

Times-Republican

PUBLISHED DAILY BY THE TIMES-REPUBLICAN PRINTING CO

TERMS: One Year, by Mail, \$10.00; By Month, by Mail, \$1.00; Delivered by Carrier, per Month, \$0.50

Entered at the Postoffice at Marshalltown Iowa, as second-class mail matter.

MCKINLEY TRIBUTE TO WASHINGTON

President McKinley at the tomb of Washington on the one hundredth anniversary of his death presented an important spectacle to the nation. As he placed the laurel wreath over the sacred ashes and paid a tribute to the genius and virtue of the father of our country the occasion was a great one. The theme inspiring the oration as if he had caught the lofty and serene spirit, the calm philosophy, the unflinching patriotism, and the lofty nobility of America's most illustrious statesman. The patriot was indeed striking. As the inspired orator related the story of the one hundred years of completed history in the midst of a mighty nation of seventy millions, extended, strengthened, prospered, purified and united by a discipline of civil war in which he himself had participated as a worthy soldier of the republic. President McKinley's oration was a masterpiece of the art of the orator. It was a masterpiece of the art of the orator. It was a masterpiece of the art of the orator.

WHEN DOES IT BEGIN?

Of all the funny things that have happened in this world and of all the queer ideas that have seized the minds of men, about the funniest and queerest is the dispute as to when the twentieth century begins. 1900 is the year the infallible, who seems to have looked for a moment, at reason and has been tripped up on a composition in simple arithmetic that any 12-year-old boy could solve without a question. He has decreed that the twentieth century begins January 1, 1900. But funny and more inexhaustible than all the rest is the attitude of the Chicago Times Herald in endorsing the queer error of the pope. That this great journal should go wrong on the simple proposition of how many years constitute a century is past all understanding. First listen to its reasoning: "Time, like temperature, is calculated from zero. If matters had when you may put the starting point at 12, 13, 14 or 22 degrees below freezing, the temperature is counted backward or forward up or down from a zero. If Professor Laves, White, Hall, Gage and Atwell will leave their telescopes and books long enough to look on their respective campuses and stake out 100 yards they will quickly realize that a century has a beginning, and that the first stake, labeled one yard, is a yard away from the starting point and that the last stake, labeled 100 yards, is 100 yards away from the starting point. The second step they pass that they had staked by the most infinitesimal fraction of an inch if they are in the first yard of their second century."

Yes, very true as to stakes, but in measuring time we begin to write the number of the stake first, and then we pass the one before it, we do not walk until we get one yard away before we begin to write "stake one" or "year one," nor do we wait until we have gone 100 yards or years until we begin to write "stake 100" or "year 100," but we write them down before we complete them. Under our present system of reckoning time we should have begun to write the year one when Christ was one day old. So when we get past "stake 1899" we begin to write 1900, but have not yet reached it or completed it until December 31 of that "year" or year. Under the peculiar hallucination of the Times-Herald we wonder how one would write the date when Christ was six months old. Would it be June 30, year zero? Oh, fit such nonsense.

Dates are reckoned B. C. and A. D., that is, before Christ and anno Domini, which translated means "in the year of our Lord." Now when Christ was three months old the date was March 31 in the first year of our Lord, the year one. So men began to write the year 1 A. D. before it was completed. When ninety-nine years had passed they began to write 100 A. D., but 100 years had not been completed until December 31, 100 A. D., when they began to write January 1, 101 A. D., likewise with the centuries. We are not through with eighteenth centuries and ninety-nine years until midnight of the 31st of this month. Then we will begin to write 1900, but the 100th year of the century will be twelve months long and on December 31, 1900, we will have completed one more century than eighteen, or nineteen, and when we are through with nineteen centuries we will begin on the next one, or the twentieth. But no decree of the pope or journalistic sophistry can start us on

the twentieth century until nineteen have been completed. Again that journal says: "Upon a question like this authority is vain and learning is vain. Nothing we came into this world and from nothing everything is calculated. No one can dispute that there must be a hundred years in a century, but it is now ninety-nine years and 365 days and a fraction since 1800 we entered on the nineteenth century. We have but eighteen days and a fraction before completing the century."

Alas! ye wise editors of the Times-Herald, you were just as big fools one hundred years ago as you are today. Your argument only begs the question, for come, if you were right as to the beginning of the nineteenth century, you are now right as to the twentieth, but you have been wrong on the proposition for a hundred years. Come to your senses, quick, or else some wag will undertake to pay you a dollar each in silver dollars, and when he has paid 365 and is ready to start on the fourth hundred he will stop, saying he has paid 365, 1899 and has paid his debt. You may kick, but it is hands over a dollar more you will have to credit him with \$1 on "stake 1899" on January 1, year 1900, and your own argument will prove the wag's case. The second dollar of this debt would begin, not with the 100th cent, but with the first. You will be out just \$100, as your country is just one year short. How strange that grown men, wags and great editors should be found discussing such a proposition! It seems that anyone capable of summing up two and two correctly could make no mistake in this case.

FARMING IN ALASKA

Many of our people have gained some knowledge of and minor possessions of Alaska, as well as the soil industry, yet have never learned anything about the agricultural possibilities of the far-north land. That Alaska has not the rigor of the Klondike is shown by the results of Prof. G. C. Cooper's work last summer at Sitka and Cook's Inlet, where the department of agriculture has established experimental stations. Last year Mr. Cooper sent me some interesting and surprising disclosures in regard to the agricultural possibilities of Alaska, and the year's work was continued, his statement that potatoes forming there is by no means a myth. He has reported taken to the city of Washington some of the finest barley, oats and rye ever seen there, some excellent spring wheat and some splendid garden vegetables, such as parsnips, carrots, turnips, onions and potatoes. In fact, Mr. Cooper says any and all of the hardy vegetables can be grown to perfection in Alaska.

"Of course," he added, "Alaska will never be a great agricultural country, it will never compare with any other country in this respect, but we have shown it to be possible to grow anything wanted to supply the necessities and even the luxuries of life. It is not profitable to farm, probably not at very large scale, as clearing the spruce stumps out of the land is a difficult and laborious task, but the land is very rich and it is about three feet of soil top, which, when cleared, yields enormous crops, and a great deal can be raised on a small area. The people themselves have been astonished at the things, especially the quantity of grain we have raised, never having supposed it possible. The season is not a short one, as is generally supposed. The Japan current equalizes the temperature of the entire coast very greatly. The highest point reached by the mercury last summer was 83 degrees and the lowest record during the last fifty years is 10 degrees below zero. Killing frost did not come this year until October 10, before that time all our grain crops had fully matured.

"Of course, as I say, Alaska can never be an agricultural country, but the experiments we have made mean that its mining camps can be supplied with fresh vegetables and fresh meat. It is a fish stock country. Grass grows splendidly and flowers better than in most places in the United States, and cattle do well, sheep thrive and hogs grow fat. Flax, I think, may become an important crop of the country. We have grown some of a very fine quality which I understand compares favorably with the best Irish flax. It is not probable, however, that the Alaskan Indians can ever be made into farmers. They are too lazy. They are fond of vegetables, but have never attempted to raise anything with the exception of a few turnips. They subsist through the winter principally upon dried fish. Our operations next year will be quite extensive, as much time was consumed this year in breaking ground and draining and putting up buildings."

IOWA PRESS COMMENT

The Burlington Hawkeye thinks the best way to procure the annexation of Cuba "by consent of the government" would be to admit Cuban products into the United States free of duty from now until Cuba set up an independent government. It believes "self interest" would lead the Cubans to desire permanent annexation. The Ottumwa Courier believes "the Mormons will be shy hereafter about electing a polygamist to either branch of congress. The power which each branch has of halting members-elect at the door will forever remove the peril which has bothered many persons that Utah might at some time in the future remove the anti-polygamy re-

striction from its constitution and defy the public sentiment of the country. Congress can effectually guard the country against this danger."

"Some modification of the present system seems to be demanded," says the Muscatine Journal, referring to the board of control. The Nevada Representative takes a cheerful view of the Cummins senatorial prospects. "In general terms," it says, "the senatorial situation improves from the Cummins standpoint." Congressman Dooliver having introduced a bill for a \$100,000 federal building in Boone, the Republican of that place suggests "a public ovation for our esteemed representative when congress passes this appropriation for our federal building in this city and this paper will contribute ten or fifteen cents \$25 to help make it a success."

The Grundy Republican states that in recounting the votes for sheriff of Grundy county one thing was shown up very plainly, viz: When the state prohibition ticket was cast the voters would invariably vote the democratic county ticket. "We have always suspected as much."

Speaking of the Iowa boys' football team with Chicago players and their pressions good record the Council Bluffs Nonpareil remarks that "Iowa leads in football as it does in many other ways, and Chicago should be magnanimous enough to gracefully concede this, especially as there can be no other conclusion to be justly drawn from the record."

The Clinton Herald declares that the lowest deal of vice in the slums of a great city is virtually compared with jobbery. The attorney general of Indiana has given an opinion adverse to the legality of the insurance of children by assessment companies. Miss Grace Woolson, who was private secretary and stenographer for her father, the late Judge Woolson, will be retained in that capacity by Judge Shires, who will look after the southern district business until a successor has been named to fill the position left vacant by the death of Judge Woolson.

Tru D. Sankey is quoted in the Philadelphia Press as saying that D. L. Moody will never again be able to undertake any active work as the weak condition of his heart makes absolute rest necessary. Gen. John M. Palmer, the sound-money democrat leader, denies that he intends to support Bryan. There are no late reasons to change his mind.

A humorous touch in connection with Lathrop Hearn's naturalization as a Japanese was the reduction of his professional salary from 150 to 50 yen a month. As a foreigner he drew a larger salary than the native instructors, but at the dinner in celebration of his charge of nationality the president of the university rose and observed that now that Professor Hearn had become one of them the last invidious distinction would be removed by cutting down his salary. And the American born professor tried to look as though he enjoyed it.

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Of the city of Philadelphia it is said that it has had a larger number of congressmen of extended periods of consecutive service than any other locality in the country. It is pointed out that Congressman Kelly and O'Neill each served twenty-seven years, Congressman Randall twenty-seven and Congressman Hamer twenty-six. One of the greatest congressmen, Gen. Bingham, has a record of ten terms or twenty years of consecutive service. Gen. Bingham is a native of Philadelphia and it is a peculiarity of Philadelphia congressmen that they are usually natives of that city. An exception is William McEver, the representative of the Third district. He is a democrat and a native of County Tyrone, Ireland.

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DR. HERRON AT BOSTON

Prof. George D. Herron, the gentle and moderate Iowa enthusiast, has been pouring forth wisdom upon the Boston single-taxers. The Hon. George Fred Williams sat reverently on Herron's feet, and then rapturously on his own. "It is all a ray of sunlight through darkness," cried the Dedham Bryan, "for such a man as this to come from the west into our murky atmosphere of Boston." Murky? Mr. Williams wrongs himself and Boston. If that town is not perpetually illuminated, then the famous Williams gas plant has been planted in vain.

records broken and that man has very little discernment at best. God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform. The last Sabbath evening of the meeting a beautiful gold medal, costing about \$25, was given to Professor Alexander by the members of his union choir. The presentation speech was made by Professor Beach. The meeting scenes in connection with this title act in the drama will never be forgotten. The high point in the entire meeting had been reached in the musical part of the work. Shouts, clapping of hands and waving of handkerchiefs brought heaven down as the united choir with a full orchestra rendered "Shonodah for Christ." The enthusiasm was beyond the power of the pen to fully describe.

TOPICS OF THE TIMES

A leading event of tomorrow evening will be the eclipse of the moon.

Congressman Pierce, of Missouri, is at the head of an official party which proposes to visit Porto Rico during the holidays on a government vessel at its own expense.

A great many republican speakers would like to participate in the gold-standard debate on the currency bill, despite the lack of popular interest in the subject as shown by thin attendance in the galleries and on the floor of the house. When the debate opened republican applications on file footed up seven thousand five hundred and were at the disposal of the majority, and the twelve hours allotted to the democracy will be occupied. Thus far there has been a great deal of threshing of old straw.

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ANOTHER ASSESSMENT LAW VOID

Much interest was awakened awhile ago by a United States supreme court decision knocking out the front-foot assessment plan of paying for street paving in an Ohio case. The decision held that the exaction from the owner of private property of the cost of a public improvement in substantial excess of the special benefits accruing to him is, to the extent of such excess, a taking under the guise of taxation of private property for public use without compensation, and that therefore it is unlawful. The decision put a quietus on paying in Iowa for similar laws.

Now the federal court at Indianapolis has knocked out the Indiana Barrett law, which is similar to the Iowa law, being based on the "front-foot" plan. A review of the Barrett law provisions and the decision follow:

The law provided for a front-foot assessment of the cost of construction, and the prices for asphalt, block and brick roadways ranged from \$5 to \$7.50 per front foot, and the total cost to the forty-foot lot owned was from \$200 to \$300. Two years later the law was amended so as to relieve the city from payment for that part of the street which was represented by a crossing or intersection of streets, and this cost was prorated among all the property owners along the line of improvement.

Other amendments carried the provisions of the law to other cities, and for five years or more all improvements have been made under the law. Under its provisions the improvement could be paid for in cash or in a term of ten years, bonds being issued on the property which abutted on the improved street and being paid in installments with interest at 6 per cent.

The practical working of this law was to compel the man who owned a vacant lot to pay as great a proportion of the cost of the improvements as did the owner of a lot on which a residence or a business block stood. And so it frequently happened that a lot which would not sell for more than \$1,500 or \$2,000 was assessed equally with a piece of property that would sell for ten times as much, the only things being equal, as between the two, being the front-foot measurements. And so it might occur that a lot 200 feet deep and forty feet front paid no more for the street improvement than one 100 feet deep with the same frontage, though the number of square feet of ground and the consequent value were disproportionate.

The great injustice of the law was made more manifest, however, when the cross streets came to be improved. For the frontage on the north and south street the owner of a corner lot paid the same as his neighbor, but when the cross street was improved and the cost was assessed on the same basis, the amount often reached \$1,000, and thus placed a burden of from 25 to 40 per cent of the value of the lot upon it for the mere convenience of a street which the whole public was privileged to use and which it did use a great deal more than the man who was taxed so outrageously to make it.

In number of instances parties have been forced to sell their property because they could see no way of meeting the debt thus forced upon them. While the law has thus burdened many persons beyond what they were able to bear, it has been the means of beautifying many of the cities and towns and has provided permanent streets that would never have been made under any other system, and especially under one that would require such improvements to be paid for out of the funds raised by general taxation.

This was the status of affairs here and in other cities when the authority of Marion determined to improve the main thoroughfare in that city. The improvement was ordered under the Barrett law, and the cost was assessed upon all the front feet. James Henry owned 1,000 feet which abutted on the proposed improvement, and part of this land was not worth more than \$1 per front foot, while none of it was worth more than \$8.50, and the whole not worth the \$5,000 which would be assessed against it.

One peculiar feature of the Barrett law, as recently amended is that, where land is surrendered rather than pay the assessment and its sale does not bring the amount, the adjacent property for a certain extent is assessed. Mr. Henry believed that the improvement would be practical confiscation of his property, and he filed suit in the federal court, setting up the facts of the proposed improvement, the value of his land, and asked for a restraining order to prevent the council from carrying out the plan.

Judge Baker issued the restraining order and in his decision in the case referred to a decision of the United States supreme court in which that body declared that a front-foot assessment, which failed to take into consideration the special benefits, was violative of the federal constitution in that it deprived the owner of his property without due process of law. In other words, the supreme court of the United States held that the front-foot assessment is illegal and void, and that the only valid assessment is that which distributes the burdens of street improvements in proportion to the benefits that the property receives.

The decision of Judge Baker, therefore, declares that the proposed assessment against the property of James Henry in Marion is unconstitutional, and it follows that the Barrett law, on which the assessment is based, becomes null and void.

This decision was followed almost immediately by a very interesting and important sequel. When it was handed down an asphalt company was engaged in improving Twenty-first street, for several squares. This is an outlying street and each lot upon it will be made to bear an expense of from \$750 to \$900, and in the cases where lots are unimproved this cost will be nearly if not quite as much as some of the lots are worth. Fifteen of these property owners at once filed suit to prevent the collection of the assessment upon the property and, following the line of the federal court decision, they charge that all proceedings which have been undertaken by the board of public works are null and void and in conflict with the United States constitution, which declares that property shall not be taken without due process of law.

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