

INK SLINGS.

—It doesn't matter much what happens now spring, is only forty-five days off.

—It isn't now that the farmers want help. It will be during the spring planting and the summer harvesting.

—Berlin has spurned the claim of reparation made by the Allies. The Allies, however, scarcely expected anything else.

—At last Germany knows how much she has to pay, but how she will pay it may concern her more than finding out the amount did.

—Centre county's first annual motor show has been a distinct success. Most of the visitors, however, had a Marmon taste and a Ford pocketbook.

—It doesn't matter whether his hogship saw his shadow or not. We haven't had six weeks of winter thus far, so he can't hand us such bull as six weeks more.

—Smiling skies and tropical seas are greeting Mr. Harding on his Florida trip. It is well, for we fear that storms are lowering for him when he reaches Washington.

—Another Soviet ark has set sail for Russia and we are to be deprived of the company of a few hundred more dogs that tried to bite the hand that was feeding them.

—It would have been too bad if the President had pardoned Debs, since Debs feels that his record for consistency would have been smirched if executive clemency had been extended.

—All the harrowing tales that have come out of Washington for a year or more as to the scarcity of houses and the high cost of everything don't seem to strike much terror to those gentlemen who are looking for jobs under the new administration.

—The sooner we relieve those Armenian children the sooner we'll be relieved of the suspense over the success of the drive that is on in Centre county for them. Those one hundred and forty-six babies must not meet us at the judgment seat and say: You, with plenty all about you, left us to die.

—The Legislature might serve the State far better than it knows if it were to insist on a gigantic road building program for early in the spring and then bind contractors to a labor scale slightly less than that paid by industries and farmers in the communities through which the highways are being built. Such a plan would leave no excuse for idleness on the part of able men, and it would not put other employers of labor at the disadvantage of being in competition with the State in the matter of wages.

—A gentleman, W. A. Hirschfeld by name, organized a party of Altoona people into a company to drill for oil and gas in the McKeesport region. After the first hole proved "a duster," it was learned that oil and gas were unknown in the field in which Mr. Hirschfeld had invited his friends to prospect and they cancelled the contract for drilling a second well. Now the well driller is suing the entire party for \$9,800, which is the balance due him on the first well. We sympathize with all of Mr. Hirschfeld's visionary friends except a doctor who we notice is among them. He ought to have been out looking after the sick and left the well alone.

—The railroad company's are placing steel straps around personal baggage shipped on certain lines the better to protect it from pilfering employees. Since prohibition has been effective more robberies of baggage in transit have occurred than had been reported in all previous times; the presumption being that nothing but wet goods was taken from the luggage of travelers. The habit, once formed, seems to have been growing to such proportions that all manner of articles are purloined from trunks and bags. While we have scarcely credited many of the wild stories of theft we have heard it must be admitted that when some railroad men become so finished that they use stethoscopes with which to detect the presence of liquors in a traveling trunk the railroad companies would serve a greater good by calling into use the old ball and chain rather than this new and obviously needless steel strap.

—Congress is considering the advisability of putting real teeth in the Volstead act. Such things as jail sentences for the first offense of selling, search and seizure of home brews and making the buyer equally guilty with the seller are some of the plans being considered. If the States were to cooperate more diligently with the federal authorities no additional enforcement legislation would be necessary and if the individual would look at his duty as a citizen with conscientious, patriotic vision the whole problem would be solved. Prohibition is here. Whether it is to stay or not depends wholly upon how it profits the country. Its results cannot be appraised under prevailing conditions and it seems to us that those who are opposed to it ought to be leaders in its enforcement, for if their contention is true, that the country doesn't want it, the quicker the country becomes bone dry the quicker there will be the revulsion that they predict. The present state of affairs is breeding disrespect and even contempt for law everywhere and, strange as it may seem, many law officers in the States are adding fuel to the flames by their poorly founded contentions that they are not supposed to help with enforcement.

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Penrose's Surprising Actions.

There is an old adage that "a renegade is worse than ten Turks." The zeal with which Senator Penrose is now pressing the Fordney emergency tariff bill is a substantial vindication of this fact. When the measure was first introduced the Senator proclaimed opposition in language of considerable vehemence. He even intimated that his views on tariff taxation had undergone a change within the past few years and that tariff legislation of the future must be drawn on scientific lines to secure his approval and support. But now he is rampaging about the Senate chamber "like a bull in a china shop," demanding the immediate passage of the Fordney bill. He appears to have thrown aside all reserve.

There is the excuse of Penrose, of course, that he is a sick man and an impaired physical system causes sympathetic mental infirmity. But he revealed no signs of mental incapacity in his management of the organization of the Legislature a month ago. It is true that the friends of Governor Sproul and state chairman Crow intimated that he appealed to their sympathies in a rather childish manner, but that inference has never been confirmed and no other signs of mental malady have been shown in his personal or political activities since. But his abrupt surrender to the ultra tariff mongers as indicated in his attempts to force the passage of the emergency bill justifies suspicions.

The palpable and declared purpose of that measure is to keep prices of necessities of life up to the high level of war times. Industrial life is in a depressed if not despondent state, and the signs point to an inevitable decrease of wages all along the line. How any sane man in the face of such a situation can invoke legislative instruments to keep up the cost of living is inexplicable. Yet Penrose, who has always been regarded as a shrewd politician as well as an experienced statesman has been using every parliamentary expedient to force the passage of this absurd measure. The wisest leaders of the party are against it but he persists even to the extent of invoking the cloture.

—Senator Borah is not always happy in his speeches but he seems to have hit the bull's eye in his reply to Senator McLean's statement that the New England woolen mills have material enough on hand to last two years. In that event, Borah said, he couldn't see how the emergency tariff bill would benefit the wool growers of the west.

General Atterbury is too Drastic.

Brigadier General Atterbury was rather arbitrary and somewhat dogmatic in his attitude before the railroad labor board in Chicago, on Monday. He demanded "the immediate abrogation of the national agreement between the roads and their employees." It was suggested that further conferences be held but he summarily rejected the proposition. "So far as the railroads are concerned," he declared, "we feel that we cannot get together. The views of the two sides are so radically opposed that no good could possibly come from such a conference." For that reason he imagines that the other side ought to be thrown out of court. It has no right to consideration, in his estimation.

The intelligent public, divested of prejudice and inclined to be just, is not likely to adopt his view of the subject. He promised that no wage reductions would be asked at present if his demand is acceded to and declared that the revocation of the agreement would result in the immediate saving of \$300,000,000 to the carrying corporations. These statements appear to be inconsistent and the average mind will incline to doubt one or the other of them. But in any event the General's attitude before the board was hardly diplomatic. He was addressing a deliberative body rather than an army on the battle front and might have gotten farther if he had been more reasonable.

No doubt the wages of railroad employees will be reduced in the future, near or remote, for a decrease of wages in all lines of endeavor is essential to a reduction in the cost of living. But the matter should be considered in a rational way instead of in the mandatory fashion adopted by General Atterbury in Chicago. When the wages of railroad employees are reduced, however, there ought to be a corresponding decrease in freight rates and charges for passenger service by the carrying corporations. A very considerable increase was allowed not long ago to cover the high wages of employees and it would be neither fair nor just to reduce one and allow the other to continue.

—Germany now knows just how much it costs to carry ambition beyond the limit.

Germany Must Pay Fifty Billions.

Whether Germany will be able to pay war indemnities to a total of nearly fifty-six billions of dollars, remains to be seen. In any event the supreme council of the Allies at its session in Paris on Saturday fixed that sum as the amount to be paid in penalties for the war. The payments are spread out over a period of forty years, beginning with half a billion annually for the first five years. Subsequent payments would be a billion and a half dollars a year for thirty-two years. In addition to that a levy of twelve per cent. on her exports is provided which charge must be paid in cash on sight. Besides these exactions Germany is required to disarm completely within six months.

Germany is rich in resources and suffered comparatively little from the war. France, Belgium and Italy suffered severely and Germany was exacting in demands wherever and whenever conquest afforded opportunity to levy tribute. But fifty-six billions of dollars is a vast sum to draw out of the earnings of the people and the products of the soil and industry. Even the privilege of borrowing is curtailed to the extent that no loans may be negotiated without the consent of the allies. It is said, however, that consent will be given to borrow in this country and steps have already been taken to establish a substantial credit here. It may be added that upon the success of this effort will rest the ability to pay the indemnity.

Opinions differ widely as to the justice of the levy as well as concerning the ability to pay. But no one undertakes to defend Germany in the actions for which the penalty is imposed. The property loss inflicted upon the allies was greater than the indemnity while the sacrifice in life and treasure is far beyond calculation. For these reasons severity is justified and in view of the resources of the country it should and will be exacted. Forty years is a brief period in the life of a nation and some living today may see the obligation discharged in full and the country a long way on the road to opulence. At least there is a hope of such result and meantime little sympathy will be wasted.

—The army of the unemployed is increasing rapidly without the help of recruiting officers or the expenses of medical examinations.

Berger and Debs.

The simultaneous decision of the Supreme court awarding Victor Berger a new trial and of the President refusing a pardon to Eugene Debs, upon the recommendation of the Department of Justice, causes a confusion of public opinion. They were accused of practically the same offence, under the same law and in similar circumstances. Both openly denounced the war, protested against the execution of the selective service law, and advised against enlistments in the army for service in the war. The only difference was in the fact that Mr. Berger had protested against the eligibility of the sitting judge to try the case against him and Debs made no such objection. All judges look alike to him.

At the time that Berger was convicted he was a member of Congress for the Milwaukee district of Wisconsin and was subsequently unseated by a vote of the House. Afterward he was re-elected and refused the seat on the ground that he was disloyal to the government. It seemed to be a just determination of the question. He offered no sign of contrition. He made no apology for his action. And the decision of the court giving him a new trial is in no respect a vindication. It is based entirely on the fact that his protest against Judge Landis as the trial judge was disregarded and as Justice McKenna said in substance it ought not to have been so disposed of. His rights were technically invaded.

In the Debs case conditions are the same. Mr. Debs has not altered his views on the subject of the war and persists in his offensive attitude against the government. Possibly the sentence of ten years' imprisonment was severe. But his offense was great and might have been disastrous. Clemency under the circumstances might influence others to similar offences in future if the conditions recurred. Mr. Debs is no stupid. He understood and understands the full measure of his responsibility as a citizen and persists in obduracy and rejoices in his turpitude. His friends may imagine that he has been sufficiently punished but the deterrent effect on others might not be achieved if he were pardoned.

—Probably Harding went to Florida to escape the "great minds" that were pestering him at Marion.

—We are not yet entirely persuaded that hiring men at a dollar a year is wise economy.

Deficiencies to be Investigated.

According to information from Harrisburg the expenditures of the State during the last fiscal year are to be investigated. This is to say, the heads of the several departments of the State government are to be summoned before the Governor in the near future to show cause for a deficiency of several million dollars for which funds are asked from the present Legislature. It appears that the last Legislature appropriated \$104,000,000 for all purposes. The Governor cut into this sum with his veto ax to the extent of \$2,000,000, leaving \$102,000,000 for expenses for the year. The disbursements have exceeded this vast aggregate by from six to eight millions and the Governor wants to know why.

This is an interesting subject and the result of the inquiry will be awaited more or less patiently. It comes a trifle late, of course, but such things are better late than never, for while it may fail to result in recovery of waste or loss, it may prevent recurrence of the faults in future. While the orgy of profligacy was in progress the Governor was so busy criticizing the extravagance of the administration at Washington that it was impossible for him to see the leaks at home. But now that deficiency bills of extraordinary proportions have called them to his notice it is gratifying to learn that he not only disapproves of the extravagance but is willing to expose the delinquents.

That the Governor had no knowledge of the profligacy that was rioting around him may be clearly inferred. In his message to the Legislature he recommended the passage of laws which would increase the revenues from fifteen to twenty-five million dollars in order to meet additional expense. If things had gone along quietly he would no doubt have pressed those measures and thus enabled the enterprising fiscal agents of the Commonwealth to continue the profligacy. But those pestiferous, not to say impertinent, newspaper chaps made a fuss about it and an inconsiderate public began to kick. The consequence of this is the investigation and a pompous proclamation of a limit to future expenditures.

—John F. Kramer, federal prohibition enforcement officer, of Washington, D. C., was a Bellefonte visitor on Sunday, speaking in the Lutheran church in the morning and in the court house in the afternoon. Owing to the inclement weather only a fair sized audience gathered at the court house to hear the man who holds the destiny of many million gallons of liquor virtually in the hollow of his hand. Mr. Kramer told of the efforts being made by his department to suppress the illegal traffic in liquor but declared that much of the abuse of the present law is due to the lack of vigilance on the part of local and state officials. He also admitted that another deplorable fact was that men caught in the act of bootlegging were left off with sentences of light fines, paid their money and promptly got busy again. There is no doubt but that this latter fact has been a very potent agent in the persistency of the bootlegger, and it calls to mind the fact that one individual captured in Centre county not so many weeks ago was let off with a fine of fifty dollars and five dollars for the driver of the car; though, of course, his load of liquor was confiscated. Since that time, however, he has continued in the business and is alleged to have cleaned up from six to seven thousand dollars. If that is correct, what does he or any other individual engaged in the game care for a fine of fifty dollars? It is only when the penalty is made severe enough that the bootlegging practice will be broken up.

—Altoona has discovered that the churches of that city are using too much water and a movement is on foot to make them pay for all consumed in excess of ten thousand gallons. How be it that such a discovery is just being made. There couldn't possibly be any connection between this unusual consumption of water and the fact that the country has gone dry.

—If we are to believe the interesting historical sketch of the old Union cemetery in Bellefonte, that is published in another column in this issue, there are a lot of folks up there who are keeping mighty quiet about not having paid their room rent.

—Those who earned big wages during last year and bought silk shirts at exorbitant prices may have trouble in getting money to pay income taxes next month.

—If the late Kaiser loves the Fatherland as ardently as he professes he will give a generous part of his vast fortune toward paying the war indemnity.

The Anthracite Monopoly.

From the Philadelphia Record.

Chairman Thompson, of the Federal Trade Commission, in supporting the Calder bill before a committee of the Senate, said that Congress must either "restore competition in the coal industry, or face nationalization."

We do not believe the American people desire the nationalization of any industry but their objections to that form of State Socialism are being steadily and rather rapidly undermined by the anthracite coal interests. The public is exceedingly averse to a monopoly, and the anthracite industry is substantially a monopoly.

The independent producers had some little competitive influence 20 years ago. But as they could reach tidewater only over one of half a dozen lines of railroad owned by concerns that were also deeply interested in coal mining, their freedom of action was extremely limited. They projected a railroad of their own which would enable them to compete in fact with the coal roads. The latter attacked the project in the New York courts and before the Public Service Commission, but were beaten. The only way the anthracite monopoly could be maintained then was to buy out the largest of the independent producers. The Erie Railroad made the purchase through a large banking house, which admitted making a profit of well over two millions in a transaction completed within six weeks, and in which no money was advanced by the bankers. The price was very high.

With the largest independent in the ownership of one of the coal roads, the independents could not go on with their railroad. They dissolved their association, dropped their periodical, gave up their struggle, and sold their mining properties to a railroad whenever they had a chance.

There has been no competition since. Congress has tried to separate the transportation and the mining interests, but with only superficial results. Back of both interests were the same persons. Prices have been moderately advanced. But with the orgy of high prices precipitated by the war, the anthracite interests saw opportunities they had never realized. They found out "how much the traffic would bear."

Anthracite is not scarce. Production compares favorably with previous years, but half a dozen men can determine how much the public shall pay for a necessary of life, and the prices are higher than they were during the war or during the scarcity produced by strikes. The anthracite companies have made a mistake. They imagined that the public aversion to government ownership was proof against anything they might do. It is not; it is rapidly fading away under the influence of coal bills, for which there is no adequate explanation except monopoly. In recent years there has been a marked increase in Socialistic sentiment. The coal miners have already begun to demand nationalization, because they believe the Congressmen they would elect would vote higher wages to them. These influences making for the nationalization of the anthracite industry are powerfully reinforced by the prices the anthracite companies are exacting.

They Are Worried.

From the Norristown Times.

Republican leaders at Washington confess that the tariff problem which they have before them is extra grave and hedged about by all sorts of knots and complications. They view the great, unprecedented exports of the United States, and the condition of Europe, financially and industrially, and admit that the matter of adjudication of schedules is going to prove a task for an intellectual Hercules. They know full well, but dare not say so, that the situation at present calls for no revision of the tariff, unless it be downward; and when they refer to an intellectual Hercules they can only mean a man who is able so to resort to cunning and subterfuge as to make apparently tenable any new tariff which may be brought into existence.

Reference has already been had by Republicans to the Payne-Aldrich tariff law of 1909, the feeler being put out that possibly this may be accepted as a short-cut to the G. O. P. goal. However, deep deliberation will be in evidence in ring circles on such a proposal, in view of the manner in which the people received the Payne-Aldrich act at the 1910 elections, and we scarcely expect to see that old law of special privilege revived.

There is positively no need for a change of the tariff at this time. Only two "reasons" exist for the suggested upset of the customs duties: One is that the present tariff law, under which American trade has developed to an unprecedented stage, is a Democratic measure; and the other is because the Republican leaders have to recognize the yawps of the big interests which contributed to their mammoth fund in the late campaign—yawps whose real meaning is that the big interests want their reward in a tariff law that will permit them to shut out competition and to gather in unearned increment.

Has Surplus.

From the New Orleans Times-Picayune.

If France has any more cabinet trouble, President-elect Harding might place at her disposal a part of the surplus cabinet material he has been accumulating since last November.

SPAWLS FROM THE KEYSTONE.

—A scarlet fever epidemic at Millwood, Westmoreland county, resulted in the schools being closed. The schools and all churches are being fumigated, as well as public gathering places. Two school children, stricken with the disease, died last week.

—Robert Miner, one of the most widely known negroes in Central Pennsylvania, died at Kane last Thursday. He was born in slavery. Shortly after the close of the Civil war he came to Pennsylvania, working as a hotel porter. He left an estate worth \$40,000.

—Policeman Joseph Bossard was shot and instantly killed while patrolling his beat at Jeannette last Friday. The authorities are investigating a story of a man who said he fired a shot through a door in the hotel where he lives and going out into the street a little later found the body of the policeman on the sidewalk. No motive, the police say, has been found for the crime.

—During a prayer meeting at 7 o'clock p. m., in the United Evangelical church, in Slocum township, near Wapwallopen, Lackawanna county, a dynamite explosion from outside damaged the building badly. All the windows were broken, plaster fell and the walls were weakened. A few worshippers were slightly hurt. The explosion is thought to have been caused by boys. The state police have not yet reported any arrests.

—If you invite a man to ride with you and he is injured you are responsible, according to a decision rendered by a jury in civil court, at Uniontown, Pa. Edward Hawkey, of Shoft, has just been awarded \$1500 damages under these conditions. He was returning home from work one evening recently when he was invited to board the motor truck being operated by John Puskar. On the way home he was thrown from the vehicle and permanently injured.

—Hail the boy champion pork producer of Pennsylvania! He is Robert Webster, a member of the Huntersville pig feeding club, of Lycoming county, and was successful in making his pure bred Poland China pig put on weight at the rate of 2.43 pounds a day for 112 days. No other boy or girl in pork production clubs throughout the State could touch this record, which will probably stand for some time. The average daily gain for the members of 22 clubs in the State was 1.32 pounds.

—Five men were burned late on Monday when gas flowing from a well on which they were working, exploded and caught fire. The well is located on the Hopkins farm, two miles from Monessen, Westmoreland county. The injured are: Cooney Noll, Elmer Sasey, Earl Chambers, drillers, and Watson Shepler and Walter Hopkins, farmers. The accident occurred when a drill struck a gas pocket. The gas exploded as it reached the surface, engulfing the five men in flames. They are expected to recover.

—The Northumberland county court on Monday sentenced John Wilmer, of Sunbury, to serve twenty years in the eastern penitentiary, after he had confessed to an attempted holdup and safe breaking before Judge Cummings. Wilmer is alleged to have attacked Josh Gass, a railroad, and robbed the Sunbury Bottling works. Stanley Korchup, aged 19, who confessed to robbing preachers' homes at Mt. Carmel, was sentenced to ten years as a minimum and forty years maximum in the eastern penitentiary.

—Speaker Robert S. Spangler has forbidden the pages of the House of Representatives at Harrisburg to accept tips. Following up his declaration of last week that the stenographers employed for the correspondence of members must not take gratuities, the Speaker informed the pages they should not accept money. The stenographers and pages, he said, are well paid by the State for the services they render and must not expect to accept extra pay. Furthermore stenographers are not to take extra work while they are in State service.

—Max Corbett, an automobile driver for the Viscose company, of Levittown, was badly burned about the face, neck and eyes last Wednesday morning when a red hot pipe filled with sand for the purpose of bending it exploded throwing the sand in his face. Mr. Corbett was carried to his home on Belle avenue and while his wife was rendering first aid pending the arrival of a physician, Samuel, a little son of the house, procured matches and paper with which he set fire to clothing in a closet burning all of the family clothing and endangering the house and neighborhood.

—Representative John C. Hampson, Democrat, of Greene county, may quit politics if his new oil well becomes a regular gusher. Hampson used to be a farmer, but several years ago he gave up agricultural pursuits and retired to a quiet home in Waynesburg. He has followed the custom for several seasons of moving his family to Harrisburg during the Assembly. Hampson just got his family settled in Harrisburg, when he received word from home that oil had been struck on his old farm, which he still owns. He and his family left at once to investigate the strike.

—Jacob Harko, for many years a deputy game warden in Fayette county, charged with larceny and cruelty to animals, was adjudged guilty and sentenced to serve seven months in the county jail. The costs of the case, \$346, were placed upon Harko. It was charged Harko received more than \$1000 in bounties for killing dogs which he said were strays. The dogs in question, it was testified, had license tags. In passing sentence, Judge J. C. Work said: "You have become a menace to the community. You have used your position as a clerk to violate the laws you have sworn to enforce."

—Albert Smith, the 19 year old son of a wealthy real estate owner of Fairhope, Westmoreland county, pleaded guilty in Criminal court at Uniontown last Saturday to thirteen charges of arson, and was sentenced to serve not less than forty-two nor more than eighty-five years in the western penitentiary at Pittsburgh. Smith was arrested several weeks ago after the entire countryside had been aroused by a series of incendiary fires, which caused damage estimated at no less than \$750,000. It was stated by the authorities that he had made a complete confession, and soon afterward the confession had been repudiated. Saturday, however, he appeared in court and entered the pleas of guilty, six of them being to charges of felonious arson. The incendiary fires, which continued for a period of three months, not only destroyed farm property and houses in a number of villages, but also valuable school buildings. Not all of the fires were charged to Smith.