

The San Francisco Call

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The San Mateo Court House Ring

THE indignation of San Mateo county citizens over the loaning of public funds without interest to local banks is natural, but it is their own fault. If they care so little about the administration of county business that they take no steps to oust from power the Redwood City courthouse ring they may be prepared for graft all along the line. That is just what they get.

Just now the grand jury is busy with the banking exposures, but that is merely a sample case. The tax payers get just the same kind of measure on contracts let by the board of supervisors. No man not in the service of the ring and contributing to its support can get any sort of contract from San Mateo county.

The citizens can stop all this if they will take up the matter with serious purpose, but they need not expect an easy job. The ring is entrenched all along the line and has all kinds of money on which to draw.

In no political division of California is graft so completely organized as in San Mateo county. Legitimate and illegitimate business is made to pay tribute. The banks that get county money for use without paying interest as the law directs are able to contribute a powerful political support. The gamblers, who do a thriving trade under protection of the county authorities, are regularly assessed by the ring. The county judiciary, the district attorney and the sheriff are all chosen by the same influences.

Attorney General Webb does very well to come to the assistance of the tax payers and prosecute the charges made by the grand jury, as it becomes evident that the district attorney can see nothing wrong in the conduct of the treasurer's office. Yet we do not expect to see any very important results from these prosecutions except as a means to direct and organize public opinion in the county. The administration of justice, the calling of juries and other details are altogether in the hands of the ring and they will find means to save their friends somehow.

The really important effect of the exposures should be to stimulate a thorough organization of the honest people in the county to drive the grafters from power. In that sense the attorney general and the grand jury may be doing good public service.

A SORT of literary bureau for the rehabilitation of distressed reputation appears to be in full operation at Seattle and its tone is both heartfelt and excited. At the present moment the literary labors of this curious organization are being strenuously applied on the restoration of Secretary Ballinger's good name. The Call would be sorry to entertain the belief that Mr. Ballinger is in need of such dubious boosting.

Secretary Ballinger's Fool Friends

The French have a proverb which, translated, says he who excuses accuses himself. By way of example, we may quote from an "indorsement" approved by the Seattle chamber of commerce:

If the American people were prepared to believe President Taft a purblind dotard and all his advisers crooks or complacent asses, the recent onslaught of Collier's Weekly might, by their very persistency, bring about that conviction. So far as Secretary Richard A. Ballinger of the interior department is concerned, the ringing indorsement of his official conduct given by the Seattle chamber of commerce and the implicit confidence in his integrity voiced by every reputable publication of the west from the best answer. The ignorant and headstrong within that little circle, from which the attacks upon him emanate, might better face the facts now than be forced later to a more humiliating acknowledgment.

Mr. Ballinger might very well pray to be delivered from his fool friends and their soaring rhetoric. The attack on Ballinger was based on valid grounds—chiefly his connection as attorney with interests seeking to obtain by fraud possession of Alaskan coal lands worth a great many millions. The facts in this regard have never been denied and are, indeed, admitted by Mr. Ballinger; nor could he shelter behind the plea that an attack on him was an attack on Mr. Taft.

But it is right and just to say that Mr. Ballinger has done more by the tenor of his recent report to restore himself to public confidence than all the shouting of silly partisans. By that report and its recommendations Mr. Ballinger puts himself right in line with the most advanced policy of conservation of national resources. If the performance equals the promise Mr. Ballinger will need no better rehabilitation.

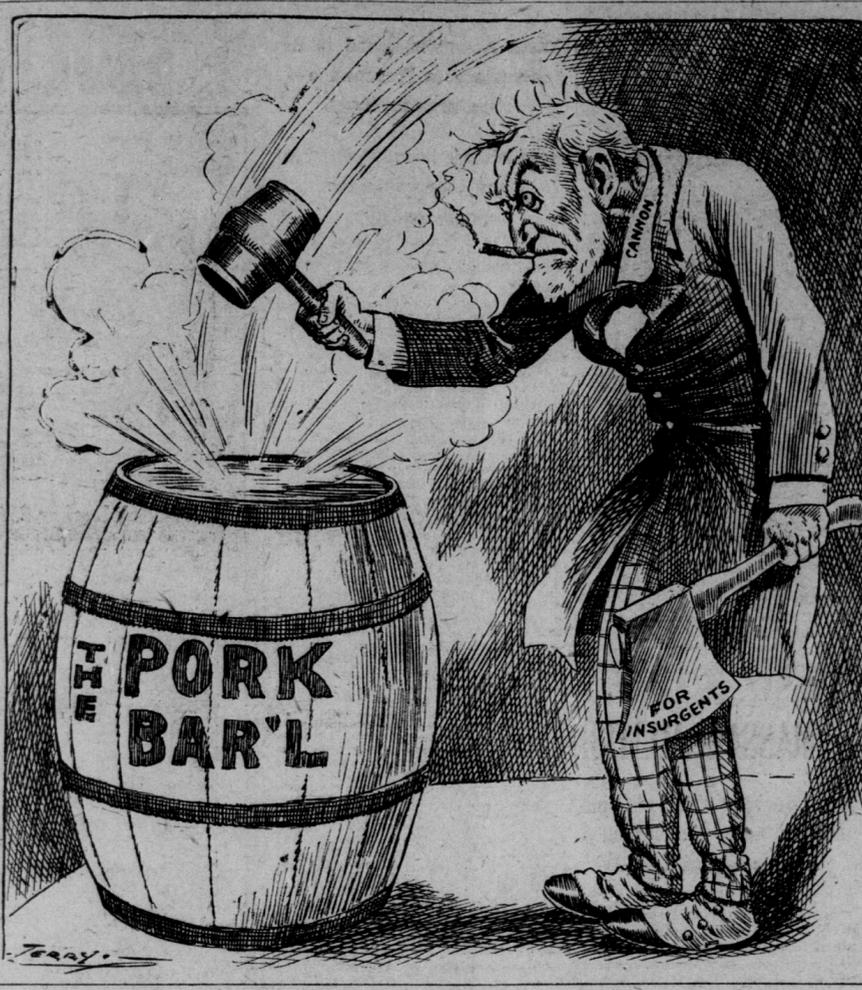
ALL Canada is convulsed by a strange debate whether to build a navy or not to build. It is freely admitted on all sides that the dominion has no enemy and no possible fear of attack except in the remote contingency that a European war might be transferred to its territory. Still there is grave and excited talk among the jingos and imperialists—a noisy tribe—about cruisers and battleships.

But Canada, although on warships bent, has a frugal mind and if a navy is to be built it will only be a little one. It is not at all certain that they will go even to that extent. Hon. Charles Murphy, secretary of state, said that he had found that western Canada was at present thinking more about boxcars than battleships. The venerable Goldwin Smith, who has always exercised a strong influence on the best Canadian sort, expresses himself in this wise:

Militarism In the Wrong Place

Not Canadian was this policy of turning Canada into a war power. No call for it had been heard here. Its birthplace was in the banqueting

Uncle Joe: Now Start Something!



halls, perhaps partly in the commercial circles, of London. Both the interest and honor of Canada call for vigilance on the part of her people. The argument of most advanced advocates of Canadian naval expansion that the Monroe doctrine is merely a fortuitous fiction which the United States will use solely to its own advantage is a notable feature of this naval propaganda. They urge that it is offensive to Canadian pride to rely upon this doctrine.

The proposals of the imperialists supply a strange example of perverted thought inspired by a vicious fashion which has no possible reason for existence or toleration in Canada. It is not argued that Canada is in any sort of danger from foreign aggression. The inspiration of the movement comes from the love of brass buttons, gold lace, furs and feathers and the contemplation of fat jobs for ship building contractors. It is a form of militarism in the wrong place. This sort of thing grows by what it feeds on. Annual appropriations beginning modestly with \$10,000,000 or so will create a lobby and a propaganda calling for more and more as the appetite grows, and this in spite of the fact that all reasonable men agree that every penny spent by Canada for such purposes will be pure waste.

MRS. GERTRUDE ATHERTON the other day declared from experience that "Chicago is an awful place." She was afraid to go out by night for fear of being robbed, and by day her eye was offended by the houses of the rich, pretentious, ugly, vulgar.

But Chicago does not mind and still nurses a dubious pride in its social institutions. Of these none looms bigger in the public eye than the hardy annual known as the "first ward ball," of which the chief patrons are "Bathhouse John" Coughlin and "Hinky Dink" McKenna, the aldermen from the ward. The names of the lady patronesses of this social affair are not considered fit for publication. In the light of such male patronage Cockey O'Brien and Spider Kelly pale their ineffectual fires, and, still quoting Shakespeare, Chicago has San Francisco "skinned a block."

Last year some moral enthusiast, disapproving the scarlet eccentricities of this social function, blew up the building in which it was to be held, but not even the use of dynamite as a missionary agent could stop the ball from rolling, or perhaps, staggering, on its mad career.

A Famous Social Function

This year the ball was given its advance notice by Alderman Coughlin on the floor of the city council in this wise:

With the price of admission raised to \$2 we think we will keep the size of the crowd down to the capacity of the hall. It was out of the question to lead a grand march last year, and some fancy side stepping which I had intended to introduce went into the discard. I never could understand why the newspapers set up such a roar about the first ward ball. They call it an "orgy" and all that kind of stuff, but I never saw an orgy in the place. The police at the door have instructions to let no orgy get past them.

The alderman said with feeling that "more than 20,000 people attended our reception last year," but in the coming event he proposes to keep out the "pikers" who get in the way of his fancy feet.

The newspapers give up their front pages to the function and it is evident that in the sense of Chicago the first ward ball is an institution and an affair of government of so much popularity that it becomes necessary to raise the price of admission.

Railroad Building to The Coast

THE most recent report of railroad ambitions credits the great Chicago and Northwestern company with a purpose to extend its line to the Pacific coast. The Chicago and Northwestern is for the present allied with the Harriman group of roads and through them makes coast connections; but doubtless this corporation, like the St. Paul and the Gould system, would feel safer with a Pacific coast road under its own control.

The building of the Western Pacific as an outlet to the coast was easily understood because the Denver and Rio Grande was practically bottled up at Ogden by the Harriman roads, and the new line was only a measure of self-defense.

That reasoning, however, scarcely applies to the St. Paul road. That property is largely owned by the same interests that are behind the Harriman group and by the extension of the road to Puget sound they are in some measure creating competition for themselves. The same considerations that actuated the extension of the St. Paul road might equally impel the Chicago and Northwestern to come here.

It all means that the capacity of the Pacific slope for the production of high class freight is being appreciated by railroadmen who keep their eyes on the future. It is only a question of time when the great Rock Island system will be compelled to construct its own line to the coast.

Clubwomen and Their Work

By MARY ASHE MILLER

BY one of those inexplicable movements which it is impossible to account for as it is to prognosticate clubwomen are devoting themselves to affairs of study rather than civic matters this year. Last season was pre-eminently a season of civics and some people learned more of their duties in that line than they had conceived of before. This fall the opening of the new club year showed that the programs had undergone a reaction. Those adherents of musical, educational, literary, dramatic and artistic interests had plucked up hearts of grace and refused to devote all their time to cleaning streets and politics. Sociability is playing an unusually prominent part in club life just now, too, and there are more parties than ever before in the history of clubdom in San Francisco.

The Caedmon club will meet this afternoon at the home of Mrs. J. M. Driscoll, 1788 Broadway, to hear Prof. M. C. Fishery of the University of California lecture on "Hamlet." The lecture is one of a course which he is giving before the Caedmon club. His lecture last week was on epic and lyric poetry and the development of the drama. The epic was effectively illustrated through a comprehensive outline of Beowulf. From some of the classics of English literature the spirit dominating the lyric was given. The technical demands of the drama were clearly presented, diagrams being used further to elucidate the requirements.

Channing auxiliary will meet this afternoon, the hostesses of the occasion being Mrs. O. D. Baldwin, Mrs. Lloyd Baldwin, Mrs. Henry Bretherick, Mrs. M. A. Cutten, Mrs. W. B. Cotter, Mrs. J. D. Stadtmuller and Mrs. E. A. Blodget. After a drill in parliamentary law by Mrs. George Outton the afternoon will be devoted to listening to the reading of Dickens' "Christmas Carol" by Mrs. Mary Joss Jones, a reader of unusual charm and ability. Music will be rendered also.

Cap and Belle's study section will meet Monday afternoon, the program consisting of papers on Spain by the following: Mrs. A. Stewart, Mrs. John Samin, Mrs. Colburn and Mrs. C. W. Thomas, with the rendering of the Spanish national hymn by the music section.

To Kalon will meet tomorrow afternoon at Calvary church, and after brief papers on current events by the members of the United States, in October, a lecture on "Java, the Gem of the East Indies," illustrated by lantern slides. Edward C. Boyesen will sing.

The California club will meet tomorrow afternoon and the reports of the delegates to the district convention at San Jose last month will be heard. At 3 o'clock a program will be given on Indian matters, opening with Indian dances by Mrs. John E. Loomley. Mrs. A. S. Bacon will give a talk on Indian basketry, and the Northern Californian Indian association will hold an exhibit and sale of Indian handicraft.

Corona club members met Saturday afternoon for a card party for the benefit of the civic center of their club. Whist and five hundred were played and a delightful afternoon was spent.

The Country club of Washington township, Alameda county, will hold the December meeting at the Irvington academy on the first Tuesday of the month. Mrs. C. Wamsley, hostess. A musical program under the direction of Mrs. Thane, chairman of the music committee, will be presented. In October Mrs. May Cheney of Berkeley lectured on "The Work of Clubwomen Among College Girls." In November Mrs. E. Turner of Oakland gave a talk on "The Teaching of Household Economics in the Public Schools." In January Miss Cornelia McKinnis will give a talk on "St. Francis de Assisi and the Franciscan Missions" and Miss Anderson on "The Founding of Mission San Jose." In February Miss Millicent Shinn, Ph. D., will talk on "Reminiscences of California Authors."

Mrs. Carleton C. Crane is the president. Mrs. Helen C. Ford vice president and Miss Mary Hawley chairman of the executive committee. The Indian section will give an art and loan exhibition December 14 in the town hall at Centerville, at which will be offered for sale many beautiful baskets.

The Whittier woman's club gave its annual flower show in October with a baby show and juvenile floral and industrial parades. It proved a great success, both artistically and financially, and netted a handsome sum for the clubhouse fund.

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ANSWERS TO QUERIES

THE PRESIDENCY—A Subscriber, City. Must a man have been born in the United States in order to become president of the United States? The constitution of the United States, article II, section 1, clause 2, says: "No person—except a natural born citizen or a citizen of the United States at the time of the adoption of this constitution shall be eligible to the office of president."

THE SALLIC LAW—Subscriber, Berkeley, Cal. A few days ago I saw a reference to the "Sallie law." What is it? The Sallie or "Sallie" law is a name given to a collection of popular laws framed by the Franks, which were committed to writing in the fifth century. Several Latin texts of this code exist, though little has been recorded of its history. The law relates principally to the compensation and the punishment of crime; the chapters relating to the succession of heirs are called Sallie lands seems to have been inserted at a later date. The provisions of this land law have especially perpetuated the name and memory of this ancient code. Although the Franks' law did not in general discriminate against women, it was provided that the inheritance of the Sallie lands (which were supposed to be the lands directly attached to the baronial hall of the lord) should be confined to males, probably on the importance of securing the military service of the chief proprietors. How or for what reason the rule of succession came to be extended to the French crown is not known.

MEN AND DOGS—H. D. A. City. J. F. Marshall and R. Burnsey of this city inform this department that the words, "The more I see of men the more I like dogs," are by Long de la, an English novelist, better known under the pseudonym "Ouida." One of the writers says: "I do not know whether it appears in one of her works or was simply conversational. She was extraordinarily fond of dogs. Sometimes she had 15 or 20, and to feed these in her latter years she sometimes herself went hungry."

PLANT STONES—Subscriber, City. What are "plant stones," said to be found in the Philippines? The plant stones, according to an article published some time ago, are said to be the rarest of the many strange things that have been found in the Philippines. The tabashir, one of these, is a variety of opal sometimes deposited in the siliceous wood, and the beautiful greenish pink and yellowish specimens from these islands are stated by a German publication to be much more costly than the ordinary opal. Thousands of cane stalks may be examined without finding one of these curious gems.

BEAUTIFUL bluish pearls or stony repetitions are occasionally found, ranging in size from a pinhead to a pea, by carefully examining the interior of

ripe coconuts. About a dozen of these beautiful pearls—all from the Philippines—are said to be preserved among the treasures of European museums.

COYOTES—Subscriber, Susanville, Cal. Which is the most effective way of getting rid of coyotes? The department of agriculture of the United States offers the following: "It may be stated that strychnine is the most effective poison known to destroy wolves and coyotes. The strychnine sulphate is preferable on account of its quick action. The proper dose for a wolf is 4 grains and for a coyote 2 grains. The common 3 grain gelatine capsules if well filled will hold 4 grains of strychnine. Fill, cap and carefully wipe each capsule to remove every trace of the drug from the outside. Insert it into a piece of suet the size of a walnut and close the cavity. The bait should be carried in a can or pail and not in a bag, and be pointed to hands or forceps. They should be dropped from horseback along trails followed regularly by wolves or coyotes or along an artificial trail made by dragging an old bone or hide well saturated with a kind scent. These baits are very effective when placed around or partly under a carcass on which wolves or coyotes are feeding."

MARINES—Subscriber, City. Why are empty bottles at a banquet called "marines"? The term, it is believed, was first used by the duke of York at a banquet given at which there was present a marine officer. The duke said to the man in uniform, "What is pointed to a number of empty bottles. 'Here, take away these marines.' The officer asked for an explanation, when the duke said: 'They have done their duty well, and are ready to go to it again.'"

CERTIFIED COPY—Anxious, Oakland, Cal. How can I obtain a copy of my great-grandfather's naturalization papers? Is there a fee for such a copy? You can obtain a certified copy from the county clerk of the county in which he was naturalized. A fee is charged for such a certificate.

MONEY IN GERMANY—Anxious, Oakland, Cal. Where can I be informed as to the law in Germany as to the time when one may make a claim for money? Communicate with the German consul.

LOST PAPERS—E. H. C. City. How can I obtain a duplicate of my naturalization papers destroyed by the fire of 1906? Communicate with the county clerk of the county in which you obtained your original papers.

LEAVING THE COUNTRY—W. H. Stockton, Cal. Is there any law that prohibits the president of the country from going outside the limits of the United States during his term of office? There is not.

HARROLD McGRATH—S. City. What is the home address of Harold McGrath, author of "The Lane of the Mask" and "The Man in the Box"? 254 Kellogg street, Syracuse, N. Y.

CAPITAL—A. E. City. In what year was the capital of California first located at Sacramento? January 16, 1852.

CENTER OF FINANCE—E. L. J. Alameda, Cal. Which is now considered the financial center of the world? London or New York? London.

GERONIMO—E. M. F. City. Is Geronimo in the present "Breath of Geronimo" by Cardinal Newman, an imaginary being? It is.

MINT—C. W. F. City. When was coin first minted in the United States branch mint in Carson, Nev.? 1870.