

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

RILEY H. ALLEN EDITOR

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THEIR GRIEVANCE.

Honolulu merchants and retailers in general—aside from those connected with the big sugar agencies—are surprised and angered to find that the Sugar Factors and the American-Hawaiian steamship company have calmly concluded a very important shipping deal without taking into their confidence the independent importers of the territory.

Their point seems to be well-taken that the big sugar men of Hawaii and the steamship company should have let the merchants know that the New York-Hawaii service was to be abandoned, even if only temporarily. As one merchant points out, it isn't the money involved, since in the long run the consumer is going to pay the increase between the freight charge by railroad and the freight charge by water, but it is the secrecy with which the deal was completed, and the fact that local retail interests weren't consulted on a matter vital to the import trade of the entire territory.

It is also pointed out that this import trade helped to make possible a favorable two-year contract rate entered into by the sugar men and the American-Hawaiian Company. The large import business done by local merchants, and which they were glad to assure to the A.-H. concern, was a material factor in getting from the steamship line an advantageous contract for Hawaii's sugar.

What the local merchants think, with apparent reason, has not been observed is "reciprocity" between the big sugar interests and the smaller but much more numerous mercantile interests. They feel that the matter should have been taken up with the Chamber of Commerce, and the merchants asked, "How is this reorganization of cargo service going to affect you? How is it going to affect Hawaii's import trade?—What can we do to help you if it is going to disorganize your freights?"

Big prospective war profits, it is admitted, was the controlling factor in the decision of the American-Hawaiian Company to put its main feet into the Atlantic trade. This action of the steamship company is in marked contrast with that of the Matson Navigation Company, which has refused flattering offers to put its steamers into the war trade. At one time the Lurline could have made an immense profit by going on another run, handling largely war material. The company not only stood by its Hawaii business, but its raise in freight rates is considered reasonable. That policy in the long run is the best policy. If the American-Hawaiian company had as close interest in Hawaii as has the Matson company, it too would recognize this policy as the best.

Consultation between the sugar men, the American-Hawaiian company and the local retailers and other importers would have hurt no one and would have been precisely the step to make the "little fellow" feel that the "big fellow" in Hawaii held at heart the interests of all. It is impossible to believe that such consultation and cooperation, if frankly but discreetly handled, could have imperilled the ultimate success of the deal.

Reciprocity in business between all the interests in Hawaii is the surest way possible of guaranteeing a united front when the prosperity of the territory is menaced from the outside. And reciprocity cannot be maintained unless both sides—all sides—carry it out in practise.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE TARIFF.

President Wilson quite frankly admits that he has changed his mind on the subject of a permanent tariff commission. He has sent a letter to Chairman Claude Kitchin of the House ways and means committee, in which he outlines his position now and gives the reason for the modification of an attitude which appeared unshakable only a few months ago. He says:

"I have changed my mind, because all the circumstances of the world have changed, and it seems to me, in view of the extraordinary and far-reaching changes which the European war has brought about, it is absolutely necessary that we should have a competent instrument of inquiry along the whole line of the many questions which affect our foreign commerce. I have no thought whatever of a change of attitude toward the so-called protection question. That is neither here nor there. A commission such as I have suggested would have nothing to do with theories of policy. They would deal only with facts, and the facts which they would seek ought to be the actual facts of industry and of the conditions of economic exchange prevailing in the world, so that legislation of every kind that touched these matters might be guided by the circumstances disclosed in its inquiries."

This is so near the attitude taken by Republican advocates of a permanent tariff commission that there is no appreciable difference. Whether the southern congressmen will reconcile themselves to it remains to be seen.

Since Hawaii is vitally interested in protection on legitimate industry, the steady growth of sentiment in favor of a non-partisan, permanent commission is watched here with much interest. Hawaiian businessmen strongly favor non-partisan investigation of the facts and are willing to have expert and unbiased opinion at any time. When the investigators for the U. S. bureau of commerce were here a few months ago—the party headed by Thomas J. Sheridan—they were given every facility for their work the sugar planters could afford. In fact, the federal experts commented both publicly and privately upon the splendid cooperation they received here in their efforts to get at the facts of sugar production in Hawaii. This was an instance of expert investigation which would have even more guarantee of non-partisanship if directed by a distinctly non-partisan board.

THE WAR TRADE.

Figures just announced by the U. S. bureau of foreign and domestic commerce show the tremendous increase in the overseas trades of the United States due to the European war and explain why there is such a demand for cargo-carriers on the Atlantic.

American exports for December exceed those for any previous month in the country's history. The total value of the goods shipped abroad for the month is placed at \$359,301,274, which brings the total exports for 1915 to \$3,550,915,393, or about a billion dollars more than was ever before exported during a like period.

The excess of exports over imports for 1915 was \$1,772,309,538, which is a striking increase over the average of about \$450,000,000 for a number of years before the war started. The excess of exports over imports for December alone was \$187,459,609, an increase of about \$47,000,000 over December of the previous year.

Tonight the De Folco Grand Opera Company will give as concert numbers several selections from well-known and popular operas. The program is one that should appeal to all tastes and the opera company should be given another large house such as that of last night. The excellence of the De Folco artists is beginning to be realized by Honolulu, as well as the unusual opportunity to hear the world's masterpieces of musical-dramatic composition at moderate prices.

Anyone who fancies that Col. Roosevelt is on friendly terms with William H. Taft should read a recent number of the Metropolitan Magazine, in which the colonel pays his respects to the Wilson administration for its handling of the Mexican and European matters. About the mildest adjective he uses is "poltroon" and he puts Mr. Taft and the president in the same class, with the difference that Taft is merely lagging behind.

Hilo's federal building is getting along so far and so fast as to be a sad reproach to Honolulu. Ours is still on paper and still to go through a court fight or two.

Now the captured Russian cities are getting a taste of the conqueror Germany. Vilna has just been fined 75,000 marks for something. Belgian papers please copy.

Peace terms continue to be rumored in Europe, but with scarcely more encouragement from any of the main belligerents than during the first six months of the war.

Failure of the Luther Burbank Company shows that even a horticultural wizard can't make two dollars grow where only one grew before.

The Russian controller of the currency who retires "on account of sickness" evidently has found that he can't run the Russian treasury just for his health.

Wonder if the Bull Moose party in Hawaii can arrange his plans to attend the Republican territorial convention on April 3?

Germany is charitably willing to agree not to direct against the United States her reprisals upon England.

Rumors of Kitchener's retirement are a good deal like those of the German Crown Prince's death.

Isn't preparedness that's worrying us, but prepaiddness.

Letters OF TIMELY TOPICS

(The Star-Bulletin invites free and frank discussion in this column on all legitimate subjects of current interest. Communications are constantly received to which no signature is attached. This paper will treat as confidential signatures to letters if the writers so desire, but cannot give space for anonymous communications.)

"PREPAREDNESS"—THE MACHINERY AND THE MACHINIST.

Editor Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

Sir: It now seems a certainty that we will soon have ample funds set aside and provisions made for strengthening our coast fortifications and naval craft, but how about the men behind the guns? They cannot be wished into efficiency, nor can they grow up overnight. The science of war, by which the world is ruled, is at this very moment puzzling the greatest of military and national rulers who have given it a life, study and no doubt thought themselves its master.

We know that were a call made for volunteers to defend our country, our every son would wish to be in the first line, and down deep in our hearts we know also that no parent could stay that wish of their son. Then can we as parents be so thoughtless of the safety of our sons as to send them forth unprepared to a certain cruel slaughter? Could we as businessmen expect our stenographers to step into our power plants and be even efficient assistants to our machinists in running the plants? Could we as mothers ride safely in a passenger train that our untrained sons were running?

The machinery of war is far the most complicated of them all, and only men educated in the science of this terrible machinery can be expected to cope with men who are educated in it. Then it would seem to me that we could hardly demand that our officers should station our boy, who is untrained, in one of the important entrenchments to our land, and expect that untrained boy to keep the trained enemy out.

There have appeared in the Honolulu Star-Bulletin and various mainland papers very favorable comments upon the wonderful growth of the National Guard of Hawaii; and the apparent lack of interest displayed on

the mainland toward their National Guard. But it seems that as yet no paper has shouldered this task of unraveling a mystery upon which the possible future destiny of our country hangs. Yet it has long been a recognized fact that our press (so much dreaded by visiting "fathers of incendiarism," etc.) wields the arm of right and might, by which our people are moved. It has taken the initiative in so many national movements and received the bumps that our politicians have sidestepped, that it is expected to lead in this one.

I believe that one very great reason why the Hawaiian National Guard is outstripping the mainland National Guard so far, and is actually sought and developed with so much zest and enthusiasm, is that there are no organized labor unions here to hamper the free actions of our working boys; that is why also the Hawaiian Islands are more nearly an actually free country than any other state or territory under the American flag.

Those who make up the best part of any National Guard units are, of course, our working boys, who, in the States, must belong to some union, and as one of the unpleasant duties of our National Guard is to "quell riots and disturbances," there has been some friction between the two bodies during labor riots, just enough friction in fact to give some few unreasonable labor union leaders something upon which to harp, so that now a general (though slight) feeling of animosity has developed in many labor organizations against the National Guard, enough, however, to greatly hinder the natural growth of the National Guard. I say "natural" because there are thousands of boys who would gladly join the guard only they fear that the union would think. My experience with working boys tells me that they will gladly cooperate in any movement which they know is right, and which their fellow workmen and friends do not oppose. It would therefore seem that our government officials could not, at least, hinder the growth of our National Guard if they should cause able representatives who understand working boys to be sent out over the country to explain just what is best in the National Guard; this move I think could be brought about only by the press, which should devote more space to our national defense problems.

PARENT.

LITTLE INTERVIEWS

—F. PACHECO: This humid, damp weather is good for our business. It makes hair grow faster, and keeps the barbers busy.

—W. M. BUCHANAN, ticket agent, Theo. H. Davies & Company: Next month will see the Makua and Niagara bringing more tourists from Canada every voyage. The spring travel season will then be starting.

—NORMAN E. GEDGE, secretary and treasurer Inter-Island: Photographs of our drydock were recently published in a London illustrated publication. They show the transport Thomas in drydock for repairs.

—F. J. LOWREY, president Lewers & Cooke: We expect details by mail Friday concerning our schooner, the Repeat, now at Portland. The snowstorm there was so violent that unloading her lumber cargo has been impossible.

—RAY B. RIETOW: According to present indications, 1916 will be a banner year as regards the filing of citizenship papers. Although the year is not yet a month and a half old, a large number of declarations and petitions have been filed.

—T. B. THIELE, general manager, Territorial Hotel Company: We are looking ahead now all the time, planning for the Carnival rush of tourists and making sure that we have everything we need in the way of provisions and supplies.

—J. A. DOMINIS: From what I have been able to learn, an appeal will be taken from the decision handed down by Judge Stuart yesterday in the Kubio case. I am unable to say how the queen feels regarding the appointment of Lorrin Andrews as her "next friend."

—HENRY W. KINNEY: During my trip to Japan, if ever I get there, I intend to make an exhaustive study of school conditions and methods in the empire. I understand that the school system there is wonderful, and I will be on the lookout for new ideas.

—A. F. GRIFFITHS: If the promotion committee is going to advertise the Punahou pageant, those in charge of the production certainly will assist by making the event one of the most interesting kind ever held here. The

fact that several hundred students, all in costume, will participate, makes it unique.

—FOSTER L. DAVIS: Persons who apply for passports here, and then travel to foreign countries in hopes that the papers will reach them there, are taking chances. I would advise all travelers to wait right here in Honolulu for the passports.

—A. M. HAMRICK, meteorologist, U. S. weather bureau: Making weather predictions here is much more difficult than on the mainland, as we have no other bureaus to work with us and tell us by telegraph how fast and in what directions storms are traveling.

—A. A. WILDER: Under the Shingle regime, this is what is going on—I counted nine laborers at work on Kalakaua avenue the other morning. There were three lunas overseeing these nine laborers. No wonder we get no value received for the taxes we pay.

—A. H. HODSON, assistant chief clerk, Railway Mail Service: January was a very trying month for inter-island mail service. The tonas shot schedules all to pieces several times, although the Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company did its best to maintain normal service.

—MALCOLM A. FRANKLIN, collector of customs: You have no idea how many persons apply to me every week for permits to go out in the customs launch and meet steamers. I have to refuse them, as the department grants passes only where urgent business or life and death makes it imperative.

—L. D. VIS-NORTON: Returning home on Saturday night after the splendid performance of "La Boheme," I heard a well known society matron complaining that it was sung in French instead of in Italian. Possibly one reason of the lack of support may be that so few people really understand Italian. I wonder how grand opera rendered in English would go here. There are probably many Australians in Honolulu who will remember the failure of Italian opera throughout the commonwealth. It was, I think, Madame Meiba who produced it in English; and made a whale of a success in consequence.

A speed of 21.47 knots was reached by the superdreadnought Nevada in one mile of her standardization runs off Rockland, Me.

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TEUTON DIVER AND DEAD CREW FOUND

HAVANA, Cuba.—The crew of a German submarine was found asphyxiated in their stranded vessel, 20 miles southeast of Cadiz, according to the crew of the Spanish steamer Valbarena. The submarine apparently was engaged in supplying other similar vessels in the Mediterranean.

GOVERNMENT TO BUY MANILA RAILROAD

MANILA, P. I.—Governor-General Harrison has recommended that the legislature ratify an agreement for the purchase of the Manila Railroad, capitalized at 8,000,000 pesos, with immediate payment of 4,000,000 pesos now available in the insular treasury, and the balance in 18 months.

Two Service Suggestions

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