

The San Francisco Call

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WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT? ASK THE GOUGING PUBLIC SERVICE CORPORATIONS

THREE of San Francisco's public service corporations are asking the people of this city, "What are you going to do about it?" The question is put with an air of insolent assurance that the people won't do anything about it, because they can't.

The three corporations are: The United Railroads, which, by means of an absurd and palpably illegal fiction, seeks to force the city to give it for nothing a very important privilege which it overlooked when it was looting the public of trolley franchises through the thieves of the Schmitz boodle board; the gas company, which, having enjoined the city from enforcing the rate duly fixed by the supervisors, proceeds, pendente lite, to make new rates of its own, thus usurping a function which belongs absolutely to the municipal legislative body; the water company, which, having enjoined the city from enforcing the rate made by the supervisors, is boosting the bills presented to its helpless consumers, and, like the gas company, notifying them that its present collections from them are only in part payment, and that it hopes to be able to squeeze them still harder a little later on.

Two of these corporations, the United Railroads and the gas company, stand before the public accused by indictment of bribing public servants against the public interest. Two of these corporations, the water company and the gas company, are squeezing the public, and seeking to squeeze it still harder, through the agency of the courts, using for that purpose the process of injunction. It is a familiar process with the water company, which quit boodling and went to lawyering a half dozen years ago; the gas company kept on boodling till it was caught, and then followed the water company's safer plan.

The gas company's manifestly illegal rate making is done under the pretense of a bond of \$150,000 guaranteeing that it will pay back any difference in favor of the consumers that may come from the decision on its injunction case. The bond and the guarantee are worthless. The gas company admits as much when it announces that large consumers will be charged lower rates than small consumers, these lower rates going as low as 10 cents a thousand feet less than the 85 cent rate, which is tied up by the temporary injunction. The average citizen must pay \$1 a thousand, and the company wants to charge him \$1.23. If the supervisors' rate is upheld in the federal courts the big consumer will have no rebate coming to him, and the little consumer will get a polite invitation to sue if he wants to get back his few dollars of overcharge.

The city attorney has done nothing to stop the gas company's unlawful gouging; he says he can't do anything—that there is nothing to do. He confesses that his office is unprepared.

The city attorney has done nothing toward destroying the illegal fiction by which the United Railroads is whipping Sutter street and other property owners into line to support its grab for an absolute monopoly of lower Market street. He says he has not been asked to do anything, and maybe he is correct, but The Call, speaking for the people, asks him now at least to find out what he can do.

The people are looking at the increased figures and the insolent red ink notifications on their gas and water bills. They are beginning to see the brazen and brutal infamy of the Sutter street trolley grab. Pretty soon they will demand a better answer from the city attorney, and they will answer the three gouging public service corporations by doing something about it.

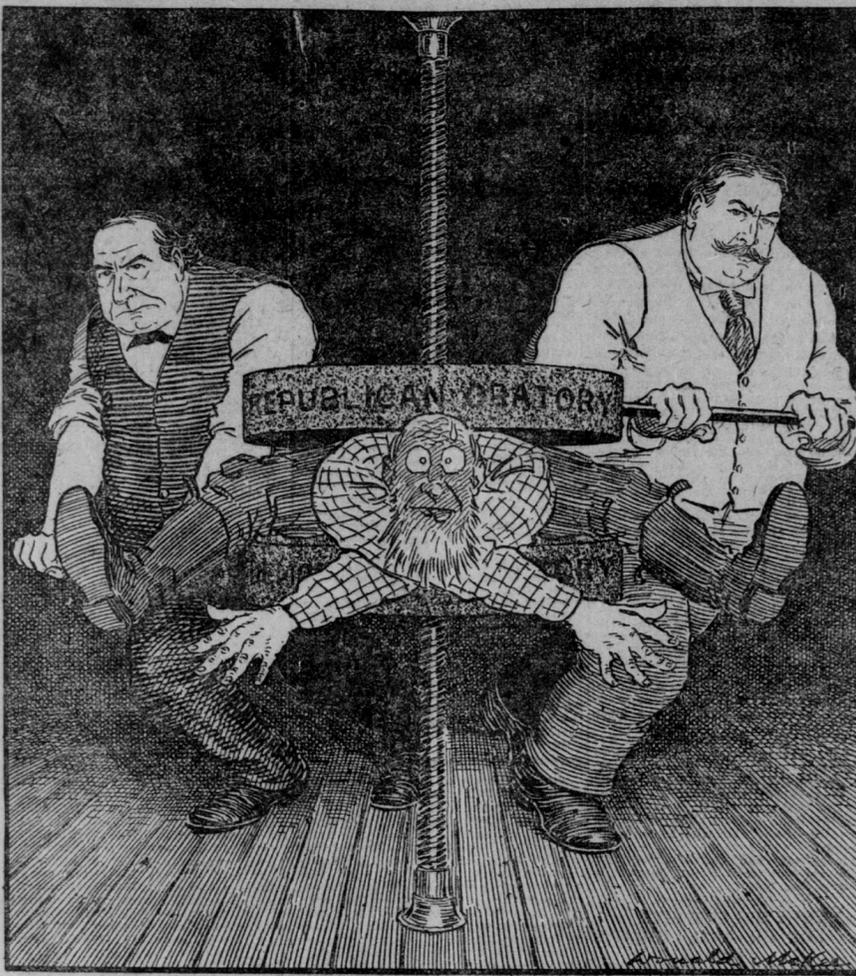
INFRINGES GENERAL STONE'S PATENT

FAR be it from The Call to discourage the longings that find expression in the demand for direct primaries as the best means of bringing government closer to the people, but when a cheap bunko game is worked by conjuring with the name and not the thing it becomes a duty to lift the cover under which a thimble rigger operates. We believe that General Stone is entitled to the dubious credit of having invented this form of political thimble rigging by which the heedless were persuaded that the advantages and privileges of the direct primary were placed at their service. We believe that General Stone did hold a primary that he described as "direct," but an indifferent public did not take much stock in the results, which were mostly private and confidential to General Stone.

Now it is with a sense of poignant disappointment that we find Mr. Hearst copying the rather transparent methods of General Stone's private primary. Mr. Hearst has called upon his 176 trusty followers in San Francisco to take part in a sort of political picnic that he describes as "a direct primary." As guarantee of good faith he announces that the ballots of the faithful 176 will be deposited in "a locked postoffice box," an assurance that might be more encouraging if the key to the box were not held in hands appointed by Mr. Hearst's proprietary organization. It seems hardly fair to steal General Stone's flim flam politics, and, indeed, it scarcely seems worth stealing, but when this silly trick is held up by Mr. Hearst as a patriotic departure from the practice of "the party bosses" the argument should be enough to impel General Stone to uproarious hilarity. Mr. Hearst's plan for a confidential primary was first used to promote Mr. Herrin's purposes. The confidential primary is an instrument on which the man who holds the key can play any tune he pleases.

All this explanation is not important, perhaps, and finds its only purpose in the common duty to expose a noisy humbug. Mr. Hearst's confidential primary will not change the fate of nations,

The Middle West



Answers to Queries

SCHOOLS—Subscriber, San Mateo, Cal. How may a new school be established in a section of a county where the schoolhouse is three miles away from where a number of children live?
The school law says that "No new school district shall be established at any other time than between the 1st of October and the 10th of February, nor at any time unless the parents or guardians of at least 15 census children, residents of such proposed new district, and residing at a greater distance than two miles, by a traveled road, from a public school in the district in which said parents or guardians reside, present a petition to the superintendent of schools, setting forth the boundaries of the new district asked for; provided that the distance of two miles may be dispensed with if the petition is signed by the parents or guardians of 50 or more census children residents of a district containing more than 500 census children."

OCEAN CARRYING TRADE EAST AND WEST

NEW YORK, like San Francisco, is threatened with a loss of ocean carrying trade, due, it is charged in both instances, to action of the railroads. Montreal is getting most of the Atlantic grain shipping trade because rail rates from Buffalo are higher than the traffic will bear. San Francisco is threatened with a loss of oriental trade because the railroads do not want to comply with the rule made by the interstate commerce commission that they must publish in segregated form the several charges for land and ocean transportation. The result of this attitude of the railroads is likely to be that the bulk of eastern shipments to the orient will go by the Suez canal route. The railroads appear to be indifferent as to the future of this trade and declare that it is of little value to them. President Ripley of the Santa Fe is quoted:

Oriental business hardly ever has been profitable except for the time during the Russian-Japanese war. In ordinary times there is nothing in it for either the American steamship lines or for the railroads which have been carrying the freight in and out. I venture to say there is not a steamship company between the Pacific ports and the orient which is making operating expenses except the concerns which are subsidized by the Japanese government and possibly the Canadian Pacific lines, which, I believe, have substantial encouragement from the British government.

When the commission issues its order that the proportionate rates inland should be published and that a three days' notice should be given in case of any rate reductions, and 10 days' notice in case of a raise, the railroads felt that the prize would not be worth the candle.

The railroad people contend that in order to do this business at all they must be given a free hand absolutely, so that they can meet the fluctuations of ocean competition at five minutes' notice. The argument is entitled to respectful consideration by congress. If the rule is insisted on the alternative will be subsidies for shipping unless we are prepared to see the American marine driven out of business on the Pacific.

World's Visible Supply of Coffee Is Steadily Diminishing

The past, present and future of coffee was discussed in a Rio de Janeiro publication recently, from which the following statistics are taken:
Let us see what the elements are that will go to form crops during the next quadrennium, 1909-1912, and the average annual crop that may be looked for.
Since 1902 no more coffee trees have been planted in Sao Paulo, and as it takes four to six years for coffee to bear, the only possible element of production are the trees already in existence, all or almost all of which are in bearing at present. The last trees planted will be at their best and in full bearing in the course of the current quadrennium, while the influence of replanting exhausted areas, as well as of the intensive cultivation lately followed, will also reach its climax during this period. Under such circumstances it seems reasonable to suppose that the annual average production during the next four years, 1909-1912, will be the same as for the previous quadrennium, plus 5 per cent increase from freshly bearing trees, or, in all, about 10,000,000 bags per annum.
Twenty years ago consumption was between 9,000,000 and 10,000,000 bags; ten years later it had risen to 13,000,000, and this year is generally estimated at 17,250,000 bags.
At this rate, at the close of the current quadrennium in 1912, consumption should reach 19,000,000 bags, especially if the official propaganda should be as effective as is expected.
The visible supply of the world on June 30, 1908, will be about 14,000,000 bags. Next year's production is estimated by the well informed Dutch brokers as follows:
Brazil: Santos, 8,350,000; Rio, 2,750,000; Victoria, 300,000; Bahia, 200,000; total, Brazil, 11,500,000. Other countries: Central America, 1,500,000; Colombia and Venezuela, 950,000; Haiti, 350,000; other West Indies, 50,000; East Indies and Java, 697,000; total other countries than Brazil, 3,697,000; grand total, 15,197,000 bags.
Visible supply on June 30, 1908, 14,000,000 bags. Total visible supply on June 30, 1908, and estimated production for the year ended June 30, 1909, being \$26,958,561, against \$28,615,560, an increase of \$1,673,101. Machinery imports for 1907 were \$15,338,072, against \$11,255,380. Of the exports wool shows the very large increase of \$9,386,458 over 1906, and larger exports of coal, meats, silver, hides and sheepskins, tallow, and ores have been made, while gold decreased by \$29,052,643, butter by \$1,749,662, and lumber by \$1,044,395.

Commerce of Australia

The total trade of Australia in 1907 reached the record amount of \$607,249,710. The imports were \$252,495,119; exports, \$354,754,591. Compared with the previous year the imports show an increase of \$54,788,978, and the exports of \$15,495,756.
The increase in imports has been spread over nearly all the leading departments of business. Apparel and dry goods show an increase of \$3,274,437 over 1906. Metal goods have increased considerably, the total under the six headings of galvanized iron, bars, rod, etc., pig iron etc., tin plates, metal manufactures, and tools of trade, being \$26,958,561, against \$28,615,560, an increase of \$1,673,101. Machinery imports for 1907 were \$15,338,072, against \$11,255,380. Of the exports wool shows the very large increase of \$9,386,458 over 1906, and larger exports of coal, meats, silver, hides and sheepskins, tallow, and ores have been made, while gold decreased by \$29,052,643, butter by \$1,749,662, and lumber by \$1,044,395.

Autocrat of the Table

Dr. Weary Wiley threatens to make war on the United States if he does not get his own way

By Edward F. Cahill

DR. HARVEY W. WILEY—weary Wiley—announces that he has "enlisted for the war" to defend pure food. He is the autocrat of the breakfast table and the sole judge of what is pure. That, I think, is not an unfair statement of his position because Dr. Wiley resents the action of Roosevelt in appointing a commission of experts as a court of appeal from Wiley. Indeed he has been doing politics recently at a hole and corner convention of food fad mongers in Michigan, where he threatened to tear the United States up by the roots if he was not given his way.

We need not deny to Wiley the meed of high and useful accomplishment in fighting adulteration, while at the same time we recognize that the man is an extremist and a fanatic. The ancient inquiry, "What is truth?" was no harder to answer than the question, "What is pure food?" Take whisky—not as a drink, but as a basis of argument. No man has ever yet succeeded in defining whisky. I am ready to bet a big red apple that the supreme court of the United States cannot do it any better than they did in defining the measure of value for a railroad and that definition would drive an assessor crazy. In England they have a pure food law like ours or with like purpose, and not very long ago a London magistrate presumed to convict a publican and a sinner of selling impure whisky. The judgment almost caused a rebellion. Who was this upstart official who undertook to say so glibly what was whisky and what was not? The matter was of such high concern that parliament took it up and appointed a royal commission to define whisky. After six months' painful deliberation and examination of witnesses the commissioners gave it up. Neither the constituent ingredients nor the geography of whisky can they define. Listen to them:

If Scotch whisky is to be whisky made in Scotland, then the name can have no meaning for the public, nor can science offer any means of determining whether a given sample was made in Scotland or not. If Scotch whisky is to be whisky of a particular character the difficulty is equally great, because no two Scotch whiskeys are identical. It is, of course, the same with Irish whisky.

The same perplexity attends the question on this side of the water. There are nine and sixty ways of making whisky and the makers contend that every blessed one of them is right. Then a geographical name is often a trade mark. The learned Gudeman asks with scientific scorn, "Is it only in Boston that we can get Boston baked beans?" Is not most of the Scotch whisky made in Peoria, Ill.?

Professor Gudeman, the eminent chemist already quoted, begs mercy for the coal tar dye as a means for enhancing the joys of candy. Perhaps you don't know how your candy is painted red. Gudeman can tell you. Vanilla extract is 61 per cent alcohol and stronger than the whisky of trade, although it is not sold over the bar. Although a favorite disguise for the Demon Rum it is not therefore impure. Few people know that tomato catsup in a state of nature is more gray than red, and like strawberry soda water mostly owes its commercial complexion to coal tar. It is not therefore unwholesome because the dye is harmless. If you insist that the stuff is impure the same objection would lie to the use of pepper and salt. All preservatives, flavoring or coloring matter are foreign bodies and anything that contains them is not pure food.

Having got so far we come to understand that the question is not, What is pure food? but What is wholesome food? The little "pure food law" is a ridiculous misnomer and the attempt to classify eatables and drinkables by any such test is impossible. There is no pure food but peanuts. Is the cold storage egg pure food?

The law says ingredients must not be "poisonous or deleterious to health." The pretended purity test is frankly abandoned and the debatable ground of medical and physiological science is occupied. But these are largely questions of evidence on which as many doctors differ as there are doctors, and this is the reason why Wiley's angry and obstreperous claim to infallibility becomes offensive. I venture to say that when his rulings come to be reviewed in court, as they necessarily must, a large proportion of them will be upset. The only safety for the plain citizen is to let the lawyers devour the doctors.

seller can furnish the outline rules. Generally, the rules that govern whist govern five hundred.

MRS. COLUMBUS—A. F. R. Oakland, Cal. Who was the wife of Christopher Columbus?
His first wife was Dona Felipa, daughter of Bartolomeu Monis de Palestrello, an Italian cavalier who was one of the most distinguished navigators under Prince Henry of Portugal. His second wife was Dona Beatriz.

BECOMES A CITIZEN—M. F. Olema, Cal. Does the wife of an alien who becomes a citizen of the United States become a citizen also?
The fact that the husband is naturalized makes a citizen of his wife and his children if under age at the time.

BURROS—G. B. and E. D. City. What do burros sell for in Plumas county?
The price of burros in that county are not listed in this city. Suggest that you write to some paper in that county.

FIVE HUNDRED—A. G. City. In "five hundred" is it proper for a partner to place a king (in a no trump hand) upon his partner's ace (having other smaller cards) at any stage of the game?
No.

SECOND COOK—F. K. City. What are the duties of a second cook in a caphouse and a hotel?
Those that are assigned him by the first cook. The duties vary in many details in different places.

CRAWFORD—Sub. San Jose, Cal. What is the sex of F. Marion Crawford?
Male.

GALVESTON PLAN—E. B. W. Point Richmond, Cal. What is the Galveston plan of municipal government?
This department has not the space

ARIZONA—Subscriber, City. Who was the first governor of the territory of Arizona?
John N. Goodwin, 1852-65.

Impertinent Question No. 65

What Do You Hear?
For the most original or wittiest answer to this question—the briefer the better—The Call will pay FIVE DOLLARS. For the next five answers The Call will pay ONE DOLLAR EACH. Prize winning answers will be printed next Wednesday and checks mailed to the winners at once. Make your answer short and SEND IT ON A POSTAL CARD to

IMPERTINENT QUESTIONS, THE CALL
Winning Answers to "What's the Use of Talking?"
\$5 prize to William Crichton, Sausalito.
Better talk than write what you have to say, Or you may see it next as "Exhibit A."
\$1 prize to Mrs. Eddy Martin, P. O. box 112, Watsonville.
I love music and can not play the piano.
\$1 prize to F. H. Bryson, 46 East street, city.
Look at Bryan!
\$1 prize to G. S. Gilbert, 120 Sutter street, city.
It kills time between drinks.
\$1 prize to A. E. Rademaker, 100 Newton avenue, Oakland.
To show man's superiority over other animals.
\$1 prize to W. J. Herkenham, 430 Twelfth street, Oakland.
No use; leave it to the "machine."