

WANT POLITICS OUT OF COLLEGES

Henry A. Wise Wood Says
Competition Examinations
Should Decide.

NEW YORK, March 9.—Henry A. Wise Wood, chairman of the conference committee on national preparedness, a joint body formed from several leading defense societies, today in a circular letter attacks the political evils surrounding Annapolis and West Point. He says:

"The signing of the bill to increase the number of cadets in the naval academy at Annapolis from 1,200 to 1,700 is gratifying, but it is to be regretted that no change was made in the method of appointment, for in the selection of the material out of which to make officers upon whose ability and conduct the fate of the nation may one day turn there is a fatal defect in the system. A system providing that all of the raw material out of which the government is to make army and navy officers must pass through a political gateway is inherently bad.

"While many of those holding the power, distribute their recommendations, which are equivalent to appointments, with full consciousness of the responsibility involved, there are also many senators and congressmen who give little heed to the fortunes of the country but instead use the power of selection to pay political debts. A double waste ensues—a waste of money on the part of the government in carrying on in the academies for a year, or perhaps longer, cadets in whom failure is inevitable, a waste of opportunity to get the right kind of boys, because under the plan of political preference the most able youth in a congressional district may have absolutely no chance to go either to West Point or to Annapolis, he having no 'friend at court.'"

The ordinary records of the two academies reveal the defects of the system: At West Point about 23 per cent of the cadets drop out. At Annapolis in ordinary times 18 per cent of the midshipmen drop out during the first year and 26 per cent drop out during the four years' course. These figures do not, however, include the recent upheaval at Annapolis, resulting in the failure of approximately 80 men of all four classes, though the average percentage required in the course of study was only 62.5 per cent.

But the influence of politics does not end with the appointment of the cadet, nor even with his failure. The powerful political hand that puts a young man into either academy may often be raised to keep him there after he has been tried and found wanting. At times a 25 cent telegram may set all the machinery of a vast political organization into motion to save a failure from dismissal.

It has been estimated, unofficially, that it costs the government upward of \$10,000 to give a cadet in either West Point or Annapolis his course of four years. An estimate of \$12,000 was thought high. Assuming, however, that the four years' course costs even no more than a course in Harvard or Yale, it is still too valuable a thing to be left to the exigencies of politics. The waste of money that ensues is the lesser of the two evils attached; the weakening of the

army and the navy is the greater evil, for the weakness extends beyond the men themselves down into the ranks.

These appointments belong to the whole people and the doors of the two academies should be open to the young men in each congressional district, and in each territory, who in competitive examinations have demonstrated that they, above all others, are best fitted.

Recognizing their responsibility, and the right of every young man to appointment, some congressmen have selected their candidates by holding public examinations, but the law governing appointments should be so changed that every official holding the power to recommend should follow this rule. Such a course would bring out the very best material in each district, would stimulate the ambition of many youths, would free the academies from the burden of dead wood, and, when unexpected vacancies did occur, there would be available a list of men of known ability from which to make selection.

The defects of the political system of appointment have long been recognized by those familiar with conditions at the academies. In his annual report for 1913 the superintendent, Col. C. P. Townsley, of West Point, said: "These cadetships belong to the people of the district, state, territory, etc., and should be open competitively to all the youths eligible to compete, and it is my recommendation that a law be enacted requiring competitive examinations to be held for each vacancy, that youth to be appointed who passes successfully the best mental examination, and who is physically and morally qualified. The examination questions should be prepared by the academic board and a successful passing of the competitive examination should qualify a youth to enter, so that no other mental examination need be required. The details of conducting such examinations should, I think, be left to the secretary of war. By announcing in the local papers some 10 months or a year in advance that such a competitive examination will be held, stating its scope, it is believed that there will be a large number of eligible youths who will present themselves for examination in each district from which a vacancy is to be filled."

We have set out to repair the neglect of years in the matter of our national defenses, and we shall increase our army and our navy to a larger extent than we have ever done before in a time of peace. Congress should now correct this waste and abuse. As the efficiency of the army's and navy's increase will depend very largely on the personnel of the officers under whose direction ships and fortifications are to be built and manned and men are to be trained, the character of the officers comes very nearly being the crux of the whole proposition of national defense, once a program has been decided upon.

A few years hence the boys now in West Point and in Annapolis will be in charge of not only the disbursements of vast sums and of property aggregating millions, but they will be charged with various grave responsibilities wherein failure may bring about wide-spread disaster. Is it not high time that we withdrew a matter of such tremendous importance from the political paytable and restored this right of selection for service to the people themselves?

Spring Millinery Opening beginning Thursday, March 10th, at Dora Waldschmidt's.

Glad Her Husband Sued Her



PHOTO BY MOFFETT

Mrs. Frances Springer Keith as she appeared before her marriage when European nobility was at her feet, and (below) a recent photograph of her taken at Palm Beach.

Edwin Keith—famous from Chicago to both oceans as the man Frances Springer married when the choicest dukes and barons of the then civilized Europe were whining at her heels—lost his patience yesterday and filed a suit for divorce.

Frances is cruel, he complains and to prove it he quotes an interview that she gave to the newspapers a few days ago at Palm Beach. She called him a "half-headed wooden boob," it appears, whereas the fact is that he has some hair.

U. S. TARS AND GERMANS FIGHT IN CONSTANTINOPLE

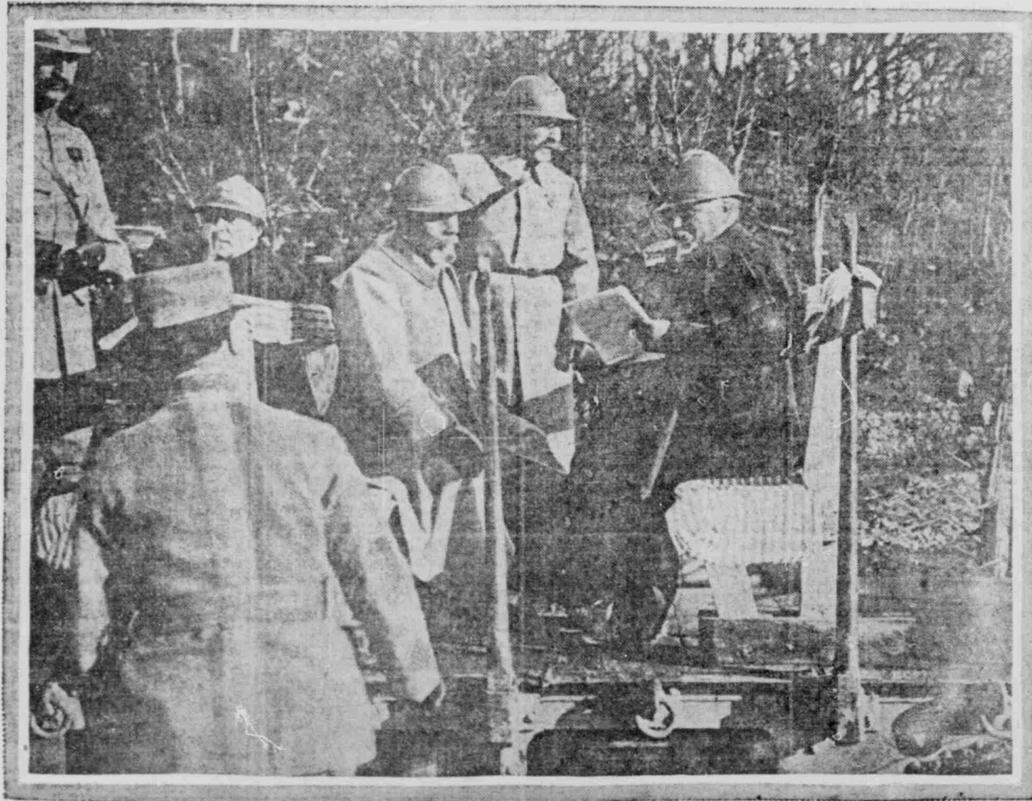
Are Not Allowed in Amusement
Places Frequenting by
Teutons.

LONDON, March 9.—A Reuter dispatch from Amsterdam says: "Private advices from Constantinople report several brawls between Germans and blue jackets of the American stationaire (guard ship). The latter are now only rarely permitted to land on condition that they do not enter places of amusement frequented by Germans."

VERDICT FOR \$30,300

NEW YORK, March 9.—A verdict of \$30,300 in favor of Walter Lawry, a miner who was burned in a gas explosion in the Auchincloss colliery near Mantiocke, Pa., was rendered in the supreme court here Wednesday against the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Co., which operates the colliery. The attorney for the plaintiff contended that where a mine owner knows a mine is not being properly conducted it becomes his duty to see that it is made safe. Failure to do this, the attorney contended, resulted in permanent and disfiguring injuries to his client.

Pres't. Poincare At the Front



Pres't. Poincare of France, at the right, reading, and Gen. Roques, seated facing him, on a military car traveling to the first line trenches in the Verdun district. Note that the president is wearing a steel helmet. The president on his last visit to the Verdun front decorated many officers and men for bravery in defending the city.

Iowa needs—

Iowa is the premier crop producer and the richest agricultural state in the Union but—

Iowa needs—

What agricultural Iowa needs in order to be greater is stated in the last important interview on this subject given by the late Henry Wallace, the dean of agricultural editors in the Middle West and a tireless crusader for a greater and better Iowa.

What he says is of importance to every farmer throughout the Middle West.

It appears in

The COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

Also in this issue:

Is Hog Cholera Conquered?

Is it true that a new, cheap, simple, safe preventive has been found for the scourge that costs farmers millions of dollars annually?

Dr. Charles W. Duval believes so. He has announced his discovery to the Secretary of Agriculture.

Dr. Duval is a scientist of recognized standing.

The Department of Agriculture, through the Bureau of Animal Industry, is planning to make thorough tests of this discovery at Ames, Iowa, during the early spring.

Whether or not these tests will prove that Dr. Duval is right, no farmer should fail to read what he said to the Congressional Committee on Agriculture.

The Biggest Butcher Shop

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The Dozen Best Perennials.

To the garden lover we need only say that the promise conveyed by this title is admirably upheld in the text. It's really intended for the beginner, but—

And much more, including:

A Boom in Clover Seed; The World's Most Valuable Crop—farm boys and girls, pictorially presented; Raising Baby Turkeys; how J. H. Gwaltney has averaged 103.06 bushels of corn to the acre; Four-Legged Corn Shuckers; Peas as a Truck Crop; Co-operative Buying; From My Chimney Corner—a story for the woman; Meat for the Farm Table; Your Poor Feet—give them a square deal; A Home-made Fireless Cooker; and other special articles, besides

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