Editorial Page of “The Capital Journal”

“PASSING THE BUCK”

Everyone who has player cards realizes how hard it is to remember whose turn it is when one is playing. It is this trait of failure of memory, that was the originator of the term: passing the buck.” Among poker players in the older generation, it was the custom to lay a pocket knife on the table, and this was passed to the next man by the dealer, until that man’s turn was up, when he would turn the knife to the next man. If the knife was laid on the table, and a player with a knife without asking that momentous question: whose turn is it? proceeded to pass the knife around, this might cause the knife to go back again as soon as he finished his deal. In those same days a large portion of the pocket knives had a handle, and, so the term “passing the buck” was naturally followed. The meaning conveyed by passing the buck, and the meaning of the term now, is that the person’s turn to deal to whom the buck is passed.

It has not only come to be a common expression but also a common habit. An example of it is before the public is now over the argument about high prices. The consumer rebelled against prices that were getting to be prohibitive, and naturally, the only person he or she, mostly she, could complain to was the retail grocer. Now the grocer was only charging a fair profit for his work, and naturally he did not feel standing for the blame. So he “passed the buck” up to the jobber with its double hint that it was his deal. The jobber feeling that he, too, was just don’t realize to what point was he paid the wholesaler, argued with the grocer and finding him “out,” in this way passed the buck to the wholesaler. The wholesaler was not the original pro-ducer and so “passed the buck” along to the packers of meats and canned stuffs, to the millers and sugar makers, to the importers and all the balance of whom he finally “passed up” his stock. The game of passing the buck is yet, and the buck is travelling around the table. It will never have the ultimate end. The consumer is just a stated price, no more passing. Instead there will be a general reduction of prices, already in force, which is the usual price in the retail market. Yet it’s hard to see the end. Few of them are going down to the retailer who will be told to get in and sell goods and build up a trade once more.

JOHN BARLEYCORN

“I seem to be deep in disgrace; they’re shutting all doors in my face,” sighs John Barleycorn, as he watches three or four chasers, “Where once I was welcome as guest, they spit up my head and may my heart.”

A Portland man has brought suit against another “wealthy” cigar dealer at this place in a suit that looks as though another year will see it completed. Marion county has been ready party to a suit for some time and presumably the city of Salem is also ready now. If the county judges and other officials will get together and agree upon a plan, it will permit the starting of work on the structure early in the Spring. In the meantime another year may pass before the dangerous old bridge now in use is done with.

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THE HUSBAND AND I

By Jane Phelps

THE DINNER GUESTS ARRIVE

Chapter 11

We should have been able to talk to one another; but after I had finished my dinner, we sat silent. There was a long pause.

I am tired of the married life; I am tired of the married life.

I am tired of the married life.

I am tired of the married life.