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THE PLUCKING BOARD

This is the name given to the board of general officers appointed to carry out the law for reducing the number of officers in the Regular Army. Members of the Board around the table are, from left to right: Brigadier-General A. W. Brewster; Major-General M. W. Ireland, surgeon-general; Major-General Joseph T. Dickman, retired, chairman; Major-General Henry P. McCain, former adjutant; Brigadier-General Ernest Hinds; and Major R. A. Jones, secretary.

of considerably more than one thousand officers. Their task is lightened to some extent by the fact that the law allows eight hundred promotion-list officers in grades from colonel to first lieutenant, inclusive, to be held for absorption or recommissioned in the next lower grade. No such allowance, however, is made for the medical department and chaplains, and all of the excess there must be removed by separation from the active list, including that due to normal losses.

In connection with this drastic cut which has been ordered by Congress there is much discussion in army circles as to the effect it will have on the morale of the force and on its general efficiency and preparedness in case it is called on again to render active war service. Promotions, it is pointed out, will be much slower, officers being retained in the lower grades many more years than at present, so that if suddenly called on to assume greater duties they will be lacking in the required experience. This situation in the Army, it is claimed, cost many extra millions of money and months of time in preparedness of the American Army for the World War.

The selections for retirement and discharge will be based on the official records of officers, supplemented by such additional recommendations and reports as may be received. In the process of making the large reduction required, "officers must necessarily be retired or discharged whose active service would otherwise be continued," says a War Department circular giving the regulations; and so, under the circumstances, these separations from the service will be "regarded as honorable in every way and will not be regarded as stigmatizing an officer or his record."

As there are more than 12,000 officers in the Army and the time within which

the Elimination Board must perform its labors is limited, it is assumed that it will have to depend to a considerable extent upon the recommendations from chiefs of the several army branches. The War Department recommends that officers who leave the active list of the Regular Army continue available for military service in emergency, and urges such officers to affiliate with the National Guard or to apply for appointment in the Officers' Reserve Corps.

A SUCCESSFUL
MASSACRE

HERRIN, until lately obscure, has achieved infamy. That southern Illinois mining town has become known as the place where murder pays. Turks or Kurds who torture to death defenseless Armenians in order to rule the surviving population with a rod of terror can now enjoy the flattery of successful imitation in America. Perhaps Illinois will have added a word to the language. Nobody hereafter need mistake the meaning of the verb "to herrin."

It was on June 22 that a mob of strikers at Herrin murdered in cold blood a score or so of non-union miners. For fiendish cruelty that mob has had, according to unrefuted reports, few equals. The strikers in that mob were determined that nobody in that region should exercise the liberty of working while they exercised the liberty of refusing to work. So they proceeded to prove that any one who tried to work would be in peril of suffering, not merely death, but also agony. A strike is a form of war; but this was worse than war. The men whom the strikers killed with torture had surrendered. They were not the vanquished in an open

though unjustifiable fight; they were the victims of a worse than brutish crime.

And that crime, after more than six weeks, appears now to have been a complete success.

The issue raised at Herrin has nothing whatever to do with the merits of the strike. No matter what any American may think of the strikers' cause, he cannot, if he is an intelligent and decent citizen, be (to use William Allen White's phrase) "fifty per cent" for these strikers of Herrin; he must be a hundred per cent against them. There are means so evil that they can render any cause on behalf of which they are used wholly negligible, for they constitute in themselves an utterly evil cause.

Such a cause is that of deliberate, terrorizing, murderous torture of the defenseless. And it is that evil cause that has apparently triumphed at Herrin.

If free government is to endure, it must provide means, not merely of punishing those who commit such a massacre, but of preventing, by constituted authority, such a massacre from taking place.

Do the people of Illinois propose to do anything about it? If not, do the people of the United States?

This case is a test of the American system of government.

Ordinarily a crime of violence, according to the American theory, is the concern of the community in which it occurs. But when the whole community is so tainted with the crime that the individuals in the community by shielding the criminals—whether through sympathy or through fear—become accomplices shall justice go by default? If so, government itself to that degree abdicates and in its place arises anarchy.

The failure of the county authorities at Herrin, the failure of the State authorities in Illinois, to establish the reign of law is not merely the failure of a county or a State; it is the failure of the Nation. Where men can rule by massacre there is the end, not only of liberty, but of all that is worthy to be called government.

AN URBAN VIEW OF
RURAL IDEALS

IT was a maxim of Joseph Pulitzer that no editorial writer was worth his salt who did not find something every morning in the newspapers that made him angry. If the editorial writers for any agricultural paper happened to let their eyes fall upon a recent editorial in the New York "Mail," we suspect that each and every one of them promptly qualified for their daily ration of sodium chloride.

As an example of urban misunder-

standing of rural problems we reprint this editorial here in full:

IS A FARM A FACTORY OR A HOME?

At Mr. Morgenthau's picnic former Secretary of Agriculture Houston denounced a "silly notion that we have not enough farmers." He said that "the Nation needs just as many farmers as can produce crops which they can sell to the Nation at a profit."

According to this theory a farmer is a manufacturer and a farm is a factory. Its object is to produce food and sell it at a profit. It would follow that the fewer farmers there are and the fewer crops they raise the higher the price and the more profitable the farm-factory to its owner.

This theory has been recently taught to the farmers. If it is accepted by the farmers, it is well now to consider what the results would be to the farmers themselves and to everybody else.

It would follow that when prices are low farmers would not produce. The next step would be for the farmers to organize and strike. Suppose that any year the farmers would decide that they would not produce more food than enough for themselves and their families to eat. What would become of the rest of us?

The traditional American idea is that a farm is not a factory, but a home. The distinction between a farm and a factory should be clear. A factory is a place where a man goes to work. A farm is where he and his family go to live. A factory is where he spends a fixed number of hours every day. A farm is where he eats and sleeps as well as works.

From a factory a man gets the means to buy food and shelter and fuel. A farm should supply the farmer with all his shelter, the greater part of his food, and his fuel from the wood lot. It is possible for

a farm to supply practically all a man's material wants—shelter, an abundant diet, fuel, ice, and it is not so long since the farm supplied wool, spinning wheels and cloth, and hides for shoes.

Considered solely as a factory, a farmer is at a great disadvantage. He must pay the retail prices for everything that he buys, and he gets only the wholesale price for what he has to sell. If he is a milk farmer and does not raise his cow feed, he pays the retail price for feed and receives about a third of the retail price for the milk. If he is a fruit farmer, he pays the retail price for his fertilizers, his packages, his spraying machinery, and gets only a fraction of the price the consumer pays for his fruit.

If a farm is a factory, the next step will be to consolidate hundreds of farms and have them run like factories, with the farmers as the hired workmen.

We remember reading with silent applause ex-Senator Houston's statement when it was originally reported in the daily press. We see no reason to withdraw that applause because of the arguments of the New York "Mail." An overcrowded profession is not an efficient profession. A large class of hand-to-mouth farmers is no more to be regarded as desirable than a large class of hand-to-mouth lawyers, doctors, or editors.

It seems to us entirely unobjectionable to regard a farm as a food factory. We can see no danger in this to any of the rural ideals which should properly be associated with the farm as a home. We see nothing desirable in the state of affairs in which a man purchasing a farm buys himself only a permanent job.

In addition to a wage income the farmer certainly deserves an income on his investment. If the editor of the "Mail" would apply the same argument to his own business, he would possibly see its weakness at once. There is no reason why the farmer should forego a profit on his investment for the benefit of the newspaper man than that the newspaper man should forego the profit on his investment for the benefit of the farmer. The editor of the "Mail" wonders "what would become of us" if our farms should be turned into factories. Possibly if the consequences imagined by the editor of the "Mail" actually occurred the city man might begin to take a real interest in the problem of marketing farm products. The suburbanite might be willing to take a few days off to study the problem of getting in direct touch with the farmer, thereby avoiding the shipments of farm products from rural communities to big cities, and then back again to the same rural communities.

We shall not attempt to answer fully the apparent theory of the "Mail" that the farmer should be given food, drink, clothing, and shelter, and then that the income of his labor should apparently accrue to the benefit of the city dweller. Nor shall we attempt to unravel the system of economics in which it is apparently claimed that the food which the farmer raises for his cattle costs him little or nothing. We shall merely speculate as to the length of time the theories of the "Mail" would endure if their creator could be put in the midst of a July hay field or set to milk a score of cows.

EMERGENCY CONTROL OF COAL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE FROM WASHINGTON

BY WILLIAM P. HELM, JR.

COAL cannot be mined by proclamation; nor can miners and operators, it seems, be coaxed or shamed into performing their duty to the public, even by the President of the United States. Under existing laws, the Government is powerless to force unwilling workmen to work or unwilling employers to negotiate. For all its sovereign authority, it cannot compel a free man to place a pound of coal upon a railway car. As the laws of the country stand to-day, the miner is within his legal rights in refusing to work and the operator is within his legal rights in refusing to negotiate.

The rest of us may be forced into idleness, or close down our mills and factories, or see our personal hopes and savings curl up to the sky in smoke, or face the suffering of a coalless winter.

It is all perfectly regular and legal. If we freeze or starve, we may have the dying satisfaction of knowing that, like hanging, our death is brought about in a manner so entirely justified by present laws that no possible objection can lie against it. The miner is within his rights, the operator is within his, and we are within ours; and the Government can search through all the law libraries in the land without finding anything whatever to the contrary.

The Government cannot compel coal production, but there are some things it can do with respect to such coal as is now being produced, and those things are second in importance only to the actual mining of coal.

It can stay the hand of the profiteer from the insufficient production now being brought up from the mines.

It can check the cunning of the coal hoarder.

It can place at the disposal of producing mines the full measure of facility for accomplishing their maximum effort.

It can take the coal, when mined, and distribute it equitably in the public service, so that all may share, in proportion to their needs, in the available supply.

Those things the Government can do. Fortunately, there is a single agency, which the Government may control, capable of being used to work the Government's will. That is the agency of transportation, or, in other words, the railways, for the coal mines are utterly dependent upon cars to haul away coal as it is mined. The Government, by taking over all coal at the mouth of the mine, may send that coal where it wishes; and by supplying producing