

Imperial Valley Press

Official Newspaper of Imperial County and City of El Centro

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

Manager C. F. Hayden
Editor Allen Kelly
Associate Editor Lewis Havermale

SUBSCRIPTION

One Year \$1.00
Six Months50
Three Months25
Single Copies05

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The number of our paid circulation and rates of advertising will be furnished on application.

All remittances and communications should be addressed to the Imperial Valley Press.

Entered as second-class matter March 3, 1906, at the postoffice at El Centro, California, under the act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

HOT WEATHER NO JOKING MATTER.

Once upon a time—half a century ago, to be more nearly exact—there was a funny man, who was known as John Phoenix. He was an officer of the army, Derby by name, and he was here in the Southwest with little to do but draw rations and write jokes. He wrote a joke about the climate of Yuma, and at least sixty million Americans have told that story no less than 237 times each. Some of them, including Chauncey Depew, have told it oftener, and each time they have pretended that it was new and original. It went this way: "A soldier at Fort Yuma died and went to —"

Oh, quit shooting! Wouldn't finish it for the world. What we were leading up to is that Yuma doesn't see anything funny in the story and has entered solemn protest against its further circulation. In deference to the feelings of Yuma, the Espee has undertaken to retire the blanket story officially and has issued a general order from the traffic department to agents and trainmen forbidding all jesting about the climate of the southwestern corner of Arizona.

Traffic Manager Fee is not mentioned in "Who's Who" as one of the great American humorists and probably he doesn't know that he is funnier than John Phoenix, but unconscious humor is often the most subtle and laugh-provoking, and none of the archaic school of jesters ever perpetrated anything better than Manager Fee's general order against unseemly levity at the expense of Yuma. He says to the stale jokers of the Espee: "Our attention is directed to thoughtless and common observation made about the intense heat of Yuma, which as a matter of fact, is no more marked and is far less oppressive than that of many other sections of the United States.

"Joking remarks of this nature are, however, not only annoying to the people trying to develop this land of great possibilities, but a positive and serious distraction, no matter how good-humoredly or thoughtlessly said.

"Your co-operation is earnestly solicited in creating for Yuma and the section thereabout the reputation it is entitled to, for being a region unexcelled in agricultural and horticultural advancement and possessed of many other attractions, and to do away with the unjust and ancient climatic jokes, which have been forgotten long ago."

Now that joking about Yuma is barred, the funny men will have to locate all their hot-weather yarns in Imperial Valley. It is hot here from the middle of June until the middle of September—hot enough to make things grow like Jack's beanstalk. If it were not hotter than a revivalist's descriptions of Sheol, Imperial Valley would never have been reclaimed and made the most productive patch of ground in Uncle Sam's farm. The heat is good for healthy people; sweats the physical and moral waste matter out of 'em. That explains the superior virtue of the population of Imperial County. Some of them are so awfully good that it gives them pangs in the solar plexus to hear that anyone is so depraved as to drink beer when he is thirsty.

Imperial Valley hasn't been bored to death with stale jokes about its climate, as Yuma has, and there isn't any Chauncey Depew story of the Imperial farmer who died and went to — well, Imperial Valley people don't go there when they die, anyway. If the funny men can think up any new jests about hot weather, there is no general order from the Espee to prevent them from having fun with this region.

BOGUS AND GENUINE REVISION.

No genuine effort to revise the tariff is expected of the committee now going through the motions of holding hearings in Washington. The committee is dominated by "stand-patters" and has no more intention of disturbing the big graft of protected interests than had the framers of the tariff plank in the Republican platform. But the report of that committee will not necessarily determine the action of Congress. President Taft will call a special session after March 4, and the new Congress will appoint another committee, not to make a thin pretence of keeping platform promises for campaign purposes, but to make a genuine investigation of the subject and gather real information from sources other than the beneficiaries of perverted protection.

President-Elect Taft seems to be earnest and honest in his desire to get the tariff so adjusted as to promote the general welfare instead of the fortunes of a few specially favored combinations and trusts. He has no control over the Payne committee and he cannot even make suggestions to it, but he intimates plainly that he means to have a real investigation made later and to give the people as well as the "interests" a hearing. Perhaps the new President may even have sufficient influence to force Joe Cannon to get out of the path of progress and catch on at the tail end of the procession, after his usual fashion.

Andrew Carnegie, who ought to know something of the workings of a system which made him a multi-millionaire, says the manufacturers of steel need no protection. "The day has passed," he says, "when any foreign country can seriously affect our iron interests, tariff or no tariff. Not a ton of steel is produced at as small an outlay for labor as in our country. Iron ores are much cheaper because more easily transported and our output per man is much greater than the large standardized orders obtainable only through the specialized rolling mills, machinery kept in shape without change of rolls, and several other things.

It is interesting to note that the Louisville Steel Company is buying steel rails in Europe and landing them at lower than the price asked by the Steel Company in this country, thanks to the tariff.

years of protection, and extorts "all the traffic will bear" from those who deal with it. In its arrogance, the trust appears to have overplayed the game in this instance. The trust could undersell foreign rail makers and make a reasonable profit, but it is not satisfied with reasonable profits. It has all four feet in the trough, and is one of those "friends of the tariff" by whom revision should be made, according to Cannon, Dalzell and the rest of the immovables.

A FORGETFUL PHILANTHROPIST.

That good, pious old gentleman, John D. Rockefeller, has forgotten all about the deal with the Pennsylvania Railroad by which he not only received a rebate of 20 cents a barrel on oil shipped by Standard, but a secret rebate of a like amount on every barrel shipped by other producers. The railroad robbed all the independent shippers and handed the plunder over to Mr. Rockefeller, but the good man swears he doesn't remember anything about it; his mind was occupied with more important problems. He does not even remember that the State of Pennsylvania brought suit to oust one of the Standard Oil Trust's principal companies from the State on the ground that it was in a criminal conspiracy with the railroad; he has forgotten that Cassatt, of the railroad, testified to the rebate conspiracy. All he remembers is that at some time in the past "there was trouble about freight rates."

Mr. Rockefeller knows nothing of the crimes of cunning committed in his name. He had so many wicked partners that he could not keep track of all their financial deviltry. His mind was occupied in devising benevolent and laudable schemes for reducing the price and improving the quality of oil, and he is unable to understand why the people are so ungrateful as to say hard things about him.

Unfortunately for Mr. Rockefeller, who wants everybody to love him, the memories of most men are not so conveniently unretentive as his. The public does not forget readily the methods by which Standard Oil has accumulated dividends and surplus of \$800,000,000 on an investment of \$67,000,000.

POLITICO-ECONOMIC NEW THOUGHT.

Back in Missouri, where everyone is supposed to be sceptical of all things not proved by visible evidence, they have unbounded faith in the efficacy of prayer. On Thanksgiving Day the ministers in twenty-five towns of the mining region put up to the Almighty a concerted petition for a tariff on zinc ores for protection of the local industry of zinc mining.

The Missourians are consistent protectionists and put to shame those representatives of the "interests" who address their prayers to Payne, Dalzell and Jounce Canon for preservation of the sacred Dingley schedules.

The American people have been taught that the Dingley Act is sacrosanct and not to be profaned by the impious hand of the free-trader or the tariff-for-revenue-only infidel. They have been told that they may safely leave the safeguarding of their rights and their welfare to "those to whom God, in His infinite wisdom, has entrusted the property interests of the country," and that it is little short of blasphemy to find fault with the tariff or to inquire into the pious mysteries of trust capitalization and dividends.

Only the Missourians have proved themselves faithful children of the church of Saint Dingley. They accept the revealed gospel of protection, and humbly supplicate Providence to inspire the Prophets in Congress to place an adequate duty on zinc. If their prayer is answered, it will herald "the dawn of a new era" in American politics, and instead of log-rolling in Congress we shall see twenty-five-parson-power prayers put up for appropriations for new postoffices and for slices out of the river and harbor pork barrel.

A recent German court-marshal sentenced a sergeant to reduction to the ranks for systematic cruelty to soldier. No less than 517 cases of cruelty in eight months were proved, and they ranged from flogging with heavy whips to kicking in the ribs of the Kaiser's "food for powder". It was shown that the sergeant had been practicing these atrocities for ten years, and that his system of ferocious discipline is prevalent in the German army, more than 10,000 similar cases having been revealed in trials. The amazing thing is that men having access to weapons submit to such savagery. That the Kaiser's bestial sergeants are alive is evidence that his soldiers are a lot of squalid cowards, of whom England need stand in no fear.

Legal documents, including affidavits made by John D. Rockefeller and other Standard Oil chiefs in the course of a job to do up an independent refiner, are missing from the safe of the county clerk at Cleveland, and their disappearance is said to be "mysterious". There is no mystery about such disappearances. The papers would be useful to the government and dangerous to Standard Oil, and of course they cannot be found. Catch the Standard Oil or any other big law-breaker leaving incriminating evidence lying around loose.

The cost of electing Taft, as reported by the treasurer of the national committee, was \$1,655,518.27—note the painful exactness of the twenty-seven cents—and the heaviest contributor to the fund was brother Charles, who "blew himself" to the extent of \$110,000 for the sake of the family. The Laird of Skibo and J. P. Morgan came through with \$20,000 each, and Nelson Cromwell, financier of Venezuelan revolutions and asphalt, trust rows with Castro contributed \$15,000. There were only 12,330 contributors to the fund.

It cost the Democracy a good deal to get Bryan laid away during the third and last time, and more than 74,000 persons chipped in for the Democratic jackpot. The Democrats do not appear in the Democratic Party. They do not like Roosevelt.

policies, but they are not jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

NEWS BRIEVITIES

Six strikers shot down in pitched battle at Perth Amboy, N. J., and troops patrol town.

Mining men in Nevada successfully protesting Southern Pacific's patents to mineral sections.

George A. Night of California, urged for place in Taft cabinet, probably Secretary of the navy.

Radicals of Democratic party say organization is dead and issue call for convention to form new party.

France voices approval of Lord Roberts's speech and makes it plain she will support England against Germany if war comes.

Shah of Persia has sudden change of heart in refusal to grant constitution and orders proclamation torn from mosques.

Prince and Princess De Sagan subjected to scathing arraignment for immorality and scandalous conduct by Count Boni's attorney.

Southern Pacific asks permission of New York Stock Exchange to list \$74,863,000 in common stock and preferred immediately goes up.

Federal Commission on Country Life, appointed by President to study rural problems, decides unofficially, after local hearing, that there are no problems in Southern California.

The Attell, featherweight champion, was defeated at every point in the boxing game by Fred Welsh at Los Angeles, November 26. The bout was in seven rounds, and Welsh had the best of every round.

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