

THE HERALD



THE HERALD PUBLISHING COMPANY  
WILLIAM A. SPALDING  
President and General Manager

13 SOUTH BROADWAY.  
Telephone Main 267, Business Office and Subscrip-  
tion Department.  
Telephone Main 124, Editorial and Local Depart-  
ment.

RATES OF SUBSCRIPTION  
Daily, by carrier, per month..... \$ 75  
Daily, by mail, per month..... 6 00  
Daily, by mail, six months..... 35 00  
Daily, by mail, three months..... 18 00  
Sunday Herald, by mail, one year..... 2 50  
Weekly Herald, by mail, one year..... 1 00

POSTAGE RATES ON THE HERALD  
Single copy..... 1 cent  
Three months..... 50 cents  
Six months..... 95 cents  
One year..... 1.80

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TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 1918.

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MUSTER THEM OUT

At a session of the local war board yesterday, evidence was submitted confirming the reports of unsanitary conditions, neglect and ill-treatment to which the Seventh regiment has been subjected at Camp Merritt, as previously reported by The Herald. In view of all these wretched conditions, and the further prospect that the services of the regiment will not be required by the government, the war board acted wisely in taking steps to secure the mustering out of the men.

The whole matter of their enlistment and retention in camp for four months, during which they have been subjected to slight, neglect and disease-breeding conditions, may be set down as a wretched travesty.

If Secretary Alger designed this, or any part of it, as a means of "getting even" with Southern California for not liking him, he is welcome to all the glory he will get out of it.

The president should be appealed to directly to let our boys come home. We have buried our dead; we will try to nurse the sick back to health. Our patriotism, which has been scorned and rejected and spit upon, will keep, and along with it there will be an enduring remembrance of the man or men who have done this foul thing.

THE SIXTY-SECOND VICTIM

Last Monday evening Frank Rodibaugh, private of company H, Seventh regiment California volunteers, died of typhoid fever. This makes the sixty-second victim of the sinkhole known as Camp Merritt, to which the Southern California boys were assigned. Young Rodibaugh was a nephew of Dr. Stephen Bowers of this city. His parents, who reside in Ventura, are now inconsolable over the loss of their only son. When this young man entered the service the examining surgeons pronounced him one of the best men, physically, of his company. His life has been sacrificed, not to subserve any useful purpose for his country, but as a penalty for the gross incompetence and carelessness, or worse, which has characterized the treatment of the Seventh regiment from the first day it reported for duty.

At this distance it is hard to fathom the motives of the authorities in command, who are responsible for locating our gallant boys upon that disease and death-breeding camp ground. Anybody with a grain of common sense ought to have known that the proximity of a burying-ground, garbage dumps and piles of decaying stable manure, together with the chill winds and fogs that roll in from the Pacific ocean in that locality, would undermine the strongest constitutions and breed disease and death. When to these wretched conditions were added an insufficient supply of clothing and indifferent food, the climax of neglect and abuse was reached.

Over the graves of those sixty-two victims, and of those who may yet follow them as the results of disease already engendered, should be written this legend: "Victims of the incompe-

tence and neglect of the war department."

It is stated, with what truth we cannot say, but with the appearance of probability, that the real object in locating the soldiers in Camp Merritt, was to throw business into the hands of the street-car lines that run out from San Francisco. If this be true, then we must add to the charges of incompetence and neglect a charge of jobbery. As the street car system of San Francisco is largely owned and controlled by the Southern Pacific Railway company, under the management of Boss Herrin, it is easy to understand that a powerful pull may have been exercised on the authorities to place the camp where they did. If that was the moving cause, what a pitiable spectacle it presents. All for a few paltry dollars! Think of it, ye patriotic American citizens! Think of it, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, wives and sweethearts, whose hopes lie buried in the graveyard of Camp Merritt!

One thing is certain: The matter will not be allowed to rest until there shall have been a thorough investigation to place the responsibility for this crime where it properly belongs. When that responsibility shall be determined, the vengeance of an outraged people will pursue the culprits as long as they live. It may not be possible to hang them—more's the pity!—but they must suffer a public condemnation and execration that may give them a foretaste of the infernal regions. They will be branded as murderers.

WE SECOND THE CZAR

The first thought evoked by the czar's note to the powers is surprise at its general scope, and at the manifest sincerity of its author. The next is an impression that a most admirable dissertation in favor of international peace has been presented to the world. It inspires the belief that the present czar is moved by an impulse to do an act, in behalf of humanity, in some measure paralleling his ancestor's edict which gave Russia freedom from serfdom.

It would be difficult to present arguments in favor of universal peace in more concise and forcible form than the czar has shown them. He says, very truly, that with the vast armaments now employed by the nations, "labor and capital are mostly diverted from their natural application and are unproductively consumed." And again: "National culture, economic progress and the production of wealth are either paralyzed or checked in development."

In considering the probable effect of this unexpected proffer from the czar, it is noticeable that Europe and Great Britain generally concede its sincerity. There is no question that it will be so regarded in the United States. An impediment appears at the outset in the coldness with which it is received in England, if we may judge from the brief expressions of newspapers that have thus far reached us. Even in England, however, the force of the proposition is likely to grow the longer the matter is considered and the more closely it is studied.

Of course it is only partial or relative disarmament that the czar proposes. What fraction of armed strength he would eliminate, whether one-fourth or one-half or more, has not yet been disclosed. The czar's proposition is that a conference of the powers shall determine this important question and all others pertaining to it. He simply pledges Russia to such disarmament as the rest of the powers will amicably agree to.

It should be borne in mind that the Russian bear has never really been the ogre of Europe that cartoonists have so lavishly portrayed. Asia is the field which the great paws have been slowly but surely moving upon. With the exception of aggression toward Turkey and Poland, the czar has shown but little inclination to trouble himself with the map of Europe. When Napoleon oracularly declared that within fifty years Europe would be "all republican or all Cossack," he had in mind the hordes that were pressing him in the retreat from Moscow.

As the czar's invitation, of course, extends to the United States, it must arouse profound interest here. It comes just at the time when our government is making preparations for a large standing army and a vast enlargement of the navy. So far as the sentiment of the people of the United States is concerned, it may be counted as unanimous in favor of peace. The American people are firm believers in the apothem that "peace hath her victories no less renowned than war." Victories in the broad field of the world's industry, not on the battlefield, are the kind to which Americans are now looking eagerly forward.

REPUBLICAN PLATFORM AND LABOR

The Republican fly-trap platform is a work of art, if it is not a model of consistency or of sense. It demands the retention of Porto Rico and the Philippines, in order to permit the extension of American trade and to extend the benefit of free commercial intercourse, and declares that, in pursuance of the constitution, all duties, imposts and excises must be uniform.

A little further on the same platform pledges that its representatives in congress will devote their energies to retain, in its integrity, the protective policy of the United States in dealing with the question of the retention of the Philippines.

sition of this territory must bring about. The platform, therefore, ostensibly, by an amendment, reiterates the old chestnut that the Republican party of Mark Hanna and Dan Burns is the champion of the wage earner, and demands the enactment of such legislation regarding Hawaii, Porto Rico and the Philippines as will protect the American workman against Chinese, Japanese and other contract labor found therein, and prevent any further influx or extension thereof, and, finally, it proposes to prohibit the Chinese and Japanese now "located" in the Hawaiian Islands from entering the United States.

These planks show that Mr. Burns' platform is intended as a vote-catcher. The truth is the Republican party of this state has no principles upon which it can make a winning campaign, and, in its desperation, it is driven to make absurd declarations.

Having adopted these planks, it now remains for the representatives of the Republican party to explain how it is possible to annex foreign territory without, at the same time, making its inhabitants members of the American Union. Do they propose to drive the Chinese and Japanese out of the annexed territory? And, if so, does any sane person believe that such purpose will ever be carried out?

By the constitution of the United States, under the protection of which the inhabitants of the annexed territory will be brought, equal rights and liberties are guaranteed to every person. While the articles of annexation between sovereign countries may, perhaps, abridge the rights and liberties of the inhabitants of the annexed territory and force upon them a status peculiar in citizenship to themselves, no civilized country to sell its subjects into slavery, or that the United States could, if it desired, discriminate between different classes of wage earners by declaring that its adopted citizens shall be restricted in the free exercise of their constitutional right of pursuing their vocations, while its native citizens shall have a free field.

The absurdity, therefore, of a platform which attempts to fool the laboring men of this state upon a matter of such vital importance to them needs but to be mentioned to be discovered. The Republican party, which stands as the sentinel for highly protected mill owners, wants territorial expansion for an enlarged market, but always with a stone wall of protection around it. It wants also the millions of laborers within this territory with which to supplant the wage-earners of the United States. And the Republican platform declaration, that the American laborers must be protected against the coolie labor of the annexed territory, is a falsehood promulgated for campaign purposes.

COAL AND ELECTRICITY

The discovery of a promising coal prospect in Cajon pass is not surprising. There is probably plenty of coal in the mountains of Southern California. Like many other elements of wealth, the coal deposits have not been explored and utilized. Not only coal, but iron is known to exist in the mountains north and northeast of Los Angeles, and this is only a question of time when these products will be marketed here.

Fortunately coal is not so essential a factor in the business world as it was a few years ago; at least where facilities are offered for the introduction of electricity, generated by water power. Before this year closes we shall probably have light, heat and power, available to any desired extent, at rates lower than other cities pay where coal is plentiful and cheap.

Less than a year ago grave doubts were expressed about the practicability of transmitting electric energy a great distance without ruinous loss. All doubts on that subject were set at rest several months ago. Nicola Tesla, the distinguished electrician and specialist in long-distance transmission gave a friendly opinion in a personal letter, expressing unqualified faith in the enterprise. Mr. Tesla says: "By means of the polyphase system power can be readily and economically transmitted to much greater distances than eighty miles."

Relative to the percentage of loss in long distance transmission, which gave much uneasiness at an early stage of the project, Mr. Tesla says: "The loss at eighty miles may be practically reduced to the same figure as at five miles; it is a mere question of the electric tension adopted." Under the favorable circumstances, resulting from abundant cheap power, there is no reason whatever why Los Angeles should not soon be the site of many large manufacturing industries.

A SHAMEFUL SPECTACLE

It is humiliating to American pride that the attention of Europe should now be attracted to a shameful spectacle at the head of our military establishment. The praises of our army and navy have scarcely ceased to echo abroad, when admiration turns to wonder and amazement. The scandalous developments in the war department and the certainty that only the edge of them has yet appeared to public view, makes American blood tingle.

General Miles is to be subjected to a court of inquiry, as preliminary to a court martial, because he has been unable to fully disguise his contempt for the incompetency and stupidity that have characterized the operation of the war department. It will be interesting to read the specifications in the case, if the public should have the privilege of seeing them. If General Miles has fittingly phrased expressions of contempt, his utterances deserve to be framed.

The scheme to court-martial General Miles is palpably an attempt to divert public attention from the scandals that are beginning to crop out in the executive department of the service. Secretary Alger finds himself overwhelmed by the weight of evidence already adduced. He knows that the facts to come

will bear with crushing force, and in his helplessness he is aiming to personally escape by saddling at least part of the blame on the active head of the army.

Thus a disgraceful scandal supplements the fame achieved for the nation by its army and navy. We had good and sufficient ground for objecting to some of Europe's strictures while the war was in progress, but any case that may be made against us now, relative to our war department scandal, may go by default.

A KNIGHT ERRANT

George A. Knight of San Francisco has announced his intention to be a candidate for United States senator should the Republicans have a majority of the legislature. He also has declared his purpose to stump the southern counties to aid in achieving a realization of his senatorial aspirations. Mr. Knight has ever been a stalwart advocate of free and unlimited coinage of silver. In going to the St. Louis convention he made several speeches for it, and he voted against tabling the Teller substitute in the convention. We suggest that when Mr. Knight appears on the stump he be interrogated as to his silver views. In coming out for senator Mr. Knight displays more courage than judgment, for he ought to know that the senatorship has already been slated for De Young.

The gift battleship business is being run into the ground, metaphorically. An "American Girl" battleship scheme has just been launched in Chicago, and American women and girls are to be impertuned to chip in. Our advice is to put no coins into the enterprise. The government can afford to buy battleships when it needs them. A battleship would cost perhaps five million dollars. What oceans of caramels and chewing gum that would buy!

It has a cooling effect to read that Pasadena is already making preparations for its annual New Year's tournament. Our New Year's days are so balmy, however, that they are hardly suggestive of the eastern holiday season. Pasadena evidently intends that there shall be no diminution in the attractions to be presented in future, and those in the past have made the city famous.

They evidently do some things fairly well in the state old Keystone State. Governor Hastings was nettled at the way Pennsylvania sick soldiers were treated at Chickamauga. He personally solicited subscriptions for a hospital train to bring them home, and in half an hour he collected five thousand dollars. Roosevelt, Hastings—who next?

The San Francisco Chronicle prognosticated the entire ticket of the Republican nominees with absolute accuracy two days before the late funeral at Sacramento. As a shepherd Mr. De Young deserves due credit, if the sheep still maintain that the pasture had not already been staked out for them.

One of the Hawaiian commissioners, in an interview on his arrival at Honolulu, said to the people: "The United States has assumed \$4,000,000 of your debt, but that is no reason why you should be estopped from incurring more." They must be supremely happy now.

A project is on foot to colonize a large number of Hebrews in our new territory of Porto Rico. Its success would very probably be doubtful. Such an attempt was made at Vineland, in New Jersey, a few years ago, and it completely failed. Several other failures of the kind might be cited.

That Enoch Arden story from San Pedro indicates that that ambitious seaport is alive to the benefits of advertising. Romance is all well enough in its way, but the beginning of that harbor work is what we particularly want to hear about.

Now the Spaniards have set up the plea that they ought to be paid for public works and buildings on their lately transferred property. As their galleys enlarged they will probably claim a reservation of tree stumps, mining claims and uncut grass.

The report of the Republican state convention in Delaware, in allusion to the platform, says: "Nothing was said regarding territorial expansion." The Delawareans are evidently satisfied with the magnitude of their own state.

San Francisco reports a light earthquake Sunday night. If the city were blameable for crimes committed there against suffering soldiers, it would deserve such a visitation as the one that wiped out Sodom and Gomorrah.

In a dispatch from London it is said that the emperor of Germany intended to do the olive branch disarmament act in a declaration from Jerusalem. Well, let him and all the other monarchs chime in. The idea is not patented.

Now Kansas City holds up its finger and says it wants a peace jubilee. The jubilee fever is working westward from Chicago. How would it do for Los Angeles to jubilate, as compensation for the loss of Fiesta?

In Berlin somebody is worrying with the question, "whether America has not reached her zenith." We think hardly, but it does seem a little dizzy, up where we are.

The National Soldiers' Home in Local Politics

BY ABBOT KINNEY

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The Soldiers' Home at Santa Monica has been used by local office seekers to gain access to the public taxes. Street cars have been sent to the Home to bring carloads of soldiers to vote in the local township elections for justice and constable. The old soldiers have been used in school elections. Five voting precincts have been located on the federal reservation itself. Office seekers manipulate the Home beneficiaries for personal gain. They treat to beer in excess at the Canteen and to other strong drink in near-by saloons. They debauch the old soldiers.

The whole business has been a cruel, self-seeking use of the old soldiers. The use of these beneficiaries of the people's generous sacrifices in taxes for political plunder has been unjust, illegal and a heartless disregard of the standing of the soldiers individually and in the popular regard. It is manifest that the illegal political use of a body of two thousand men supported by the taxes of the entire people for the enrichment of this or that venal political cabal is likely to diminish the good will of the taxpayers who are made to suffer and to alienate the affection of the people for the old soldier. It is clear that such political use of this institution in local affairs can in no way benefit or favorably affect the old soldiers or the Home. The Home is not administered by local county elected officers; it is not supported by local taxes. Its law is the military law of the United States. The Home and its occupants bear no part of the burdens of the community and are beyond and outside of all local control whatever.

The beer and whisky treating political self-seeker in evidence at this time amongst the old soldiers is a moral debaucher. He is a curse to the soldier, a detriment to the Home and a traitor to the just rights of his real local constituents. No true friend of the soldier and no honest patriot should longer tolerate this political and moral wrong.

The district attorneys have misunderstood the law applying to this federal Home. They have advised the assessors that they could collect no poll tax from residents in the Home unless these had property elsewhere in the state. The exception is in harmony with the state constitution, which provides that the occupant of such an institution neither gains a political residence while there nor loses the political residence which he had before entering the Home. It would therefore be a reasonable presumption that the political residence is where the old soldier has property. Whether it was the intent of congress to provide this beautiful park and free home for men with property is doubtful. But that is another story.

The assessor knows the law as to this Home. He assesses no land or buildings there, but he assesses no personal property located within the reservation either of soldier, officer or civilian employee.

The tax collector knows the law, and collects no taxes there. It is left, then, for the county clerk to play catpaw to the political monkey and register the whole communal Home into five voting precincts. If the assessor and tax collector are wrong in their law and the county clerk is right, then the former officers and their bondsmen are liable to the taxpayers of this county for a deliberate neglect of duty. These gentlemen can rely on the fact that the approaching settlement of the political status of the Soldiers' Home will interest them and their bondsmen.

The Soldiers' Home either is a federal reservation, the property of the United States and supported by it, or it is not. If it is, then no one in it is thereby a political resident of California, and the gross abuse of right and decency in using the old soldiers in local political partisan plunder campaigns must end. If it is not a federal reservation, then the assessor and tax collector of this county are liable on their bonds, and this Home and the personal property within it must contribute to the tax burdens of the community. The political officers of the county are going to be asked to blow hot or cold on this question. To blow cold on tax collection and hot on vote counting will no longer do. The real voters of the soldiers and the Home and those who did most to secure its location in this delightful climate, so conducive to the health and longevity of the helpless veterans, are in opposition to the present leadership of the Republican party. Some of these did more for the Home than Senator John P. Jones of Nevada. The mouth-patriots who have done the wrong to the old soldiers of dragging them into local politics never did anything for the old soldiers or for the Home.

No true friend of the old soldiers can wish to see them used in organized bodies for local partisan political plunder. The great injury from their abuse is to the old soldiers and to the popular regard in which the institution where they are supported is held. The next greatest injury done is to the party whose venal partisans seek to abuse an army of helpless veterans. In this county it has been the Republican machine. When the Soldiers' Home was located here Los Angeles was the banner Republican county of the state, and this, too, without any Soldiers' Home to vote. Today it is close to the doubtful column. The last injury, which is greatest to the people, is the defiance of law and justice involved in their abuse and the fixing upon the county of a body of tax eaters through the votes of non-tax paying and helpless tax-supported men in a federal institution and under the military law of the federal government. The abuse is wicked and heartless. The fact that men otherwise decent and of good standing should descend to do such a cruel wrong to the old veterans and break the law for political advantage is a demonstration of the need of a reform of our political methods to remove such irresistible temptation from those in the public service.

There are two distinct reasons which make the voting of the old soldiers at the Soldiers' Home illegal. These will be presented in another article, and also to the courts of the state.

It is no exaggeration to say that the old soldiers have lost the most by their use by the political machine. The fact that men otherwise decent and of good standing should descend to do such a cruel wrong to the old veterans and break the law for political advantage is a demonstration of the need of a reform of our political methods to remove such irresistible temptation from those in the public service.

The officers, both township and county, whom they have fixed on this county, have failed to protect them from robbery and murder. Dens and dives of disorder have been and are licensed, tolerated, and it is even claimed, protected by so-called law officers. These places, located about and near the Home, are the most disgraceful dens of thieves and brutal highlanders in California. Santa Monica canyon is probably the worst county district on the Pacific coast. Old soldiers have been murdered right in Santa Monica. Who has paid a penalty for the evil deeds? Many of these tolerated dives live on the old soldiers' weaknesses.



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Hysterical Women

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They tempt them to drunkenness and vice. The time has come for the people to realize the unlawful and disgraceful situation, and end it. Let us have a fair, honest and generous administration of the Soldiers' Home. Let us protect the soldiers from self-seekers and debauchers. Let us secure the veterans in the regard and affection of the whole body of the people whose sacrifices in taxation support them. Let us enforce the constitution and the law. To do this we must abolish the dives about the Home, we must keep local politicians out of any interest in its vote and we must enforce the plain rule of justice applicable to the political status of all such institutions, whether municipal, county, state or national.

LIST OF SICK IS APPALLING

From the following table, says the Examiner, a fair idea may be had of the extent of sickness and suffering among the soldiers. The tabulation is by no means complete, and cannot be made so until completed from army records, but is made up generally from the reports received from the camp hospitals. Thousands of whom no record now exists, or ever will exist, have gone to their homes on furloughs and are being cared for there. Hundreds of others are arriving almost hourly in the hospitals and camps of the north from Cuba and southern camps. Following is a partial list of the number of sick:

Table with 2 columns: Location and Number of Sick. Includes entries for Fort Sheridan, Camp Thomas, Camp Wilcox, St. Louis Hospital, Chickamauga Park, New York hospitals, Santiago de Cuba, Fort Ord, Boston hospitals, Jacksonville, Porto Rico, San Francisco, Fort Meyer, Fort Monroe, Sheridan Point, Camp Alger, and other places.

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