

GREAT FALLS DAILY TRIBUNE

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EDITORIAL PAGE

SECOND THOUGHT.

Now that congress has adjourned and the senators are getting back among their constituents some of the brave opponents of Wilson and his league of nations appear to be getting cold feet. We note that several of the senators who signed the Lodge pledge never to vote for confirmation of a peace treaty containing the league of nations constitution are doing some hedging. They are hearing from their constituents and so they are doing a little explaining and apologizing. They are telling them that they are not opposed to the league of nations idea. Not at all. They approve of it, but think the draft at Paris should be amended in some respect, or the wording of some article made more clear. Senator Chamberlin of Oregon must have a rather queer feeling when he reads the Oregon Journal which has been taking a straw vote in the state on the question of a league of nations. The result of four days of voting showed 2,226 for and 26 against. The favorable votes, it is stated, came in thickest on the day the round robin senators made their protest. The thirty-seven are only thirty-six now for one of them has publicly recanted, and there is every sign that others of them are feeling pretty sick since their names were published and they are flooded with letters of protest from their republican constituents. Washington is notoriously the worst place in the United States for a politician to put his ear to the ground when he would listen to the voice of public opinion. The air there is surcharged with hatred to Woodrow Wilson, who has made rather light of senatorial and congressional influence, and gone over their heads to appeal to the people direct. Listening to the persistent knocking of the politicians against the silent and independent occupant of the White House the average congressman is apt to mistake the noise of the hammers for the voice of public opinion at home. When he gets away from Washington he is surprised to find how strong the president is with his constituents, both republicans and democrats. The New York Evening Post thus records the experience of a republican senator from Missouri, the colleague of Senator Reed of the same state and a leading democratic knocker of the president. He appears to have been "showed." The Post says: "He said that he was 'heart and soul in favor of a league of nations.' Such a league was 'certain to be formed' and he 'did not see how anyone could oppose such a league.' Who is this ardent champion? None other than Senator Spencer of Missouri, one of Lodge's immortal 37 republican senators who pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to oppose the league of nations. But that was in Washington. When Senator Spencer reached St. Louis the glorious thrill of putting Wilson in a hole had passed. He began to discover what his fellow citizens at home really thought, and promptly blossomed out into a tremendous advocate of the league. The incident needs no comment, except to say that it throws a suggestive light on the whole republican maneuver in the senate. Anything more shortsightedly partisan and at the same time insincere could hardly be imagined. Lodge and his fellows appear now like naughty schoolboys writing on the blackboard an impudent message to the schoolmaster, and then scuttling away as fast as possible. The country has pretty well sized up the entire affair, and is settling down to the confident belief that the republicans will be heartily for the league after it has been amended in a few particulars."

So alarmed have the kickers against Wilson and his league of nations idea become that they have called for an organization and a campaign of education of the American people to back up the thirty-seven senators pledged to vote against the ratification of the peace treaty. The republicans evidently do not trust their thirty-seven and are afraid they will not stick, for they have called on the kicking democrats to help them raise a big wad of money to educate the American people and open their eyes to the deadly peril of the republic, thru a nation-wide propaganda. Now it takes a good deal of boodle to enter that game. It costs money to educate so large a class, especially where the pupils do not trust the teachers and dislike the lessons taught. We should like very much to know who is going to put up the money and how much they put up. Perhaps we will know more about it when the organization is perfected and their work of education commences. Senator La Follette educating the American people in patriotism is going to be one of the star courses in this senatorial chautauqua, we understand. It carries a touch of comedy about it, now, doesn't it. There is no doubt that the next six months or year will witness a campaign of education in this country as to the meaning and purpose of the league of nations, but we predict the result will not be what these gentlemen wish. Already they are hedging on making the issue on partisan lines because they are finding out the republican rank and file will not stand for it. It was their original intention to commit the republican party to opposition to the idea of a league of nations, but so many republican news-

papers and men of influence in the party declined to stand for it that most of the kicking republican senators are now content to call on the kicking democrats for aid and make it a non-partisan affair. We are of the opinion that this will not save their political bacon and that both republican and democratic kicking senators will get retired to reflect on their sins as soon as their constituents can get a chance at them. We are willing also to predict that the infamous thirty-seven will shrink in numbers so materially that not even their democratic aiders and abettors will be able to make good the loss or prevent the ratification of the peace treaty, league of nations and all, when it comes before the senate for formal action.

Taking note of the growing indisposition of republican leaders to stand for a partisan issue under the leaders of the senate opponents of the league of nations, the Springfield Republican remarks: "Since the adjournment of congress the tendency toward making a party issue of the league of nations has noticeably lessened. The republican senator from Missouri, Mr. Spencer, who signed the Lodge resolution, has declared since going home that he was 'heart and soul' for a league and that one is certain to be formed. Henry A. Stimson of New York, former republican secretary of war, has declared for the league even under the democratic president's leadership. The coming Lodge-Lowell debate will be, happily, between two republicans. Grafton Cushing, in Boston last evening, gave emphatic warning to fellow republicans to avoid partisanship. Senator Borah has returned to Washington bitterly complaining of the tendency of other republican senators to 'compromise.' While Mr. Bryan is for the league, he wants amendments. It begins to look as if with a few amendments, placed where they will do the most good, the real fight will soon be over."

THE VOICE OF REASON.

War rouses hate to its last degree, and there is no wisdom in hatred. Hatreds once aroused cool down slowly, but they do cool with passing time, and the eyes cleared of the mist of passion see more clearly. That process is going on in the world now after the close of the great world war. As the United States suffered the least of all the allies in the war it is natural to expect our hatred of the wrongdoer to cool first, and our delegates stand for moderation in the peace terms to be imposed on the central powers. Mr. Lansing recently made some remarks along this line and the Springfield Republican comments on them in a sane and cool-headed way as follows:

"In his speech to the interallies press club in Paris Secretary Lansing puts very strongly some of the reasons why Germany must be helped. He is not to be taken as wholly excluding considerations of humanity; it is not necessary to present the case from that side for the reason that self-interest and more constrains the allies to a humane treatment of Germany. We have reached a crisis, Mr. Lansing declares; we must feed Germany and give the Germans a chance to sell their products if the danger of bolshevism is to be avoided.

"Two words, he says, tells the story, food and peace. To resist the encroachments of anarchy Germany must be allowed to purchase food and to earn money to pay for food. Industrial life must be restored by a treaty of peace which will end uncertainty and open the way to commerce. 'It is not out of pity for the Germans that this must be done, and done without delay, but because we, the victors in this war, will be the chief sufferers if it is not done.'

"A strong case for moderation and humanity on the part of the victors could be made if that kind of argument were necessary, and a convincing precedent could be found in the conspicuous moderation and humanity shown by the allies to France after the Napoleonic wars. In the historical retrospect clemency seldom if ever fails to justify itself; it is unbridled revenge on the part of the victor that brings the condemnation of posterity and almost invariably is followed by dire retribution. But while anger is still hot it is always hard to make arguments of this sort heard; it is easier to present the case for moderation when this coincides as now with self-interest.

"Even those who without compunction would starve Germany have no desire to see the chaos of Russia reproduced between the Rhine and the Vistula. The bolshevist menace is already quite serious enough, and Great Britain with its vast Asiatic empire has become acutely sensitive to its possibilities. If central Europe is captured by bolshevism it will be hard to set limits to the danger; Germany has become the world's first line of defense, and Mr. Lansing does not exaggerate the importance of the establishment there of a stable government. Immediate relief, a prompt peace on terms which will not strike the German people with despair, and a league of nations to put the world on a new and sounder footing, these are all essential measures for the restoration of the reign of law without which the world for a long time to come will see no peace, confidence or prosperity."

HASKIN LETTER

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN

RECONSTRUCTING THE MOVIES II.—Mr. Price, a Film Reformer.

New York, March 14.—"Morality, Method and More Money" might as well be the legend inscribed on the letterhead of the new United Artists' Corporation, which has attracted so much attention by obtaining the services of William Gibbus McAdoo as chief counsel, and the formation of which has caused so much discussion of conditions, business and artistic, in the great moving picture industry. As explained in a former article, Mr. McAdoo has been retained in a merely advisory capacity, and chiefly for the sake of the confidence which his name will inspire in the public, and possibly on Wall street. The executive head of the Pickford-Chaplin-Griffith-Fairbanks is Mr. Oscar Price. He is to be the leader in putting into effect the large plans of these "united artists."

Mr. Price is well known as the assistant director of railroads. He frankly states that he has not yet completed his plans in connection with the new movie enterprise. He says that he has "a single-track mind," and the track upon which his mind is now running is a railroad track. When his duties as assistant director terminate on the 15th of this month, he will take up the matter of reconstructing the motion picture industry, and not before.

Mr. Price is an executive of varied experience. He used to run a weekly paper, a saw mill and several other businesses in West Virginia, his native state. Later he came to Washington and was auditor of the interior department. Then Mr. McAdoo discovered him, set him the difficult task of straightening out the fiscal affairs of the bureau of engraving and printing, made him publicity director of his new job in detail. Mr. Price has clear, if general, ideas of what he is going to do for the movies. For one thing, he is going to make them "moral." He is against all pictures that could possibly be considered suggestive, or unfit in any way for the American family trade. He is especially against those pictures which show risqué scenes under a guise of propaganda. He thinks that a smutty story posing as a sermon on the "social evil," or an exposure of the perils which beset the beautiful manœuvre girls in New York, is a smutty story just the same. He further takes the view that the movies should be, and to some extent are, a fine moral influence. He believes that the morals of American girls are favorably affected by the beautiful and inspiring screen conduct of Mary Pickford, and that the agile and manly image of Douglas Fairbanks in 15,000 theaters affords high inspiration to growing boys. Charlie Chaplin, he admits, has less of this ethical value, but in the opinion of Mr. Price, Charlie is not vulgar.

No artists, therefore, who exalt the fleshpots need apply for admission to this new enterprise; but, on the other hand, those who belong unmistakably to the clean and wholesome class will be welcomed. Mr. Price also believes that the motion picture industry has given too much time and attention to drama and not enough to educational and news features. A publicity man and publisher himself, he is especially impressed by the great possibilities that are in the news pictorial. He looks forward to the day when the public will see in pictures the news of the world almost as fast as it happens. But the United Artists' Corporation has not been formed primarily for the purpose of moral and artistic reform. Its underlying motives are of a business and financial nature. The four famous stars who have formed the corporation are dissatisfied with the way their pictures are being distributed, and they are going to do the distributing themselves. Incidentally, they invite other stars to join in this effort, with a view to making the elimination of the moving picture middleman permanent and permanent.

It must be understood that at present the tendency of the motion picture industry is to make the production, the distribution and the exhibition of motion pictures each a separate business. Thus Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and D. W. Griffith all have studios and make their own pictures, but these are distributed to the theaters by the Paramount-Artercraft corporation, of which Adolph Zukor is the head. Charlie Chaplin is also an independent producer, distributing his films through another agency.

The Paramount-Artercraft company, which is the biggest single organization in moviedom, and the nearest thing in it to a monopoly, also produces pictures, but it is largely a distributing concern. According to Mr. Price, the newly united stars object to the way in which this corporation is handling their products, chiefly on two counts. In the first place, he says, pictures are released to the exhibitors not singly, but in groups. Thus the distributing agent will pool a Pickford picture with four or five other, and generally inferior, pictures, and in order to get the Pickford feature the exhibitor has to buy them all. This, according to Mr. Price and his associates, is most distasteful to the exhibitor, and tends to make him refuse the star picture because he does not want the others.

In the second place, according to Mr. Price, the Paramount-Artercraft corporation plays up its own name at the expense of the names of the stars. Thus this corporation has recently conducted a great national magazine advertising campaign which had for its sole object to establish in the minds of the public the idea that Paramount-Artercraft pictures are superior, but which seldom mentioned the names of any of the stars which have given the corporation its fame. Since publicity is the breath of life to a movie star, this method of advertising is most distasteful to the leading ladies and gentlemen.

Not by Mr. Price, but by other well-posted persons, it is said that the stars have yet another objection to certain methods of distribution. It is stated that one of the great distributing agencies, feeling that it was very strong in the field, and by way of becoming a monopoly, tried to buy all of the exhibitors whom it serves sign a three-year, non-cancellable contract. This contract would have bound the exhibitor to show in his theater for three years whatever the distributing corporation chose to send him, without the privilege of a whimper. The exhibitors, whose aggressive independence has always been a nuisance and an embarrassment to the big business men of the motion picture industry, refused to sign any such contract. The failure of the big distributing agency to put across its three-year contract plan is said, more than anything else, to have shaken the confidence of the stars. They feared that such high-handed proposals would ultimately turn the exhibitors against the big distributors and all their work—indeed, the star pictures plan.

Thus the formation of the United Artists' corporation is also a revolt against the attempt of big distributors to make the exhibitor, and hence the movie fan, accept whatever he chooses to offer. It is a bomb placed under the throne of the would-be motion picture czar. Whether it will blow him up remains to be seen.

Tomorrow—What the Distributors Say.

TRAVELETTE

By NIKSAH.

THEBES.

Thebes was, several thousand years ago, the mightiest city in Egypt. Today, in Thebes the mighty ghosts of forgotten gods struggle for supremacy against hordes of substantial visitors who pose on its broken columns and otherwise deface the landscape. The rightful awfulness of the temple of Thebes is stolen from them by the chatter and exuberance of the moderns. But the Egyptian shrines triumph. They are mysterious in the face of voluble explanations of their mysteries. The temples fight to the end on the side of the gods they serve. These neglected gods of Thebes were once worshipped by kings, who served them by condemning thousands of people to life sentences on a rock pile. Mountains of stone were planted stiff and solid in defiance of a proverbial sand foundation, all as a background for the vague gods whom the Egyptians were so eager to understand.

To the all-powerful gods, kings erected temples as gigantic as the builders would undertake. They are still there, mutilated by the hands of the kings' successors to greatness. There are rows of pillars lifted up to support roofs that now lie broken on the ground. There are massive steps and porticoes, and figures of the gods and of proud kings who

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Medical Officer Back With His War Bride

Special to The Daily Tribune. Kalspell, March 17.—Captain and Mrs. E. D. O'Neill returned home this morning from the base hospital at Fort Riley, Kas., where Captain O'Neill was stationed for over a year. Captain O'Neill was one of the first physicians of Kalspell to volunteer in the medical corps after the war broke out, and was assigned to duty at Fort Riley. He was married soon after his enlistment, and Mrs. O'Neill has been with him since.

There may be white blackbirds and black whitebirds. But there never was an assistant who didn't believe that he did all the work.

Death Takes Veteran Locomotive Engineer

Bozeman, March 17.—William E. Barker, who has been a locomotive engineer on the Northern Pacific railroad for about 25 years and has lived in Bozeman most of that time, died at his home on Church avenue north. He had been under the doctor's care for some months and was in the hospital in Missoula for a few weeks. After he came home from the hospital he went to work, but was taken ill again about 10 days ago.

Barker was born in Iowa August 28, 1855, and was married in 1878 to Anna Schramm, who survives him, as do two children, J. L. Barker of Livingston and Mrs. P. H. Wilkin of Bozeman. He was a member of the local lodges of Odd Fellows and Knights of Pythias and was also a member of the organization of locomotive engineers.

Funeral services will be held at the residence Wednesday morning, and the burial will be in Bozeman cemetery, the Odd Fellows to have charge of the services at the grave.

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