American Sentinel

The Republican Paper of Carroll County.

Published Every Friday Afternoon by the American Sentinel Co. of Westminster, Maryland.

OFFICE—MAIN & LIBERTY STS

Entered at the postoffice in Westminster, Md., as second-class matter.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26th, 1926.

WHEN INACTION COUNTED

In the weeks just previous to the settlement of the anthracite coal strike, many of the congressmen became very urgent that the president ought to do something about it. They seemingly forgot that the president had no real power in this situation, and that congress had long dallied over this question, and had shown a disposition to avoid the subject.

After congress had allowed this situation to drift along for years, although there was constantly great danger of a destructive strike, it seemed unreasonable for them to look to the president for the action that they should have taken long ago themselves.

President Coolidge manifested through this strike a keenness of insight that not many public men have. He could see that failure to intervene would make him temporarily unpopular with some. But as congress had failed to give him the power to do anything, he could also see that the chances of his accomplishing anything were practically nothing.

The more he did, with these strictly limited powers, the more the strike would probably have been prolonged. The contending parties would have got the idea that government intervention was going to accomplish something for them, and that the people of the anthracite using states had become so desperate and panicky, that they would be willing to consent to higher prices, if they could only get the mines started again.

It often takes a strong man to refrain from action when action can do no good, and when natural forces must be relied upon. As a result of President Coolidge's calm self control, the people will get this product without advance in price, and there is a good chance for future peace in this industry.

MORALE IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

While President Coolidge favors rigid economy, it was recently stated that he does not subscribe to the view that has been advanced by some, that many of the employes of the government departments are loafers, and that the force of government employes could be reduced by 100,000 dismissals.

People well acquainted with conditions among these employes, remark that many persons have a wrong idea about the general character of the government workers. It is sometimes claimed that a great many government employes are inefficient and indolent. But it is said by those personally acquainted with the situation, that they are a very hard working group of people, many of them inadequately paid.

It is quite a problem to know how to develop in the services conducted by the government, the states, and cities, the same morale and enthusiasm manifested in a private business. It should be the easiest to do it in a city, since city employes come closely in contact with the people.

Politics has had a most unfortunate effect in the government services. Even if the employes are protected by civil service regulations, so that they can not be thrown out as a result of political overturns, the influence of politics may be harmful. It may be impossible to secure proper advancement for those who show superior ability, so that people of that type are tempted to go to work for private companies. Such employes may feel in many cases that the way to get advancement, is not to render superior service, but to make friends with influential politicians.

One of these days the American people will be smart enough to cut all politics out of these services, so that an ambitious person would stand as good a chance there as if he went to work for a private corporation.

CLEAR THINKING

Richard F. Grant of Cleveland, the man generally credited with finding the plan of agreement that settled the coal strike, recently delivered an address on "Clear thinking." But unlike some people who pronounce in favor of certain ideas, he proceeded to carry out his principle, and by clear thinking he produced a plan that settled the great anthracite difficulty.

These people who can think clearly are a wonderful help in straightening out the difficulties of business and politics. They will come into some complicated situation, as Mr. Grant did in this case, and persuade people to overlook side issues and concentrate their minds on the main question.

In any big and doubtful problem, there is usually one main issue that people want to get settled right. There may be two or three of them. Some folks are constantly being diverted from the main thing, by little side issues that do not amount to anything. Perhaps they start out to do something on a movement for a better town, and then they get "cold feet" because they do not like the personality of someone among the managers of the movement. The clear thinker shows people that the only way to accomplish anything, is to set your purpose on the main objective and work for that one thing.

Also the clear thinker tells people to choose practical aims that can be accomplished without too heavy cost, and be satisfied when they have accomplished those aims. They can't expect to clean up everything they don't like with one fell swoop. Win one victory at a time.

When Mr. Grant talked with those antagonistic operators and miners, he probably had that gift of helping them to concentrate their minds on the main issue and not expect the impossible. In so far as people can do that, their ideas will always command a great deal of influence.

THE RESISTANCE OF THE BUYER

There are many who complain about high prices of commodities, and yet they have not themselves done anything in the way of resistance to such prices. They growl and groan, but they pay the prices asked. Sometimes they clamor for the government to fix prices, so that they shall not get too high.

The buyers of commodities usually have the situation somewhat in hand, if they are willing to use their power. They exercised it recently in the anthracite coal strike. Instead of clamoring for the government to intervene with some action that would probably have resulted in an increased price for coal, the great majority of them quietly looked around to see what else could be burned in place of anthracite.

So millions of them tried out various substitute fuels, and on the whole got along comfortably. The result was quite different from what some expected. It was believed that the public would raise such a great outcry, that the government would have to intervene, with very doubtful results.

In 1920 when prices of most commodities got too high, the people simply got angry and cut down their purchases to the limit. The result was unfortunate in many ways, but it showed that the buyers have a great power when they decide to use it.

One of the ways in which buyers can use their power over prices, is to watch newspaper advertising to see what merchants are willing to shade the prices the closest. If people exercise their power as purchasers skillfully, they can check price advances to a large extent, and encourage those who are willing to do business on close margins. The people who pay whatever price is asked of them without some effort to find out where the best bargains can be had, are the ones who help maintain prices at a high level.

STUDENT MUSCLE

The problem of getting the snow shoveled off from the walks of Columbia university, New York, was solved by setting 100 students to work at 50 cents an hour. Probably in many of the colleges where there have been heavy snowfalls, the same method was adopted.

There must be a good deal of student muscle not thoroughly utilized. Some of the capers of the students are due to the fact of surplus energy, not wholly worked off by their athletic sports. The modern boy is too active to spend all his time studying, and the great majority can't get places on the athletic teams. Some plan giving more of them a chance to use their hands on useful work and earn something thereby toward their education, should be a desirable thing for a large part of those fellows.

CIVIC IMPROVEMENTS

The people in a modern town expect certain conveniences that promote comfort. They look for parks, playgrounds, lighting and water systems, good streets and sidewalks, etc., and street railway or bus service if the community offers opportunities for such transportation business. The use of so many automobiles is calling for a new form of equipment, that of suitable parking spaces.

A city like Westminster needs to look over its equipment in these respects, and compare the same with communities of the same size. It does well not to be satisfied merely with what the average town has. It may well look to more progressive places, and try to make itself equal to them in these respects.

TEACHABLE PEOPLE

A college professor recently remarked that in a college or a high school, the freshmen and the seniors are the most teachable. You can tell them something, he said.

The reason is, that the freshmen feel uncertain whether they are going to make good or not. That keeps them right up on their toes, and they feel they must work if they expect to make good.

But after they get into the sophomore class, they feel altogether too comfortable. They are somewhat assured of their position, and have no doubt discovered some points where they can skimp their work. They are not so readily accessible to suggestions from their teachers.

But after they become seniors, a new spirit comes over them. Their course is nearly over, and they are beginning to think about what is ahead of them. They realize that soon they must get out and struggle with the world, and they see more readily the need of all the preparation they can get. Also they begin to realize that what they have learned is really very little, and that there is a vast deal they do not know.

These two points of view can be found everywhere, in every community, in every workshop and place of business. We constantly see the "know it all" people. They have certain points of view, and it is almost impossible to change them. It seems almost impossible for them to make progress and learn anything new.

When people stop being teachable, they stop making progress. When a person thinks he knows all there is to know about his job, the chances are strong that he will never get a better one, also it is often doubtful if he will be able to hold the one he has. The world is constantly changing, and ideas and standards change. We must have the teachable spirit if we expect to keep up with the procession.

LESSONS OF THE COAL STRIKE

The American people will be thankful that the regrettable strike in the anthracite coal industry has come to an end. It has been a case, like the war in Europe, in which everyone was a loser. However, the people through the anthracite using districts are pleased with the fact that they have tried out substitute forms of fuel, and found that they can get along even if anthracite production is stopped.

The miners have not found this strike profitable. They think they made a gain in avoiding compulsory arbitration of such disputes in future. But if they had never gone on strike, the operators would not probably have attempted to induce them to accept compulsory arbitration, and the situation would have kept along about as it has in the past.

The miners have lost their wages for six months, and about all they have really gained seems to be a kind of modified checkoff. They paid a very high price for whatever advantages they may gain from this new method.

It looks as if all parties were sick and tired of this quarrel. Therein their attitude is very much like the peoples of Europe at the present time. Over there war is not likely, because the people have learned that it always costs more than it comes to. Similarly all parties in the anthracite coal quarrel have probably learned that such methods of settlement do not pay.

An industry can not operate efficiently where antagonistic relations exist between employers and employes. The energy that should be devoted to improvement of production methods, is spent in fruitless quarrels which accomplish no useful result.

PROGRESSIVE CITIES

The cities of America are making more rapid progress today than ever before. It is not so much that they are growing faster in population, as that they are making community gains, in industrial progress, education, street construction, wholesome recreation etc.

Some cities make more than a normal record of development, while some make less. Why this difference?

The difference may be caused by the fact that some cities have a very active group of hustlers, who almost work their heads off in the effort to secure progress. It is more likely to be due to the fact that in those cities progressive movements of all kinds are welcomed, and that the people generally take hold and join the Chamber of Commerce or like organizations. Through these associations public sentiment favorable to progressive moves is disseminated throughout the city, and the people respond favorably when new ideas are advanced.

While the anthracite coal strike is settled, there are still a number of things left for the politicians to holler about.

COMPETITION IN SCHOLARSHIP

The school of several towns in Aroostock county, Maine, have something out of the usual in the way of interscholastic competitions. These pupils are to compete for proficiency in arithmetic, grammar, composition, spelling and reading.

The students seem to gain the most glory in their own crowd, by playing superior baseball, football, etc. Whether the winning scholars will arouse as much hero worship as he winning athletes have done, is a question yet to be determined. But good scholars have received so few plaudits, compared with the adulation given successful athletes, that satisfaction is felt when scholarship is given the place of honor that educational theory demands.

Some alarm might be caused in certain sporting circles by such a plan, on the theory that if the students get too much interested in study, they may neglect proper training for baseball and football.

Nerves All Unstrung?

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Mrs. Brown is only one of many Westminster people who have gratefully endorsed Doan's Pills. If your back aches, if your kidneys bother you, don't simply ask for a kidney remedy, ask distinctly for DOAN'S PILLS, the same that Mrs. Brown had, the remedy backed by home testimony. 60 cents at all dealers. Foster-Milburn Co., Mfrs., Buffalo, N. Y. "When Your Back is Lame, Remember the Name."

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