

GREAT FALLS DAILY TRIBUNE

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EDITORIAL PAGE

B. K. WHEELER AND JOHN D. RYAN

B. K. Wheeler, candidate for governor on the republican or democratic party ticket, which ever seems to him the easiest party to pirate by the stuffing of its primaries by voters who profess no allegiance to either party and condemn the principles of both, in his address in this city last Wednesday spread the venom of his malice over Mr. John D. Ryan personally in a manner characteristic of the politicians who seek to appeal to envy of success and ignorance such as we have been familiar with for years. And as usual the poisoned weapons he used were simply falsehoods. They were bald mistatements of facts known to be such by every well informed person in the state and only calculated to deceive newcomers to the state or those who have not followed closely the news of the day and are ignorant of the facts.

Mr. Wheeler charged that Mr. Ryan "was mixed up in the Hog Island graft scandal." That is absolutely a falsehood. In the first place there was no Hog Island graft. There were rumors about graft, and the republican congressional investigation committee, keen as a pack of hounds on the scent of a fox, and hoping to unearth some scandal that might reflect on the Wilson administration in its conduct of the war, went into the affairs of the construction of the Hog Island ship construction plant from cellar to garret. They reported their findings to a republican congress and were compelled to say in that report that they could find no evidence of dishonesty or graft in the carrying out of this enormous job. They did say that they found evidence of extravagance and waste of money. Most undoubtedly that was true. It was impossible that it should be otherwise, for the Hog Island plant was built in the face of urgent demand from our government for haste, haste, and more haste, in a desperate race for victory between the German submarines and the allied shipbuilding plants. We know now how narrowly we won that race and so won the war by getting American troops and supplies to France before our foes deemed it possible. The Hog Island plant was not built by contract bids. There was no time to advertise for bids. It was built on force account, and the contractors received a percentage on the cost. Experience has taught many a private firm that that is the most expensive way to build a big construction enterprise, but it is also the quickest way. The Hog Island plant cost several times the original estimate. That was partly due to enlarged plans, partly due to the well known fact enshrined in the homely proverb, "haste makes waste." Mr. Ryan had no more to do with the building of Hog Island shipping plant or the spending of money there than Mr. Wheeler had, except that he and his companies contributed vast sums in taxes to the federal treasury to help pay for it. And the remarkable fact remains undisputed that costly as the building of this plant was, it has amply justified its expense and is worth to the government and nation all it cost. Among all the vast expenditures of the government for war purposes this alone will salvage 100 per cent. It could be sold for all it cost. It can build fifty vessels at one time. It can and does build vessels for less money than they can be built for elsewhere in the world, and private shipping firms are eager to buy every ship it builds at full cost price to the government or more. There is no particle of evidence that there was any graft in this enterprise to begin with, and Mr. Ryan had nothing to do with it to end with. The statement of Mr. Wheeler is a falsehood made out of whole cloth or with nothing more substantial than a disproved and discredited rumor to stand on.

Mr. Wheeler said that Mr. Ryan made fifty million dollars by selling copper to the government at 27 cents during the war and buying it back at 14 to 16 cents. That is a false statement, monstrous in its malignity. Mr. Ryan never bought a pound of copper from the government. The government never sold any copper to him, or to his copper company, or to any other copper company, or to any corporation or individual in the United States, unless it might be small lots of junk copper to junk companies. It did buy a lot of copper from the Anaconda company and other copper producing companies during the war. The first lot of copper it bought was an enormous purchase, some forty million pounds as we remember it, and it bought it from the Anaconda company at nearly half its current market price at that time, 16 cents, we believe. That was how John D. Ryan and his company showed their patriotism. Mr. Wheeler was selling his services to the government at the same time. We have not seen it recorded that he offered to cut the market price of those services in half to help win the war. Subsequently the government bought copper from many sources

of copper production, including the Anaconda Copper Company, at varying prices fixed by itself as being a fair price. Our recollection is that this price was 22 or 23 cents. But if the government at any time paid as high as 27 cents for copper it did so because it fixed that price itself as being fair and necessary. When the war was over the government had a great accumulation of copper on hand that it no longer needed. If it threw this on the market it would demoralize the price of copper and the government would lose a vast sum on its purchases. It, therefore, turned its surplus copper over to the United Metals Selling company, a corporation that acts as selling agent for many copper producing companies, with instructions to sell it gradually for the government account at the market price, and agreed to pay this corporation a fractional part of a cent commission for the service, stipulating, however, a minimum price at which any of it could be sold and if the market went below that point at any time sales of government copper were to stop. That is the whole story of the government sale of copper in a nutshell. It sold its own copper on the market in small lots to get the most money out of it for itself, and paid the Metals Selling company a small per cent for its service, as all copper producers it acts for do likewise.

As to the charge made by Mr. Wheeler that John D. Ryan built a logging railroad for the benefit of the Milwaukee railroad, it is old stuff, completely disproved by the evidence presented to the investigating committee. John D. Ryan had nothing to do with the building of the road at any time. The Milwaukee railroad does not own the road and does not want to own it. Had it been built through to the spruce woods as they recommended they might have been willing to pay the government for it when they were through with it if it had the money to do it with, which it had not then or now. It was not built that way. The Milwaukee railroad does not want it or consider it worth the cost to acquire it even if sold at a bargain. Mr. Ryan was completely exonerated from all connection with the building of this road by Secretary Baker of the war department under whose orders and direction the road was built. His letter to that effect to Chairman Frear was suppressed by that gentleman and kept out of the record until Mr. Ryan appeared before the committee and forced its production and insertion in the record. The charge has already been fully explained and disproved in the press of the country. Enough said on that point.

There remains the charge made that Mr. Ryan, while expressing regret that he was too old to go to France to fight with the boys, remained behind at home to work for the government at one dollar a year and stabbed the soldier boys in the back. It is a noticeable fact that this and all the other charges against Mr. Ryan made by Mr. Wheeler were received by his audience in silence. Not a man in the crowd gave audible sign of approval. They knew it was false and that Mr. Wheeler knew it was false also. And every man in Montana knows it is false. And it came from the lips of a man who had just announced his purpose of forming a political alliance with A. C. Townley, convicted of disloyalty during the war by a Minnesota court, on the one hand, and Mr. Dunn of Butte, convicted of disloyalty during the war by a Montana court, on the other hand. It came from the lips of the attorney who defended Mr. Dunn on the charge on which he was found guilty, and who himself was summoned before the Montana Loyalty League for investigation as to his loyalty because they were suspicious about it on account of the bad company he kept in those trying times when our boys were fighting at the front and disloyal men were seeking to stab them in the back at home. Can you beat it. Is it necessary to say more. The gall of the proposition is enough to make the gorge of any patriotic citizen rise.

The Opinions of Others

WOODS ARE FULL OF 'EM

Senator Harding of Ohio announces that he will not be a candidate for president, but desires re-election to the senate. But let no one worry; there are plenty of presidential candidates left to make all the running that will be required.

GO INTO THE GARDEN AND EAT WORMS

An explanation of how the victory was won may be thrilling, but not even a policeman wishes to hear the troubles of the candidate who lost.

HAS NO SILVER LINING, HOWEVER!

Whoever gets a mandatory for any Balkan state gets one perfectly good Balkan war cloud, in every way as serviceable as before.

AS T. R. D. SAY, "GOING SOME"

To be elected to the legislature and become the father of another son all in one day is the regular Roosevelt style.

CHEERFUL VIEW OF SITUATION

This sugar shortage would have been a serious thing back in the days of the long toddy.

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT!

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By J. H. Cassel



HASKIN LETTER

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN

ROLLING STORES.

New York, Nov. 26.—A new and picturesque weapon for defeating the high cost of living has recently been developed in New York. It is known as the rolling store.

A rolling store is a large truck, drawn by two giant horses, and filled with huge stacks of dry groceries, which rolls into a neighborhood at the early hour of 8 in the morning and thereafter does a message business until 6 o'clock at night. It sells its products at prices ranging from 25 to 30 per cent lower than those being charged by the stationary grocery stores, thereby earning unfriendly criticism from those sources, blessings from the housewives and the hearty commendation of the New York commissioner of markets.

Ninety-six of these rolling stores are now operating throughout New York and Brooklyn, and Mr. George H. Salmon, vice president of the North American Export company, who is doing the rolling, says that in another month there will be 200 of them. The demand for them from neighborhoods in which they have not yet appeared is so great that one person is kept busy simply answering the telephone calls of housewives, who are indignant because their districts have been slighted.

"We are here to reduce the high cost of living," is the red-inked slogan on the side of the rolling store, and beneath that is a list of the supplies it carries with their prices. The other day this list included bacon at 24 cents, chickens at 56 cents, can of pork and beans weighing nearly three pounds 12 1/2 cents, best coffee 35 cents, can of tomatoes 17 cents, peas (No. 2) 13 cents, can of corn 13 cents and rice (fancy blue rose) 13 cents.

Buying from a rolling store is much like buying from a cafeteria. First you look at the price list, then you help yourself to what you want, with the assistance of an extremely busy salesman, knowing perfectly well beforehand what the total cost of the purchase is going to be. In most stationary groceries in New York you cannot do that. The prices are not listed on the wall, and when the clerk finally adds the total up on a paper bag, showing that butter or eggs or coffee have taken a sudden leap in price, you have no evidence upon which to contradict him. A customer usually leaves a rolling store not only with the pleasant sense of having secured a bargain but with the virtuous conviction in New York that is a great civic movement. He has helped, as the rolling store points out, "Mayor Hylan to knock the 'H' out of the H. C. of I."

The first rolling store was started about the first of October, merely as an experiment. No one was certain as to how it would be received, but the results were so satisfactory that ten more stores were added every week and four warehouse terminals to supply the stores were opened in New York. While the stores have not been able to bring back those marvelous days before the war when the nickel still had a separate and distinct existence, they have brought about a surprising reduction in prices. "Our object," says Mr. Salmon, "is not to compete with merchants who are selling groceries at reasonable prices. It is to help to drive out profiteers. We go into a neighborhood where we feel foodstuffs are costing too much, and we stay until we have driven the profiteers to reduce in their prices. Then we move on to another neighborhood. For instance when we first started operating most storekeepers were selling peas and corn at from 18 to 22 cents a can. We started selling the same kind

of peas and corn at 13 cents a can, and the result was that the storekeepers then reduced their products to 11 cents a can. We knew that they were losing money at that price—that the move was directed against us. But as a matter of fact, it did not hurt us the least bit. For we simply ceased selling peas and corn for the time being and replaced them with other cheaper products.

The rolling stores are able to sell goods at reduced prices for various reasons. In the first place, they do not have the large overhead expenses which must be met by the ordinary grocery store. Their selling force is confined to two young men, one of whom is also the truck driver, and neither of whom wastes any time in persuading customers to buy goods. At a rolling store, you can either take it or leave it. No one cares whether you buy food or not, because there are too many anxious housewives waiting to grab whatever is left over. In the second place, the North American Export company has a purchasing power of half a million dollars behind it, which enables it to take advantage of cash discounts and to buy in large quantities direct from the producer. According to Mr. Salmon, this factor alone permits them to make a saving of 50 cents on the dollar—savings which usually is absorbed by middlemen and clumsy methods of distribution.

"The chief purpose of the rolling store," he says, "is to reduce the cost of living and to provide employment for returned soldiers and sailors. All of our employees are men who have just come out of uniform." On the other hand, one gathers that the corporation is by no means running a charitable institution. It does not seek to conceal the fact that it is operating for a profit.

"Of course," declares Mr. Salmon, "the company does not know what the profits will be in this proposition. It will not pay, certainly, until we have 200 stores operating. We are convinced, however, that such a plan can be made to pay, but it is completely sold out by the customer will not be obliged to pay the high prices which he must submit to in the regular stores." As a money-making proposition the rolling store has everything in its favor. It is estimated that it sells in one day just three times as much as the ordinary grocery, and when the company has a chance to perfect its distribution system it will be able to sell even more. At present its sales are handicapped only by the store's carrying capacity, which is from 9,000 to 10,000 pounds. Each store starts out in the morning with 12 o'clock, so that it is then obliged to return to the warehouse for the afternoon's supplies. The company is now working on a plan whereby automobiles can be sent to follow up the various stores, distributing foodstuffs and eliminating this noonday trip to the warehouse. The most popular reception yet accorded the rolling stores occurred the other day on the East Side when the supply of eggs carried by one wagon sold out in one-half hour. A crowd of women was waiting on the curb as the truck made its appearance, and they proceeded to surround it, pushing, gesticulating and talking in various languages so that it became manifestly impossible to sell anything so easily as eggs. The driver was just about to turn his horses and stage a hurried retreat when a policeman arrived to handle the situation. With dramatic flourishes of his club he managed to subdue the crowd's feminine enthusiasm, made it form an orderly line, and

permitted only one customer to approach the wagon at one time. By the time the end of the line reached the wagon, the eggs were all gone, and so was the policeman. As the driver intimated, there are times when even a policeman must exercise discretion.

The busiest hours of the rolling stores are at 10 o'clock in the morning and at 4 in the afternoon. Prior to 4 o'clock, sometimes, the stores will make comparatively few sales, then the rush occurs all at once. The salesmen figure that this is because the women wait for their children to come home from school, so that they may have someone to leave with the smaller youngsters or to accompany them and help carry home the food. Also, especially on the East Side, the children learn the art of battle early in life, and prove valuable aid whenever there is a bargain rush.

Not long ago, such a rush was staged at one of the rolling store warehouses, taking the workers completely by surprise and upsetting the plans of the company. The warehouse was in the heart of one of the city's Italian districts. The Italian women had watched the rolling stores, with their promises to reduce the high cost of living, driving in and out of this warehouse day by day, and they did not understand why they never stopped to lighten the burdens in their neighborhood. At last, after patiently waiting for several weeks, they decided to attend to the matter themselves. When the door of the warehouse opened one morning there was a large crowd of Italian women and children behind it. They charged into the warehouse and were prevented from raiding it only by the timely appearance of a quick-witted ex-sergeant, who pointed an unloaded revolver at them. The women retreated, but they did not go home, as the sergeant had told them to do. They waited on the street corner, and when the first rolling store came along they surrounded it, forming a veritable barricade and keeping it there the whole day long. After that, the company felt that a rolling store in that particular community was an absolute necessity.

The demand from other districts, while not as forcible, is nevertheless equally compelling. It has kept up just as insistently during the recent cold weather. The rolling store has now added a large ash-can, with kindling wood and matches to its equipment, with which it provides a cheery, warm fire. It is cold work, this shopping in the open. The women hold their hands over its blaze as they choose their supplies, but they keep on choosing. The popularity of the rolling store is proved.

Has an Insane Idea He Requires Cash to Work Coal Mine

Special to The Daily Tribune. Chinook, Nov. 28.—That he had come to Chinook to petition the county commissioners to vote the sum of \$5,000 to open up a coal mine on his farm, was the obsession of Dan Munson, living north of Harlem, who was brought to the county jail Wednesday by Marshal Dolven, of Harlem, to await a hearing on the charge of insanity. The unfortunate man has a mother, brother and sister living in Minnesota. The hearing will be on Monday or Tuesday of next week.

Work Three Shifts Treasurer's Office Issuing Tax Bills

Special to The Daily Tribune. Chinook, Nov. 28.—The office of county treasurer, F. M. Rolfe, has been an exceedingly busy place this week. In spite of the fact that the state equalization board was late in sending in its returns, delaying the work of making out the tax statements, these were all out on Tuesday night. It required a great speed to accomplish the work, however, three shifts having worked from Sunday until Tuesday night. One shift began at 8 p. m., and worked until midnight, when a second shift came on duty and worked until 8 a. m., and the regular force took the day work. The extra assistants who began Sunday and worked until Tuesday night were Misses Clausner and C. O. Williams from the depot office force and H. Schlatter and Norman Mosser. Rodney Stam and Clark Chose assisted the county treasurer during the regular hours.

WILLIAMS TO HAVE RETAIL OIL STATION

Special to The Daily Tribune. Williams, Nov. 28.—Work on the new oil station of the Mutual Oil company has started and will be hurried to completion, weather permitting. The tanks at Waller, secured when the Mutual Oil company took over the Montana Oil company, will be moved to this point. The improvement will save farmers in this locality a long haul for oil and gas. George Sullivan will be in charge of the station.

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