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Philadelphia, Monday, April 11, 1921

DEVASTATED PHILADELPHIA

IF ALL that we hear is true, there is to be a new and well-organized movement for the improvement of political practices in this city. It may not be too much to hope that the plans of the reorganized general staffs of gangdom reported as headlining from Harrisburg during the last month or two, will meet with opposition of a sort to be seriously reckoned with.

The movement ought not to be labeled with the word "Reform."

That term has been dragged too long in the dust; it has been worn threadbare by some of the amateurs and the self-seekers to have any meaning as a definition intended to imply an improved political technique or better aspirations in the municipal government of these parts.

CHANNEL WORK ASSURED

IT IS good news that, although the appropriation for the rivers and harbors committee of Congress was cut from $28,000,000 to $15,000,000, the regular amount for this city will be unaffected.

Joseph P. Hackney has learned from the Philadelphia representatives in Washington that the work of deepening the Delaware channel to thirty-five feet will not be interrupted. The $1,000,000 that will be available will be devoted to improving the possibilities of a port which has few if any superiors in the country.

Time was when development of the channel was deemed as an inducement to commerce. While that is part of the case remains, the real necessity now is to adapt the port to its greatly expanded maritime trade.

A WELCOME "COME-BACK"

EXPECTATION that the most gifted tenor of the times and one of the most richly endowed of any period will adorn, not to say dominate, the Metropolitan Opera Company next season is now encouragingly confirmed. Although Mr. Caruso has not sung a note since he was stricken with pleurisy last December, his physical progress has recently been marked. "Certainly he will sing again," is the cheerful forecast of his secretary. "He is the great Caruso."

The renown of a singer ingratiating in personality and utterly devoid of the affectations that have been said to be inherent in famous tenors is in a way a national benefaction. The popularity of generous, almost ingenuous, big-hearted, open-minded Enrico Caruso is as impenetrable as his artistry.

His long success before the American public has fostered the impression that he was approaching the retirement age. Yet Mr. Caruso is but forty-seven, and years of brilliant endeavor and performance should lie before him.

His prospective return after an absence of twelve or more months from the operatic stage, which had been for a time a habit, returned to delight music-lovers. A second "come-back" is in joyous prospect.

UNRULY YOUTH

YOU probably have noticed that there were parents outside Court 5 of the Young Person.

The Young Person was rather peculiar, we suspect, in the matter of concurrency between Miss Barrington, principal of the Camden High School, and the grand jurist who resent her decision to enforce rules established by the Board of Education for the good of all pupils.

There is hardly a thing we can say that doesn't seem a bone of contention for the young, with the board applauding that boy and girls are running riot or getting themselves into bad matters. Mrs. Anna Schlesinger Brown, head of the Oglethorpe Club, thinks the parents are to blame for the way their boys and girls behave, and has the confidence of most of the public in that point of view.

For ourselves, we are inclined to think that the greatest offenders in the matter of young people are, like many of us, the victims of too much leisure. A little more responsibility and a little more opportunity to acquire labor may be a wholesome thing for many old. Adolescence is a difficult period to question for those who have had plenty of their school teachers, as well as presenting some tragedy.

The Young Person is going too good a time.

OUR CLIPPED WINGS

SAID LEONOVE, a French aviator, who piloted an airplane across the Channel and back, after watching the performances of aviators in Europe and everywhere with the eye of an expert, that the Caproni seemed to him with energy and economy of construction the mastery of the air. Caproni, he declared, have what appears to be the most powerful and most powerful engine in the world. The machine is said to be so constructed that it can carry bombs capable of destroying a city. We know what the Japanese are doing. They are building aeroplanes and training them with ferocious zeal. The Dutch are rapidly improving their aviation service. Germany is building a plane which will carry more than 100 passengers. The British are adapting their attention to the construction of passenger planes for the neighbors of a revolutionary and highly efficient sort.

Thanks to a Congress which still thinks of the battle-planes as mere engines of war, the principle of the Liberty engine was first successfully demonstrated in the United States, doing nothing really worthy of it in the field of aviation. We are content to continue to leave the air to others.

RESPECT THE FORESTS

FOREST PROTECTION WEEK, proclaimed for May 22-28 by the President, opens the way for practical consideration of a national problem whose importance can hardly be overestimated.

Deforested countries like central Spain and Mesopotamia furnish grim testimony of the consequences of tree waste. America's wealth in trees is so prodigious that ordinary safeguards against fires often have been recklessly neglected and the felling of rich forests has proceeded with ruthless indifference to future needs. It is not only unproductiveness of the soil that is the penalty of deforestation, but rigorous alterations of climate.

Mr. Harding's proclamation cites the enormous losses by forest fires annually in the United States, involving the devastation of 12,500,000 acres of land.

The various state governments are awakening to the situation to some extent, and in Pennsylvania particularly Gifford Pinchot is expertly vigilant in his endeavors to safeguard our arboreal riches. But much remains to be done. Especially necessary is public education on this subject.

The exercises and events planned for Forest Protection Week should help to implant in the minds of citizens respect for the conservation of one of our primal natural resources.

CONGRESS AWAITS WORD FROM PRESIDENT HARDING

In the Month Since He Took Office He Has Risen to a Position From Which He Can Speak With Authority

PRESIDENT HARDING begins his administration by calling Congress in extraordinary session. The representatives of the people assemble in Washington today.

The constitutional date for the meeting of the national legislature is so far away and the need for remedial legislation is so great that the President has felt compelled to use his constitutional power to bring the congressmen together now.

We are accustomed to such procedure. President Wilson served through four Congresses and he called all but one of them in extraordinary session. The exception was the Sixty-fourth Congress, which he allowed to meet on the accustomed date in December, 1915. He began his presidency by getting Congress together within a month and recommending immediate revision of the tariff. The Sixty-fifth Congress was summoned to declare war against Germany and the Sixty-sixth to make the necessary appropriations for the support of the government.

President Taft called both Congresses of his term in extraordinary session, the first within eleven days of his inauguration and the second a month after the term of its predecessor had expired.

President Roosevelt, however, presided in the White House during so peaceful a period that he interfered with the regular procedure only once, and that was when he called the Fifty-eighth Congress to meet on November 9 instead of waiting a month for it to meet on the fixed date.

Mr. Harding has done only what was expected of him. The situation which confronts him is such that it cannot be met without the immediate co-operation of Congress.

The nation is laboring under the burden of unscientifically adjusted war taxes and its foreign trade is conducted under a tariff law which brought stagnation to business and threw hundreds of thousands of workmen out of employment. Domestic industry was saved from wreckage through the incorporation of academic theories in tariff legislation because the war intervened and forced a stoppage of importations.

The country is looking to the Congress to correct the inequities of the present internal revenue laws. That the laws are fatally defective is admitted now by the men who drafted them. Their only excuse is that they had to act in haste; but this is an excuse which will hardly be admitted by the historian, for the unsound theory on which some of the taxes were based was pointed out while the bills were still in the formative stage. Congress acted on the belief that it was just to make a business man with an income of $1,000,000 pay a much larger tax than was to be collected from ten men with an income of $100,000 each, and that a corporation which did a business of $500,000,000 a year could be justly taxed at a higher rate than was levied on 500 corporations doing a business of $1,000,000 each.

But the plan has not worked. It has resulted in the diversion to the federal treasury of the capital needed for carrying on the business of the country. It has forced investors to put their spare capital into tax-free securities, because otherwise their income would have been absorbed by the tax collector.

The internal revenue laws must be revised in the light of knowledge that even the most demagogic congressman never imagined since they were first passed. And the tariff law must be revised to meet the changed position of the United States from that of a debtor to that of a creditor nation. The extreme high-tariff men may be reluctant to modify their views, but they will have to be modified if we are to collect the debts now owing to us abroad.

The President was probably right in delaying the extraordinary session for five weeks. He has had time to look about him from the seat of authority. The members of the cabinet also have had time to consult together and to give to him the benefit of their knowledge of what ought to be done. The executive branch of the government has won the confidence of the people. Whenever any member of it has stepped in his chosen field to correct a blundering bureaucracy or to initiate a thorough understanding of what was going on and a better relation between the government and the people, he has received the plaudits of the nation.

Secretary Hughes has already shown himself capable of meeting the situation in accordance with the best traditions of American diplomacy. There has been a clear and definite as his attitude toward Germany and Russia. He has met Germany and Russia. He has met Germany and Russia. He has met