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Philadelphia, Wednesday, August 17, 1921

JUDGE BROWN RECENTS

THE noteworthy thing about Judge Brown's resignation from the position of front legs of the horse in the Fifty-Fifty circus is not merely the fact of a weakened Vare combine. It is the nature of the "interview," issued in explanation of the return of office by the Judge himself and by Senator Vare.

It is difficult to believe that any politician of skill and experience could have the effrontery in these times to imply that all voters are without the judgment of common sense or a single glimmer of critical intelligence. Judge Brown and Senator Vare assume all that and more. They talk as they might talk to a kindergarten class in pronouncements solemnly issued for the advice and guidance of voters in Philadelphia.

The Judge took his orders. He took them from Washington. It was under pressure from Senator Penrose that he abandoned a scheme in which two factors were joining to run the city for their own exclusive benefit. Now, however, the horse of the Municipal Court wants to be viewed as an idealist, as one who for seven long years held aloof from politics and took part in that distressing business only to help toward the election of Mr. Moore. He isn't a politician, this Judge. He is a gentle philosopher and a friend of humanity.

Similarly drools Mr. Vare. In this trying hour he puts his faith in the plain people, the plain people whose streets were left dirty and disease-ridden in order that contractors might be a little richer; the plain people whose children were to be exploited by the drug peddling and gambling and vice wings of the Fifty-Fifty combination. The amazing thing is not that voters are asked to believe stuff of this sort. It is that a good many of them, including a considerable number of women voters, actually will believe it.

WOMEN REGISTRARS

ALTHOUGH the appointment of some 250 women registrars in this city will not precisely shake the political structure to its foundations, their desire to serve is an earnest of the right sort of consciousness of their recent enfranchisement.

Registration day work is by no means difficult, but the hours—7 in the morning to 1 in the afternoon, a three hour hiatus, and then duty again from 4 until 10 at night—are long, and in periods of political doldrums waiting for "customers" is a sometimes dull and dreary business. With brisk "trade," resulting from a stiff local contest, or the imminence of a presidential election, there are compensations.

The Registration Board has definitely ruled that "over twenty-one" will not be accepted as a valid answer from electors, male or female. Although the list of questions asked is not tyrannically inquisitorial, the details sought are pertinent and specific. Not every masculine elector, if the fact exists, admits without gulping that his residence is in his wife's name. There will be more reluctance than ever when a woman propounds the query. There is, moreover, no taboo on division gossip in the registration place.

The ten-dollar-a-day wage does not represent the full compensatory value of the job of checking up voting citizens.

MORE WASTE

NEAR Bristol, in the days of the war, the Government built one of its "model villages" to house workers drawn to the shipyards. No one appears to have looked beyond the necessity of the hour. No one seems to have given a thought to the safety of an enormous investment of public money. The dwellings cannot be sold at a reasonable price. And groups of buildings which house 278 families are useless because the central heating plant, another bit of Shipping Board work, cannot be made to function economically.

It is natural to suppose that the heating plant would be repaired and that the agents of the Shipping Board would make an effort to obtain for the Government a normal rental for the living quarters in the buildings.

Orders issued from the Shipping Board headquarters in this city indicate, however, that nothing of the sort is contemplated. The families occupying the apartments have been ordered to find other dwellings. Presumably the heating plant and the series of buildings which it serves are to be left to fall into decay.

The people who live in this model village have done right in organizing to bring the whole mess to the attention of the Shipping Board chiefs. Under the reorganization there must be a few competent minds at that vast and mysterious organization.

MEXICAN RECUPERATION

IF THE present Government of Mexico is to be recognized it is inconceivable that Secretary Hughes will not have something to say about it.

This prospect contributes an element of inconsequentiality to the Senate's decision of this theme. The debate, however, in which Senator Ashurst, of Arizona, defended President Obregon against the attacks of Senators King, of Utah, and Watson, of Georgia, is illuminating. The revelations are indices, for the first time in more than a decade, of the existence of a conciliatory attitude in the border States toward any regime in the neighbor republic.

"There is here a State that understands the Mexican situation," declared Mr. Ashurst, "It is Arizona." Proof of the new friendliness of this Commonwealth is at hand in the unanimous petition of its Legislature urging Congress to recognize the Obregon Government.

Texas and Oklahoma have also recommended such a step. Senator Ashurst particularly pointed out the security of railway travel, asserting that regular Pullman service is now restored between Mexico City and

the United States and that freight is being systematically and efficiently handled.

The Administration in Washington is naturally inclined to move slowly in the affair on account of the alleged confiscatory provisions of the Mexican Constitution regarding property holdings by foreigners. But the signs of the return of order, emphasized by Americans in a position to contrast them with the former chaos, are not to be dismissed lightly. The recuperation of Mexico seems to be a fact at once heartening and substantial.

THIS YEAR'S \$32 TAX BILL WILL BE \$4 NEXT YEAR

The Reduction Will Come About Because of Changes in the Revenue Law to Benefit the Man of Moderate Means

THE new tax bill, which the House will begin to debate today and will send to the Senate on Saturday, contains provisions for relief which will benefit a large part of the population.

If the present tendency continues we may see repeated in this city the confusion that now exists in Jersey. Seven-cent car fares are but a preliminary to ten-cent car fares. The loss of business which results from seven-cent fares makes ten-cent fares necessary.

The provision upon which there seems to be unanimous agreement among the leaders of the party in power increases the tax-exempt income of men receiving less than \$5000 to \$2500 for married men and to \$100 for every dependent child regardless of the amount of the income. The present exemption is \$2000 and \$200. This will benefit nine-tenths if not forty-nine-fifths of the income taxpayers. It will exempt entirely from income tax about one-half of those who are now paying it.

The exemption is to date from January 1, 1921, so that it will apply to the incomes received this year. As the tax that is being paid now is on last year's income, the change will not affect any payments to be made before January 1, but it will reduce considerably the tax liability next year.

For example, a man with a wife and one child and an income of \$3000 will be taxable on \$100, whereas he is now taxable on \$800. His tax this year is \$32. Next year it will be \$4. This is the kind of tax relief that will be appreciated.

Another delegate asked whether "we are Republicans or are we split?" Mr. Kuenzel informed him that they were all Republicans. "That means you're for the Mayor. I take it," the delegate said, and Mr. Kuenzel dodged the bluntness best he could. The woman explained that she only wanted to know who her hosts is.

And all this happened in a convention supposed to be controlled by the Vare machine. The leader of the Women's Republican Club has announced that the members must take orders from the City Committee, and that it is almost treason for members of the committee to consult with the Mayor. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that some of the women are beginning to wish a little light. If they are Republicans, why are they not supporting the Charter which the Republicans passed, and who are they not supporting the Mayor nominated and elected by Republican votes? Is it something else than Republican victory that they are supposed to be interested in?

Well, the way to find out is to continue to ask questions, and to ask them of the men who are supposed to be able to answer them.

THE RASH BRIAND

THE French estimate of the significance of the Disarmament Conference is strikingly disclosed in the personal acceptance of Aristide Briand, who is to head the delegation of his Government. The United States will be pleased to welcome such stables discussing the prices they had got for their town carriages. A brougham had brought \$25 and a Glens Falls three-seater \$20, the double harnesses from \$6 to \$3. I tucked this information away in my mind with an eye to the old buckboard which I had got back to our farm. I casually let it be known that I would sell our buckboard for \$10 or little under. The "little under" was the bait for my hook, and I waited with no great expectation of a nibble, since both the garbage and milk man had acquired wheeled vehicles of an ancient and durable vintage elsewhere.

But this morning the nibble came! First a nubile girl, then a stout one. I treated it with all the solicitude I could command, although I was so anxious these boys should possess that dear old vehicle that it was all I could do to make them buy it and not give it to them.

But they had obviously come as purchasers—and also as hagglers—and as they were agents and not spenders of their own. I made a great come-down. It was a great come-down if I presented them with what they wished to bargain out of me. So we began off on quite another subject.

They were in fact—or rather the professor's wife was in fact—renting the old barn from me at \$15 for the season, subject to its being left clean when the boys removed their old white pony for the return to town.

The haggling began on the subject of the barn. They felt that they only needed half of it and in that case what rebate was I prepared to offer?

I said that they were using the whole of it, having the pony and the white horse and two carts and their bicycles.

They agreed with me with expressionless faces and said, "How much are the other things stored there, not theirs?"

I asked them if they meant the buckboard. They nodded solemnly.

"You mean by that," I said, "that although you pay for the barn you have not the entire use of it?"

They was, I think, they meant. After a due silence they took up the matter of the buckboard. They said that might not have a horse another year, so that buying seemed to them problematical. They might consider renting it.

I moved too rapidly for them at that point. I said that they could have it for \$8. I meant buy it, but they thought I meant to rent it for a year.

They remarked therefore that as I had, they understood, put \$10 on it as selling price, \$8 as my rental for part of the season seemed too much.

I said that I would have to break it gently to them that the selling price was

As is well known, Anglo-American opinion sometimes inclines in the opposite direction. This time the United States is out of the argument, since Secretary Hughes has already been made head of the American Commission, and Lodge as an associate, while the President is still in the hands of the manufacturers.

The soundness of this argument is open to question. It would be difficult to imagine many business men who are making normal profits this year, and the man whose profits are so large that they would be taxable under the excess-profits provision of the law is a curiosity. Yet the official estimate of the return under the tax is \$350,000,000.

The reasons for postponing the repeal until next January are clearly political. They are put forth chiefly by the representatives from the farming districts, where the doctrine that the rich must be made to pay the cost of government to the full extent of their ability is popular.

These amateur economists, however, were not strong enough to prevent making the repeal of the heavy surtax on incomes above \$36,000 retroactive to January 1, 1921. This tax is fixed at 32 per cent, which is large enough in all reason. It will yield considerable revenue without forcing men who have had to pay 73 per cent of their incomes to the Government to seek tax-free investment in order to protect their necessary business reserves.

The bill will look like when the Senate gets through with it no one can foretell, but it is not likely that the Senate will be so foolish as to forget that the Nation is expecting some such relief as it provides for. There are certain to be changes in some of its details. There ought to be no change in its general purposes.

THE ERIC'S BOLD MOVE

A VERY large part of the working organization on every railroad is engaged in the shops in manufacturing and repairing rolling stock. The labor rulings issued by the Government and formulated after deliberation in Congress and in the recent industrial conference in the interest of economic progress and industrial peace apply to the shop men as well as to the President's estimate of the return under the tax is \$350,000,000.

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