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Sporting Comment

(By Daniel)

New York, Dec. 22.—In selling Grover Alexander and Bill Killefer to the Cubs William E. Baker disposed of the Philadelphia club of the National league. In accepting $50,000 for the star pitcher and his battery mate Baker depreciated the value of his club by at least $100,000. In various quarters last night there was a disposition to place the sum involved at anything from $80,000 to $100,000, but on the very best of authority it can be said that not more than $50,000 exchanged hands. Without Alexander and Killefer, last season the league's leading performers in their respective positions, the Phillies are reduced to a weak and colorless mass that cannot be reckoned with a better than a second division outfit.

The going of the battery will hurt the Philadelphia club not only on the field, but is bound to deal it a terrific blow at the box office. The fans of the Quaker city cannot be expected to accept the sale with complacency. Alexander is a product of the Philadelphia club. He rose to top heights under an ownership other than Baker's, and Philadelphia have come to regard him as a fixture, the period of whose presence on the team was limited only by his effectiveness. Baker has put the club in a position similar to that in which the Athletics found themselves after the sale of Collins, Baker and Barry—and that certainly was no enviable one, take it from whatever angle you desire.

Baker Tells Why He Sold His Stars

Baker's move appears to have been a misguided one from the standpoint of playing strength, sentiment and business. However, there is a chance that eventually he will find himself justified in the last named of the trio of considerations. Nobody knows what the coming season may have in store for professional baseball. The Philadelphia club may find that $50,000 is a far more potent and satisfying possession than Alexander and Killefer.

Baker himself last night attempted to justify the sale from a business standpoint. "It is a business matter, pure and simple, with me," said the Phillies' owner. "Alexander is more than 30 now. He has been in the majors seven seasons, and undoubtedly is slipping. It is true that he won 30 games last summer, but five of these victories came after New York had already won the pennant. There is another question to take into consideration. Alexander has a contract which calls for an annual salary of $12,000. That sum is more than the club can afford, especially in a war year.

Alexander Subject to Draft.

"Then, again, you must remember that Alexander is subject to the army draft. I believe that Killefer is in a similar situation. I sold Killefer because at the end of last season he told me that he no longer cared to play for us. I did not want to keep him under those circumstances. Of course, I know I will be criticized in Philadelphia for my action, but the fact is that with our stars and the club fighting hard for the pennant we got nothing like the support we merited last season. I understand that Prendergast and Dilhoefer, whom we acquired in the deal, are capable players and should make good under Moran."

Baker intimated that Alexander had not kept in the best of condition last season. He looks for a little resentment next summer, but is sure that before long the club will rehabilitate itself. He figures that last summer the fans began to return to Connie Mack, and that they will come back to the Phillies. But has the Philadelphia club of the National league a master reorganizer of the Mack type?

Joe Cantillion, manager of the Minneapolis Millers, is a believer in signs, that is certain signs. But this is an incident of another variety of signs which crossed Joe's path. Joe's club had been going rotten for some time, and he started tinkering with his machine, trying to find out why his engine was missing and just why the differential didn't gee with the eleport. He asked some of his ball players what the trouble was that they couldn't win a game of ball, and they said the signs on the park fence kept them from hitting.

"Well, if that's all, we'll soon be where we can crash that onion just as we uster do," said Joe meaning Columbus, where n osigns are allowed on the fences.

On the first day in Columbus, the Millers were given the biggest walloping they had had in many days, the opposing club slipping it over them by something like a 12 to 0 count. Some of the ball players asked Joe if he saw any signs in the field.

"Yes, all I see is a lot of goose egg signs. The only way my club will ever win a game is to come out some night after supper when there's no team to oppose it."

Clayton Perry, manager and second baseman of the San Antonio team of the Texas league, is one ball player who loves only his life more than he does his money. He is the original money-Hooverizer, and whenever he clamps down on a dollar bill, nothing short of nitro-glycerine can separate him from it.

They tell a little story about a dream that Clay was supposed to have done some time ago.

Perry dreamed that he died one night after he had lost six bits in a poker game, and strange to relate, he found himself in heaven.

"Well, who are you?" asked St. Peter, the heavenly official scorer, as he adjusted his "specs" and started giving Clayt the critical up and down.

"Perry Clayton Perry, a ball player," answered Clayt, who had visions of one of those golden crowns that are given free with every permanent berth in the city where the streets are paved with gold.

"What did you ever do to deserve a place in heaven" asked St. Peter, "Well, I helped a blind man across the street once," replied Perry.

"What else?"

"Yes, I gave a beggar two cents once."

"Is that all?" asked St. Peter.

"Yes, I reckon it is," said Clayt, trying to look pitiful.

"What are you gonna do with him, Pete?" asked St. Peter's assistant standing nearby taking in the proceedings, and who acted as turnkey.

"Guess you'd better give him his two cents back and send him to hell."

Poll Perritt, now with the New York Giants, once tried to make good as a pitcher in the Northeast Arkansas league, a class D organization and failed. And thereby suspends a tale.

Poll's uncle who went under the same nickname and who claimed to be the original Poll, was a bear in that organization, and when the younger Perritt went down to try out, the elder Perritt gave him the hoss laff. He referred to Poll as his "niece," which made him so hot under the collar that burning celluloid could be smelled every time the two came together.

The younger Perritt tried out with Paragould, and as he failed to get away he was cut loose. As he was leaving town, some of the ball players were around, and Poll slipped them a parting shot.

"Well, I can't make good in this bush circuit, but I'm going to the big league just the same, and it won't be long until you log rollers will be buying cigarettes just to get my picture out of them."

Poll is in the majors to-day, while the elder Poll who derided his "niece" is still in the minors.

Resurrecting the hoary sneeze as regards the bloke who laughs last being one up on the first giggler.

SAVE SUGAR

The production of beet sugar in France this year has been estimated at only 207,000 tons, as compared with an average annual production during the five years before the war (1909-13) of 752,542. Normal consumption in France is 704,830 tons. The beet sugar production of Italy has also been reduced from a pre-war average of 211,050 tons to 75,000 tons. The pre-war annual consumption of sugar in the United Kingdom was 2,056,000 tons, all of which had to be imported. About 70 per cent. of the supply of the United Kingdom came from countries from which it is now cut off by the war. Great Britain, France and Italy would require to import about 2,700,000 tons before the next crop—and most of it from new sources—if they were to maintain their normal consumption.

But the necessity of conserving supplies of sugar, which was emphasized by the shortage of shipping, had resulted in stern economies among the allies. Before the war, England had the largest per capita consumption of sugar of any nation—93 1-3 pounds per person per year. This has now been reduced to 26 pounds per person per year, or about one ounce per day per person. In Great Britain prices have now been fixed for jams and jellies. There is no sugar for the home-made product. In France the people are on rations of 1.1 pounds per person per month, which the Government distributes at about 25 cents per pound. In Italy, because of the shortage of sugar supplies, the Government has set a retail price of $1.25 for a box containing 2.2 pounds. In Germany the present sugar ration is only .77 pounds per person per month. In the United States and Canada the per capita monthly consumption of sugar is about 7.4 pounds.

The Food Controller has asked Canadians to reduce their consumption of sugar by at least 7 ounces per week per person and, in order to provide larger supplies to meet the necessary requirements of the allies, a further reduction to 3 pounds per person per month may be urged. Steps have already been taken to curtail the use of cane sugar in candy-making and the use of sugar or molasses in distillation of potable liquors has been prohibited.

About 50 per cent. of the sugar consumed in North America is imported from Cuba so that the Cuban product is the dominating market factor. The International Sugar Commission, representing the allied countries as well as the United States Food Administration and the Food Controller for Canada, is endeavoring to secure the Cuban production at a reasonable price. By curtailing consumption in this country so that the necessity of securing the Cuban crop is not so urgent, the people of Canada will be assisting the Sugar Commission, the allied countries and themselves in obtaining supplies for spring and summer at lower prices than would otherwise be possible.

STREET CAR NO. 66 NEVER COMPLETED ITS JOURNEY.

It was caught by the blast of the explosion just above North Street Station. By some freak the car was left seemingly intact, but Street Railway Inspector Burgess was killed and not a single passenger was left alive. Just beside it in the road are lying the gross crew of a smashed telegraph pole.

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NORTH BRANT OFFICIAL RETURNS.

Sheriff Westbrook, returning officer for the North riding, made his official count yesterday afternoon. His figures are the same as those previously given in The Courier with the exception of a slight variation with regard to the Township of South Dumfries. The figures handed out are Cockshutt, 2,007; Harold, 1,616; Doran, 1,280. Majority for Harry Cockshutt, 391. The Sheriff did not have the handling of the ballot box on the Reserve, which gave 12 for Cockshutt, making a majority for him of 403 with the oversea soldier vote yet to be recorded.

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