

Public Opinion

DODGING THE ISSUE. (Springfield Republican.)

If party platforms are designated to aid in the crystallization of public opinion on issues of immediate and paramount importance, then both the Republican and Democratic state platforms in New York should declare definitely either for or against the federal prohibition amendment. If prohibition is not an issue in that commonwealth this year, nothing is.

REAPING HIS REWARD. (New York Herald.)

Kaiser Wilhelm is commencing to reap the reward of his policy and acts. His armies are crumbling, his people are half starving and wholly discontented, his allies are faltering, while the few neutral nations left will yet join the ranks of his enemies when they realize the inevitability of German defeat. The Kaiserin wept when she saw some of her husband's handwork. She will shed yet more bitter and copious tears when she sees him defeated and discredited, a pariah and outcast among the kingly tribe, and the six stalwart sons she has borne to him humbled to the dust instead of occupying the thrones of conquered nations.

1918 VERSUS 1816. (Ottawa Journal.)

The national debt of Great Britain is now approximately \$60,000,000,000, making allowance for what is due her by other countries for war loans to them. It is estimated that the annual income of the British people is \$12,000,000,000. The national debt is thus about two and a half times as great as the annual income.

Over one hundred years ago, at the close of the Napoleonic wars, the national debt of Britain was \$4,500,000,000, the annual income \$1,500,000,000. The debt then was therefore three times as great as the income.

Britain can still put up six thousand million dollars more for the present war and be financially as well off in proportion as she was by the time she smashed Napoleon Bonaparte.

RUSSIA'S VAST DOMAIN. (American Review of Reviews.)

The Russian Revolution of 1917 is a landmark of capital importance in world history comparable to the French Revolution of 1789. For Russia it ushers in a long period of readjustment and construction which will consume many years or even generations. For the world at large it sets in motion political and social forces whose ultimate consequences may well be felt in the remotest corners of the earth.

The tremendous possibilities inherent in the Russian problem may be grasped by a glance at the bare size of the area and population involved. The Russian Empire as it existed in 1914 covered an area of 8,500,000 square miles (nearly three times the size of the United States), while its population numbered 178,000,000 souls. Stretching uninterruptedly from Central Europe to the Pacific and from the Arctic Ocean to the mountainous backbone of Central Asia, this huge political organism engrossed nearly one-sixth of the total land surface of the globe.

Like all great empires the beginnings of modern Russia were humble and obscure. Russia's germ-cell was the small principality of Moscow that, towards the close of the Middle Ages, arose in the centre of those vast East European plains which are the historical home of the Russian race. The principality of Moscow was only one of several Russian states which lay exposed to the devastations of the Tartars, Asiatic nomads, who from their seats in Southern Russia, terrorized the whole country with their savage raids. The little principality of Moscow, produced a line of able rulers who performed the double task of breaking the Tartar yoke and uniting all the petty Russian states into a single realm—Muscovy—of which they took the title of "Tsars." They also laid the foundations of Greater Russia by encouraging Russian adventurers to cross the Ural Mountains and occupy the uninhabited Siberian plains to the Pacific, just as our pioneers later crossed the Appalachians and won the whole breadth of the North American continent for the United States.

WHAT IS NEEDED. (Rochester Post-Express.)

The "Helping to Rebuild Europe's Society" has a worthy motive, but why squander time and effort and money on such a project now? The job at hand is to get a society of five or ten million Americans over there to make Europe and the rest of the world safe for democracy. We can do the rebuilding job afterwards.

THE MOST OVERWORKED PHRASE. (The London Chronicle.)

At a London club of writing men—chiefly from Fleet street—there was an informal debate recently as to which is the most over-employed phrase of the war. Thirteen members took part in the argument, and on the question being put to a vote, it was found that twelve were of opinion that without doubt the most overworked phrase was: "When the history of this war comes to be written."

SEA POWER. (Chicago Tribune.)

A great American military intelligence, that of the late Rear Admiral Mahan, an intelligence respected wherever men have functioning brains, preached to his country to the last hour of his life the value of sea power.

He lived long enough to see navalism pitted against militarism, but not long enough to see the actual triumph which his intelligence could foresee. He knew that in the conflict between the British navy and the German army, between the grand fleet and the Prussian Guard, the German army would be beaten.

The custodian and controller of the world highways has ruled the world. Lloyd George, speaking in parliament with a full perception of the effect of this power upon the course of events and the destinies of nations, gives a picture of the tireless, if obscured, and vital work of this factor against Germany—sea power in control of the sea.

The control, one in which the American navy, the French and Italian navies join with the British in maintaining, is mainly British. The British navy is the keystone of the arch of the allied structure. If it could be destroyed, if British control of the sea could be eliminated, the allied cause against Germany would be more than hopeless. It would be instantly lost.

The United States would stand upon its own shores in impotent rage. France could not be coaled or fed. Neither could Italy. Great Britain itself would be starved if not overrun. The munitions and men which pour to the battlefield would be choked off. The desperate remnants of French and Italian armies would disappear under the invader's divisions.

The world is a German world except for the British fleet, which is constantly at work, constantly alert, constantly meeting thrust and possibility of thrust, sending its ships into every region of the earth's waters, meeting and conquering the deadliest menace a great fleet ever knew—the submarine.

Silent but never inactive—not even when the grand fleet rides at its station with its antennae reached out—quiet but never off guard, the navy preserves the military cause against Germany, and in the end will starve, smother and crush the army power which sought to make the world a German world.

This achievement is unilluminated except in patches and by flashes. American troops are carried to France by the hundreds of thousands. The event is recorded. Italy and France are coaled, and fed. British troops have an open highway across the channel. British expeditions go to every threatened flank of the British Empire.

Wherever a highway is needed for the intercommunication of the scattered allies against Germany, that highway is cleared and made safe. By arduous patrol in cold and stormy waters, by never relaxing work in the terrible isolation of the sea, by never sleeping, never resting, by never relenting attention to each detail of command and control, the sea power which saves the world against Germany is constantly at work and, as every intelligent and perceptive German knows, at work to the destruction of German presumption and power.

IN PALESTINE.

(Rochester Post-Express.)

Reports agree that Palestine is prospering and happy under British rule. All religious sects are equally respected, and the equitable judicial tribunals are intensely appreciated by the people so long at the mercy of the corrupt and tyrannous Turk, who sold justice if he granted it at all. Local chiefs in the Mejdal area petitioned the British to employ no former Turkish officials, and declared that "the British administration is like a sword but is straight, has true edge and is no respecter of persons." So greatly have British justice, tolerance and tact in dealing with the nations impressed them that even the Moslems are showing unheard of friendliness for the "glaur" or "infidel," and at a village near Hebron threw their mosque open and invited the troops to take shelter in it on a cold, rainy night. Compare this administration by conquerors with that of the Huns in Belgium, Serbia, Northern France, Roumania, and wherever their troops have gone, and the reason is apparent why Britain's colonials fight for her; and no subject people has ever been content under German rule.

THE PRESIDENT'S DESK. (Christian Science Monitor.)

The story of President Wilson's desk at the White House is told by a London newspaper. It recalls such a happy little incident in the past relations of the United States and Great Britain that it is quite worth giving once again. In 1852, H.M.S. Resolute was sent to the Arctic in search of Franklin, but, getting into difficulties, she was abandoned by her crew. Three years later an American whaler extricated and towed the ship into port. The Resolute was then purchased and refitted by the United States Government and sent to England, by President Franklin Pierce, as a token of good will and friendship.

Some little time afterward, being past service, the Resolute was broken up in Plymouth dockyard, and from her timbers Queen Victoria had a desk made, which she sent to President Buchanan as a memorial of "the courtesy and loving kindness" which had prompted his predecessor to send the vessel back to England. The desk has ever since been the one used by successive presidents of the United States for their official correspondence.

OWNERSHIP OF THE AIR. (The Public, New York.)

Certain elements of our population view with alarm the control assumed by the government of railroad, express and telegraph enterprises for the period of the war. The fear is expressed that these agencies will never revert to private ownership. But those who spend their time criticizing the present tendency to socialize so-called public utilities are losing a magnificent opportunity to re-establish individualistic ideals, to commence seizure of the air.

Modern science has once more provided the supermen of the earth with the means of enslaving their brothers. Seizure of the air, staking out claims on the sky, would have been a joke ten years ago. The invention of the airplanes, however, makes the plan practical. Let the business leaders divide the sky among themselves and their families, and police their holdings by means of biplanes.

If the idea appears a bit unusual, consult history. The invention of machinery was followed by the control of machines in the hands of a few. This meant in turn the suzerainty over labor, over one's means of life. Consider also the discovery of electricity and its relation to water-power. Already vast areas of water-power are under private ownership and the government is often criticized by solid citizens for not giving away the remainder of its birthright on demand. Wood and coal, copper, and other basic products are privately owned by men who got there first, or who were stronger than those who got there first.

Precedent certainly points toward the private ownership of the air. The average man used to work for himself alone, now he works for someone else. He used to get water from his own well. In many cases to-day he must pay a private company. He used to hew his own wood, but now must pay someone else. Light, water, heat and labor, which were once free for all, have come under the guardianship of multimillionaires, who inevitably should also be trustees of the air.