

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

A CRYING BUSINESS NEED.

For over twenty years the merchants of this city have been struggling in an uneven contest for the trade of the intermountain country which geographically belongs to them. At times there have been slight evidences that relief would come from the railroads which would bring about the object so much desired. Hopes have been engendered, lost and again revived, only again and again to be dashed to pieces, until many of our old-time merchants have allowed a feeling of despair to seize them, and it is hard to awaken in them any confidence that this city will ever be treated in railroad tariffs as she deserves. Many plans have been advanced for the amelioration of this condition, some feasible, others wild and impracticable. But the results have all been about the same in the end.

We cannot lose sight of the fact, however, that we did at one time in our history have within our grasp the means of a signal victory which, if allowed to progress to a finality, must have proved a permanent benefit to the commercial interests of this community. But alas, it struck a snag, and we lost not alone in a pecuniary way, but the prestige which could have been ours. We refer to the great struggle of 1892, when the Chamber of Commerce took hold of these matters with a vigor and enthusiasm never shown before or since in the adjustment of this freight problem. At first only a few of the merchants could be interested in the plans of Colonel Donnellan and S. W. Sears, president and secretary respectively of the Chamber of Commerce; but as developments went on, many rallied around these two, giving them moral and financial support; and matters so far progressed that even the most pessimistic admitted that much was to be expected from the work which the Chamber was so vigorously pushing against certain railroads. Suddenly, just before victory seemed assured, there was a great change. For some reason the merchants changed front and joined the forces to which they had been opposed; it was not many days before the two gentlemen mentioned stood almost alone; and though they never wavered, they were defeated in their plans by almost the entire commercial interests of this city.

The results are too well known for us to imagine that we need to elaborate upon them. The News was willing, nay glad, to hope that all the merchants expected to gain by this sudden change of front would be realized; and while never uttering a word to discourage them in their efforts under the new plan then evolved, we did sound the necessary note of warning, and showed the danger which might come. We are not of the kind who are always saying "I told you so," but in this case we feel that we did our duty as we saw it, and now call attention to the fact that we had not been misled in our judgment, though it would have been much more pleasant to have been

compelled to admit that the fears expressed in October, 1892, were groundless.

The trouble all the way through this business has been that our merchants have allowed their own seeming personal advantages to outweigh their patriotism, and the general good has been sacrificed for some insignificant and at best only temporary gain—a tendency truly and forcibly expressed by a merchant yesterday who, as reported in a morning paper, says in reference to recent developments in rates:

It simply means a death-blow to jobbing in Salt Lake and Ogden, and unless the merchants get together in united resistance, a year of it means a loss of \$1,000,000 to us. The trouble is that too many of us are fighting for the protection of some personal rather than the general interest. That has been the main weakness in our organization, and so long as it exists, we may look for the worst of it.

We have no fight with the railroads. We want to see their business increased by the general prosperity of the country and the increased traffic which would result. We believe that their present policy is not even for their own permanent good, and that a more liberal policy would more than double their business during the next decade. The representatives of the railroads are shrewd business men, whose whole time and attention is given to making money for their respective roads. They are well organized. They have their associations for the maintaining of rates, and getting "all the traffic will bear." Our merchants lack organization, at any rate the thorough organization of the other side; and much as we may dislike to admit the fact, they are overmatched. We need in this city a thorough organization with a competent executive, who would do for the merchants what they have not time to do for themselves, and it would be money well invested to have just such a freight bureau as we had in 1892 with a good and aggressive commissioner at its head, that the interests in this Territory upon freight matters might be continuously watched and the railroads be made to see that any discrimination against us would not be tolerated, at least not without a vigorous protest.

WISDOM IN LAW MAKING.

The reasons that are from time to time deemed adequate to justify the calling of an extra session of the state legislature are numerous and amusing. Dispatches have recently told of the prompt convening of the Illinois lawmakers immediately after the close of their regular session, and the grounds given by Governor Altgeld for issuing his special call. Still more lately local readers have heard of the suggestion that by reason of a court decision affecting the validity of the collection of the school tax in certain cities, the Utah legislature should be called together again forthwith to remedy the alleged defect in the law; as though a technicality and palpable error in

the statute—even if it really exists—could not be endured or temporarily overcome by the public spirit and good sense of the communities affected. And now comes the New York *Herald* with the demand that the lawmakers of the Empire state be convened in special session to enact a new excise law applicable to New York city before August 1st—the complaint being that the existing law forbids the sale of liquor of any sort on Sunday, and this terrible statute has of late been receiving rigid enforcement under the reform administration and the new police commission now in control. One may readily believe that such a law honestly enforced would carry dismay into the very vitals of the metropolis; but inasmuch as it is on the statute books, most people will fail to find much reason for its non-enforcement, and still less for calling a special session, after all these years, to secure its repeal. On general principles the sooner the meaning of laws as enacted be discovered, the better for all concerned; and the more energetically they are enforced, the more reason the people will have for confidence in the intelligence of their legislators. If this latter should transpire to have been misplaced, why, that would be a good thing, too; it would be a warning to the voters against electing noodles to do their law-making for them.

LOOKING FOR FARMS.

That the laboring classes of the East are commencing to turn their attention to the vast possibilities this country still offers for obtaining individual independence by means of farming, is a healthy symptom, and their efforts deserve encouragement. The products of the soil are undoubtedly the chief resources of a country, the true basis of its wealth, the support of its institutions. The earnings of the wage laborer are always uncertain and the fortune-building speculator is subject to many ups and downs, while the small but generally sure treasures of the earth are gathered year by year by the careful and industrious tiller of the ground, who not only, in this way, has within his reach a means of subsistence, but also adds continually to the sum total of the nation's resources, and as a rule maintains a strong body and a cheerful disposition and enjoys long life as a consequence.

Eastern people are eagerly looking westward for favorable locations and steps have now been taken by the so-called Western Society in Chicago to obtain reliable information about Utah and surrounding states and territories. A resolution has been adopted to appoint a committee of seven, representing the various sections of the West and entrusted with the duty of preparing plans at once for the establishment in Chicago of a permanent Western exhibition. Among the gentlemen appointed on this committee is Hon. George Q. Cannon of this city, a selection showing the wisdom of the leaders of that movement and their desire for scrupulously correct information for the benefit of home seekers. These are signs indicating that agricultural pursuits before long will be looked upon as something desirable.

One objection to farming has been