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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1920.

THE AMERICAN LEGION.

Elsewhere in this issue is given a complete account of the organization, Monday evening, of the Abbeville County Post of the American Legion. Quite a nice little story is attached to the organization of the local post and especially to the organization of the State Department.

The first meeting of a representative assembly of delegates from every unit in the A. E. F. was held March a year ago in Paris, and every organization in the expeditionary forces was represented at this meeting. A few weeks later the representatives of the military units in the United States held their first meeting in St. Louis. For some unaccountable reason South Carolina was represented at the St. Louis meeting by three negroes from Charleston. Before matters had gone too far, however, two patriotic ex-soldiers of Florence hearing of the conditions at St. Louis, at their own expense made a hurried trip to the convention at St. Louis and managed to obtain seats as representatives from the Palmetto State. Upon their return to Florence a call was soon issued by them for a state convention to meet in Florence. Due to the interest of W. D. Wilkinson, now Post Commander of the Abbeville Post, this county has the honor of being the first post to apply for a charter in the state. At the Florence meeting however, Abbeville lost, and properly so, due again to Mr. Wilkinson's unselfishness, on account of the delegates from the various counties, Abbeville included, unanimously agreeing that no matter what other counties had applied previously for charters, Florence should have Post No. 1. And a little army nurse of Florence has the honor of being the first member of the American Legion in this state. With the above knowledge in hand, we believe that Abbeville is far prouder to hold charter No. 2, than she would be to hold No. 1. Things rocked along quietly until Monday evening last when, in response to a call issued by the chairman of the fifteenth charter members, about three score veterans met in the court house and perfected the organization of the Abbeville Post.

When we consider the fact that the American Legion will soon number over four million members, representing every walk of life, some millionaires, some day laborers, but every member one hundred per cent American, we cannot but feel that the American Legion constitutes the most powerful factor in this country. The fact that its motto is, "Policies—Not Politics," will ease the minds of every American citizen, save the narrow brain cell of the hyphenated politician.

While the Legion is not yet a year old, several crises have been met by its members and the motto still holds true. The first deportation in a wholesale manner, of Reds and undesirables, which took place a few weeks ago in the Soviet Ark, must be credited to the activities of the Legion. The passage of the Sweet bill in Congress, giving the disabled National Guard or National Army veteran the same allowances and compensations as the Regular Army soldier, is another proof of the wise use of their power by the Legionnaires.

We wish to congratulate the Abbeville veterans on their organization and we prophesy a better future for the county as a whole through their efforts for law and order and by reason of their outspoken antipathy to mob violence.

WITHOUT CAUSE AND EXCUSE.

There will of necessity be inconvenience to the people of the city from the work being done on the streets, and the people of the city must, and do, expect some inconvenience on account of the work. But there is no excuse for the manner in which the work is being done on Greenville Street. Some of the sidewalks have been plowed up and made almost impassable, while in other places great quantities of red dirt have been piled in the sidewalks, making mud puddles for people to walk through, and this long before the sidewalks are to be built. The children going to and from the High School, as well as the people living on the street, find it almost impossible to pass along the sidewalk. The paved walk on the other side of the street is rendered useless because of the fact that the street cannot be crossed near the High School except under great difficulties.

Neither is there excuse for the use of the sidewalks by the grocery wagons of the city. What mud has not been mixed by the street builders is now being prepared by a few negro grocery drivers who take a delight in driving their wagons on

must walk and where other pedestrians must travel. All of the houses on Greenville Street may be reached by taking the back street and by carrying the groceries a few yards.

We believe in being reasonable about all things but there is no excuse for anybody Kaisering the whole town because the rules have been somewhat relaxed out of necessity. Let the Council get busy and do something to keep the street workers and the grocery wagons in bounds as well as other people.

The schools are closed today and if it could be known we have no doubt that a goodly number of the sick from grippe and colds owe it to the kind of sidewalks they have been forced to travel over due to the unnecessary acts complained of. The children get their feet wet and muddy from these causes and at this season of the year nothing is to be expected from wet feet except colds and pneumonia.

The Legislature has been in session for nearly a month but no dog bill has yet been enacted.

THE OPINION OF OTHERS.

UNNECESSARY ALARM.

Some 40,000 farmers of the 200,000 to whom the Post Office Department addressed a questionnaire inviting suggestions about reducing the cost of living have replied to the appeal, and more answers are coming in every day. Summarized by the officials of the department, the chief complaints of the farmers are that hired help and the farmers' children have been attracted to the city by the lure of high wages and short hours, so that it is almost impossible to procure workers for the farms; that the middlemen take extortionate profits for the mere handling of products; that it is difficult to establish any relations of contact between the farmer and the consumer. One of the department officials estimated that as many as 50 per cent. of the farmers' replies indicate that the "writers contemplate either leaving their farms or curtailing acreage under cultivation." Whereupon Assistant Postmaster General Blakslee makes this comment: "Such a condition at a time when the predominant cry is for production and still more production cannot but constitute a grave menace."

The "menace" revealed by these replies of the farmers to the department's questions has existed, and would have been disclosed at any time by a similar process of questioning, for a hundred years. Somehow we have lived through it. The only new thing in this revelation is the means which the department has offered of giving extraordinary publicity to views which great numbers of farmers thus approached would at any and all times have expressed. The farmer has his own psychology. It is known to everybody who knows anything about farming that the tiller of the soil is little given to complacency and confessed optimism. He may be doing very well, may be very happy and prosperous, but if he talks at all about his affairs he is very apt to say that times are hard, the crops are poor, that no help is to be had, that everybody is discouraged. Not all farmers talk that way, but we judge that the department has been extraordinarily successful in rounding up those who do talk that way.

There is justice in every one of these complaints the farmers make. The extravagant and reckless resort to the "cost plus system" on Government contracts during the war has upset wage standards all over the country. The farmer is not alone in his difficulties, for in countless industries it is hard to get labor at reasonable wages. It is notorious that the middleman profits unduly at the cost of the farmer and of the consumer; he always has; and methods of getting the farm products to the markets, to the consumers, are known to be defective. Nevertheless, the farmers are not going to abandon their farms, they are not going to reduce production. The discontented ones are not representative of their class.

The farmers of the United States are the very bone and sinew of good citizenship, of good Americanism. They know that not only is the demand great, but that the need is more pressing than it ever has been. They know that in such times they are going to get good prices. The real farmers, that is the vast majority of the farmers, practically all of them, have no sympathy whatever with slackers. They believe in the doctrine of production, always more production. They are willing to work. And they are not misled by the professional agitators who have been industriously striving to mislead them into the support of socialistic and destructive policies.

The heads of the six great farmers' organizations in conference in Washington adopted on Friday a memorial to Congress declaring that "the Government ownership or continued operation of railroads is most emphatically opposed." They condemn extravagance in public expenditure, they condemn profiteering, just as every reasonable man does. There is nothing in the thoughts or condition of the framers that "constitutes a grave menace." They are bearing their share, they are willing to bear their share, of the after-war burdens. In that they set a good example to their countrymen. Above all, they are a bulwark of protection against the agitators who are trying to upset Government and society.—New York Times.

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