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TELEPHONE, BEEKMAN 2200.

A Contract That Protects the Railroads, the Government and the Public.

The final draft of the contract that is to be executed between the Government of the United States and the railroad corporations which it has taken under its control for the duration of the war was printed in THE SUN of yesterday morning. The fact that we were able to lay this potent document before the public in advance of its appearance in any other newspaper, while highly gratifying to us, as it undoubtedly is to our readers, is of minor consequence when compared with the supreme importance of the document itself and what its terms mean for the Government, for the railroads, and, of greater moment than anything else, for the people of this country.

They mean that the Government will play fair with the railroads, and while utilizing their plants in every department for the prosecution of the war, will not seek to make its temporary occupancy of their property an excuse for injuring their shareholders or impairing the private rights that have been acquired in the long and laborious task of upbuilding the land transportation system of the United States. There is no threat or suggestion of confiscation; the railroads of dreamers have no place in the coldly sensible provisions set forth in this comprehensive paper.

The first conspicuous feature of the contract is its recognition of the inviolate rights of the owners of the railroads, coexistent with the unquestioned authority of the Government to seize and administer their property for the benefit of the nation. The owners are to be compensated, and compensated fairly, for the period in which the roads are out of their control; and when the time comes to restore the lines to private management, they are to be returned in a condition as good as that in which they were when they were commandeered. The Government binds itself to this. It will not seek to impose on the owners a long and costly procedure or litigious struggle for reimbursement after peace is proclaimed. The possibility that such a course might be adopted existed. Had the frantic enemies of private property whose bedlamish theories of railroad regulation reduced the railroads to the lamentable condition in which they were when the demands of war suddenly revealed their weakness to the nation and the world been entrusted with the preparation of this contract, we should have seen a production that would have terrorized every individual who owns a share of stock in a public utility. Reasonable and far-sighted men had charge of the task, and they have carried it forward in sobriety and good sense.

Of the betterments and extensions needed by the railroads to fit them more completely for the paramount necessities of the Government, none except those which are required in the orderly conduct of their business in peace times are to be charged against them when the final accounting is made. The essential war extensions, useful only for war purposes, are to be paid for by the Government as other expenses incurred in the national defense are paid, an arrangement that is just to all concerned, and calculated to relieve railroad investors of the fear that on the conclusion of peace they would have dumped on their expensive and non-productive lines and facilities which would increase their capital charges to an amount that would force them into bankruptcy.

Similarly, the Government is to account for all money belonging to the railroads, and to pay for its use, just as it pays for the use of the money of citizens who put their savings into War stamps and Liberty bonds. In the same spirit of fairness and justice, the Government is to respect the contracts of the railroads with subsidiary corporations and their ownership of various collateral and contributory enterprises.

It will be seen that neither malice nor ignorance dictated the terms of this agreement. It was conceived in a broad spirit of justice and, as a disclosure of the Government's attitude toward corporations engaged in public service, it betokens a new understanding of the relations that

should subsist between the corporations and the administrators of the country's affairs. Thus the contract is fair to the Government, fair to the railroads and their thousands of owners, and fair to the public. It is fair to the Government in that it provides against improper charges and protects it from the injection of political issues in the form of raids on vested interests under the guise of war necessity; it is fair to the roads in that it provides for their maintenance and improvement; it is fair to the owners of the roads in that it assures for them proper compensation now and properties undiminished in the future; and it is fair to the public because, despite the fanatical utterances of insane or corrupt demagogues, the progressive development of the railroads is the highest possible point of efficiency, of momentous import to them in their individual and corporate capacities.

The Government, having the authority to increase freight and passenger rates at will, can spend money on the roads, for whatever purpose may seem desirable, with the comforting knowledge that it can surely and promptly get that money back. Thus none of its expenditures need be unproductive. The money will, of course, come from the public, in the form of higher freight rates and higher passenger fares. But these increased rates form in effect a notably profitable investment for the public which pays them. What would it have been worth to the people of the United States to have had every railroad in the country adequate to the work piled on it last winter? What would it be worth to the manufacturers, the merchants, the householders of the Atlantic coast to know to-day that the railroads could bring to them enough coal for their needs next winter? It is unnecessary to go further than this to show what a strong, prosperous railroad system means to the country; and to establish that system, the public, once it comprehends the facts, will be ready to pay a fair price.

The Funeral of John Purroy Mitchell.

JOHN PURROY MITCHELL'S body will be brought to City Hall to-day, and there the people of the city he served so well will have opportunity to pay their last tributes of respect to the man whom they rejected at the polls in November.

Never in the history of the town has sorrow more sincere been evoked by the death of one of its people. In every calling and trade, in every section of the city, among the rich and the poor, the famous and the obscure, unrestrained evidences of grief and ready acknowledgments of a great loss testify to the depth of feeling that has been stirred by his untimely passage from a world in which he had been an active, useful factor. To-day his high ideals, his unswerving patriotism, his diligent labors for the welfare of others, his honorable ambition for himself, his fidelity to the tasks he eagerly sought, are testified to by the spontaneous utterances of scores of thousands of his fellow townsmen.

These citizens are not moved to their unquestioned grief by the tragic circumstances which surrounded his death. Their expressions of sorrow are not the emotional outbursts of a population excited to fever heat by the perils of war. They are based on a complete understanding of the character of the man in whose memory they are framed. They record the opinion New York really held of JOHN PURROY MITCHELL; yet the great tragedy of his death in July, 1918, would have been averted if this sentiment of respect and confidence had not been overborne in the heat of the political canvass of October, 1917.

We get now an accurate conception of what New York generally thought of the young man who rose to the highest office within the disposal of its citizens, and whose extraordinary services in that office were rejected in a manner that to a man who served for no higher motive than to win popular acclaim, would have been humiliating. With JOHN PURROY MITCHELL this consideration counted for nothing. He had seen his duty and had done it with the same fine courage that characterized all his other acts. If the public rejected him, that fact could not obscure or cloud his consciousness of rectitude, or conceal his fidelity. If the exercise of those qualities that most distinguished him did not meet the approval of the electorate, the heavy responsibility did not rest on him.

To-day and to-morrow many a man in New York will search his soul and mind as he ponders on the career of the brave young man who gave his life to and for his country, and the reproaches that are engendered through contemplation of the recent history of New York will not be aimed at the man whose memory we honor.

Durability in Concrete Ships.

The announcement made by R. J. Wio, chief of the Concrete Ship Division of the Shipping Board, to the effect that a new protective coating has been discovered by which concrete ships can be rendered as durable as steel vessels, is of the utmost importance, not only as it relates to the emergency created by the U-boat campaign, but also as it will affect shipbuilding in peace times. Only a few days ago Mr. Wio was quoted as saying that the concrete hulls now building would last a year, and possibly two or three years, but he distinctly discouraged the belief that they would be of permanent value. They would serve for the purpose which brought our shipbuilding programme into existence, but not for general use.

plies of material largely from the localities in which they are established. The volume of steel reinforcement parts hauled by the railroads in comparison with the steel required for an all steel ship, or of wood required for a wooden vessel which is not built where material is immediately at hand, is immense. Once the forms are prepared the pouring of the hull occupies comparatively little time, and the number of skilled laborers needed is small. The concrete sets quickly, and this form of construction has the merit of expedition.

The ship Faith, built on the Pacific coast, made eleven knots on her trial trips, and behaved admirably in the water. Barges of concrete have proved highly valuable here and abroad; in Italy particularly they have been in use for years, and have given a good account of themselves. It is plain that in canal and river transportation they offer a solution of a difficult problem, which may prove of the greatest value to the country.

When Mr. Wio says that he "believes the concrete ship can eventually be made as permanent as steel, if not more so," the enduring masonry construction of former times come to mind. The specimens extant are on land, to be sure, but in many cases they have been exposed to the weather under adverse circumstances for years without deterioration. If the elements necessary to resist the action of sea water have been discovered, the same durability should be attained in hulls.

An American Prayer.

The appeal of the three American Cardinals to the people in their spiritual charge is a strong document. It lives up to its title, "Prayer and Praise." Peace, yes, it says; but first Victory!

"If we fight like heroes and pray like saints, soon will America overcome mere force by greater force and conquer lust of power by the nobler power of sacrifice and faith."

Their Eminences ask their flocks to pray three times a day "for the guidance of our rulers, the success of our arms, the unity of nations and the welfare of heroes."

That is a prayer in which every American can join at morning, at noon and at the hour of the Angelus and be the better for it. It contains the programme of real and lasting peace.

An Allied Offensive in the Balkans.

An Allied force made up of Italians and French has undertaken a new offensive in the Balkans. The point where they struck is about midway on the long line over the Albanian mountains from the Adriatic to Monastir. Vienna officially acknowledges the withdrawal of the Austrians, and the statement from Rome reports the capture of more than 1,000 prisoners and stores of war munitions.

This is the first offensive in this region since the Austrians, sweeping down from Montenegro, occupied the Albanian capital of Durazzo. They were halted on the north bank of the Vovusa, and the Italians have since been engaged in the development of southern Albania. They have improved the harbor of Avlona and have built a road over the mountains from that port to Monastir. With the aid afforded by these improvements the Italians have succeeded in transporting over the Adriatic 200,000 soldiers without the loss of a ship or man. They have succeeded at the same time in carrying reinforcements and supplies to the Allied line on the Macedonian front.

The Italian force on the western Balkan front is estimated at about 500,000 men. The offensive which they have undertaken in cooperation with the French has for its purpose not only the forcing of a diversion of Austrian troops from the Pieve to the support of the Balkan line, but the breaking of the Austro-Bulgarian right flank and the recovery of the Serbian territory west of the Vardar valley. The Macedonian army, which was under the command of General GUILLAMET before his recall to France, has already made considerable gains east of the Vardar. The Allied successes at these two vital points of the Balkan line have been taken to signify a renewal of an offensive all along the front. The Central Powers have unquestionably weakened their line by the withdrawal of troops for Italy and France. For this reason the present is considered especially favorable for an attempt to retore Serbia and Montenegro.

Besides its military objective the movement has the purpose of the fulfillment of a promise earlier made by Italy to the Albanians to rid their country of the Austrian invaders. The independence of Albania was proclaimed last year with the approval of the Allied nations. A government was formally established at Koriza, and the improvement in the roads and the condition of the people which have been made by the Italians were sanctioned by the representatives of the new state. The intention of the Allies is to build up an independent and stable Albanian government. With this accomplished one of the disturbing and perplexing problems of European politics will be in a fair way of settlement.

The Old Ninth Regiment.

Some of Its Officers in the Days Before Jim Flisk. To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—I, as one of the oldest living former residents of Greenwich Village, as well as one of the reorganizers of the Ninth Regiment after its return from the civil war, can verify all the statements made in the letters from "A. C." and Joe H. Hart.

After the return of the Ninth Regiment with less than 200 of the original number of its members that enlisted for three years, or the war, a movement was started to reorganize the regiment and put it back in its old position as a unit of the city. One of the members of the young men of Greenwich Village, among whom were Thomas C. Dunham, afterward State Senator; John S. Huyler, the founder of the Huyler Candy Company, and myself, became interested and helped to reorganize the Company. Our first captain was John J. Gaffney, well known in Greenwich Village, and John S. Huyler was one of our lieutenants. The first commandant of the regiment was Colonel Wilcox, a manufacturer of mattresses and bedding in Chatham Square.

During the war Jim Flisk was a member of the regiment, and he was a member of the band of 100 pianists led by the well known Dowling, with Levy, the famous cornetist, as one of its members.

I was born in Greenwich Village, in Perry street, opposite the Van Ness Hotel. My father was a shoemaker, and my mother was a dressmaker. My father and Charles, my brother, my father, Thomas J. Curtis, a carpenter and builder, being one of the first settlers of Greenwich Village. I remember when the present site of the Grand Opera House was occupied by the Knickerbocker Hotel, a very stable, and I remember when the first elevated road was built on Greenwich street and Ninth avenue. It was first operated by endless cable, but afterward changed to steam dummies as motive power.

I have been for a number of years a resident of the city, and I have been connected with the United States postal service for nearly thirty-five years, am a comrade of Teft-Odell Post No. 443, Department of New York G. A. R., am in my seventy-fourth year and able to parade as I did on the Fourth just passed without occasion requires.

J. B. CURRIS. NEW YORK, July 9.

PARALLEL PREJUDICES.

Prohibition Compared to the Fast Waning Hatred of Tobacco.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—The American public will try anything once. Sometimes that proves to be once too much. Then there is often trouble ensuing, and the experiment proves costly.

Just now there seems to be a probability that prohibition will become a part of the national system of law. Even if the efforts of the zealous reformers who urge it should prove insufficient to secure nation-wide enforcement of their pet measure, the restrictive regulations of the army and navy will probably prove the way, and the compulsory reformation of the public will follow after the war, if not sooner.

Perhaps that will be a good thing. Perhaps not. In either case it seems likely that the public will try it. One that event there may be a revolution afterward that will remind of the great change in public opinion as to the use of tobacco.

Dr. Pease is not the only hater of the weed. Neither is he the first who has endeavored to restrict its use. Those employed by interstate enemies of all alcoholic drink, hardly anything said by the latter has been left unaided by the former, and though science has laboriously disproved the worst of these slanders on "My Lady Nicotine," there are still many who believe the old story, still believe tobacco to be a deadly enemy to the health of the human animal.

There are two kinds of occupation of a conquered territory. One is by devastation and destruction and by the military subjection of the helpless inhabitants through terror and cruelty in the name of Kultur. The other has for its purpose the upbuilding of the land and the pacification and development of the people in the interest of civilization.

LET DOCTORS GO TO WAR.

A Plea to Hospitals to Abandon the Rotating Service. TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Of necessity the business of the country has been reorganized; the same impetuous necessity calls for the reorganization of the civil hospitals.

Up to the present time the enrollment of medical men has kept pace with the growth of the country. But a million Americans have now taken their place in the fighting line; ships are available for the rapid transportation of a second million; a third million is streaming into the training camps, and more doctors are needed. The hospitals of the country must help to furnish them—they can if they will.

What is the rotating service? It is a plan of organization which requires or permits the rotation of a body of men, each serving six, four, three or perhaps only two months annually, to hold down one man's job. There may be reasons of educational policy which justify a rotating service in ordinary times; to-day any such plan is contrary to the national interest. The interest of the country is not to release every competent physician who can be spared for military duty. No man should be permitted to excuse himself from entering the Medical Reserve Corps on the plea that he has a wife and family, unless his presence in that hospital is indispensable—not two, three or four months in the year, but all year.

For the period of the war the rotating service must go. The continuous service plan is the only patriotic plan of hospital organization at this time. One job, one man! It is the duty of hospital authorities to adopt this plan now, and to make it plain to the men who are thus released from hospital service for the period of the war that the purpose of their release is to make it easier for them to decide where the path of duty lies.

S. S. GOLDBLUM, M. D., Chairman War Service Committee American Hospital Association. NEW YORK, July 9.

NEWSPAPER SIZE.

Will the Paper Shortage Restore the Briefer Form?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—The shortage of newspaper paper is of course unfortunate; at the same time most people will welcome smaller newspapers, especially on Sundays.

"Without any intimate knowledge but merely as an opinion founded upon hearing the expressions of others, I believe that there is a universal demand for a return to the newspapers of twenty-five years ago. The art of writing of that age and before has never been excelled. Articles were digested in the brains of writers in those days before they were put on paper, and consequently came off in a graceful style that was as beautiful in its brevity as it was interesting in its story telling.

The old eight page daily SUN and the three section Sunday SUN have never been surpassed for news giving qualities, editorial vigor, literary excellence and typographical perfection. OBSERVER. NEW HAVEN, Conn., July 9.

CALICO FROCKS.

They Are Popular, but They Are Not Cheap.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Reference is made in THE SUN of July 6 to the attractive calicoes of the Pacific coast mills.

New York shops of high standing have made a feature of calico frocks this summer. Many of them suggest civil war styles, with their flounces and flowing sleeves, and they show the old shades of blue, orange, gray or pink with old time patterns of sprigs and rings or spots.

THE EMPIRE STATE—A RECORD OF NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS.

State Comptroller Eugene M. Travis Outlines the Progress of State Revenues During Recent Years.

The important facts regarding the internal affairs of state these days are unknown to many New Yorkers because we are so busy earning a living and devoting our attention to the prosecution of war. Nevertheless, the vastness of the work of State government and the volume and variety of its activities are matters of vital concern to every inhabitant of this State, whose motto, "Excelsior," is exemplified in every phase of her being.

It takes a lot of money to run a State government—over \$51,000,000 this year—and it will take more as time goes on. The party out of power will always tell us that the party in power is responsible for this increase, that it expends more than is necessary and that too much is wasted. But this charge is always of a partisan nature ever revived during election times and afterward immediately subsides.

One of the heaviest requirements is for debt service—that is, the amount annually needed to provide for the interest on bonds and pay the interest on them. By direction of a majority of our voters we built the new Barge Canal—the largest single public enterprise—at a cost of over \$150,000,000, and over \$100,000,000 highway bonds and \$25,000,000 forest preserve bonds have been issued during the last few years.

By a vote of the people the State ran in debt for these projects and it cost about \$14,000,000 annually to provide for the payment of these undertakings. The State is the real proprietor of educational institutions, and while taxes are paid locally for such purposes, the State also makes contribution—\$12,000,000 out of the \$96,000,000 appropriated—and it supervises the whole system, maintaining ten normal schools for the training of teachers.

The Commonwealth manages also about fourteen hospitals for the insane and they contain about 40,000 patients at an annual cost of approximately \$14,000,000. Moreover, the State conducts something like twenty charitable institutions for the care of children who are feeble minded, blind, crippled or in need of moral training, and for the care of tubercular persons, old soldiers and their widows. The aggregate population of these institutions is about 10,000 and the cost of maintaining them is about \$6,500,000 annually.

The six prisons of the State contain about 5,000 inmates and the cost of conducting these institutions is about \$3,000,000 each year. For the promotion of agriculture in all its forms, including the raising of sheep, stock raising, and agricultural colleges, stamping out of all sorts of insect pests, diseases among cattle, etc., the State spends annually about \$5,000,000.

As above indicated, the State goes into debt for the building of highways but annually it saves its money by contributing to sinking funds which are reserves made for the specific purpose of paying off the interest and reducing the amount of the principal. In addition to the cost of construction, about \$3,000,000 is required annually for the maintenance of the roads, at an average of about \$1,000 a year to maintain one mile of road.

In ordinary times the National Guard costs about \$1,000,000 a year, but during the last fiscal year approximately \$14,000,000 was made good to make up the millions appropriated for State government is expended in such a variety of ways that it would become monotonous to attempt figures. They include, however, general administration, supervision and general insurance, and many other things essential to the welfare of the citizen.

There is one phase of governmental activity that is especially interesting at this time, the conservation of the forest and the development of the fish and game. The State maintains about 1,700,000 acres of forest land and it takes a small army of men to patrol these and to enforce the game law. And yet the entire payroll, amounting to \$235,000 annually, is paid entirely from hunting license receipts.

TRADE BRIEFS.

Typewriting paper is needed in Switzerland. An automobile fire engine is wanted by the authorities of Mexico. An ice making plant will probably be installed in which event there will be a demand for American ice making machinery and equipment.

One million acres of arid land near Matamoros, Mexico, are to be irrigated in the near future, and brick and cement block making machinery, farm equipment and small knock down houses will be needed.

Temple, Mexico, would be an excellent locality in which to establish a medium priced American restaurant, reports Vice-Consul William A. Ward. There are many Americans and Mexicans in the better class who would welcome such an enterprise and patronize it.

Consul Edward Higgins reports from Brazil that the Brazil tobacco crop is estimated at 60,000,000 pounds each year. The leaf is of the quality. Estimates place the cocoa crop at 800,000 bags of 132 pounds each.

Colombia and Peru seems have been placed on the list of restricted imports by the War Trade Board. Outstanding licenses for the importation of these products have been revoked and no new applications will be considered.

Uganda. A canny man upon the street Sopped every one he chanced to meet, "State first," he said, "or say so. A stranger I fear 'o'er the sea; 'You're a man, your own is a man, Where's a man the usquebaugh?"

"Kind stranger," said I, slow and dour, "You ask me what's beyond my power; I'll say; at any time you buy; Or any man could while away; That good time's past, forbid by law, There's not a drop of usquebaugh."

The stranger turned, about to flee, Yet spoke before he quitted me; "A judgment on 'em all say now; I shake the dust of you from my hair, To suffer 'till a third sea saw, An' no a drop of usquebaugh!"

WILLIS STRELL. "HOW" IN SIOUX. "How" is good Teton Sioux, and the constant iteration naturally impresses itself on the minds of army officers who adopted it, minus the suffix, as an index change of sentiment when performing the sacred rite of "wetting up" after a long, hard, dry ride.

To the Editor of THE SUN:—The Hudson Bay Company employees had nothing in common with the plains Indians. They were as remote, the one from the other, as a Patagonian from a British Islander. We leave it to the General Crowder to decide if we are right. He knew the Sioux well in his younger days of army service.

GOVERNMENT CLERKS.

One of Them Feels That Her Hours Are Now Long Enough.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—I am a female Government clerk. I work from 9 until 5, with half an hour for luncheon. This makes a seven and a half hour day. At the end of that day I am very fatigued and am unable to go to the theatre or to any place of amusement. The constant sound of typewriting machines is most annoying, and, although the work is not difficult, one is kept busy and overworked.

I feel as though I am doing nothing, even though I accept a salary of \$1,000 a year. I have done a great deal of work, but I have not had any of the interesting characters and records and shipping orders, as I think for which I could be better paid. The day has not been lengthened as it is to give me the opportunity to do my work in a physical condition that will result in the lowering of efficiency.

G. L. NEW YORK, July 9.