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RIVER IMPROVEMENT.

HARDLY any issue now before the people of California is more important or more pressing than that of the proper improvement of the Sacramento River. Every year of neglect entails a heavy loss to property-owners, while adequate remedial measures would bring about benefits of incalculable value.

The salient feature of the issue is that the condition of the river does not remain constant. Where nothing adequate is done in the way of improvement the conditions become worse. The river bed is becoming more and more elevated, and as a consequence the surrounding lands are more and more exposed to submersion. Unless something be done to maintain a clear, deep channel to the sea the stream that ought to form a river fit for navigation of large steamers will eventually become shallow, tortuous and difficult of navigation, while its waters will spread out over thousands of acres that ought to be among the most profitable of the State.

It has been stated that the bottom of the river at Sacramento is now higher than the low water line of 1854. That is an illustration of the rapidity of the elevating process that is going on continuously, and nothing in the way of prophetic forecast is needed to perceive that unless artificial means are provided for keeping the stream open the time will come when along a large part of its course there will be a submerged area of vast extent, the reclamation of which at some future time will entail an enormous expense.

It is evident that the work of river improvement cannot be left to the counties through which it flows. It is a task for the State and for the Federal Government. Primarily it rests upon the State, for we cannot afford to sit in idleness and suffer loss year after year while waiting for an adequate appropriation from the Federal Government. In fact, the best way to obtain Federal aid is to do something for ourselves, and accordingly the Legislature should deal with the subject in a broad and statesmanlike way at this session.

The objection that the improvement of the river would benefit individuals and would virtually amount to the expenditure of public money for private gain is of little account. Every judicious act of governmental authority benefits the individuals who make up the community. It would not be judicious legislation if it did not have that effect. In this case the number of persons to be benefited would include well nigh every resident of the State. Certainly the advantages resulting from a comprehensive scheme of improvement would not be confined to the holders of lands along the river banks, and therefore there is no justification for the charge that it is designed for private advantage only.

It is to be borne in mind, moreover, that the property-owners and the river counties have already done much to guard against the danger of floods. In a recent article on the subject Mr. Peter Cook of Rio Vista says: "The landholder suffered the extreme penalty for a neglect of river improvement, and was still taxed for the necessities of a modern community, government, education and protection of infant industries. Private activity is a direct proof that State policy is not urged in the interest of private ownership, for in the last eleven months an extensive and unusually excellent reclamation has been attempted, within a radius of twelve miles, with Rio Vista as a center. Two hundred thousand dollars has been expended. Of this extensive work nothing will be permanent until the obstruction between this point and the bay is cleared."

It is unquestionably high time for California to grapple with the problem in earnest. The river itself is a most valuable possession to the State, and were it rightly maintained would be a source of even greater value through the increased transportation facilities it would afford. Left neglected, however, it will cause an increasing loss every year. The improvement bill now before the Legislature has been rid of the one feature to which valid objection was made. As it now stands it merits the support of all who are interested in the advancement of the State.

Our State legislators want to receive from the State a salary of one thousand dollars for each session of the Legislature. Men with high ambitions and little ability are generally willing to accept less.

The Sultan of Morocco is reported to have captured the rebels with coin, and he is now doubtless devising means to tax them heavily enough to get his money back before the next outbreak.

THE OAKLAND CONTEST.

OAKLAND is just now the scene of one of the most interesting municipal campaigns in the history of the State. The issues involved are of such pressing importance to the voters that ordinary partisanship in politics has been laid aside and new alignments made. No less than six parties took part in the primary elections, but when the nominations were made it was found that the pressure of public sentiment had brought about something very different from a six-sided fight. In short, the great mass of the citizens outside the ranks of prohibitionists, socialists and other doctrinaires have virtually ranged themselves into but two parties and are making a contest on strictly local issues.

In a situation of this kind, with such important interests at stake, the people of Oakland are to be congratulated on having a chance to elect to the office of Mayor a man like Warren Olney, backed by a strong ticket for subordinate offices. They are also to be congratulated upon the fact that the support given him rises above partisanship, for he has not only the Republican nomination but that of the Municipal League and the Democracy as well.

Mr. Olney deserves the remarkable indorsement that has been given him by this nomination from three parties. He has been a resident of Oakland for upward of thirty years, and while he has never before been a candidate for office he has ever been noted as a citizen of marked public spirit, never neglectful of his political duties. As a lawyer he ranks among the foremost in the State, and enjoys a reputation of which any man might be justly proud.

Of Mr. Olney's fitness for the office of Mayor and of his ability to serve the people well and faithfully in the settlement of the local problems involved in the present contest there can be no question. He has given evidence of that by the service he has already rendered as a member of the citizens' committee on water supply, and can be counted on to manifest in office the same firmness and efficiency he displayed in dealing with the issues he was at that time called upon to meet.

Like ourselves, the people of Oakland have a water problem, and they have reached the conclusion that the time has come for settling it, and settling it right. In the past controversies over water rates have filled the city with scandals, and effort after effort to provide a remedy for notorious evils failed. It was for the purpose of providing for a thorough investigation of the whole subject that the citizens' committee was appointed. Their recommendations precipitated the issue that is now being fought out, and logically Mr. Olney, who was one of the leading members of the committee, leads the fight for the people against the old forces of corruption.

It is significant of the high estimation in which Mr. Olney is held by men of all parties in Oakland and of the unassailable position he holds on the water question that his opponents, having no argument whatever to urge against him, have set the wild yellow liars of the coast to shouting that he is the candidate of the water company. Were Mr. Olney a candidate before a constituency that does not know him such roorbacks might do him an injury. Fortunately Oakland knows him about as well as he knows Oakland. His personal acquaintance is large, for he is a man who knows how to make and retain friendships, but his reputation is far wider than the circle of those who come into personal relations with him, and that reputation is not likely to be affected in the minds of any considerable number of his fellow citizens by anything the campaign liar may print or speak.

In short, Oakland has a very serious problem on her hands. It is going to be no easy matter to find a safe solution of the difficulties attending the establishment of an adequate water system for the city, and even when such a solution has been found it will be no light task to bring about its adoption. For that work there is needed in the Mayor's office a man of public spirit, business ability, sterling integrity and unflinching firmness. It is therefore fortunate that the right man has been forthcoming. In presenting Mr. Olney as candidate for Mayor the Republicans of Oakland have served their party well by serving the city well, and the Democrats and the Municipal Leaguers deserve credit for their cordial indorsement of him.

Accidents on naval vessels are not uncommon, but the fact that within a space of three weeks there were mishaps to the Massachusetts, the Puritan and the Boston has led the bean-eaters to believe their State has a hoodoo in the navy.

NEW YORK WATER WASTE.

FROM New York comes an official report on the waste of energy caused by the irregular flow of rivers that is of interest to California since it bears upon a problem that is of far more importance to us than to the New Yorkers. In fact, while water conservation will undoubtedly be beneficial in New York, it is absolutely essential to many parts of California, and consequently the information compiled by the Eastern State will be helpful in solving a big problem of our own.

A water storage commission was appointed in New York in 1902 to investigate the causes of floods and the overflow of rivers and streams and devise remedies for the evil. Since that time it has been engaged in gathering data upon which it has now made a report. From a summary given in the press it appears that the report estimates the damage done in New York last year by floods at about \$3,000,000 at the lowest. In addition it is stated that upward of 200,000 acres of good land are kept permanently out of cultivation because they are subject to frequent overflows. These evils are caused wholly by the irregular flow of the streams, and can be remedied only by devising some means of storing the waters during the flood seasons, so as to maintain in them a steady flow all the year round.

The storage of the waters would not be a loss to the State in any respect, since the reservoirs would provide a water power sufficiently valuable to more than offset the cost of constructing and maintaining them. It is stated, for example, that at the time of highest flood the Genesee River has, at a given point, a maximum flow of 40,000 cubic feet a second, while in the dry seasons it has a minimum flow of only 300 feet at the same point. There are now established along the streams factories and other works having an aggregate force of 23,000 horsepower. Owing to the irregularity of the stream the water power is not constant and has to be supplemented by steam power; but if the water were properly conserved it would furnish more than enough power to run the mills steadily all through the year, thus saving the expenditures now required for fuel to generate steam.

Reviewing the subject generally the report estimates that with proper storage there would be saved to the State an efficient power on the Genesee River equal to 450,000 tons of coal annually, on Black River

a power equal to 800,000 tons of coal, and on the Hudson a power equal to 2,000,000 tons. An annual saving of that kind would more than compensate the cost of providing the storage reservoirs. The commission therefore recommends that the State undertake the conservation of the flood waters by the construction of adequate reservoirs, and that the cost be assessed upon corporations and persons who are benefited by the work.

It will be noted that the estimates given deal with but a small portion of the waterways of New York. They are sufficient, however, to show that the waste of waters entails a heavy loss upon the State every year. We can draw from it the conclusion that the loss in California is also great—perhaps even greater than that in New York. It will therefore be worth our while to give attention to the New York plan of dealing with the issue. In these days of industrial struggle no people can afford to let its natural powers run to waste. It is to be borne in mind, moreover, that we need our waters not only for manufacturing power but for irrigation. We shall thus gain a far greater benefit than New York by conserving them.

British custom-house officials are reported to have discovered that cigars are being smuggled into that country concealed in bales of hay. No such incidents occur in this country, for the practice with our smugglers is to conceal hay, cabbages and other farm truck in the form of cigars.

THE LABEL BILL.

OBJECTIONS urged by commercial and industrial associations against the label bill now before the Legislature are unanswerable. The bill is altogether too sweeping and drastic in its terms, and, moreover, the conditions are such that it is doubtful if California or any other State acting singly can afford to undertake legislation of that kind. The commercial relations of the various States are so closely interwoven that whatever is to be done with respect to proper labeling, no matter how moderately it may be devised, must be done by the Federal Government and be made operative everywhere. Otherwise one State would be handicapped and its industries exposed to ruinous competition from abroad.

The substance of the bill and a summary of the objections thereto were published in The Call yesterday, and it is not necessary to extensively restate them. Suffice it to say that the bill is so broadly drawn and its requirements with respect to labeling are so drastic that the protesting associations are quite justified in saying: "Under the proposed act every one of the millions of cans, bottles and other containers of fruits and other products made in this State would have to be stamped as specified, and likewise the ordinary labels covering these containers, as well as the boxes in which they are packed. Many parts of a battleship, or machinery, wagons and other articles made here in part would have to carry the prescribed name and address. The requirement would apply to every brick made in the State and to other articles of clay, and even to a spool of thread selling for one cent. The cost of compliance would in many cases be prohibitive of manufacture, and in other cases burdensome and oppressive, and the value of many thousands of dollars' worth of labels already prepared for use in the ordinary course of business and now on hand with our manufacturers would be destroyed upon the passage of the bill."

Even if the more radical features of the bill were toned down or wholly eliminated the measure would still be objectionable. It is to be borne in mind that a very large proportion of the goods handled in this country are marked with the name of the firm that handles them, or with some brand or trade name which that firm extensively advertises. To require the labeling of all goods with the producer's name would prevent California producers from complying with that custom of our trade, and merchants desiring goods with their firm name on the packages would have to go elsewhere for them. There would thus be a heavy loss to California industry without any compensating gain.

In fact, the objectors to the bill are quite right in saying: "Should this bill specifically recite that no article made elsewhere and brought into the State shall be required to be so labeled, and that no person selling such goods in our markets shall be punished, but that all articles made in our own State shall be thus labeled, and that any person making or selling them without the required label shall be fined and imprisoned, it would more clearly define the practical working of the measure, which seeks to brand the manufacturers of our State as criminals for doing what every manufacturer outside the State is permitted to do and cannot be prevented from doing."

That is the whole case in a nutshell. That there are evils resulting from false labeling of goods of general consumption is unquestionable. California suffers from it as much as any other State, and perhaps more, but the evil cannot be remedied by State action. It is a matter on which the General Government only is capable of effective legislation. The subject is now under consideration by Congress, and it will be well for the Legislature to leave it to that body.

Our local Board of Education has placed itself on record as eager to secure for the city handsome and substantial schoolhouses. This sudden and unexpected devotion to public interest comes naturally as a severe shock to the community.

The reckless manner in which Montana legislators trifle with fate reminds one of the temerity of a drunken man reeling with a lighted candle around a keg of gunpowder. The Montana Legislature has set itself emphatically against woman suffrage.

Wine statistics from France report that the area in vines in 1902 was 5000 acres less than in 1901 and the wine output was 405,466,270 gallons less. The value of the crop is estimated at \$150,000,000, as against a value of \$170,000,000 for the preceding year. The decrease is attributed to a condition of the wine market which led some proprietors to leave their vineyards uncultivated for the year.

The Samoan chiefs recently raised their voices in murderous English and gave thanks to the American Government, personified, as they believe, in President Roosevelt. Perhaps these ingenuous children of the southern seas are giving thanks because they are not worse off than they are; there is some wisdom in that attitude.

Our Filipino fellow citizens are plucking the feathers of the eagle again and blood has flowed. This scheme of forcing a fellow to recognize the blessings of liberty and the glories of civilization is becoming a trifle monotonous, not to say hazardous.

A man in this city was charged the other day with involuntary manslaughter. This peculiar combination of unconscious criminality ought to strike the ordinary observer as something new under the sun.

WILL ENTERTAIN CLUB WOMEN WITH "DIXIE DARKY DIALECT"

MISS ALEXANDER has announced an afternoon of "Dixie darky dialect" to be given at Century Hall Tuesday, February 17, which is attracting considerable interest in society. The names of prominent people who are acting as patronesses and working toward the success of the affair are alone sufficient assurance that the exclusive set will attend, to say nothing of the ability of the young entertainer. A feature of the programme will be old darky church songs of the colored folk, which Miss Alexander has had an opportunity to learn in the South and presents with natural grace and talent. The patronesses are Mrs. W. F. Herrin, Mrs. Monroe Salisbury, Mrs. Seiden S. Wright, Mrs. Sidney M. Van Wyck, Mrs. William Alvord, Mrs. Lovell White, Mrs. F. C. Sanborn and Mrs. William Wheeler. The patrons are Raphael Weil and H. L. Tevis.

One of the largest and most delightful card parties of the season was given by Mrs. E. Jennings of 1901 Page street at the Sorosis Club yesterday afternoon. The floral decorations were lavish and afforded an artistic setting for the exquisitely gowned guests. The cardroom was decorated with jonquills, arranged with a profusion of foliage. The parlors were done in pink roses and violets and carnations predominated in the reception-room. Mrs. Jennings, becomingly gowned in black and white, received and entertained her guests most hospitably. Encore was the game, and handsome prizes were awarded to the fortunate players.

Mr. and Mrs. John Simpson have issued cards for a reception on Thursday, February 19, at the Hotel Vallejo street, complimentary to Bishop and Mrs. Sidney C. Partridge (nee Simpson). Bishop and Mrs. Partridge will arrive in this city to-morrow for a short visit, as the Bishop contemplates to resume the work in his diocese in Central Japan. The couple will enjoy a short rest in the Simpson home, having traveled constantly for the last four months throughout the Eastern States.

Mrs. Chauncey R. Winslow gave a charming dinner last evening at her home on Pacific avenue. The decorations were in excellent taste and the guests were pleasantly entertained. Covers were laid for fifteen.

An enjoyable dinner was given by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Williams at their home on Van Ness avenue Wednesday evening. The guests of honor were Dr. J. Wilson Shields. Covers were laid for twelve. Those present were: Dr. and Mrs. Shields, Dr. and Mrs. George Shields, Dr. and Mrs. Ernest Johnstone, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dunphy, the Rev. and Mrs. William Carson Shaw.

Mrs. Pritchett of Boston was guest of honor at a pretty luncheon given by Mrs. Pinckard yesterday. Among those present were Mrs. Burt and Mrs. John Johns, Mrs. C. P. Pomeroy, Mrs. Henry Wagner, Mrs. Frank Newlands and Mrs. A. B. Williamson.

Mrs. Frederick W. Tallant was hostess at a delightful luncheon yesterday, com-

NANCE O'NEIL AGAIN ESSAYS HEDDA GABLER

The Ibsenites had another innings yesterday afternoon at the Grand Opera-house, when Nance O'Neil, at urgent request, repeated her striking performance of Hedda Gabler. The cast was identical with that of last week, and, save that greater familiarity with the play made the piece go much more smoothly and that Mrs. Carr was laboring under the disadvantage of a bad cold the performance was of the same satisfying caliber as at the first matinee.

Miss O'Neil's Hedda is a remarkable achievement, ranking with her Judith in its completeness and consistency. These are positively the last nights here of the gifted young woman, and in the following performance she takes her leave. To-night grand testimonial, "Magda"; Saturday matinee and evening, "Judith"; Sunday evening, farewell performance, "Lady Ingre of Ostrat."

The eminent Irish tragedian, Charles Erin Verner, who has arrived in San Francisco and begins an engagement of two weeks at the Grand Opera-house on Monday night, will present his own drama, "Robert Emmet," based upon the ending of the immortal patriot, as his first offering. Mr. Verner has recently returned from England and before his leave-taking he was in frequent consultation with the leaders of the Irish Nationalist movement, among whom is Michael Davitt, a close personal friend of Mr. Verner.

The actor declares that a day when the Irish Parliament will hold its sessions in Dublin is not far away, as the British people are beginning to realize that the only way to settle the Irish question is to settle it to the satisfaction of the Irish people themselves. During his tour around the world Mr. Verner was the recipient of many marked courtesies and in Melbourne he was presented with a public address and testimonial. The actor filled an engagement at the Grand Opera-house on a previous occasion and made himself a favorite with theater-goers. He is the author of a number of successful dramas, among which are to be mentioned "Shamus O'Brien," "Robert Emmet" and "High Treason." The latter is founded upon the life and trial of Colonel Arthur Lynch, whose trial for high treason created such widespread interest.

FILES CHARGES AGAINST CHIEF HEALTH INSPECTOR

William Gans Asks Civil Service Commission to Investigate Dr. Hassler's Actions.

William Gans, a butcher at 843 McAllister street, yesterday filed charges with the Civil Service Commission against Chief Sanitary Inspector William C. Hassler. Gans alleges that Hassler is incompetent, having had no experience to enable him to discharge his duties properly; that on December 19 Hassler used violent and abusive language reflecting on Gans' religious belief; that Hassler caused the arrest of Gans without cause, and that Hassler refused to mark for identification certain veal taken from his butcher shop. Gans also charges that Hassler does not devote his entire time to his position, but continues in the private practice of medicine.

Californians in New York.

NEW YORK, Feb. 12.—The following Californians are registered at the hotels: San Francisco—Mrs. Redington, Miss Redington, H. Maxwell C. O. Batter, at Manhattan; S. B. Toby, at Holland; J. F. Parkinson, at Albert; F. G. Torrey, at Everett; Miss Dixie, at Rossmore; Haviland, at Grand Union; Mrs. L. A. Williams, at Hoffman. Los Angeles—S. B. Church, at Continental. San Jose—Mrs. S. Hatcher, at Earlington; G. W. Pratt and wife, at Murray Hill.



MISS ALEXANDER IMPERIAL STUDIO PHOTO

pillory to Miss Helen Dean. Pink roses were effectively arranged for decoration. The invited guests were: Mrs. J. D. Spreckels Jr., Mrs. Danforth Boardman, Miss Bourn, Miss Wilson, Miss Ethyl Hager, Miss Elena Robinson, Miss Katherine Herrin, Miss Rena Maillard, Miss Genevieve King, Miss Hazel King, Miss Pearl Landers and Miss Olive Holbrook.

The Contemporary Club held its regular session on Monday, February 9. After a parliamentary drill the president, Mrs. Florence Kendall, gave a report of the second convention of the California Federation of Women's Clubs held in Fresno recently.

A committee reported a set of resolutions of condolence on the death of Mrs. W. G. Smith, a valued member of the club, which were accepted, and a copy ordered sent to the relatives of the deceased.

Later those present heard a lecture by Miss Ball on "Art Museums," demonstrating their use and necessities as educators of the people in introducing the artistic into the homely details of every day life. A social hour was then enjoyed, during which refreshments were served.

PERSONAL MENTION.

Dr. E. S. Hawker of Kansas City is at the Occidental.

H. E. Muir, a hotel proprietor of Willets, is at the Grand.

E. L. Weber, a well-known attorney of Napa, is at the Grand.

Dr. A. W. McCornack of Fort Bragg is registered at the Grand.

M. E. Sanborn, former District Attorney of Yuba City, is at the Lick.

J. T. Mulgrew, proprietor of Skaggs Springs, is registered at the Lick.

Former Bank Commissioner John Markley of Geyserville is among the arrivals at the Lick.

Charles T. O'Hara, representing William A. Brady's "Lover's Lane" company, is at the California.

William Beckman, a banker of Sacramento and a former Railroad Commissioner, is at the Grand.

John Martin Fulton, district freight and passenger agent of the Southern Pacific Company at Reno, who recently married the daughter of J. E. Stubbs, president of the University of Nevada, is at the Occidental with his bride.

Ex. strong hoarhound candy, Townsend's. Fire etched valentine boxes, Townsend's.

Townsend's California glace fruit and candies, 50c a pound, in artistic fire-etched boxes. A nice present for Eastern friends. 630 Market st., Palace Hotel building.

Special information supplied daily to business houses and public men by the Press Clipping Bureau (Allen's), 220 California street. Telephone Main 1042.

As there will be no sale in the windy season, please call now. Genuine eye-glasses, 25 to 50 cents, at 814 Fourth street, front of barber and grocery.



SOCIETY YOUNG WOMAN WHO ANNOUNCES AFTERNOON OF DIXIE DARKY DIALECT.

FRENCH SONGS ARE BEST SUNG BY DE LUSSAN

Zelle de Lussan's second recital found the captivating singer in fine feather last night at Steinway Hall. As well as De Lussan can sing she sang, and in some things this means well, indeed. Dashing, dramatic, picturesque, her style is essentially popular, with a well-defined and rather narrow range of effectiveness. Commonly it is not an artistic style, serious faults of phrasing, enunciation and tempo being not rare with the singer. She will break a phrase, chop out a half-measure, pronounce "before" "be-fo-hore" and "sich," and then drag you into applause with a little temperamental magic and a bewitching smile. It's not fair! She looked tremendously handsome last night, by the way, in a pink and glitter gown.

The French songs by all odds are the best part of De Lussan's program. The "Styrienne" from "Mignon" went finely, and a "Reverie" by Hahn and pretty little "Chanson Legere" (Erlanger) both pleased. The Gypsy "Lili" evoked an encore that brought out the Yradier "La Paloma," that was stunningly sung. Parts of the "Vedra Carino" (Mozart) came very prettily, and the favorite "Habenera," as usual, charmed. Mr. Froman's accompaniment was acceptable; his solos rather distressing.

The last recital is dated to take place to-morrow afternoon, and a popular programme has been provided.

BLANCHE FARTINGTON. Theater Folks: Will find the Midnight Express a convenience. Leave Ferry Depot at 11:25 p. m. for San Joaquin Valley as far as Bakersfield.

"What is a Yankee notion, Pop?" "Eating pie for breakfast, my son."—Yonkers Statesman.

... READ ... The Leopard's Spots By THOMAS DIXON JR. IN THE SUNDAY CALL FEBRUARY 22 This sensational problem play complete in three issues of the SUNDAY CALL February 22d, March 1st and 8th. Read The "Colonel Kate" Papers.