending buyers of securities will do well to discriminate carefully. The widening activity evidenced by the succession of million-share days is symptomatic of the approach of better times. Wall Street is busily discounting future peace and prosperity. The greatly increased activity in bonds and high investments is excellent testimony of reviving confidence. Of late careful investors have been good buyers. Our monetary situation is satisfactory; and, while capital is likely to command high rates after a while because of reasons well understood, there will be no lack of funds or credit to good borrowers. The new reserve system has greatly strengthened and increased the capacity of our banking system, and though there is more or less inflation to be expected as a result of general conditions, there is as yet no danger in sight in this direction. Foreign liquidation is no longer a menace. Europe is naturally sending us a considerable amount of securities which will aid in settlement of foreign credits here. Under existing conditions it pays us much better to accept settlement in securities than in gold. The latter we do not need and the former will yield us considerable profits.

At the moment the market is somewhat unsettled by realizations which were to be expected after such rather advances. A moderate reaction would strengthen the market and pave the way for continued activity and further recovery thereafter.

HENRY CLEWS.

TURKISH TROOPS MUST FACE TWO DISTINCT OFFENSIVE MOVES

(By J. W. T. Mason, Former European Manager of the United Press.)

New York, April 28.—The allied troops landed on the Gallipoli peninsula are facing the most strongly protected area on the surface of the earth. The long narrow neck of land offers little room for maneuvers. The attacking forces are in constant danger of being forced to retreat toward the bordering waters. Forts, batteries and trenches cover a large part of the peninsula, while fortunately situated hills add to the defenses.

If the French subdue the Turks it will be one of the greatest accomplishments in history. It is improbable, however, that this is the primary object. The movement is rather a part of the allied strategy based upon the desire to separate the Turks protecting Constantinople. The Moslems have two centers for European defense, Adrianople and Constantinople. If the allies landed only on the Turkish coast, both the Constantinople and Adrianople forces could be consolidated and the Turks would know exactly how to find their foe's strength.

The allies have not done this. Besides landing north of Gallipoli, the nearest point for operations against Constantinople, they landed at Enos, 20 miles to the west on the Gulf of Saros and nearest the coastal center from a drive on Adrianople. The Turks are therefore facing two separate allied offensives without knowing which is destined to be the prime movement, or in fact, whether both are not major attacks.

There may be 400,000 Turks available for the operations in European Turkey and on the Gallipoli peninsula. It is doubtful, however, whether they are evenly divided. The objective of the allies, therefore, probably is to hold the larger Turkish force in check by defensive tactics while advancing against the weaker.

The indications are that the Turks are concentrated in great strength on the Gallipoli peninsula. Constantinople dispatches contribute to this belief by declaring that the French and British troops have been forced to take to their transports along the peninsula. At the same time it seems to be a fact that the Turks have been forced back at Enos.

The reticence of the allies in announcing the details of the Constantinople campaigns makes all deductions tentative, but it is probable that if either of the two allied offensives is a blind, it is the Gallipoli advance.