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

Our Latest Laws

The supreme court, with its usual quiet, has made over important segments of our economic and political life this week. But Oliver Wendell Holmes' characterization of the court as a "storm center" is borne out fully by the close divisions on the major controversial questions decided.

The court refused to modify the 1920 packers' consent decree, to allow the \$2,500,000 meat-packing industry to enter into distribution and wholesaling of groceries. Justice Cardozo, in the majority opinion, pointed out that modification would handicap the present distributors and wholesalers against competitors so huge that regulation would be difficult.

Justices Butler and Vandeverter dissented from the four justices of the majority. Justices Hughes, Sutherland and Stone refrained from participation.

In the field of civil liberties, Justice Cardozo, the newest member, and successor to the great Holmes, appeared again as spokesman for the liberals, holding invalid the second attempt of Texas to bar Negroes from voting in Democratic primaries for state office—the only real contests in that state.

Chief Justice Hughes and Justice Roberts, 1930 appointees, joined with the liberals to knock out the law by a 5-to-4 vote. Justices McReynolds, Vandeverter, Sutherland and Butler, the die-hard conservatives, dissented. Unfortunately for the Negroes of Texas, however, Cardozo, in holding that the legislature unconstitutionally authorized the state Democratic committee to bar Negroes, left a loophole which undoubtedly will be used by the lilywhites of the state, in the form of racial disbarment through action by the state convention.

Justice Brandeis, in the court's unanimous opinion rejecting the senate's ouster suit against Chairman George Olin Smith of the federal power commission, based the ruling on the constitutional question of the President's authority to administer an oath, once he formally is notified of an appointee's confirmation by the senate. The outrageous action of the power commission in discharging faithful public servants which caused the senate to bring this suit, was not involved technically.

In the field of criminal law, Alphonse Capone, chief of Chicago's vice, murder, and liquor law violators, was denied a review by the court of his eleven-year sentence for failing to divide his profits with the government through the income tax. The gangster thought his soup kitchens should offset the income tax.

The court cut squarely across prohibition in two other unanimous decisions. Justice McReynolds, in outlawing a warrantless seizure of corn whisky in a Baltimore man's garage, based on a prohibition agent's sniff, decreed:

"Prohibition officers may rely on a distinctive odor as a physical fact indicative of possible crime; but its presence alone does not strip the owner of a building of constitutional guarantees against unreasonable search."

How different this attitude from that of the five conservative justices who upheld wire-tapping by prohibition agents a few years ago!

In a series of automobile and ship seizure cases, the court ruled that customs laws for confiscation, which do not protect the innocent lien-holder's interest, may be used by the government, instead of the Volstead act's provision protecting such interest, where attempts at illegal importation have been made.

Welcome, Alice!

Mrs. Reginald Liddell Hargreaves, the original "Alice" of Lewis Carroll's inspired nonsense, has arrived in the United States to help Columbia university commemorate the birth of the famous Oxford don, 100 years ago.

To the little English lady, 80 years old Wednesday, this country must appear as another wonderland. As she travels about, things will seem to her "curious and curious."

Doubtless, rich New York will resemble another "pool of tears" like the one which almost drowned her as a little girl; the conversations there much like the sage debates between the mad hatter and the March hare.

Congress may remind her of Father William, who, in spite of his age, could balance an eel on the tip of his nose.

If she stays over to watch the two big party conventions in Chicago, will she think of the little fat men, Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee, who couldn't point the way out of the woods? The fate of many Americans may recall that "little walk and little talk" the walrus and the carpenter took with their guests, the oysters, which ended so sadly for the latter; and the appetites of certain of our bankers will remind her that during the meal—

"The carpenter said nothing but

"Cut us another slice."

I wish you were not quite so deaf;

I've had to ask you twice."

It's a very mad tea party to which we've invited the grown-up Alice.

Farmers or Peasants?

If American farmers, once possessors of the nation, are not to be turned into peasants, their taxes must be reduced and their buying power restored.

Renick W. Dunlap, assistant secretary of agriculture, says that an American farmer now must toil one year out of every five just to pay taxes! In certain regions, taxes are so high that farmers must buy their own farms back every nine years to keep them out of the sheriff's hands.

Agriculture's total annual tax burden is more than \$1,000,000,000, or nearly \$3,000,000 a day. No other industry carries such a load.

While the farmer's taxes have gone up 226 per cent since 1914, his buying power has been cut in half. The things he sells bring him 50 cents, as compared with a dollar in 1914; the things he buys cost \$1.14, compared with the 1914 index of \$1.

Results, of course, are devastating. More than 100,000,000 acres never have gone into public ownership through tax delinquencies. For example, in 1927, nearly one-fourth of an area of seventeen counties in Wisconsin was put under the hammer because of delinquent taxes; in Mississippi, Senator Howell told the senate, 60,000 farms, or one-fourth of the state's farm area, have been put up at sheriff's sales.

Many of those who remain on the land resort to barter. In some sections, farms are reverting to conditions comparable with city slums.

Redeeds lie in social action. States, counties and cities should not wait for the federal government to do all the economizing. Since they account for 70 per cent of tax burdens, they should apply economy and efficiency, consolidate duplicating functions, enlarge township districts, and county units, cut useless expenses, drive out grafters and wasters, adopt systems comparable to the city manager plan.

More of the tax burden should be taken from real

estate and shifted to properly graduated incomes, estate and gift taxes. President Hoover, at the Richmond conference of Governors, showed the unequal burden now borne by real estate.

Also, by legalizing and taxing, liquor budgets can be balanced without slashing education and other essential functions.

Finally, the spread between the farmer's buying and selling power can be narrowed by reducing the high tariff by which he was goldbricked in 1930.

By doing nothing, we must sit by and watch America's independent farmers become serfs.

The Pension Bill

With a swoop and a dash, again demonstrating the effectiveness of the veterans' lobby, the house of representatives has voted to add from ten to fifteen million dollars to the nation's expense during the worst year of the depression.

It did this by the overwhelming score of 316 to 16. And, to provide a touch of irony, it picked as its item a breathing spell in its economy session. It jammed this through under a suspension of the rules and a forty-minute limit in debate.

On April 18, Talcott Powell, in one of his series on the cost of veterans' relief, described in detail precisely this customary technique of the veterans' lobby. He wrote: "Bills favorably reported usually pass under suspension of the rules, which limits debate and forbids amendments from the floor."

The bill, which not only adds from ten to fifteen millions to federal expense for the year, but represents a commitment of many, many times that number of millions for the years to come, is running true form and to schedule.

There has been much bewailing of lack of leadership and of efficiency in these dark times. But there is no lack of either in operation of the veterans' lobby. Its performance is perfect.

The pension bill adds another chapter to the already long list of departures from the original relief plan, the essence of which was to take care of cases arising from direct service casualties.

Pensions for widows and orphans of men killed in the war have been in effect for years. This measure makes eligible widows and orphans of veterans who have died since the war and who die in the future, provided a childless widow's annual income outside of daily labor is less than \$250 and the income of orphans or widows with children is not more than \$400.

This despite the cold fact of a nation, already billions of dollars in the hole, actually increasing expense since the depression started, and that happening while its taxpayers' capacity to pay has dwindled at an ever-accelerating rate.

No business and no individual can survive on declining income and increasing costs—and neither can a government.

The problem is: What can this country afford? Our budget is unbalanced. We are spending more than we take in. The end of that is destruction.

It therefore is imperative that we stop the spending of millions with such a nonchalant wave of the hand as the house of representatives gave on Monday when the latest pension bill was passed.

The "Nation" Goes Wet

And now it's Oswald Garrison Villard's "Nation" that joins the swelling chorus with an editorial obituary: "Repeal the Eighteenth Amendment."

For years the Nation has held stubbornly to its dry faith. Its view was not that of the bigots, but that of liberals who thought prohibition would clear the brains of the working men and increase the purchasing power of the masses.

Now it sees that the law's enforcement is hopeless and that "conditions steadily have grown worse." It sees the President tossing aside his own Wickersham commission's wet report and remaining "oblivious to growing corruption, growing defiance to the fundamental law, and the Constitution itself." His successor, The Nation thinks, will do no better.

"Under the circumstances, what else is there left but to ask for repeal?" Villard urges congress forthwith to vote a substitute amendment abolishing the offending eighteenth, and to call upon the states to ratify the change at especially called conventions.

When steel went off the dividend for its common stock, it broke a precedent of seventeen years' standing. Stockholders are unanimously against following the new precedent that long.

La Guardia says the stock market is crooked! Something will have to be done about him. Next he'll be telling us that wrestling matches are fixed.

Just Every Day Sense

BY MRS. WALTER FERGUSON

THE most exciting news from the annual meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington is the bulletin giving us a description of the seven evening gowns worn during the week by Mrs. Lowell Fletcher Hobart, retiring president-general.

In vain do we scan the papers for any new item from headquarters. In vain do we search for any evidence of progress in the thinking of the committee.

The same wearisome rigamarole comes from the sacred portals. Ban on Russian goods; restriction of immigration; urgent encouragement of a better and bigger navy. And the same old warnings about disloyalty; the same ghost stories about the red peril; and the same appeal for a return to the principles of George Washington.

In the midst of the most fateful crisis this country has faced since slavery, when men and women are seeking for a way out of chaos and for some plan that will stabilize industry and give hope to the people, we witness the dear daughters, self-appointed guardians of our traditions, repeating their pretty parable of the past.

They chant in unison their lessons conned from the dead pages of history, lauding all its deadliest mistakes. Their vision of what America is, and what it could be, is no longer than their own well-powdered noses.

Results, of course, are devastating. More than 100,000,000 acres never have gone into public ownership through tax delinquencies. For example, in 1927, nearly one-fourth of an area of seventeen counties in Wisconsin was put under the hammer because of delinquent taxes; in Mississippi, Senator Howell told the senate, 60,000 farms, or one-fourth of the state's farm area, have been put up at sheriff's sales.

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M. E. Tracy

Says:

This Nation's Credit Is Not Inexhaustible, Nor Has Its Stability Been Guaranteed by Providence.

NEW YORK May 4.—It looks as though we were headed for inflation, not of a studied, reasonable sort that might be of some benefit, but of the half-baked, eleventh-hour variety that knows no restraint, once it gets started.

We dream of pegging dollars at the 1926 level, of bringing prices and wages back by the magic wand of legislation.

Bad as times may be, they are not bad enough to convince politicians that retrenchment is necessary, except in homeopathic doses.

The idea of increased revenue through taxation still is taken much more seriously as a buck-passing game than as an emergency measure. Those who want to escape payment, or hold their jobs are making nine-tenths of the noise.

Every special tax and every item of economy thus far proposed has brought forth an outcry, but the proposition of putting the government on a sound financial basis starts little interest.

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A Case of Folly

IT is strange that we should feel as we do, with the spectacle of Europe before our eyes, with an international moratorium in force, and half the civilized world unable to meet its debts.

Have men learned nothing from the collapse of public securities abroad? Do they imagine that this country has grown so great as to be an exception to the operation of economic laws?

There is no human institution so secure that it can not be undermined by human folly.

Three years ago, we all were obsessed with the idea that some of our great corporations were unshakable; but look at the stock market report.

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Still Must Use Wits

NOTHING has occurred to relieve men of the need of using their wits. We are in possession of no machine that will run itself, no system that can withstand neglect.

Rich and powerful as this government of ours is, still it requires the wide-awake, conscientious service of its citizens, particularly of those selected to run it. Its credit is not inexhaustible and its stability has not been guaranteed by Providence.

Nowadays the child also should be given the benefit of immunization against diphtheria with toxoid or with toxoid.

Certainly, such a situation calls for more than the indiscriminate appropriation of public funds for those who may, or may not, need help, or futile wrangling over inconsequential items of triflery.

It should be apparent to even the dullest mind that the nation is of more importance than any group, or clique within the nation, and that its interests should be safeguarded.

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Must Maintain Credit

A deficit may not sound very alarming for a nation estimated to be worth three hundred billion, but coming on top of a three-year depression, an international moratorium, and a 50 per cent slump in trade and profit, it is not to be taken lightly.

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Daily Thought

Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you.—Isaiah, 35:4.

The best thing which we derive from history is the enthusiasm that it raises in us.—Goethe.

George Washington declined to accept a salary while he was President of the United States, but in order not to establish a precedent he accepted the of \$25,000 appropriated enough to cover his expenses. The salary of the President remained at \$25,000 until Grant's second term, March 2, 1873, when it was increased to \$50,000; in the second session of the sixtieth congress the salary was fixed at \$75,000, during the administration of President Taft. The salary at present is \$75,000 a year with an allowance for traveling expenses.

In the mid of the most fateful crisis this country has faced since slavery, when men and women are seeking for a way out of chaos and for some plan that will stabilize industry and give hope to the people, we witness the dear daughters, self-appointed guardians of our traditions, repeating their pretty parable of the past.

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