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"Give Light and the People Will Find Their Own Way."

A Fundamental Matter

Prompt action by Judge Baker in the criminal court in directing attention of the grand jury to the manner in which a law was written by fraud and forgery in the closing hours of the legislature gave some measure of hope to those who believe in free institutions.

The success of that body in bringing to justice those who substituted forgery for legislative processes will determine whether this is to be a government by the people or by special interests through their agents and tools.

There is agreement among legislators on the one fact that the law as signed by the Governor was not the same law as was passed by the members of the legislature.

Somewhere in the morning hours a different measure was substituted and promptly signed by the Governor.

There may be some debate as to the effect of the changes upon public interest. There can be no debate on the fundamental question that laws should be passed by the legislature and not by lobbyists.

The bill affects the rights of bus companies and the control of them by local officials instead of the public service commission. Inasmuch as that commission under the guidance of the Governor has an unbroken record of giving the utilities all that they ask and the people no redress from outrage and wrong, it may be expected that when ever public interest and utility greed clash, greed will win.

The people of the state have come to expect that result on utility matters. They have submitted quietly to outrages in rates and valuations. They have become submissive to utility extortions and exactions. But they have not yet become submissive to the direct writing of law by lobbyists.

If any official, high or low, consented to the legerdemain by which copies of the law were switched, he should be sent to jail. It is as Judge Baker so clearly pointed out, treason and the overthrow of all government.

But can the law catch up with the traitors and the manipulators? Is the law strong enough or wise enough to get the real rebels against free institutions?

The matter is much more important than catching any other law violators and should be pursued to the very end. Until these crooks are caught, all other law fails.

A Good War to Forget

The 119th anniversary of the declaration of war on England in 1812 is close at hand. The nature and significance of this conflict is suggested vividly by an amusing and illuminating article on present-day English attitudes toward the War of 1812 by Margaret Wilson in the Atlantic Monthly.

Miss Wilson, well known as a brilliant American novelist, recently married an Englishman and has gone to live in England. She was surprised one morning to find an English woman expressing the view that Americans had no use for naval vessels—that we are not a sea-going nation.

She mentioned the fact to her husband and asked if Englishmen knew nothing of the War of 1812. Even Miss Wilson's husband thought the War of 1812 began in 1776.

This sent Miss Wilson to the library to get a history to prove there was a War of 1812. With difficulty she found one which gave the war three lines. She had to consult twenty well-educated Englishmen before she found one who could identify the War of 1812.

When she referred to the burning of Washington, one man thought she was accusing the British of burning George Washington: "I know we did burn Joan of Arc. But George Washington—that's a bit thick!"

The British have shown better sense on this matter than we have. The War of 1812, Old Ironsides notwithstanding, is a fine war for Americans to forget.

In the first place, we were in the wrong over most of the diplomatic disputes which preceded the war. We tolerated, even nursed along, the abuses over which we protested.

In the second place, it was an unnecessary war. The orders in council, which were the immediate justification alleged by the United States in declaring war, were ordered repealed on June 18, 1812. We did not declare war until June 18.

In the third place, it was a humiliating and an insignificant war. Clay and the war hawks thought they could bring England to her knees in short order. Clay declared: "I trust that I shall not be deemed presumptuous when I state that I verily believe the militia of Kentucky alone are competent to place Montreal and upper Canada at our feet."

But all the militia of all the states proved quite incapable of getting any foothold in Canada. The United States won but one considerable land encounter, and that after the treaty of Ghent had been signed.

The naval engagements have stimulated much patriotic prose and poetry, but they were insignificant, even if compared to the battles between the coast guard and the rum runners off New Jersey and Florida in 1813.

The wiping out of the St. Mihiel salient cost more American lives and ammunition in a single day than were demanded by the whole War of 1812. The Battle of Lake Erie required as great bravery as the Battle of Jutland, but it was an encounter of ill-fated order.

In short, the War of 1812 was a petty war, even when compared to the Spanish-American war.

Finally, the War of 1812 promoted treason and disloyalty. Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut refused to raise their quota of troops, but threatened their militia against the federal government instead.

Most of the provisions used by the British army in Canada treacherously were shipped in by New York and New England. Timothy Pickering called a convention at Hartford to plan nullification and secession.

Let us not remind England of the unpleasantness of 1812-1815.

Meeting the Deficit

Prospects of a billion-dollar federal deficit for this fiscal year have revived discussion of tax increases.

It is no longer possible to dismiss the deficit lightly. Less than two weeks ago it was placed at \$800,000,000. Now the United States treasury statement shows an \$879,000,000 shortage for the first ten months of the fiscal year.

At the current rate of loss, the deficit on June 30 will be more than \$1,135,000,000. That figure is considerably larger than our total ordinary annual expenditures before the war.

There are two ways to meet the deficit. One is to increase taxes. The other is to borrow and go deeper into debt.

Theoretically, the government might reduce expenditures; but actually it can not. The future is mortgaged by commitments which can, or at least will not, be escaped. Indeed, it appears that expenses are going up rather than coming down.

National defense is about the only large item that could be cut easily, and unfortunately neither the administration nor congress is ready to do that.

So far the administration has indicated that it will take the easiest—the most dangerous—way. It proposes to increase the public debt. This was confirmed last Wednesday by the assistant secretary of the treasury, speaking before the United States Chamber of Commerce convention.

Such policy might be justified if the government were certain that the present deficit was caused solely by the depression, that the depression was about over, and that income would be up again next year.

But the government has no such certainty. On the contrary, there are signs that the deficit will be even larger next year, unless there is a substantial tax increase.

An increase in customs receipts is not in sight, tariff revision and revival of foreign trade are not probable this year.

Domestic business, reflected in income and corporation taxes, following a short spring upturn, has been failing during the last month. A further slump in Wall Street has brought stock prices to the lowest level since March, 1927.

The farm outlook is darkened by reports of new grain surpluses abroad, and prospects of another drought. According to the chief of the United States weather bureau, "the severe drought of 1930 continues unbroken in many parts of the country, especially in those sections most seriously affected during the last year."

If the administration is intelligent, it will face these unpleasant facts in determining its tax policy. It will forget that it is on the eve of another presidential campaign, and base its policy on sound financial principles rather than partisan expediency.

To go on increasing the public debt in times like these is not sound finance. If the deficit is to be made up by an increased tax, good business requires that it be taken from the personal incomes of the very wealthy.

A higher tax on middle class incomes or on corporations would retard business recovery.

An Able Journalist

One of the friendliest, and by the same token, most effective, American editors died Sunday in Columbus, O.

E. C. Cook, who had been editor of the Columbus Citizen and editor-in-chief of the Ohio group of the Scripps-Howard newspaper, succumbed to illness that had rendered him inactive during the last year.

Editor for more than a generation of an important newspaper in the capital of an important state, Cook played a useful role in the public affairs of his time. He was loyal to the highest concepts of journalism, unswerving in his advocacy of the state's best interests, yet he found no occasion to make enemies, personal or professional.

Men with whom he disagreed most earnestly and passionately are among his sincerest mourners today.

A man hot under the collar is fit to be tied firmly about the neck.

"I'm spilling fine," as Floyd Gibbons, the 217-word-a-minute man, might say.

Maybe the drum major preens like he does because of his high baton average.

REASON BY FREDERICK LANDIS

THIS new ambassador the republic of Spain is sending to us is said to be an open critic of the United States.

Well, after he arrives, he would better put on his muffle or he will go back quicker than he came.

So far as he is concerned, it is fortunate that he is an open critic, for this enables him to get it out of his system.

You see, if he were a closed critic, it would all be canned up in him and he might have liver complaint.

When you are making your list of heroes do not overlook Laddie, that little dog in Chicago who saved one child from a burning house by arousing help and then gave his life, trying to drag another child to safety.

Carnegie should have founded a hero fund for dogs.

General Smedley Butler has made a great mistake, rhetorically speaking, to get into this mess with this Haitian.

After having cavorted through the headlines of the world, arm in arm with Mussolini, it is a sad anti-climax to do a number with a mere minister from Haiti.

If King Alfonso several years ago turned down a one million dollar offer to go to Hollywood and appear in pictures, he now can kick himself all over the lot, for he wouldn't be in it now with Joe E. Brown, for instance.

Nothing fades quite so rapidly as an ex-king.

A CHIVALRIC Texan desires to marry one of the Siamese twins, now that the girls have won their freedom from their manager, along with a judgment for \$900,000.

But how could a fellow marry one of them without committing bigamy?

The supreme court of Illinois just has let four gangsters go for technical reasons.

We would have a terrible time saving the country if it were not for these technicalities.

Stephenson now is trying to get out of it.

M. E. Tracy

SAYS:

A Reasonable Excise Tax on the Hooch Now Being Sold Would Wipe Out the Federal Deficit.

NEW YORK, May 4.—Treasury reports for the first ten months of the fiscal year ending June 30 indicate a deficit of more than a billion dollars.

Bolled down, that means that the federal government has spent \$4 for every \$3 it has received.

About two-thirds of the deficit can be traced to decreased revenues, the remainder being due to increased appropriations. Administration officials say that the shortage will be overcome by a bond issue and that there will be no rise in taxes.

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If that is true, we have something like a quarter million running.

The public gets bad hooch while racketeers get the profit. A reasonable excise tax on the same quantity of good hooch would wipe out the federal deficit.

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