

State-Wide and Direct Primaries.

We have no objection to State-wide primaries except upon the ground of expenses. They certainly cost the people a lot of money and make candidates "cough up" so liberally that only millionaires have a chance of success. But we can't see why Mr. WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN is so much excited on the subject as his Indianapolis speech indicates. It is not a new subject and there are two sides to it. But as usual Mr. BRYAN sees only one and threatens everlasting ostracism to every Senator and Representative in the Indiana Legislature who fails or refuses to vote for State-wide and direct primaries. Who gave him authority to speak for the Democrats of Indiana he leaves to conjecture.

The candidates of the machine are nominated at State-wide primaries quite as certainly as they are generally chosen by other nominating methods. This was clearly shown by the nomination of BOES PENROSE by one party, GIFFORD PINCHOT by another and VANCE C. MCCORMICK by the third, in this State last year. Left to their own impulses and the exercise of their own judgment few of the voters of the party they aspired to lead would have voted for either PINCHOT or MCCORMICK. It may be said with equal confidence that under such circumstances PENROSE would have also been defeated for the nomination, though he had a considerable personal following. But the others had no strength outside the machine.

At no time in the history of politics in Pennsylvania has the nominations of the parties been so clearly the result of purchase and sale as last year which was our first experience with the State-wide direct primary. We do not undertake to say that the same candidates would not have been nominated if conventions had been held for money and always has been a potent force in politics and the candidates had the money and were willing to spend it. But we do say that the result of the State-wide primaries in this State last year was not such as to recommend the adoption of that system by the Democrats of Indiana or any other State. It means big expense to the people and little good.

On the question of passing the immigration bill, "the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding," A. MITCHELL PALMER voted in the affirmative. That was a queer position for a man who pretends to be the special friend and champion of the President to assume particularly when the legislation in question is undemocratic.

Progress of the European War.

More than six months have elapsed since the beginning of the war in Europe and instead of modifying the bitterness of feeling seems to be increasing. Within the period since the firing of the first gun grave mistakes have been made on both sides and it looks as if all the combatants are anxious to drag the United States into it. First Germany offended by misusing the wireless stations on our coasts and then Great Britain compelled the administration at Washington to protest against the seizure and search of American ships on the high seas. But neither has been able to involve the President in any dispute which might lead to hostilities. Our President still holds his head.

Those recent incidents have provoked a good deal of spirited comment throughout the country. One of these was the proclamation of Germany enlarging the war zone so as to jeopardize the ships of all neutral countries whithersoever bound. Of course this was an absurd proposition but one which might lead to serious consequences. For example, if a German warship were to destroy an American merchantman not engaged in contraband service reprisals could hardly be avoided. On the other hand the American flag was raised on a British ship in the Irish sea the other day. If that practice is continued the American flag would likely cease to afford protection to any ship for every ship carrying that flag would be under suspicion.

But these incidents are less indicative of a prolonged struggle than the increasing bitterness of the combatants. When the war began most observers imagined that at the end of three months both sides would begin counting the cost and casting eyes out in search of some one willing to propose terms of peace. President WILSON tendered the good offices of the American government at that time but received little encouragement. It is not likely that the proposition would receive great favor now though little progress has been made on either side except in the direction of bankruptcy. But the end is bound to come and in the interest of humanity let us hope it will be soon.

Rights of Neutrals in Ocean Traffic.

Obviously the German government and people misinterpret the obligations of neutrals in the present emergency. They appear to hold that because ship masters are unable to discharge cargoes in German ports neutrals should refrain from delivering materials in the ports of the allies. In other words they allege that because their ports are under blockade business with other ports should be discontinued. Such a policy would shift the heaviest burden of war upon the neutrals for the reason that it would work the paralysis of commerce in the present case at least for nearly all the commercial countries are involved in the war on one side or the other.

Great Britain took the ocean carrying trade away from the United States during the war of the rebellion because the operation of our ships was too hazardous. We might have gotten a large part of it back during the interval since the close of that war if we had adapted our maritime laws and regulations to the changed conditions. But we have no cause of quarrel with Great Britain on account of her gain and our loss in shipping operations. The present war offers us the opportunity to recover but if the rule made in Germany were applied it would be forfeited. At the close of hostilities Great Britain would "resume business at the old stand," and that would be the end of the matter.

The first duty of the government of the United States is to conserve the interests of the people of this country. The practical withdrawal from the service of the merchant marine of Europe gives the ships of this country the cargoes available and it is the duty of the government to protect them in their rights. If any ship master is willing to take the chance of going into a German port he has the right to do so, whatever the nature of his cargo. But American manufacturers and American ships have an equal right to enter any port of the allies or of other neutrals and lay their cargoes in the market. That is not only the law of nations but it is good "horse sense."

Up to this writing the groundhog prognostications haven't prevailed in this section, and the old saw has surely gone a glimmering. There was no question about the groundhog not seeing his shadow on Tuesday of last week, as it rained and was heavily clouded all day, but the very next day it grew colder and we have had real winter weather ever since. And now comes a New Jersey weather prophet who advises the public to be prepared for the coldest weather of the winter on February 13th to 16th inclusive. So much for the groundhog.

Pennsylvania in Next Congress.

The Pennsylvania Democrats in the next Congress will be fewer in number as compared with the present delegation but scarcely less potent in power and influence. We ought to have elected half a dozen more Congressmen but the party managers seemed to have no interest in candidates other than those for Governor and Senator and LOGUE, LEE, DONOHUE and others fell victims of party perfidy or political stupidity. LEE and DONOHUE were certainly sold out and GRIM, CARR, MCINTYRE and BRODBECK could have been elected if proper energy had been intelligently invested in the effort. Mr. LIEBEL was elected in spite of the work of the Democratic State organization to defeat him.

But in the six gentlemen who will compose the Democratic contingent from Pennsylvania in the next House the party will have an earnest and efficient force. John J. CASEY who has wisely been chosen a member of the committee on Ways and Means has long been known as a capable and sagacious leader in the interest of Democracy and labor and he will direct his energies to the conservation of the public good rather than the promotion of selfish interests. Mr. LIEBEL has served his community in various capacities with signal ability and fidelity and may be depended upon to serve the party and State to good purpose in the Congress. He is both energetic and resourceful.

In the new member from the Thirtieth District, Berks and Lehigh counties, the Pennsylvania delegation will have a tower of strength. ARTHUR G. DEWALT has all the qualifications for a successful floor leader, and no Democratic interest will suffer while he is sentinel on duty. His long service in the Pennsylvania Senate has made him a master of parliamentary usage and his high standing as a lawyer is a guarantee of efficiency in framing and advocating legislation. Taking it all in all, the Democratic delegation of Pennsylvania will constitute a force to be reckoned with and some of the present members who are retired will not be greatly missed.

Brumbaugh and Local Option.

The women suffrage amendment to the constitution and the local option bill have both been fairly started on their voyage through the Legislature. The suffrage amendment has passed the House finally and is now in the Senate where it may have smooth sailing or encounter a tempest at any moment. In the House it met with no resistance worth speaking about and the local option measure is likely to have equally easy going in that chamber. In the Senate, however, it will be defeated beyond question, if it gets upon the floor at all, of which there is no certainty. The committee to which it will be referred is almost a unit in opposition to its passage.

Governor BRUMBAUGH is pledged to the support of both these pieces of legislation and will no doubt fulfill his obligation so far as possible. That is to say he will candidly tell such Senators as he meets that he favors the bills and would like to see them adopted by the Legislature. He may even go so far as to say that support of the measures would be gratifying to him personally. But he will hardly go beyond that. More than that would be offensive to sensitive Senators who are not favorable to the bills and it would be unwise for the Governor, at the outset of his administration, to deliberately "pick a quarrel" with the Legislators.

Under the circumstances it may be predicted that the local option bill will be defeated and that the event will cause no quarrel between the Governor and the Legislature. Some of the radical advocates of local option will denounce the Governor for treachery but that won't make any difference to him. They can't help or harm him in his political estate to any great extent and like other men, new and successful in politics, he will look out for his own interests and will be in the direction of preserving peace with the managers of his party. Dr. BRUMBAUGH has not reached the zenith of his political hopes by a long shot and he carries no chip on his shoulder.

Of course HAMPTON MOORE didn't mean to be personal or unkind, but when, on the floor of the House of Representatives, the other day, while defending the President's veto of the immigration bill he reminded SAMUEL GOMPERS, FRANK MORRIS and W. B. WILSON, principal sponsors of that "offspring of bigotry" that they were all born in foreign countries, he certainly threw a harpoon which made a deep wound.

The Pittsburgh Gazette-Times celebrated Monday by occupying its new building in Times Square and coming out in an entire new dress of type which is larger faced and easier to read than its old style. The Gazette-Times is one of the best western Pennsylvania papers among our exchanges and in its improved makeup will no doubt become even more popular and appreciated by the general public.

Representative CLAUDE KITCHEN, of North Carolina, who will take the place of OSCAR UNDERWOOD as Democratic floor leader, has a big job cut out for him. UNDERWOOD is a parliamentary giant and the man who takes his place must be able, eloquent and alert. But we predict that KITCHEN will meet the requirements in full measure and we congratulate the party on his selection.

Those European belligerents have been fighting six months and neither side seems to have made material headway. Unless a decisive victory falls to one side or the other ere long the matter of further financing of the stupendous undertaking will require greater generals than the fighting.

Mr. CARNEGIE declared, under oath, the other day, that his only business is "to do all the good in the world that he can." With his wealth and the opportunities the war affords, he ought to be the busiest man in this wide and wicked world.

Possibly business is being over-regulated, as some of the captains insist, but according to our observation so long as business behaves itself nobody interferes with it.

It may be confidently predicted that so long as the United States supplies food for the fighters in Europe we will have little need for battleships of our own.

A civil service examination will be held in Bellefonte on Saturday, February 27th, to fill a contemplated vacancy in the position of fourth-class postmaster at Pleasant Gap, Pa., and any other vacancies that may occur at that office. The compensation at the Pleasant Gap office was \$383 for the last fiscal year. Application forms may be secured from the postmaster at Pleasant Gap.

Britain's Firm Position.

From the Altoona Times.
Great Britain's incisive declaration on the question of foodstuffs consigned to German and Austrian ports and intended for distribution among the civil population leaves the United States in a somewhat embarrassing position. We are now confronted with one of two equally undesirable alternatives, namely, the withdrawal of our previous representations on the inviolability of non-contraband merchandise when conveyed in neutral bottoms and intended for other than military purposes, or a complete and undignified breakdown and surrender to the direct and unequivocal diplomacy of the British foreign office.

That Great Britain is desirous of averting an open rupture is evidenced by the exemption of the Wilhelmina, now on the high seas with a cargo of foodstuffs for German ports, from seizure without compensation. The vessel, Washington has been informed, will be conveyed to a British port, its cargo confiscated and its owners compensated by the British government. Henceforth, however, ships as well as cargoes will be taken as legitimate prizes of war.

So specifically has Great Britain defined her position that her note to the American government assumes all the force of an ultimatum. No points have been left open for future consideration. The United States may take or leave what has been offered. There can be no doubt of the course that will be pursued if American shippers seek to send their merchandise to Teutonic ports.

The Washington Way.

From the Philadelphia Record.
How characteristic it is of Congressional methods, both Democratic and Republican, that when an attempt at economy is made the pruning knife falls upon the important and valuable, while that which is superfluous and without merit escapes! Thus we see the House lopping off some \$6,000,000 from the Naval appropriation bill by cutting out the provision made for five new submarines, a hospital ship and a transport which are essential to a greater efficiency in the navy—while at the same time the Senate increases the Rivers and Harbors bill about \$4,500,000 by adding new items that swell it from \$34,138,580 to \$38,627,800. When a vigorous filibuster was made against a much more iniquitous bill of the same kind in the last session of Congress it is shown that no really important project was injured by reducing the appropriation from some \$52,000,000 to \$20,000,000 and leaving the expenditure of that amount to the discretion of army engineers.

Congress were really in touch with popular sentiment it would know that appropriations for building up the navy and army strike a responsive chord among the people at large, while the lavish waste of money upon impossible river and harbor projects leaves them cold. So it is with the expenditures upon public buildings, which are especially dear to the average Representative and Senator. If these were cut off for a single year, which would work no harm whatever, and if the Rivers and Harbors bill were continued at \$20,000,000, there would be no difficulty in heading off the \$35,000,000 which chairman Underwood fears. But that is not the way of Congress. It prefers a little navy and big "pork barrels." It is because Congress and the people of the United States differ so radically on these points that the complexion of that body changes so frequently.

Good Roads for Business Purposes.

From the Allentown Democrat.
In devising a plan for highway improvement in Pennsylvania the interests of farmers must be considered as well as the interests of the automobiles. In other words roads for business interests are just as important, perhaps a little more important—than merely scenic roads. The farmer has a greater and more vital interest in good roads than the pleasure seeker has. It is on the character of the highways he must traverse in order to bring his products to the city that his livelihood, his profits and his prosperity depends. But not only is the farmer the only one who reaps the benefit. The consumer is bound to share, for the less trouble the farmer has to market his wares the lower will be the cost to the buyers in the city.

But the fact that a road is built to best serve the interests of the farmer does not necessarily mean that the scenic effect will be slighted. Rural Pennsylvania is, for the most part, a section of beautiful landscapes and roads that are acceptable to the farmer can be made things of beauty to the automobile tourist. The grand boulevards that some of our road makers have been dreaming of may come in time, and the Democrat believes they ought to come, but for the present the farmer has to make his way by farmers' roads with comfort and safety by farmers' as well as by tourists. When the immediate and more practical needs of the business interests have been supplied then we can consider the boulevard question.

Been Consulting Doc Abbott?

From the Indianapolis News.
Let's see—wasn't it the same Villa who declared some months ago that he was not fitted by education and ability for the Mexican Presidency? However, people live and learn, and maybe he has.

SPAWLS FROM THE KEYSTONE.

Patton folks are expecting the mines in that vicinity to go on full time, ere many weeks elapse.

Since the first week in December the commissioners of Indiana county have paid out over \$8,000 in bounties for weasels.

Jacob Bay, a Sunbury shopkeeper, declares that he will close his place of business for six months to work for woman suffrage.

Ore that is believed to contain gold and silver in paying quantities has been discovered in Snyder county, just over the Juniata county line.

The Clearfield borough council has awarded to the Gannett Fire Alarm Telegraph company the contract for the installation of an electrical fire alarm system at a cost of \$2,200.

Mrs. Susan Eckenrode, of Bradley Junction, Cambria county, hale and hearty at the advanced age of 96 years, took an active part in a birthday surprise party gotten up in her honor.

Lock Haven's new high school building will probably be completed by March 15 and will be ready for occupancy April 1. It will be dedicated soon after with appropriate ceremonies.

W. R. Johns, 34 years old, of Punxsutawney, a brakeman on the B. & P. railway, fell under a train at DuBois and was so badly injured that his death resulted in less than an hour after the accident.

Johnstown barbers who have raised the price of a shave to 15 cents are talking so loudly of their undiminished patronage that one feels they are like the lad who whistled while passing through a graveyard to keep his courage up.

The tangle and scale house of the Electric Colliery near Odesa were entirely destroyed by fire. The mine is owned and operated by the Centre Coal and Coke company. A large number of men were thrown out of work by the fire.

The Italian societies in the Windber, Somerset county, mining district, have already collected \$1,000 for the relief of the earthquake sufferers in Italy. A benefit play will be given at Windber at an early date, the proceeds of which will go to swell the fund.

Three boys, their weight aggregating twenty-four pounds, were born Monday morning to Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Kirach, prominent residents of Nicktown, Cambria county. This brings the number of children in the Kirach family up to sixteen, ten of them boys.

Tramps sleeping in the structure are believed to have caused the destruction by fire of a large barn on the Jesse Horner farm, near Ralphton, Somerset county, together with some cows and chickens. The horses were saved but the farming implements were burned.

According to figures produced at the charity conference in the offices of the Associated Charities there are between 3,500 and 4,000 unemployed men in the city of Johnstown at present. It is said that conditions are better now than they were in the Flood City a month ago.

Bad civic and economic conditions in Johnstown are responsible for a tremendous infant mortality rate there, according to the report of the federal children's bureau. It was shown that on an average 134 out of each 1,000 babies born in Johnstown die before they are one year old.

Mrs. Minerva B. Healey, of Blairsville, recently received her sixth commission as a notary public. Mrs. Healey enjoys the distinction of being the first woman in Pennsylvania to be appointed notary public west of the Allegheny mountains. During the many years she has held the office she has rendered efficient service.

Henry M. Keeler, a well known painter and paperhanger, of Jersey Shore, who left Saturday to visit relatives in Williamsport, was found dead alongside the Reading railroad tracks a short distance below West Milton Saturday night. How he got to that place is not known.

Alphonso DeStefano, the six-year-old son of Charles DeStefano, was hit by the B. & P. southbound flyer at a Ridgway crossing Saturday afternoon, and instantly killed. His head was cut from his body. DeStefano, with a companion, was on one track waiting for a freight to pass. The other boy saw the rapidly approaching locomotive but too late to get DeStefano out of the way.

More than two thousand men employed by the Reading Iron company began work Monday at reduced wages. The puddlers accepted a cut from \$5 to \$4.50 per ton and the other workers took a reduction in proportion. The working force was increased over that recently employed and it is expected that the work day will be lengthened in a short time, giving the men more income.

A barbed wire fence into which Levi Owen, a ten year old Towanda boy, coasted, cut his throat from ear to ear, and nearly scalped him. Only the prompt work of a surgeon, who used twenty stitches to close the wounds, saved the boy's life. One sharp prong missed his eye by a quarter of an inch. The lad refused to take an anesthetic while the doctor was patching him up, and bravely smiled through the blood which flooded his face.

A story comes from Ebensburg to the effect that Elmer Good, aged 9, son of the late Christian Good, who died last Thursday night, after being considered a semi-mute since birth and without having spoken, so far as is known, started to speak after returning from school on Tuesday a few hours before his father's death. He could hear but could not talk and was reported without the power to articulate. Now he talks like other children.

The traveling distance between Pittsburgh and Oil City over the Pennsylvania will be decreased seven miles by the opening of two big tunnels nearing completion at Kennerdell and Woodhill, on the Allegheny Valley division. The concrete lining will not be put in until warmer weather arrives and it is probable that the tunnels will not be in use before summer. The one at Kennerdell is 450 feet in length, and the one at Woodhill is 2,280 feet. The work is being done at a cost of \$800,000.

G. F. Deneen, a Pennsylvania brakeman whose home is in Juniata, Blair county, fell under his train at Creson last Thursday afternoon and was instantly killed. The body being horribly mangled, Deneen's run was between Altoona and Pittsburg and his train had just left the Creson yards when Deneen started to the rear end. The roofs of the cars were slippery and it was while passing from one to another that he fell to the track. Deneen was 35 years of age and leaves a family.

With tears streaming down his cheeks, Judge Evans, of Bloomsburg, on Saturday imprisoned in the penitentiary for not less than one nor more than two years A. N. Yost, a member of the Columbia county bar, and fined him \$500.00. Yost was one of the most respected citizens of the county until his exposure, which resulted in a plea of guilty to embezzling nearly \$9,000 from the Industrial Building and Loan association, of Bloomsburg. He had for years been secretary of the Columbia Fair association.

Seventy-two men were thrown out of employment when the plant of the Garfield Fire Clay company at Robinson was destroyed by fire late Thursday afternoon, but the majority of these men will be given work in the rebuilding of the plant, starting within a few days. All the dry-houses and other frame structures of the plant, including all the machinery, were destroyed.

The buildings were constructed in 1877. The loss is declared to be in the neighborhood of \$25,000, which is partly covered by insurance.