For People Who Think

Everything

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BY AL FAIRBROTHER | SUBSCRIPTION $1.00 A YEAR, SINGLE COPY 2 CENTS | SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 1917. | ON SALE AT THE NEWS STANDS AND ON TRAINS | ESTABLISHED MAY, 1902.

LEGISLATURE NEED NOT MEET

Commenting upon the fact that the legislature has run its course and if it stays any longer to finish up unfinished business it must remain without pay, the Wilmington Dispatch feels that the salary is too small for the lawmaker. Of this it says:

It deprives the legislature of getting some fine talent, by limiting that body to men who can afford to go to Raleigh. Unless he is a professional man, a well-to-do farmer or heads a business, a man cannot afford to be a legislator on the pay that is given. It is not because he lacks patriotism, but simply that he can not feed and clothe his family on the glory of the job. If the average man leaves home for sixty days his pay stops, and the salary is not sufficient to defray his expenses in Raleigh and keep his family going at home. That is one of the problems that sooner or later must be met, in justice to all the people; in behalf of unshackled suffrage.

True. The average legislator is certainly not a business man unless one with an ambition to get into the record. We talk about a constitutional convention. We have submitted amendments, meaningless and worthless, and we adopted some that got us into hot water. But why the legislature?

Why, because in some remote period—years ago when the country was new and laws were needed it was decided by some wise old guys that the legislature meet every two years for forty days, should we keep up such a practice of foolishness? Why, in all conscience, should a legislature meet for forty days or twenty days or at all, unless there was some real business? Why not let the legislature be composed of men of ability, high-priced men, and be subject to the call of the Governor for a specific purpose? North Carolina certainly has a thousand laws too many. North Carolina certainly needs some legislation. Why not change the Constitution and let the legislature meet only on the call of the Governor, and meet twenty times a year if necessary, but meet only to do what it is called to do. Under the Constitution in most states if a legislature is called in special session or extraordinary session it is for a specific purpose. That business transacted, adjournment at once follows.

The law should be that if there is urgent demand for certain laws, or if it is deemed expedient to abolish certain laws, the Governor would by proclamation or summons bring the lawmaking body together to do a certain thing or certain things. It would be understood. The proposed legislation would be discussed by the people; intelligent views could be arrived at; lawmakers would go understandingly and perform their duty.

There is no real reason why a legislature should meet every two years. It might meet oftener; it might not meet once in five years. As it is now every Tom, Dick and Harry; some half-fed and underpaid, as the Dispatch points out; men of ability and men of no ability; men with an axe to grind and men willing to grind other people's axes meet in Raleigh—and there is really nothing done worth while.

A lawmaker certainly should be of the best intellectually and morally. He should be a man of unquestioned ability and a man of experience. But the way we run it men aspire for office on their shape, on their egotism, on their nerve, and most any two-by-four can be elected to the legislature, because busy men and men of ability haven't time nor inclination to mix in such a mess. True, we send big men to the legislature. We draft them, so to speak, and they yield the point—at a personal sacrifice. We can find no fault with Guilford's representatives. Scales is a big man and an able man—he made a sacrifice to go to the Senate. Wright and Dalton and Bowman have all made good and are among our best citizens. But the man who wants, as Bost pointed out, "plane bored" is also there, and he has a monkey wrench ready to throw into the machine at any minute, and all the intelligent man can do is to sidestep and let the cheaper skate take time to press his scheme.

One of these days, perhaps, Augustus, not while we are living, this thing will be changed. There will be a time when the lawmaker will be a man of undoubted ability; a man who is lovely alive to his state's interests, and the legislature will become a business body and meet only when it is necessary to make laws demanded and needed. And until then it will be the same set of scrambled eggs. Until then we will have all kinds of laws and all kinds of confusion. Do we see things? Is our vision distorted? Not on your life. This will happen. And why not?

And they say the candidates for Congress multiply. Well, maybe we can induce the Hayes, who had made doubly good, to reconsider and run again.

Austria hands us a package with an inner seal—but you can hear it crack.

Only a few days now until Christmas. Do your Christmas shopping early.

TAFT COMING TO TALK PEACE

Ex-President Taft is billed for a Peace talk in Greensboro. It is all right to talk peace—we take it that nine-tenths of the American people would vote for peace at all times, unless some nation knocked a chip off our shoulders. When national honor is involved men will fight, and you couldn't keep them from it. In the present crisis none of us want war, but if Germany persists in killing American citizens we will have war, and no Peace conference in the world could keep us out. Universal peace, world-wide peace, is a dream of Utopia. From the first day of civilization war has been a part of it. Had we no wars, what would happen? How long would it be until we had a world overcrowded and overfilled? Take the present war and it means that a billion people who would have been here will not be here. The millions slain on the field of battle would have finally filled the world. But the wars come; men are cut down and the population in this way, perhaps, handled. Then the wars come to take care of the percentage which is adventuresome, which is unrestful. It is a true bill that if we had no war and no pestilence—and the people who talk things sanitary say pestilence can be avoided—it would not be long in the cycles of time until there wouldn't be standing room in the world. The terraqueous globe is a pretty big piece of real estate, but the figures show that the increase of population grows larger. There are more people born than die, as the figures go, if we take into account the natural process of departure. Had there been no wars since our civilization the world today could not accommodate the people who would have attempted to live in it.

This may be an excursive fancy, but it is a fact. We must have some way to get rid of the overflow. One way is war, the other is famine or pestilence or disease. We claim to be overcoming even tuberculosis, which claims its millions. We have conquered fevers; we have found through our scientific research a way to fify hundreds of diseases, and if we finally secure the realization of the peace-maker's dream and have no wars, no disease, what will we do with the countless billions who must come? Man proposes, but God disposes. There is in nature, in the economy of the universe, well ordered and immutable laws, and one of them is to the effect that we cannot overcrowd the world. And unless war or pestilence, how many years would it be until the sign was seen "Standing Room Only"—and finally nowhere to stand? Did you ever think of this—and isn't it worth while to ponder over?

Comes Home To Roost.

Just now indignant editors are criticising the Senators who held up the bill of President Wilson. They are giving LaFollette "down the country," as the phrase runs, but was LaFollette to blame? Isn't the Senate itself to blame? It passed and maintains the rule that allows one man to stop all legislation if he has the lungs and the will. A few years ago on a filibustering expedition of some sort or other Senator Allen, a populist from Nebraska, held the Senate for over two days and nights. He was a man of wonderful strength physically, and when he took the floor he just kept on talking and reading and wouldn't yield. He gained his purpose—but it was one man locking the wheels of progress, one man stopping legislation and insisting on a wild man's dream. But who built the hen roost where the chickens might come home? It was the Senate. That rule is put in there by the politicians for an emergency. It is a preparedness rule. They have figured that some day it may be necessary for the conservative man to have the power to block the wheels if a wild man tries something.

So we are not blaming those who threw the monkey wrench into the Works—we are blaming the deliberative body that adopts rules that may run it off the track. There is no real reason why any such rule should obtain. In fact, there is real reason why such a rule should not obtain, and when the Senate, now awakened and now indignant because its will was defeated, realizes that it must change its rules and be honest and decent, the better it will be. Perhaps the incident of the closing hours has set the body to thinking. Let us hope.

A Wonderful Crop.

The statement is made that in Frederick county, Virginia, the apple crop last year amounted to two million dollars. One county producing two million dollars' worth of apples—the statement seems astounding. But it is vouched for by State Senator Harry Ford, who is editor of the Winchester Star. And a few trees planted as twigs not many years ago. Wonderful how wealth can be increased if the proper means are taken. The apple industry of North Carolina grows every year.

Eggs Is Eggs.

No matter whether it be the genius crowned or the power shod, eggs is eggs at thirty-five cents a dozen, and an old hen on the job gets no more than she ever got—just a living.

ON MAN POWER IN AMERICA

Whatever else may be said against the Charlotte Observer it can never be charged with the crime of not "standing behind the President." With regard to the Wilson administration it has accepted literally and unwaveringly the ideal attitude of the men in the ranks toward a leader, as described by Mr. Tennyson in his famous poem:

> Their's not to make reply,
> Their's not to reason why;
> Their's but to do and die.

Under the head of "Self-important Congressmen" that loyal and uncompromising party organ delivers itself in this wise:

> The disposition of some of the congressmen to make the President divulge the secrets of the Zimmermann letter savors of a petty spirit of jealousy. They appear to believe that congress should have had the information along with the President's request for powers to take the situation in hand—that it was due congress the whole matter should have been laid first before it. It is sometimes to the advantage of a government not to reveal secrets of this sort, and that President Wilson did not feel at liberty to take congress and the country into his confidence at the time carries the supposition that he had ample reasons for not doing so. That the letter is genuine there is no doubt. What concern is it to congress how it was secured? If the government were to make public matters of that sort, how long would the secret service be of any use to it? Some congressmen appear to think themselves bigger than their country. Manifestly in recent days some have completely lost sight of sentiment back home.

We may be entirely wrong, but we are sorry we cannot subscribe to what the Observer appears to regard as a piece of impertinence on the part of those congressmen who are of the opinion that in such a crisis they should hesitate to blindly follow, being asked to act blindly on measures involving the life and liberty as well as the honor of the people they were elected to represent. We believe they have a right to know and should be made to bear their part of the responsibility which no one man, no matter how wise or great, should be allowed to carry alone in a country professing to be democratic and governed for and by the people.

We would like for the Observer to explain why representatives should be made the subjects of ridicule, as appearing "to think themselves bigger than their country?" Who is their country if not the people they represent? And if presumption on the part of congress as a collective whole to imagine itself "bigger than their country," how about one man imagining himself bigger than the collective congress?

This it not, as we have before stated, questioning in any way the ability or the judgment of the President in handling the situation, but we are against the principle and practice of any one man power in free and democratic America. The trouble with the Observer is that it seems to be obsessed with the old idea that "the king can do no wrong." And as a hero worshipper it certainly goes the limit.

Ought Not Happen.

Mooney, the labor agitator of San Francisco, has been sentenced to death. This, we think, should not happen. Mooney may have used his mouth too much in other years, but he wasn't tried for that, although that seemed to convict him. The explosion of the bomb wasn't absolutely put at his door. The circumstances were strong, but when we get a man into court he should come as pure as the beautiful snow—save the indictment against him. True, previous character can be proven, good or bad, but if a man is charged with the specific crime of murder the fact that he stole a horse ten years before should not enter into the equation. That he stole a horse might be used to show that his character was bad, but there are other men with bad characters and they were not accused of throwing the bomb. If all men of bad character were marshaled and tried for the offense it would be different. We have no sympathy in this world with the labor agitator. We are understood on that. But we have read the evidence in the Mooney case and it never looked to us like conclusive. Naturally in San Francisco if they get a chance to crucify a man they do it, but there should be an appeal in this case. Mooney should be given the benefit of the doubt, and let subsequent events attempt to help him; but to hang him on circumstantial evidence of the kind it was doesn't square with our ideal of justice.

Again we glide along with a Climate as Glorious as any under the sun. Tomorrow it may be raining, but the sun is shining today and all the men you meet ask if this isn't about as fine as anything you ever saw. It is, Mike, it is.

Only a few days now until January, 1920. Then the prohibition bill will be complete and there will be a nation dry.

SOUTH FORGETS THE FORCE BILL

Editor Gray "enthused" too soon. The supposedly perfect bill which Senator Turner had drawn with great care and discrimination, appearing to anticipate every phase of prison life and discipline and providing a remedy for the conscienceless brutalities legally practiced in this enlightened(?) Christian state, was on too high a plane, it seems, to be understood or appreciated by "an element from eastern North Carolina" which "clings to flogging as a tenet of its faith."

The Raleigh Times does not attempt to conceal its disappointment over the failure of the Turner bill to pass, unanimously, in its original form, as expressed in the following:

> After a brave show upon the first two readings the senate adopted a substitute amendment to the Turner prison reform bill, which permits the infliction of corporal punishment on convicts of the lowest grade established by the act. It provides that the strap may be used when all other methods fail. It requires the presence of a supervising physician to direct the executioner in his work, and provides also that the chaplain shall be among those in attendance. Thus, with authority and the cloak of the church a Christian state clings to the scourge as the final argument its intelligence can bring to bear upon an "incorrigible" prisoner.
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> There is this to be said for this surrender of the just principle of mercy written in Mr. Turner's original measure. It will save the indiscriminate whipping of convicts in the care of the state. It will take away from the infliction of torture the danger of death or permanent disability. And it is expected to be accepted as a compromise by the house, which, under the influence of an element from eastern North Carolina, clings to flogging as to a tenet of its faith.
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> It must be remembered, too, that even this grudging reform of savagery in prison camps does not extend to the counties in which hundreds of men are working out sentences imposed upon them by the state authority. These men, formerly entirely forgotten but by the Turner bill put partially under supervision as to camps and sanitation, still are left to the mercy of their guards. On the county roads there are scores of prisoners like the boy Jacobs so brutally whipped in Wake, who have done nothing more than offend against town ordinances. These men, it is to be supposed, still will be whipped at will till their backs are blistered, their spirits broken, and they are turned out at length the finished criminal product, cringing through life. For them there are no "gradations." For them there is no sweet privilege of being whipped in the presence of the high authority and with the preacher looking on. For them is no benefit of clergy. They will remain the forgotten men, except when society, suffering eruption, searches from time to time for the cause and observes their contagion, which it creates for itself with a leather strap.

All of which moves us to ask: What is the matter with eastern North Carolina anyway? Time was when to be from eastern North Carolina was much the same as being from Virginia, or Charleston, or Boston, don't yer know? Eastern North Carolina was the center of culture and hospitality and religious sentiment.

But how the mighty have fallen! if the attitude of a "certain element," under the influence of which the legislature is persuaded to "cling to flogging as a tenet of its faith," is to be taken as representing the moral and intellectual status of the erstwhile proud and chivalrous people who were wont to refer to other sections as beyond the pale of social or political recognition.

True, there are many good people in eastern North Carolina—many of the brightest and best to be found anywhere in the state. But it is in evidence that these best people are no longer in the ascendency. Isn't it about time that the good and intelligent people of eastern North Carolina asserted themselves in an effort to redeem that now discredited section from the stigma put upon it by the perpetuation of a system entirely out of harmony with the age in which we are living, and which puts an otherwise great state in a most unenviable light before the world where Humanity and Progress walk hand in hand?

The Austrian Note.

Austria sends us a note. Uncle Sam will consider it. Looks like we had out more notes than we could ever redeem, and it looks like the note business is the best and only evasive way. Diplomacy is one thing—doing things is another.

The Glorious Climate came back again today. The ground hog is perhaps trying to make good in the last days, fearful of being annihilated.

FORGOTTENMEN THESE CONVICTS

The New York Herald writes an editorial which finds in our heart a response that would make us walk, if necessary, to New York to see that the game ended even. It appears that a shop girl was accused of theft, and she wasn't guilty. She was thrown into a cell and passed a night of wretchedness because a cheap skate with a star thought he had some rights. The Herald, which doesn't often burst into indignation, says:

> "If the city had spent $700,000 in building a prison and court for the exclusive use of women in difficulties little Frances Kelly, arrested on a false charge of picking pockets and forced to spend a night in a police cell, would not have felt she had been in jail. She would have had a nice room with a nice, clean bed and with curtains on the window, and she would have been out of hearing of bad language."
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> This is the official excuse for one of the grossest official outrages the city has witnessed in years.
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> It has become the fashion of officials to excuse stupidities and shortcomings of their administrations by pointing elsewhere and saying, "They would give us no appropriation." In this case the excuse is a mockery. If this energetic young shopgirl had been a social outcast the board of city magistrates' foresight would have permitted her to be arraigned at once, without a $700,000 appropriation for a building with curtains at the windows. A professional bondsman at the police station probably would have spared her the indignity of going to court in the custody of a policeman. But she was proved innocent in the police station and yet apparently no police effort was made to break through the board of magistrates' red tape barrier and spare her the indignity and disgrace of passing the night under the same roof with degraded malefactors. It is a case where the law is not to blame for an act that stirred the whole city's ire. The blame rests on those who administered a law with a stupidity that matched the brutality of the man who insisted on sending the girl to a cell after she had proved her innocence.

To know that New York was stirred; to know that in the greatest city in the world when a shop girl, virtuous and honest, had been wrongfully accused, there was an exhibit of that thing which men call decency, pleases us.

The woman wasn't guilty—she should have had her hearing. But a low-browed official, somewhere, wearing a star and presuming he was the mighty Mike of the Pike, threw her into jail, and caused her to suffer humiliation which no woman should have had offered her. We are glad the New York Herald took the pains to make editorial mention of an outrage, not against one woman, but against many.

When All Butt In.

A case has just been decided at Fremont, Ohio, which was one of the most interesting in the criminal annals of the country. A man named Kiser was accused of poisoning his wife. He maintained that she was poisoned by eating contaminated oysters. The case was started in December and has been on practically daily ever since. The wife died the year before and gossip kept whispering that Kiser had killed her. Several times the body was examined, and the cost to the county was over forty thousand dollars, with the result that finally in two hours a jury returned a verdict of not guilty. This was perhaps all right. If Kiser was innocent and wrongfully accused, had it cost forty times forty thousand dollars he should have had the benefit of it. But it does seem in all reason that to run a murder case three months at a cost of forty thousand dollars to the county, to say nothing of what it cost the defendant, suggests that there is something wrong in the system. Any murder case should be gotten through with in ten days, unless it is simply a grandstand exhibition for lawyers engaged on both sides to make all the show they can. In fact, a week should be long enough to establish or disprove all that could be claimed.

The Fun Of It.

The New York Times for a long time has carried in one of its boxes the proposition, "All the news that's fit to print," and we all know that the New York Sun elaborated the proposition that it "Shines For All." That is all right. But to see the New York Herald carrying on its right-hand head box "All the News That's Fit To Print" and on its left-hand head box "It Shines For All" shows that the younger Bennett, in his old days, is having some fun. Imagine the New York Herald shining for all. Imagine that it got down off its perch and saw some fun in the boxes carried at the mast head. Of course Bennett can afford to have this fun, but it seems cruel. The New York Herald—It Shines For All—isn't that a joke per se?