

EL PASO HERALD

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No Bonds Without An Audit. BOND ISSUE of \$350,000 is to be recommended by the mayor, to be voted upon by the taxpayers in 30 days.

The mayor's message shows the total floating debt of the city of El Paso to be \$403,000; this is made up of three items: first, a deficit in the general fund of \$258,255.88; second, an accumulated deficit of \$84,000 in the school fund; third, a deficit for the current year in running expenses of the city amounting to \$60,242.85.

The section of the mayor's message that perhaps excited more comment than any other was that showing the department deficits in current running expenses for the fiscal year just closed; in round numbers the various department deficits, as reported by the mayor in his message, were as follows, the amounts representing the difference between the advance estimate or budget at the beginning of the year and the amounts actually expended on the different department accounts:

Table with 2 columns: Department Name and Amount. Sanitary department: \$4,300. Police department: 8,300. Fire department: 13,500. Engineering department: 3,600. Park department: 2,300. Free library: 415. Street maintenance: 9,300. Sewer department: 9,300. City hall department: 7,000. Scavenger department: 4,700. City sealer: 800. Building inspector: 800.

Total, inasmuch as the budget for the year amounted to \$531,000, the deficit represents a shortage or miscalculation of 11 percent.

The mayor points out that the city is paying 6 percent interest on all the outstanding warrants covering the total deficit of over \$400,000. Inasmuch as the city can sell its bonds at 5 percent with a substantial premium it needs no argument with any business man to convince him of the wisdom of the general policy of funding the floating debt by the issue of bonds.

The manner in which the enormous floating debt has been created is a subject of legitimate inquiry. Nothing, however, but a very thorough examination and audit of the city's books for a term of two to four years could throw much light on this question. The only items which the mayor in his recent message specifically states were created as part of the permanent improvement policy of the city are the paving of street intersections and the purchase of a site for the garbage and sewage disposal plant—a total of \$117,000. This leaves nearly \$300,000 to be accounted for in other ways.

The city is not heavily bonded as compared with other cities approaching this in population and taxable values. Outstanding bonds amount to only \$1,653,000, while our charter permits us to issue bonds to the amount of \$3,000,000, and a bond issue of \$3,000,000 would not be excessive for a city of this size, if taxpayers and bond buyers were able to assure themselves that the money had been borrowed entirely or mainly for permanent improvement and not for making up current deficits. While it would be a wise policy, generally speaking, to fund the floating debt in the form of bonds at this time, nevertheless to adopt such a plan as a fiscal policy for repeated use as a sort of refuge from the consequences of careless administration of city finances would not be acceptable to taxpayers and would be frowned upon by outside investors in El Paso property or in city bonds.

There is no reason to doubt that the money derived from the city tax levy during the last four or five years has been spent with due economy and wisdom as well as with honesty. The Herald, in common with business men and taxpayers generally, assumes that such is the case, and there is no general disposition to criticize the conduct of city affairs during the last four years. Nevertheless, there is a very general disposition—that is just beginning to make itself insistently heard because information travels slowly—to ask for more data on which to form a fair conclusion before taxpayers will consent to vote such a large bond issue as the mayor proposes.

Mayor Kelly's message of May 25 in fact gives very little information about the finances of the city and does not form a sufficient basis for reaching satisfactory conclusions. It would not sufficiently answer this criticism for the mayor to reply that the city's books were public records open to all and that any taxpayer might satisfy himself on any point—the truth is that accountants with ample means at their disposal, and time to go through the very complicated system of city records, in order to be sure to find out the whole truth and nothing but the truth, the Herald does not wish to convey the idea, either to the public or to the present city administration, that there is any antagonism to the progressive improvement policy which has been successfully carried out during the last four years or any disposition to criticize the liberal spending of money in return for tangible benefit to the city as a whole. But, speaking for taxpayers generally, The Herald cannot make too emphatic the declaration that before this \$350,000 bond issue is voted the taxpayers should be given the benefit of a report from a thoroughly equipped firm of chartered accountants, men who are widely experienced in municipal affairs and able to give us more than the perfunctory transcript of items and totals that would be practically the only fruit of an audit by less qualified persons.

Municipal accounting within the last five or ten years has become a highly specialized science. The United States census bureau has done a great deal to standardize municipal accounting and in this work it has had the assistance of the Municipal League, the Association of Municipal Accountants, and various other national bodies working along this line. The unit system of ascertaining costs has been developed within the last few years so that comparisons are possible between the experience of scores or even hundreds of cities upon unit costs, making it possible for each city to establish for itself a certain standard and test all results, prices, and estimates by it.

The city of El Paso spends about \$600,000 a year; or, adding in the total school budget, about \$650,000 per year. This is an immense business of almost infinite detail, requiring the most minute attention to the little things as well as a broad knowledge and high general business ability. Certainly a business of \$650,000 a year with practically all the money contributed directly by the taxpayers, demands the most careful accounting and auditing.

The taxpayers of this city would not be satisfied at this time with a mere superficial audit by some local firm or by general accountants not thoroughly experienced in municipal work. An audit covering the last two or four years should now be made by such a concern as Haskins & Sells, the Audit company of America, or some other big national concern of that character, whose investigation would be absolutely impartial and thorough to the last degree. The books should be audited with a view to ascertaining especially the comparative unit costs in all departments of the city's business over a term of several years. The results of the audit should be published in full in book form; but if publication could not be otherwise provided for, The Herald would undertake to print the salient features of the report without charge, for the benefit of its readers.

Such an audit as is here suggested would cost several thousand dollars—we

should say from \$3000 to \$5000 if thoroughly done. It is decidedly the city's business to provide for this expert audit and the publication of such a report. Now is the time for it when the city is rounding up the results of a period of marked expansion and improvement and is preparing to engage upon a new era of progress.

If the city cannot be induced to make an audit of exactly the sort here suggested, the taxpayers of the city should get together and form a Taxpayers' league with the specific purpose of undertaking the audit. If the Taxpayers' league should accomplish nothing more, it would well justify its existence by providing for an investigation of the sort proposed.

Until this is done the taxpayers should and doubtless will oppose the voting of bonds to any considerable sum after the suggestion of the mayor. The Herald trusts that its expression of the wishes of taxpayers in this connection will meet with unanimous approval and that any movement for the voting of bonds for \$350,000 or any other large sum at this time be disapproved and prevented unless as a preliminary we can have a thorough audit of the city's books for a term of years by a firm of chartered accountants of national reputation especially experienced in municipal accounting and able to make a report that will be thoroughly illuminating and absolutely convincing.

When that is done, if, as The Herald believes, everything connected with the city's finances shall be found to be in perfect shape, then this paper will strongly advocate the bond issue proposed by the mayor, or bonds for even a larger amount when their necessity becomes apparent.

The Special "Peace" Edition

THE Herald's special edition to celebrate the conclusion of peace in Mexico and the promise of unprecedented prosperity will appear in two weeks. Not only was the original plan elaborated upon to such an extent as to make it impossible to procure the necessary illustrative material in time for this week, but a consideration of no less importance leading to the postponement was that the train service and mail service in Mexico are still very much disturbed so that distribution of the papers in the territory where they would do the most good would necessarily be defective at this time.

The merchants of El-Paso are well stocked with seasonal goods and are ready to supply all the wants of the people of Mexico. Following the long suspension of commerce and train service the needs of the Mexican people and of the Americans in Mexico are varied and insistent. It is to carry the news of El Paso's preparations to supply this pressing demand that The Herald's special edition is issued, as well as to advertise to the world the splendid constructive work that has been going on in Mexico and the general progress of this southwestern country. The edition will not be disappointing.

UNCLE WALTS' Denatured Poem

I'M TIRED of Jack London's tales of death in the Arctic snows, where the blizzard howls and walls, and freezes the pilgrim's nose. I'm tired of his Yukon folk, the husky and sled and barge; I'm tired of his tubs of blood, and butchers who roar at large. I'm tired of the blunderbuss, who slaughters and howl and screech; I'm tired of the bowie stroke, I'm weary of Rex E. Beach. I've sored on the cowboy camp, where the gun men make their plays; I'm sick of the cows that tramp around on the plains and graze. I'm tired of the gifted sleuth, so skilful and smooth and wise, who digs up the hidden truth from his grave in a stack of divorce and "studies" of this and that. I blow in my fifteen cents for a popular magazine, and sit by my garden fence and read till I'm sore and mean. The stories of smut and mud, the stories of vice's chain, the stores of tubs of blood, all give me a convex pain. The yarns of the dive and slum, the stories of fashion's sins, the stories of thief and bum, of Wallingford guile that wigs, all give me a dark green ache deep down in my troubled mind. Ah, me, that a man would make one book of the good old kind!

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PICKING CHERRIES The Herald's Daily Short Story

WHEN Guido came to visit—used to be one of my cousins on my mother's side—he turned up his nose. "That you belonged to the nobility, I knew," he said, "but that your wife also is entitled to the family coat of arms is something new to me. I am sorry, but, if course, you don't understand what I mean."

"As a matter of fact I did not understand him in this and in a good many other things he said. "What do you do all day," he asked with an expression of ill concealed contempt, "nothing at all happens in this lonely nest."

"What did you want to happen? I think it is lovely here and always enjoy myself when I am here." "Well, it is my vacation, I have nothing to do. I am free as a bird and can roam wherever I please and just now the big black cherries are ripe and I can pick and eat as many as I want to."

"To pick cherries? Do you consider that a pleasure? Good Lord what a kid you are." Guido laughed, took out his cigarette case, lit a cigarette, and offered me one.

"Why don't you take it," he said. "You are 15 now and will graduate next year. I have smoked ever since I was 15, but, of course, I was a different kind of a fellow, who at that time had long ago given up cherry picking."

He laughed again, twirled his mustache and sauntered back to the house. I smoked only a few whiffs of the cigarette and then threw it away. Should I go and eat some cherries? No, I would not do it. When Guido says it is ridiculous for a young man of my age of course I won't do it, but will just go down to the trees to tell our neighbor's girls that I have given up picking cherries.

The girls were sitting in one of the big trees, the 14 year old Erny high up on a forked branch, while Malva, who was 17, was on a lower branch and said she had eaten all she could possibly get down.

"Why, is it you, Hans?" both cried. "How are you, Malva, how are you, Erny?" "Erny" came from above. "Come up here."

"No," I said abruptly. "Why?" "Because I don't care for climbing trees or eating cherries any more."

"Well, not?" "Because only children care for those things."

"Well, and then?" "I am no child any more."

"I am no child any more," said Malva, let go the tree, slid down the trunk, smoothed down her skirt and looked at me with angry eyes. "And who says so, if I may ask?" "I say so, and my cousin Guido too."

"Your cousin is a fool." "He is not. He is a student and a baron, too."

"And a fool besides." "You don't know him at all." "I don't need to and don't want to." She stamped her foot. Her eyes were full of tears, and she looked for her handkerchief and did not find it, so turned and ran away. While I was looking after her, Erny came down from the tree. She stopped right in front of me, did not know what to say and bit her lip in her embarrassment.

"Do you really mean you are not going to pick cherries any more?" "Yes."

"Are you very angry with Malva?" "Yes, because she called my cousin a stupid fool."

"Hm."

"That is an insult."

"Well, I did not call him that."

"No, you did not, I know."

"Then you are not angry with me?" "No, not with you."

The Commercial Side Of the Panama Canal Is Anticipated

Big Ditch Is Expected To Be A Dividend Payer From The Start Besides Cutting A Continent In Two.

ANCON, Canal Zone, June 7.—The canal commission is already looking forward to the time when the canal is finished and ships are ready to go through it. The practical interest of the shipping world is shown by the fact that steamship lines are already making inquiries, as to what the tolls are going to be, and for other information which will enable them to adjust their affairs so as to be ready to use the big waterway at the earliest opportunity.

It is the desire of president Taft to have the tolls so fixed that it will be most profitable for the ship owner to send his vessel by way of Panama than by Suez. The net ton charge through Suez is about \$1.50 per ton, and a vessel with 4000 tons of cargo would have to pay \$6000 to pass through Suez. It is proposed to fix the toll on the Panama canal at \$1 per ton. On this basis a vessel with a 4000 ton cargo would pay \$2000 less to get through Panama than it would have to pay to go through Suez.

The Probable Traffic. Of course there can be no way of definitely estimating the amount of traffic that will pass through the canal, but in 1900 a member of the commission, who was well acquainted with the shipping business of the world, estimated that 8,500,000 tons per register would pass through the first year the canal is open, and that this would increase 25 percent a year thereafter. He said it would take years for shipping to readjust itself to the new conditions, and that it was his opinion that the toll would be less than \$1 a ton would drive business away. Such cargoes as lumber would be carried around Cape Horn as at present, rather than pay excessive tolls.

The Total Cost. The total cost of the Panama canal will amount to \$375,000,000, and at 2 percent the rate at which Uncle Sam can borrow money—this will involve an interest charge of \$7,500,000 a year. The cost of maintenance and operation is expected to exceed \$3,000,000 a year. The total expenses of operation will amount approximately to \$10,000,000 a year. It is not intended to charge the American navy anything for the privilege of using the big waterway. At present it is the hope of the administration that congress will provisionally fix the toll at one dollar per ton, leaving it optional with the president to change the toll as commercial exigencies may seem to demand.

Canal Should Make Profit. It is the hope of the chief engineer that the United States will make early provision for the maintenance of the canal. He would have matters so arranged that the government could guarantee the right to handle coal or anything else necessary to the traffic through the canal on a commercial basis. For instance, he would have coal furnished the passing ships as a part of the business of maintaining the canal. A coal station for the navy will have to be maintained, and this may as well be used to supply the demands of commercial shipping. Oil, Gorthals would not deny to private enterprise the right to handle coal or any other essential to the conduct of the shipping business. He seeks only to have a government plant operated at a safe margin of profit, so as to guarantee that the use of the canal would not be rendered unprofitable by excessive prices ships might have to pay if competition were stifled.

It is also proposed to maintain a commercial dry dock, where ships of all classes and condition can be repaired. This is practically one of the essentials in the operation of the canal. It is also planned to continue the ice factory at Colon, supplying ice to the passing vessels at commercial rates. Also that a laundry be maintained for the purpose of meeting the demands of shipping. It would then be possible for a ship to put out of Liverpool, have its laundry ready when it reaches Colon, send it to the laundry there, and have it cleaned and sent to Panama by rail in time to overtake the ship at the Pacific entrance. All of these things would make the Panama route attractive and would prevent the canal from being unprofitable by charging extortionate prices and thus interfering with the usefulness of the canal.

Many Tests Necessary. When the canal is completed some time will be spent trying out the machinery and breaking in the picked men who are to constitute its operating force.

LETTERS To the HERALD

THE SWORD OF TAMBOREL. Fort Davis, Texas, June 5.

Editor El Paso Herald: I read in your paper of Thursday, June 1, this paragraph: "Col. Hay to be given the sword of Col. Tamborel." And a thousand times no! Mr. Hay never can have the sword of Col. Tamborel. In the first place, Col. Tamborel never surrendered to any war officer in the fall of Juarez, Nev! He died defending his country, loyal to his government, as any American military officer and soldier has the duty to do the same for his own government. Moreover, Hay never was in the battle of Juarez, where the valiant soldier lost his precious life. If the Madero government wishes to do this marked injustice, I certainly will mark this fact as the worst of Madero's blunders. The precious sword of Col. Tamborel belongs to his relatives, not to Madero, Orozco, Hay or anybody else. This is plain justice.

My opinion (and humble opinion it is) is that the late Col. Tamborel deserves more respect, glory and admiration than has been accorded him by the great American military authorities.

A. Urquidí.

HALF HOLIDAYS TO EL PASO CLERKS

The Popular Dry Goods company has started the half holiday plan and has decided on Friday as the day best suited to closing. Therefore this store will close at 1 o'clock on Fridays, beginning this week.

The White House and Callahan's dry goods stores have agreed to allow a half holiday on any day that the clerks may elect, but the stores will not close. The clerks will merely take off a half day each week on different days.

Abe Martin

By Frederic J. Haskins



Pinky Kerr has been acquitted for hittin' a feller wearin' tan shoes an' a Prince Albert coat. Tell Binkley found two dollars in a ole vest yesterday an' he can't think who he owes it to.

three feet a minute, it will require about 4,000,000 cubic feet of water to lift a single vessel up or down.

Time Required for Passage. It will require about 18 or 19 hours for a ship to pass through the canal. Going from the Atlantic it first will pass the breakwater at Tote Point. There it will call at Colon. After that it will steam up the 500-foot wide sea level channel to Gatun, where it will be 85 feet below the lake above. Here it will be towed into the first lock and the gates closed behind it. Then water will be allowed to flow into the lock from the lake above, through the big 18-foot culverts, until it has the same level as that in the lock above. Then the gates to that lock are passed and closed and the ships is towed into the next one. Each time the same operation is repeated, until the ship finds itself in the lake above. Then it steams onward through the lake and Culebra cut and then asks the lock at Pedro Miguel to drop it down approximately 80 feet. Another mile at this level brings it to Miraflores, where it gets two lifts down and is back at sea level, and may go on its way uninterrupted, or it may stop at Balboa, the Pacific end of the canal.

The date when the canal will be opened is set officially for January 1, 1915, but the work of excavation will be completed much earlier. Of course if slides in Culebra cut continue, it may take the full time to finish the excavation work. But if they are not greater than anticipated the work will be well advanced toward the finishing touches in three more years. The contracts for the installation of the operating machinery call for its completion in time that the canal may be tried out by the end of December, 1915, and unless unforeseen delays occur in the manufacture of the equipment the canal will be ready for emergencies before the fixed opening date.

Tomorrow—A New Commercial Map.

At Mrs. Dolan's Boarding House

In Which Ruth Weston Takes a Skylight Room and Pays in Advance. By MABEL HERBERT UERNER.

RUTH WESTON stood hesitatingly before a shabby brownstone house and an old-fashioned advertisement in the "Boards Wanted" column of the newspaper in her hand.

"LARGE, luxuriously furnished room, also pleasant hall room; unexcelled table board; very convenient; ideal location." She went slowly up the steps and rang the bell of Mrs. Dolan's boarding house. A colored girl, with a soiled apron, opened the door.

"I'd like to see about a room," Ruth said, timidly. "Come in; I'll call the missis," closing the door and leaving Ruth standing in the dingy hall.

The girl clattered up the stairs and the door opened with a creak. "Miss Dolan! Oh, Miss Dolan!" "Y-e-e-es!"

"Somebody to see about rooms." "All right—I'll be down!" A few minutes later a stout woman, with a faded calico wrapper, with her hair in a pyramid of putty, opened the door. "You wanted to look at the rooms," eyeing Ruth keenly.

"Yes, I would like to see the hall-room you advertised," timidly. "Come right on up." And Mrs. Dolan tolled slowly up stairs. In the second floor she paused for breath and then climbed another flight.

"This is the room," she said, opening a door at the back of the hall. "This is the room." Ruth's heart sank as she gazed around the shabby little room. The small iron bed, the cheap oak bureau, the washstand with its bowl and pitcher, and a straight-back chair completed the furniture.

"How much is this?" asked Ruth. "Six dollars without lunch." Ruth thought of her eight-dollar-a-week salary. Could she pay her carfare and luncheons and laundry with \$2?

"I had hoped to get something for \$5," she ventured. "I have a skylight room for \$5 on the top floor. Do you want to see it?" "Yes, I should like to."

Another flight of stairs, and Mrs. Dolan opened the door of the skylight room. Only a dim light came through the square of glass in the ceiling. It was a little larger, but even more shabby than the hall room.

"There is no closet!" asked Ruth. "You can hang your clothes here." Mrs. Dolan pulled back a faded curtain from a closed door into which had been screwed a row of hooks.

"And the bathroom?" "The bathroom's on the second floor." "But there is running water on this or the next floor, isn't there?" "No, there ain't," implying plainly that the applicant for a skylight room should not be so particular.

Ruth looked hesitatingly around the room. Mrs. Dolan turned to the door. "She Wanted Fresh Air."

"I don't have no trouble to rent this room. The young man that's had it all winter just left yesterday, and I'm counting on it being rented before night. There ain't enough small rooms in this neighborhood for all that wants 'em."

"Yes, I know—I was just wondering