

The San Francisco Call

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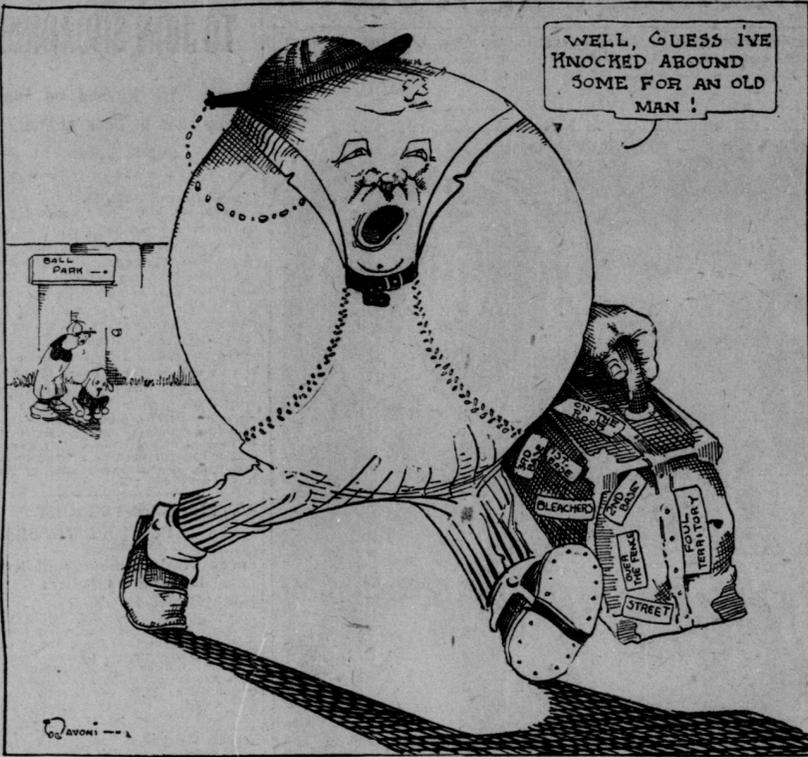
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Off for a Vacation



Vest Pocket Essays

By GEORGE FITCH

THE CONGRESSMAN

THE congressman is a representative of the plain people, and is employed by them as an errand boy in the national capitol at Washington. There is only one congressman for every 200,000 people, and he is consequently very busy. Between packing up garden seeds for Bill Jones, pushing like Smith's pension through, trying to get a job in the census department for Orson Brown's daughter and towing old Ike Green around the city of Washington on a sightseeing tour, he only has time to legislate about one hour a day. Some constituents treat their congressman very cruelly, compelling him to carry their overcoats and pay for their cabs while in Washington, while others are more thoughtful, merely requesting them now and then to have congress dig out a dry run on their farms and make a ship canal connecting with a horse pond, in order to help business during its construction. Congressmen are elected from districts, some of which look like the ground plan of a dying watermelon. The job pays \$7,500 and carfare to Australia each year, and is therefore very desirable. Most men start running for congress at 20 and land about 30 years later. When the newly elected congressman arrives in Washington he is taken to the speaker, who gives him a brass collar with a number on it, and he is then given a private room in a beautiful four acre marble office building, which has hot and cold water and detectives in it. There are about 50 congressmen and 250 occupants of seats in congress. The former make the laws and the latter help explain them to the people back home. A congressman is forbidden to spend more than \$5,000 to get elected, but the law does not limit the amount which he can spend for 200 of them away. Congressmen survive by voting on the right side of popular measures, and those who succeed in guessing the right side give up magnificent careers as weather prophets and second sight mediums in order to do so. (Copyright, 1911, by George Mathew Adams)

Spring Valley Decision Supplies An Assured Basis for Negotiation

JUDGE FARRINGTON of the United States circuit court is entitled to the rare distinction of having pleased both sides by his decision in the protracted litigation over water rates in San Francisco. It may be, perhaps, that the satisfaction declared by the representatives of the Spring Valley company is more apparent than real.

It is quite true that in a technical sense the corporation has scored a "victory." The injunction for which Spring Valley ever prays is made permanent and the company is acquitted of wrongfully collecting rates higher than those allowed by the board of supervisors. But these were at all times merely side issues and, so far as the facts are concerned, have been dead issues for a matter of some seven years.

The real issue in the suit was the value of the Spring Valley water plant for supplying the uses of San Francisco. Estimates in this regard made by hydraulic engineers varied all the way from \$24,000,000 to \$70,000,000, the figures doubtless being inspired chiefly by the bias of the experts, helped, possibly, by occasional bursts of enthusiasm from employees of the water company. In this extraordinary conflict the honors and the success rest wholly on the side of the experts who testified on behalf of the city. Their estimates come so close to the final judgment of the court that theirs is the substantial victory.

Judge Farrington does not say as much, but his decision is proof that he regards the estimates of the Spring Valley experts as chiefly a work of the imagination. The result does not make a very creditable showing for these experts. It has become the habit to pay small attention to expert testimony and the prevalence of this habit is due to such discreditable exhibitions in contested cases.

One of the rules of evidence as established in the public mind is that an expert will testify in the direct ratio of the size of his fee. Engineering is an exact science and books are kept showing costs. How does it come, then, that the estimated value of a given plant varies from \$24,000,000 to \$70,000,000?

In a large degree these variations of expert testimony are due to the prevailing confusion concerning measures of value of corporate property. Not only do the experts contend for radically conflicting measures of value, but the courts appear to hold that the value of a given property for the purpose of fixing the income by municipal ordinance may be quite different from the value of the same property fixed by a court for purchase by condemnation. If there is a distinction between the value of property on which a reasonable income must be allowed and the value of the same property at a reasonable price for compulsory sale—if there is any such distinction, it is too fine to be visible to the naked eye of the layman.

One of the corporation's experts, in a burst of imagination, with his eye in a fine frenzy rolling, committed himself to the theory that as there was no practicable substitute for the Spring Valley plant but the Hetch Hetchy project, therefore the value of the company's property should be gauged by the cost of bringing water from the Sierra. He should have been a poet and not merely a supposedly prosaic engineer. But Judge Farrington promptly suppressed him with the remark that this theory was merely the ancient and not honorable plea, thinly disguised, that a monopoly is entitled to charge all the traffic will bear.

Roughly speaking, the general basis of the valuation accepted by the court was the cost of reproducing the plant, although this measure does not appear to be stated in terms. Some weight is given to the fact that the stock holders of the corporation by their own act at the time of reorganization fixed the value of the property at a figure less than half of that claimed by the more enthusiastic experts in the employ of the corporation. It is not very clear what bearing this voluntary appraisal of the property might have in determining the legal as distinguished from the market value of the property, because a stock holder's estimate is based on the earning capacity of the plant, and that capacity is the very thing in dispute which the board of supervisors set out to regulate, subject to review by the court passing on the reasonableness of the ordinance.

It will be seen that the decision is of great practical value to San Francisco. It gives us an assured basis, which will supply a starting point for negotiations to purchase the property, whether the deal is to be consummated in conference subject to a popular vote or by condemnation proceedings in court.

MR. HEARST devotes a full page, and then some running over on the next, to advertisement of his pretensions to be the democratic nominee for president next year. To be sure, Mr. Hearst does not in so many words state the object of his long cherished ambition, but that may be understood even by him who runs while he reads.

Chiefly the ground on which Mr. Hearst so voluminously flaunts the praises of himself is that he has returned, like the prodigal son, to the democratic party fold and is therefore entitled to the fat calf. It is perhaps presumed as the basis of this theory that the democratic party is so poor in candidates that it must be on the hunt for available timber and will gladly seize the opportunity afforded by the return of a political wanderer who, in his multifarious endeavors to be all things to all men, has not hitherto been conspicuously successful in being anything for anybody.

The Iroquois of San Francisco still carry in partly resentful and partly amused memory the highly consequential and self-important fashion in which Mr. Hearst contemptuously read himself out of the club and the democratic party at the same time. But now once more he is the white man's hope and wants to come back.

Mr. Hearst's perpetual aspiration or affliction—call it which you will—and the profuse exploitation of print that it is given by himself at least serves to promote the gayety of the nation. The man who devotes a full newspaper page of words to praising himself and his condensation in coming back to a party which once he repudiated with scorn can not be regarded as otherwise than amusing, although the democratic organization might be disposed to regard it as merely impudent.

BRITISH dreams of imperialism as they may have found expression in the Canadian vote against reciprocity may be said to have about the same time run against a snag, due to growth of sentiment in the dominion against taxing the people for the creation of a tin navy auxiliary to the sea power of Britain. The feeling among the French Canadians against this naval program cut a quite important figure in the defeat of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who was pledged to build the ships.

The late premier was in an unfortunate position. He was attacked on one side by the imperialists because he wanted reciprocity with the United States and he was hammered on the other side by the anti-imperialists because he had promised to build a navy to help the empire.

Now, Mr. Borden, the new premier, being an imperialist by habit and spirit, would naturally be pleased to fall in with the naval program and even possibly to make it more ambitious, but in the exigencies of politics and the recent campaign definite pledges were given that no move in this direction would be made hastily or without consulting the people. In Quebec there is violent opposition to the naval project and the people there demand a plebiscite or referendum, at which these questions shall be submitted to vote:

- Do you favor a Canadian navy?
Do you favor a money contribution to the imperial government for naval defense?
Do you favor doing nothing?

The price of admiralty is not small, and once the thing gets a foothold it grows like a weed. As things are, whatever might happen Canada is in absolutely no danger of invasion or attack and if the dominion should set up as an independent nation it might rely on the United States for protection, in the extremely unlikely event of attack from the outside.

SPECULATION in political circles at the national capital is much concerned with the probable effect of the admission of Arizona and New Mexico on the balance of power in the United States senate. It had been assumed in a general way that New Mexico would go republican and Arizona democratic, so that the party strength in the senate would remain unchanged. But it appears from the figures of recent elections that there is nothing certain about the politics of either. The two new states will be good fighting ground for both parties.

Generally speaking, in New Mexico the chances favor the republicans, but on the election returns the margin of safety is small. New Mexico is now represented in congress by a republican delegate, but his plurality was only 388. The vote on candidates for the constitutional convention showed a larger margin, that is to say: Republicans, 21,577; democrats, 17,528.

In Arizona the democrats controlled the constitutional convention and as a general thing have for years elected territorial officials, but in 1908 the republican candidate for delegate in congress was elected by 12,435 votes against 11,727. When parties run so close together the results are usually governed by the chapter of political accidents.

There are fifty republican senators now and forty-one democrats. One Colorado seat is vacant and will be filled by a democrat. That leaves a majority of eight on the republican side, but if the four new votes from Arizona and New Mexico should all go one way it would make a radical difference in the standing of parties in the senate.

Answers to Queries

WAR PRESIDENTS—J. R., City. Who were the presidents of the United States that participated in wars?

Revolutionary war, Washington, Monroe and Jackson; the war of 1812-1815, Jackson, William Henry Harrison, Tyler, Taylor and Buchanan; Black Hawk war of 1832, Lincoln; Mexican war of 1846, Taylor, Pierce and Grant; civil war, Lincoln, Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Benjamin Harrison and McKinley; war with Spain, 1898, Roosevelt. These presidents participated, some in the sense of directing the movements of the army as commander in chief and others by actual participation on the field.

SCHOOL CHILDREN—M., Santa Cruz. Why are children in the country charged \$25 a year to attend a grammar school? This department is informed that this charge is made only in cases where a child is transferred from one county to another. It is a matter of arrangement between the parents and the trustees of the schools.

ARITHMETIC—W. F. W., City. If a person deposits \$5 every month in a savings bank which pays 4 per cent compounded interest semi-annually, how much will he have to his credit at the end of 10 years? Also at the end of 20 years? This department does not answer questions in arithmetic.

CHIEF ENGINEER—V. E., East Auburn. Who was the chief engineer of the Ocean Shore railroad in the early days of construction? Does he still hold that position? John B. Rogers. He is not in that position at this time.

MALE AND FEMALE—C. A., City. What is the proportion of males and females in the population of the United States? The census of 1910 shows that there are 100,000,000 males and 95,000,000 females.

WHEN NIGHT COMES—T. Y. S., City. This correspondent wishes to know in which of the Bible books he can find the following: "When night comes, I long for their arms around me to be blest."

DEATH PENALTY—W. R., Yorkville. Which states have abolished the death penalty? Maine, Michigan, Wisconsin and Rhode Island. Colorado and Idaho abolished such punishment, but after several years restored it.

HUSBAND'S DEBTS—A. C. R., Oakland. What is the law of California in relation to the responsibility of the wife for the debts of her husband? The civil code says: "The separate property of the wife is liable for her own debts contracted before or after her marriage, but is not liable for her husband's debts; provided that such property is liable for the payment of debts contracted by her husband or wife for the necessities of life while they are living together."

HOMESTEAD—H. H., Oakland. What is the law in California in regard to a wife selecting a homestead when the husband has not done so? The code says: "In case the husband has not made such selection, the wife may select and acknowledge the same as a grant of real property is acknowledged—a declaration of homestead—and file the same for record."

NEWSPAPER—Mrs. O., City. What is the date of the first newspaper published in the United States? The first genuine newspaper established in the United States was the Boston News Letter, founded in Boston, Mass., in 1704.

OF AGE—R. S., Pittsburg. When does a boy and a girl become of age in California? Boy at 21 and girl at 18 years.

BANK NOTES—Subscriber, Alameda. Is it true that Bank of England notes are never issued but once from the bank? Each note is dated, numbered and entered in a book by date and number. As each note is returned to the bank the number is cancelled and the note itself is destroyed.

Test of Greatness Ended the Dry Spell

Columbus had made the egg stand on end. "But could you unscramble it?" demanded the mortified courtiers. "Which merely accentuates the great truth that nobody is springing any new puzzles nowadays.—Chicago Tribune.

Abe Martin



A Bible Lesson As Expounded By PASTOR RUSSELL

"A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday."

LONDON TABERNACLE, Lancaster Gate, W., Oct. 22.—Pastor Russell spoke here twice today to large audiences. We report one of the discourses which treated on the difference between human and divine standards of measurement. He said in part: From the divine viewpoint, earth's history, from Adam's day to Christ to the last day of judgment, or trial for the world, the day in which "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the glory of the Lord is as a day which shall be cut off."

The glorious Seventh Day of Sabbath of a thousand years is "the day of judgment" or trial for the world, the day in which "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the glory of the Lord is as a day which shall be cut off."

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PERSONS IN THE NEWS
L. P. SHACKLEFORD, republican national committeeman for Alaska, is at the Palace. He alternates in his law practice between Tacoma and Juneau.
C. W. LEININGER, registrar of the United States land office at Redding, is at the Stewart.
FRANK CUMMINGS, a hotelman of Winnipeg, is at the St. Francis with Mrs. Cummings.
GEORGE A. COLLINS, a hotelman of Los Angeles, is at the Stewart with Mrs. Collins.
MR. AND MRS. W. F. TERRY of New York are at the Palace.
E. E. HEWLETT, an attorney of Pasadena, is at the Palace.
CHARLES L. BRAND of New York is at the Fairmount.
R. F. SPAULDING of Los Angeles is at the Fairmount.
R. F. ROY, a mining man of Reno, is at the Stewart.
JACOB REWAK, a clear merchant of Los Angeles, is making the Marx his headquarters while on a business trip to this city.
DR. H. L. HENDERSON, mayor of Astoria and head of the recent centennial celebration, is at the St. Francis.
D. H. STEINMETZ, a mining man of Sonora, is among the recent arrivals at the Palace.
MR. AND MRS. JOHN D. EDWARDS of Santa Barbara have apartments at the Palace.
HERBERT SHEARER, a banker of Willows, is among the recent arrivals at the Marx.
A. J. DAVIS, former councilman of Salt Lake, is a recent arrival at the St. Francis.
DR. J. WALLACE DEWITT of Antioch is at the Palace with Mrs. Dewitt.
MR. AND MRS. V. M. PORTER of Santa Barbara are at the St. Francis.
M. M. GREGG, a banker of Monterey, is at the Stewart.
W. H. EARL, a mining man of Reno, is at the Marx.