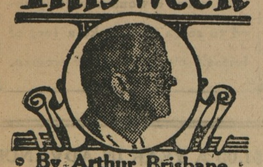
This Week



By Arthur Brisbane

THE THIRD LEG.
MISTAKEN FARM IDEA.
SHORTER SCHOOL HOURS.
CLEANLINESS FOR HEALTH.

Senator Walsh, of Massachusetts, when Congress meets will introduce a bill to provide "a West Point of the air," a United States aviation academy, to take equal rank with West Point and Annapolis. An excellent suggestion, and "equal rank is none too high, for in case of war the fliers would have to protect the obsolete warships and slow, crawling army.

West Point and Annapolis should be changed to flying academies, and the sooner the better.

A group of well-meaning, but not too intelligent farmers inform the Government that they don't want any more reclamation work done, no more irrigation canals, no more land drained or deserts irrigated until the price of farm products increases.

Those are the farmers that have voted to keep out the first-class European immigration that this country needs, the immigration that would provide mouths to eat all the farmers can grow and more. They vote to keep out customers for the farms, and would vote to prevent development of the country. But they will not prevent it.

No extensive development begun now would have any effect or add one acre to cultivatable land in less than ten to fifteen years. By that time, in the natural course of events the population of the country will increase by twenty millions.

The farmers, more than any other class, are interested in canal development, which would take, as Mr. Hoover has shown, from six to twelve cents a bushel from the freight charge of export wheat, and increase the price of American wheat by that amount per bushel.

Professor Hemps, of Budapest, is reported to have perfected a new cure for hydrophobia, better than the Pasteur antitoxin. In one year 3,063 persons bitten by mad cats and dogs were all cured, and every one of them, except four, within a few days. That's good news, but it would be better to wipe out hydophobia as the British have done. Every dog is kept in quarantine for a necessary length of time, and no hydrophobia case was known in England until recently, when a flier brought a dog through the air, escaped the quarantine and started a small epidemic.

The secret of health is cleanliness, inside and out. Clean lungs, clean blood, clean thinking prolong life and fight disease.

Leprosy, that killed thousands and was looked upon as a necessary visitation from above, was another word for filth.

In Africa a strange, destroying fever swept across the great dark continent, 60,000 were killed by it, quarantine stations were established without success.

Soap, water and disinfectant would have done the work. Disease is carried by vermin. Before asking why the natives do not free themselves of the vermin, one must remember that it isn't so long in this country since country people looked upon the absence of vermin as a sign of ill health.

They thought the tidy children abandoned, unhealthy children. They also thought that the mosquito's bite, which actually put maleria in the blood, was a good cure for maleria.

Mr. Will C. Wood, California's superintendent of Public Instruction, says that school hours should be made longer, and recommends legislation to the effect. He is mistaken, the hours should be made shorter if there is to be any change.

Two hours a day, or three at the most, a child properly taught could learn all that its mind could absorb in one day. No hours of sunlight should be spent indoors unnecessarily.

For centuries men quarreled about the nature of the soul. Was it composed of solid matter or was it purely spiritual? Now science shows that there is no such thing as solid matter, every atom being only an aggregation of electrons and nuclei, tiny positive and negative charges of electricity. And we don't know what electricity IS.

Parchment manuscripts, written with Latin characters in ancient Aramaic, spoken by Jews in the time of Christ, found in Pompeii, have been translated. They contain slighting references to early Christians. It is hard for prosperous Christians of 1927 to realize that ancient prosperity looked upon early Christians as we look upon the Russian Bolsheviki.

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COTTON PRICES IN DISPUTE

BABSON PARK, MASS. (Special). Private estimates would now place the probable cotton crop at around 14,000,000 bales. With favorable weather it will be more; with continued unfavorable weather, less.

Net exports for the crop year, ending July 31, have been 10,922,642 bales—a larger quantity than was exported in any year since 1911. A large part of this was bought by foreign mills at the low prices of last Winter and Spring and stored up for future use.

This fact, it is argued, will be reflected in reduced export demand later. There were, on July 31, on hand in this country 3,762,029 bales against 3,542,760 a year ago, while the consuming demand is not extraordinarily heavy.

That is why some persons now fail to understand how these figures justify a price above 19 cents, and refuse to scramble for cotton at 23 cents even though the weather has been more adverse to cotton growth than anticipated and the weevil has outdone himself in destructiveness.

WHEAT, BREAD AND FAMILIES

In the United States, says Stanford University, the average income per family is relatively large, expenditure for and consumption of bread relatively small; and bread prices do not fluctuate closely with wheat and flour prices.

But in Europe, on the other hand, the family income is small, bread plays an important part in the diet, and expenditure per family for bread is large. Since European bread consists far more largely of flour than American, bread prices fluctuate closely with the prices of wheat and flower.

High bread prices in Europe mean general curtailment of other family expenditures or resource to distasteful food substitutes, but in the United States they are scarcely noticed by consumers.

One need not marvel at the interest displayed just now in agricultural prices, if he or she will but bear in mind that vast areas in the great West are dependent for their buying power on the success or failure of agricultural pursuits, and our lives would be vastly changed if it were not for the wonderful productiveness of our rich country.

CROP DAMAGE vs. HIGH PRICES

Crop damage is a big word in the farm dictionary just now. One hears talk of rust, weevil, drouth and frost. It must, of course, be recognized that if a farmer's crop has been nearly destroyed by weevil or rust, by flood or drouth, the ensuing high prices do not help him much, consequently areas of extensive crop damage will reap no benefit, yet the net effect of the present price trend remains favorable to the average agriculturist.

SOME SUBSTANTIAL FARM BUYING CERTAIN

Regardless of the rest of the crop year, there has been sufficient progress already in some farming districts throughout the United States to warrant the conclusion that at leas some substantial buying by farmers is coming right along.

Nor would one be risking a great deal in a guess that names such states as Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Montana, Idaho and Washington in the Northwest, as well as Texas in the South. The former states are in a position to benefit materially from an excellent spring wheat crop, while the boll weevil damage to the cotton crop in Texas is reported on the increase, but the large cotton acreage planted and the high average level of prices that farmers may be expected to receive for their crop assures a distinctly favorable income this Fall.

FARMERS AND IMMIGRANTS

By reason of the restricted immigration now to this country, of course our farmers cannot rely as they use to on securing cheap farm labor. This, however, like everyces for farm labor are at the same time growing scarcer every year.

Canada is seeking farmers strenuously through immigration. We are not, when steamers are packed with immigrants from foreign shores, this suggests excellent business conditions in the U. S. and high prices for labor. This, however, lige everything else, can be overdone, and too large arrival figures foretell a depression. Conversely, when departures are large in number and when immigrant traffic is small, it is a good sign that U. S. business can get no worse.

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LABTR SITUATION PEACEFUL

Babson Reports Living Costs Declining

Babson Park, Massachusetts, Sept. 13, 1927.—In his weekly interview today Roger W. Babson called especial attention to statistics which are now available showing considerable decline in the cost of living compared with a year ago. In connection with this interview Mr. Babson refers to wages and labor conditions in general. His complete statement is as follows:

FEW LABOR TROUBLES

"There has not been a time in twenty years when the country has suffered so little from labor troubles as at present. It is true that the bituminous coal strike is still on in Illinois and surrounding territory; but the public is very little affected by this strike. The non-union mines in the east have so increased their production that the country's total out-put now is nearly up to the total before the srike was declared. Considering the large amount of coal that is in storage, the public has as yet not suffered at all. As the mines are gradually seeing their mistake the effect on the general labor situation ih rather healthy and beneficial. Labor leaders also have not forgotten the disastrous ending of the railroad shop men's strike two years ago and the very noticeable changed attitude toward labor on the part of the general public.

"Labor itself is much more sympathetic concerning capital than it ever has been. High wages and constant employment—due largely to immigration restrictions—have made capitalists out of many wage workers. This has been brought about both through the building of homes and the purchasing of securities. Even the unions themselves have become investors to a more or less extent. Some of the unions, such as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, have learned from sad experience that investing money and developing property is not as rosy and as easy as they onticipated. Hence the Brotherhood and other unions are not only directly interested now in investments but appreciate as never before, that employers render a real service, assume real risks and are entitled to substantial profits when an undertaking is successful. These experiences were doubtless an important reason why most labor leaders took no part in the radical eruption which the Sacco-Vanezetti case developed.

COST OF LIVING DECLINES

"Probably the most fundamental reason for the peaceful attitude of labor to-day is the constant decline which is taking place in living costs. According to the latest statistics living costs are today somewhat lower than a year ago according to the locality studied. Using 100 as the cost of living in 1913 the year before the war, the Bureau of Labor Statistics presents the following figures as the status since that time. Although these figures indicate a net increase of about 75 per cent in fourteen years yet wages show a greater increase during this same period of time. These figures are:

December, 1914—103.
December, 1915—105.1.
December, 1916—118.3.
December, 1917—142.4.
December, 1918—174.4.
December, 1919—199.3.
December, 1920—200.4.
December, 1921—174.3.
December, 1922—169.5.
December, 1923—1 3.2.
December, 1924—172.5.
December, 1925—177.9.
December, 1926—175.6.
June, 1927—173.4.

RAW MATERIALS vs. MANUFACTURED GOODS

"When studying the statistics on specific commodities compared with a year ago, we find that rye and corn are higher, but that wheat and flour are a little lower. There has been a decline in the price of pork and coffee, and the seasonaal low in the price of eggs was below last year. Butter and sugar are about the same as a year ago. Cotton is 20 per cent higher while hides are 45 per cent higher. Wool, silk and silk substitutes are slightly lower in price than last year. When studying the metals we find a 10 per cent decline in steel and iron and a much greater decline in lead, zinc and some other metals. Copper is about one cent less than a year ago but is in a strong statistical position. Rubber and hard coal are a little off, while crude oil is 35 per cent lower. The principal decline in the cost of living has occured in connection with manufactured products rather than raw materials. Owing to the very keen competition today between manufacturers, prices are constantly being reduced in most lines. This is perhaps most evident in connection with clothing and shoes. The greatest price cuts, however, have taken place in connection with motor cars and the cost of electric power.

"Although there has been no decrease in the wages of the building trades, yet carpenters, masons and other mechanics are giving more work per hour of labor than they have for some time. This is partly due to the fact that so many of the men working in the building trades have become property owners themselves and partly because their labor leaders know that building is on the decline and lower building costs are essential to encourage new building at this time. The intelligent labor leaders today are careful students of business conditions. They watch good barometers of industrial and commercial activity. They are posted on current conditions of business and know that greater efficiency on the part of both labor and management is very necessary in order to prolong the present period of prosperity. As labor leaders have their troubles, like the rest of us, they should be commended and encouraged for these efforts to seek the truth and report it to their followers.

LABOR UNIONS LOSING MEMBERS

"In view of the general prosperity of labor and the factors noted above, wage workers are becoming careless and indifferent about supporting their unions. Seeing the non-union man getting the same, or perhaps higher wages, than the union man, labor union members tend to forget what they owe to their organizations for past work and drop out. As a result the American Federation of Labor is steadily losing members. In many ways this is to be regretted. Notwithstanding mistakes which labor leaders have made, the unions have done a lot of good and certainly have been a great factor in raising the standard of living in this country. However, the American Federation of Labor is only a man-made corporation and hence must expect to be subject to periods of improvement and decline—of prosperity and depression—like all other corporation. The wheel of fortune is slowly but continually revolving in all industries, all communities, all corporations, and all families.

"The decline in the cost of living should tend to check any evident decline in general trade. The lower the prices at which goods can be marketed the more goods the public can purchase. In other words; it is the volume of consumption which keeps our industries active rather than the amount of money involved. Thus a decline in the cost of living is a healthy sign and it should be encouraging to retail trade. Furthermore, the general attitude of labor today should be encouraging to retailers. The uncertain element in the business situation is the condition of the installment craze and the amount of outstanding installment obligations. Payments which wage workers are compelled to make each month on their installment purchasers must take today a large proportion of the weekly wage. These arbitrary and fixed payments necessarily leave less for cash purchases. This is evident by the fact that such sections as are today complaining ambout retail trade are those sections in which installment buying has been most general. However, let me say in closing that this condition is of itself acting as a check and brake on further installment purchases. In addition the labor unions are starting a campaign against reckless installment buying. As a result of all these forces business, as registered by the Babsonchart, is 1 per cent above normal. Let us all do our best to keep it at its present condition and not 'kill the goose that is laying the golden egg'."

—oo—

Relative: "Now, now, Sonny, you mustn't say 'I ain't going, You must say, 'I am not going,' 'He is not going,' 'We are not going.' 'They are not going.'

Tommy: "Aw—ain't nobody going."

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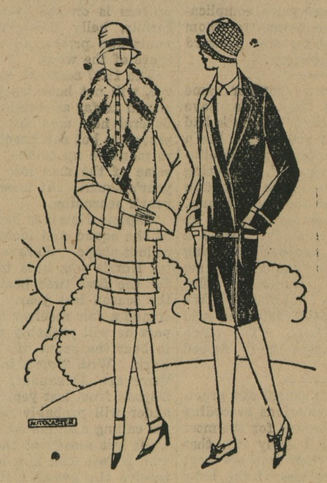

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