

Some New Faces among Organized Major League Magnates. Left to right, Col. Ruppert, Capt. Houston, William Fleischman, Secretary, and Harry Sparrow, Business manager of the New York Americans.

Eventually There will be A Third Big League Why Not Now?

The Real Reason for the Baseball War—Arguments Against Expansion—Overwhelming Arguments in Favor—Vital Necessity of Peace

By F. C. LANE

In the last month's issue of the Baseball Magazine we asked the question "Why not recognize the Federal League?" This month we are venturing to propound another query, "Eventually—Why Not Now?" It seems to be a well recognized axiom in baseball that sometime there will be a genuine need for three big leagues and that sometime a new big league will rise to meet the demand. What about the present? The American League was needed but it wasn't recognized until the old National had exhausted every resource in an effort to kill its rival. Isn't it at least possible that the same tactics are being employed by organized baseball in an effort to maintain a virtual monopoly on the national game?

THE advertising world not long since was started with the slogan "Eventually, why not now?"

This slogan was raised all over the land to sell a certain brand of goods. The undercurrent of thought was subtle

but potent. It intimated that the purchaser would some day realize the worth of the goods offered and become a purchaser. "Since this is so," argued the slogan most ingeniously, "Why don't you purchase now."

Last month, in a feature article we asked the question, "Why not recognize the Federal League?" We sought to examine into the reasons which impelled organized baseball to continue a destructive and profitless warfare. In process of these investigation we were led to ask ourselves what dire results would follow if the magnates in power actually did give the Federal League that recognition for which it is striving. We were struck by a singular absence of logical arguments for withholding this recognition and by the strong reasons of policy which favored such a course. This month after a further survey of the situation we are led to restate the query somewhat broadened in scope with the introduction of a time element and say "Eventually, why not now?"

Grant the proposition that organized baseball at some future day will either willingly or unwillingly recognize a third major league and the query answers itself. Under such circumstances it would be to the advantage of all concerned to have the situation adjusted with the minimum expenditure of time and money. Every delay, even of a week, costs organized baseball a tangible loss. It costs the Federal League a proportionate amount and weighs with intolerable force upon the strained and overwrought structure of the minor leagues. It prolongs a general state of unrest and dissatisfaction which is exasperating to the public and hurtful to the game.

Upon this question there could be no debate. The most rabid magnate in organized baseball, the most bitter opponent of the Federal League is fairly clamoring for peace. The sole problem is one of means to an end. The sole question which the partisans of organized baseball might logically ask is the question, How do you know that the Federal League *will ever be recognized?*

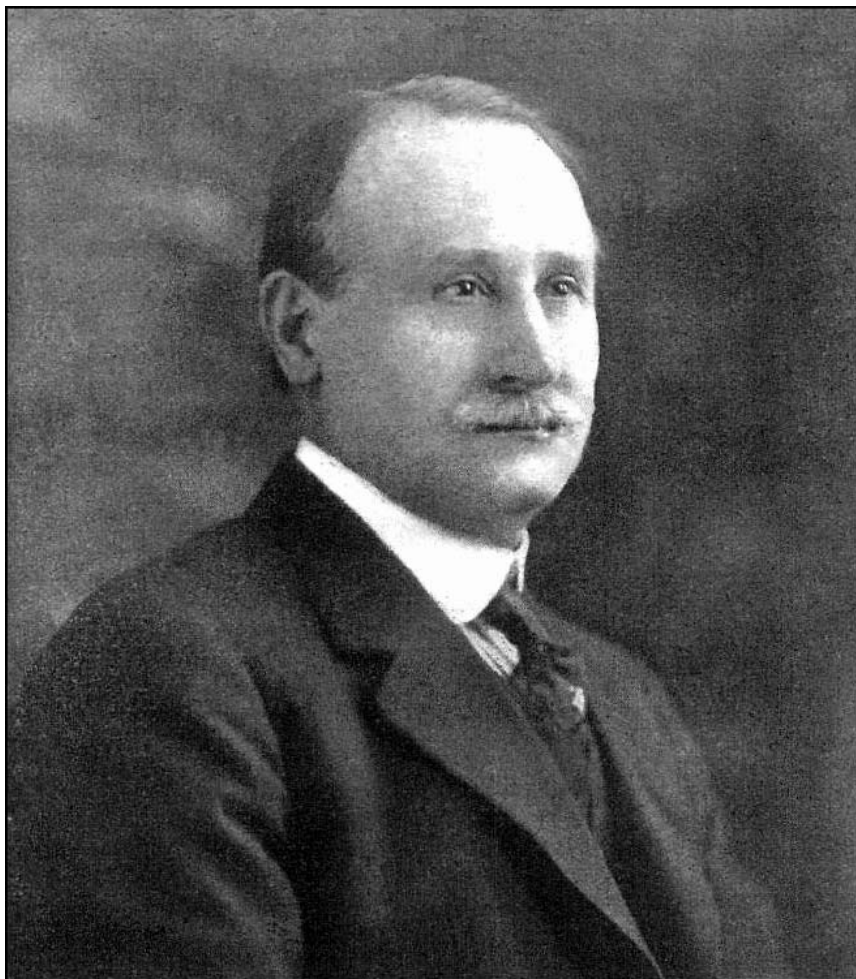
We admit our human limitations. We have never been able to look into the future with any degree of assurance. We were one of the great army who pre-

dicted that the Athletics would win. Need we say more? But we will endeavor to answer this little query without urging any claims at prophetic insight or special revelation solely on the grounds of common logic and good horse sense. This will be sufficient if the facts bear out our statement, to convince the fair minded fan.

First, then, in answering one question let us ask another: Why shouldn't there be three major leagues? Go out into the broad land where ten million fans annually pay admission to baseball games. Of this vast number far more than half reside in hamlets, towns or cities which do not have major league baseball. But each and every one of this vast army of fans reads what the major leagues are doing; for even to him, though he may never have seen a major league contest, the activities of the highest body in baseball is of supreme importance, over local matters of the diamond. Of this vast army of good substantial Americans, how many would object to having three major leagues instead of two? Certainly not one man in a thousand. We are at a loss to know how there could be any. If the fan is interested in the doings of two major leagues, he would obviously have still more to occupy his interest in the work of three major leagues. The almost universal answer from the fans of the nation at large would be, "Why not have three major leagues?"

The same answer would be given by the fans in the major league cities themselves, with the exception of a few rabid partisans of some particular league. Even they could have scant objection to the formation of a third major league, though they might still reserve their undivided allegiance to their favorite league. From the general public really the only interested party whose wishes should be consulted, there would be an all but unanimous vote in favor of a third big league or at best an utter absence of any objection to such a league. The only objection to the Federal League from the public is founded on the idea, largely false, that the Federal League has been responsible for business unrest and dissatisfaction in baseball circles. We will deal with this phase of the question a little later.

From the public there is an all but



Robert Ward, President of the Brooklyn Federal Baseball Club
and Vice President of the Federal League

unanimous sentiment in favor of expansion. The burden of proving that there should not be expansion rests upon organized baseball. They are on the defensive. It is for them to answer the query, Why not a third major league? For from the four quarters of the baseball domain that question is echoing, Why not?

Aside from the prevailing public sentiment another reason in favor of expansion is the progress already made by the Federal League. The newcomer is backed by men of ability. They have proved as much by their success in other lines of business. They have proved it by their success in building up a baseball property in the limited time at their disposal. They have invested an amount

of money running literally into the millions in grand stands, in advance salaries, in guaranteed payrolls, in all the various items of expense which form a staggering total in the financing of a league. They have secured a considerable number of major league players of note and a still greater number of minor league stars. What is far more important, they are growing stronger all the time. They have lived through one season, inevitably the worst in all business ventures. And they face a second season much stronger than they were a year ago. In short, they have made progress, and with the capital behind their efforts they show unlimited ability to make still more progress. How much progress they may be called upon to make before

organized baseball evinces a willingness to recognize them we cannot say. But from the facts at our disposal, and we believe we are in a position to know, the Federal League can continue the struggle indefinitely.

Furthermore, there is every reason, granting the financial ability of the promoters, against their making any compromises at this date, on any other basis than major league recognition. If two or three of their leading spirits were willing to compromise to the extent of buying into major league baseball, they have wasted all their efforts up to date, and most of the money they have already invested, and would then have to purchase major league interests at heavy expense, in addition. Obviously this would be the poorest possible business, a crushing concession, and a staggering loss.

Recognition as a minor league would be no less undesirable. Business men do not spend millions, build costly grandstands, some of which would be superfluous, and assume staggering salary lists to obtain possession of a minor league with its uncertain profits and dangerous risks. Had the Federal League been satisfied with a minor league rating they would have attacked the problem of existence on that basis in the first place.

Obviously even if the Federal League magnates wished to compromise on either of the two propositions outlined above, that is by the purchase of two or three major league clubs to satisfy their heaviest backers, or a minor league rating to satisfy all their magnates, they would be unable to pursue either without losing much if not most of the money they have already invested in the game. They have played for high stakes and have put their money on the table to the extent of millions. They would be poor sportsmen who would sacrifice an ante of such dimensions, especially when the cards are all falling in their favor.

If the Federal League were ever willing to compromise on this basis, and their reported willingness to do so is certainly not above suspicion as to the motive involved, that time has clearly passed.

The Federal League has been read out of existence times without number. It has persisted, increased, grown stronger. Organized baseball has lost trench after trench, battle after battle. If they are

ever going to be successful in their boast that they will kill off the Federal League, when is this slaughter to take place? Up to date most of the victories have rested on the banners of the rival organization.

There is every reason then, both in public sentiment and in actual fact, for supposing that the Federal League will ultimately succeed. But supposing it does not. Suppose, after years of warring warfare, organized baseball ultimately triumphs. What then? There will some day be a third major league as surely as the sun rises and sets. For a third big league is clearly the demand of baseball progress, of sane, wholesome, necessary expansion. It is linked with the perpetuation of baseball. Eventually, why not now?

The most biased partisan of organized baseball cannot deny that at some time in the future two major leagues can no longer satisfy the United States. There is no one who knows what logic is who will pretend to deny this statement. And by admitting it he admits that some day a third major league will exist and brings doubly to the fore our query, Why not now?

There are three determining factors in expansion. First, public interest; second, available players; third, cities of sufficient size to form a circuit of major league rank.

Must we count upon the future for the realization of any of these factors? Do they not rather lie within the present?

Public interest has never yet failed to rise to the occasion where baseball was concerned. The advent of the American League much more than doubled public interest. There is enough interest in baseball to-day to warrant the establishment of four big leagues, for that matter. There is no lack of public interest and no sane man can allege that there is such a lack.

Are there not enough players to equip three big leagues? We dealt with this problem about as fully as it deserves in our preceding article, for it is one of the most absurd questions ever propounded. We will merely add the fact that the Boston Braves are composed almost exclusively of misfit players, cast offs from other clubs, men who were long submerged in the minors, men



George S. Ward, Brother of Robert Ward

whom few or no clubs wanted. Take them away from the club and there are dozens, scores apparently, of better players at most of the positions on that club. And yet they made a record never equalled in baseball and are, by a wider margin than ever previously established, the undisputed champions of the world. We imagine with the thousands of good hustling live players waiting, clamoring for a chance, a real chance, not a hasty once over and a dismissal, that enough players can be dug up somewhere to equip another big league. The contrary argument ought to have been buried for good when the American League exploded it so successfully in its war with the National. It is the despair of reason to try to revive it now.

Admitting, as every one does, that

American cities will some day grow to a size to warrant the establishment of a third big league, when is this event to transpire? How about a cautious glance at the United States census right now? What about Baltimore, once a member of the National League, once a member of the American League. Both leagues once thought enough of Baltimore to admit it into their circuits. Strange that they should develop such mistrust of Baltimore's size and importance now. Has Baltimore been going bankrupt in the interim? What's the matter with Baltimore anyway? How large must this city grow before it gets out of the swaddling clothes, minor league class?

Surely the census must be wrong. The census says that Baltimore is larger than

Washington or Detroit, both American League cities; only a shade smaller than Cleveland another American League city, and but little smaller than Boston and St. Louis, which support two major league clubs. It is larger than Pittsburgh, larger than Cincinnati in the National League which also has clubs in Boston and St. Louis, as mentioned above. How much larger must Baltimore grow to reach major league size? Baltimore, with a present population much in excess of half a million, with the glorious traditions of the old Orioles, one of the most wonderful teams ever gathered together on a diamond?

What is the matter with Buffalo, Queen City of the Lakes, with a commerce which places it in the class of Liverpool? Buffalo is larger than Washington or Cincinnati and does twice the business of either. Buffalo was once good enough to belong in the National League circuit and also in the American circuit. Strange the fate that has befallen Buffalo. What must Buffalo do to regain this lost favor?

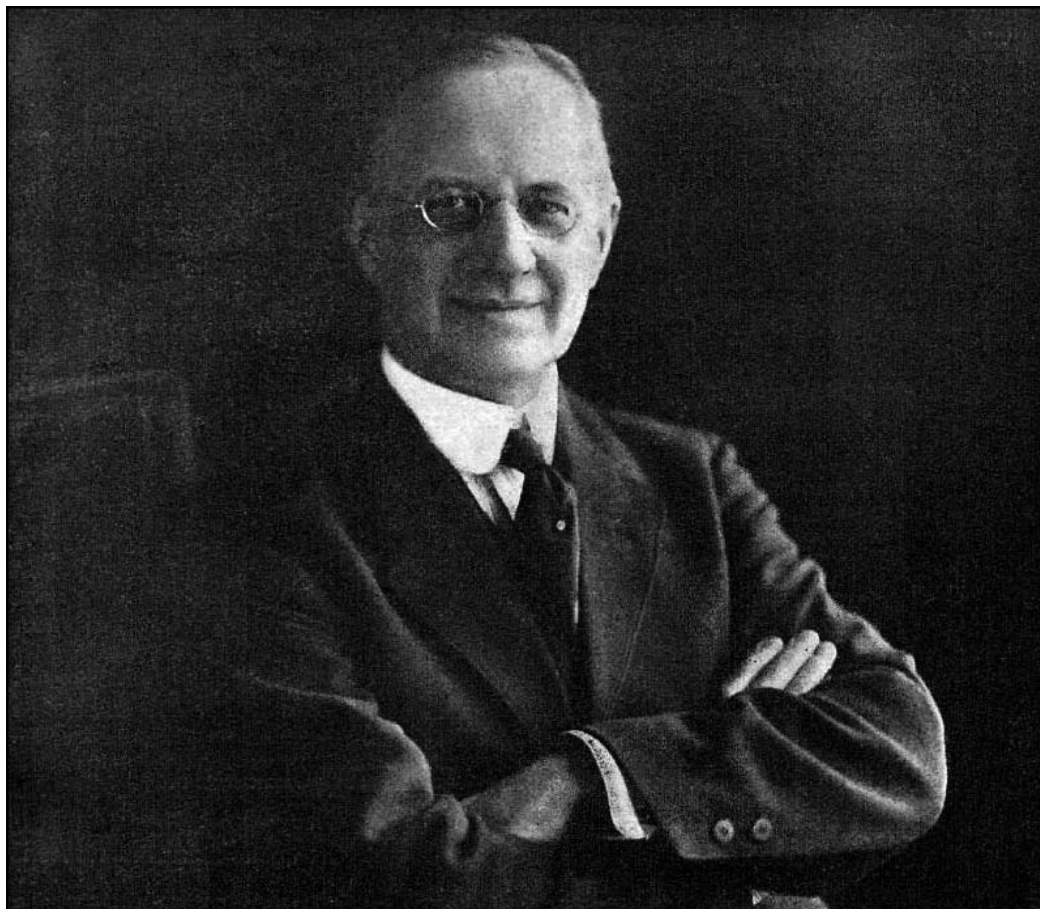
Newark has a population larger than Washington, and so has Milwaukee. But that isn't the point. There are a number of other cities perhaps not larger than major league cities of the present, though they yield but little on that point, but larger than several American League cities *were* when the American League admitted them to its circuit. How about this? Must Baltimore get a population of a million before it counts? What must Buffalo do, and the others? How about the north end in Chicago, a city in itself, which already supports a Federal League club, and paid a profit on its first year's business? Does this deserve a major league representative? How about The Bronx in New York, a rapidly growing city within a city of 600,000 people? How about other cities like Brooklyn and Pittsburgh and Cleveland which have risen to a size sufficient to warrant continuous baseball, just as Boston and St. Louis had when the American League started? Without delving into the future and dreaming about tremendous cities of a later date, what's the matter with the geography of the present? If eventually (and everyone admits it), why not now?

Since there appear to be no tangible arguments against present expansion, what is the cause of the present conflict anyway? This is a century of enlightenment. No faction wisely indulges in wholesale warfare without at least trying to explain such conduct. The European struggle has brought to light a score of more or less plausible arguments, each nation endeavoring to show how the other nation precipitated hostilities. What are the reasons for the present grand conflict in baseball?

The issue would appear, at first blush, to be clear cut, and all in favor of organized baseball. The powers that be were at peace with all the world, clothed with virtuous content, entertaining enmity toward no one. Along came the Federal League and the feathers began to fly. What a burden of guilt on the marauder. What a criminal conspiracy against the public safety!

So much for appearances. What actually happened is this: The magnates, grown satisfied with themselves and existing conditions, smothered or endeavored to smother all thought of change. They looked upon logical expansion as the average man would look upon smallpox. In their dense stupidity they inertly refused to make any move themselves to satisfy the lawful demand for expansion. Thought of progress never crossed their mental horizon. They acted the part of the proverbial dog in the manger. They would do nothing themselves—what right then have they to complain when a group of progressive outside business men, recognizing the needs of the time, attempt to render baseball the service which the magnates resolutely refused?

Aside from the service involved (and in their efforts to establish a third big league the Federal promoters have performed a real service) aside from the service involved who gave the major league magnates a perpetual ownership of baseball anyway? Is this not a free country where all business is supposed to stand a fair prospect of success, in the absence of monopoly? Why shouldn't the Wards and the Weeghman's try to build up a baseball property if they so desire? Isn't that right guaranteed them by the constitution of the United States? Hasn't baseball often



John E. Bruce Secretary and Attorney for the National Commission.

prided itself on the smug assertion that there was no monopoly in baseball that anyone could start a league anywhere at any time? Very well, then, what is the complaint about? Should the entire onus for hostilities be placed on the shoulders of the newcomer who courageously endeavors to do what the magnates should have done, but refused to do? Have the magnates, in their wild assertions that baseball is in difficult straits, any license to blame the Federal League for that condition? Is it not, in reality, their own fault, that the present warfare exists?

So much for the origin of the war. What are the reasons for a continuation of a decidedly unpleasant state of affairs?

First, and most fallacious of the reasons for the continuation of hostilities is the ingrown idea which the magnates seem to have, that a new league will cut

into their business. Without endeavoring to analyze their reasons they seem firmly of this opinion. Why this idea should persist in the light of experience, is one of the mysteries. It has been proved over and over again that continuous baseball in a city large enough to support it is an unqualified success. There are certain cities which at present have but one club that might support two. There are other cities, as we have seen, of larger size than some at present in the major leagues which have no major league representation. There are still others like Chicago which can and should have three clubs. Geographically there is room enough for an entire league of major proportions without encroaching in the least on the vested preserves of organized ball. Furthermore, in the light of experience, with the memory of what the American League accomplished for baseball, there is every

reason to suppose that the arrival of a new major league would stimulate the baseball industry, be more in keeping with the larger demands that have arisen in the past fifteen years, and result in increased business for all. Far from being a detriment to the National League the American League doubled its rival's business as well as absolutely created its own. There is every reason to believe and absolutely no reason to doubt, that the establishment of a third big league would be equally beneficial.

The second great reason for opposing recognition of the Federal League is the hypocritical attitude of certain major league magnates. "We invested our money," they say, "and made baseball what it is. See what we have done for the national game. We sacrificed and toiled and denied ourselves and assumed all kinds of risk in an honest desire to build up the national sport, and now is the public going to stand by and see us robbed of the fruits of our industry and our sacrifice, by a crowd of newcomers who never did anything for baseball?"

There is something in this hypocritical sophistry so utterly contemptible to one who understands the true situation that it can hardly be discussed without heat. The martyr attitude which certain magnates affect would be highly ridiculous, if it were not malicious. There are men of integrity and enlightened sportsmanship in major league baseball. Furthermore there are many men to-day in baseball who have sacrificed large financial interests solely through love of the game. But with one or two exceptions these men are in the minor leagues. They never get any of the glory which the major league magnates attempt unjustly to abrogate to themselves. Certain major league magnates have invested their capital largely in baseball. Notable among these are Charles Somers and Charles Comiskey. There are other magnates who own just enough stock to give them a voting privilege and are merely paid officials. And the great majority of the owners if not all have invested their money in major league baseball just as men would invest money in any other profession for the profit there was in it. They were fortunate enough to get into baseball at the right

time when a great wave of popularity carried the game to a supreme height, and they have never failed to share in that prosperity. Their control of the game, so far as it was for the best interests of baseball, was so because it was also for their best interests as owners. They had about as much to do with the popularity of baseball as the windmill has to do with the direction and velocity of the wind which turns its sails. If they had not invested their money someone else would have relieved them of the burden, so they have no license to point to the tremendous magnitude of the game as a product of their handiwork.

The major league magnates have small license to pat themselves or each other on the back and say to an admiring public "Look at us. We are the white souled patriots who risked our fortunes and sacrificed our time and effort in the service of baseball." Be calm, gentlemen. What you have done for baseball has been paid for according to your merit. Not all of you have grown rich, perhaps, for baseball, like other business ventures, does not assure success to everyone. But in the main, you have been very successful. You have been fond of reminding the ball player of what baseball has done for him. You have called his attention to the fact that had he not played baseball he might have been compelled to seek a livelihood in driving a truck or digging ditches. Very well. What would some of you have been doing had it not been for baseball? Is it conceivable that some of you might have been reporters or salesmen of bookkeepers or even bartenders had it not been for your self-sacrificing efforts in the service of baseball? Whatever baseball may have done for the player, don't forget that baseball has been reasonably kind to you.

No, gentlemen, your self-sacrifice is not so apparent as you might wish to assume. Neither is your intelligence so abnormal that you need to take special credit for your achievements. Some of you have been successful in other lines of business. Some of you would have been as successful elsewhere as you have been in baseball. Some of you are successful

(Continued on Page 108)

WHY NOT NOW?

(Continued from Page 32)

simply because you were fortunate enough to be engaged in a business that in many instances has been exceedingly lucrative. As for the newcomers, gentlemen, they compare very favorably with yourselves. They have sacrificed just as much as you have done—or more. They have taken just as big risks as you have taken—or greater. They possess a degree of intelligence equal to your own—or superior. They have invested as much money in baseball as most of you have done in an effort to get into the game, which you have most touchingly appropriated to your own use. Why should your identification with baseball for a term of years usually most prosperous years, give you the hallucination that you own the game? Is it not remotely possible, gentlemen, that you are deceiving yourselves?

Aside from the idea that their identification with baseball is expressive of some special merit, some peculiar service and sacrifice which should be rewarded, there is a very human attribute which urges the major league magnates to continue the war. This is the natural perversity and obstinacy which rebels at acknowledging itself checkmated, and the pride which cannot stand a rival's success. It is true that the Federal League is a newcomer, that if it gains recognition in the near future it will have accomplished as much in a short space of time as the majors have accomplished in a term of years. There is a certain natural jealousy in the whole matter, but this jealousy and pride are not likeable qualities and they have no appropriate place in business. You may not admire the magnates of the new league; you may not relish the spectacle of their success, but such motives are unworthy a place in the discussion. It is not a time to soothe the vanity, or salve the wounded feelings of a comparatively few magnates. The issue is one of vital importance. Peace is a benefit too universally desirable in itself to be impaired by some minor defects or personal hardships. Throw aside your animosi-

(Continued on page 110)

WHY NOT NOW?

(Continued from page 108)

ties, your personal strifes. Look at the situation in the light of your own selfish interest if no other and confess to yourselves that the establishment of peace would far outweigh in substantial benefits any loss, temporary or permanent, real or fancied, which you are apprehensive, may be caused by the Federal League. Some National League magnates nursed a grudge against the American for years. What good did it do? You will have to bury the hatchet sometime. Why not now?

Oliver Cromwell had the idea that brutal frankness was the best diplomacy. Without going into the merits of his claim we must admit he practiced his views with singular success. In the same spirit let us call attention to a few solid facts. Many sport writers have unceasingly knocked the Federal League. Up to a certain point such criticism is just. A newcomer must expect to be tried in the fires of adversity until it has proved its worth. But since the Federal League has demonstrated its ability to thrive on criticism, why carry the trying-out process any further? When criticism has answered its purpose as a destructive agent why not try a little criticism of a constructive type?

If you are honestly working for the interests of baseball as you should be doing? you know that a third major league would not be detrimental to baseball. It would be an all around benefit and you know it. If you are not working for the best interests of baseball as you should be doing you can consult your own selfish interest and still arrive at the same result. Did it ever occur to you that the establishment of a third major league would create jobs for more of you? You remember what the American League did for the newspaper man? Did you ever stop to think what the establishment of a third major league would do? We don't know what particular organized baseball job in view may be urging certain writers on their campaign of biased hostility to the Federal League. But as a class we do know

(Continued on page 112)

WHY NOT NOW?

(Continued from page 110)

that the baseball writers should view logical major league expansion as a matter in which they have a vital, personal interest.

Do you know, gentlemen, that it is you more than the magnates who have made baseball? The free advertising of the press has created the game. For every favor that may have been extended to you by some magnate, you have paid, a dozen times over, in the material you have written on his club, on his players, on the game. Without the trained corps of press writers who have carried baseball banners from the first, baseball, even at this date, would still be languishing in the state of minor league inefficiency which characterized it in the nineties.

Don't give us any bunk, gentlemen, about loyalty to organized baseball or your devotion to a trust. There isn't any loyalty at stake and there isn't any principle at stake and you know it. The Federal League magnates are as desirable citizens, as desirable an addition to baseball as the organized magnates, and you know it. They are as sound financially. They have as much right to be here, and you know it. They are just as progressive, or more so, and you know it. Why don't some of you tell the public what you know instead of continuing to carry the banner of organized baseball in a non-progressive cause and refusing to recognize the dawn of a new day when it is at hand. The old order of things was very well in its time but progress is the watchword in all lines of business, baseball with the rest. Progress offers larger prospects for you in your none too well paid profession. Why continue to quote a moldy, moth-eaten creed and manufacture fake halos for a lot of major league magnates, few of whom will ever wear a genuine halo in this or any other world.

And the public, the ultimate consumer, the usual goat in all controversies, don't be misled by surface indications. The major leagues have performed a service for you in that they have given you high

(Continued on page 114)

WHY NOT NOW?

(Continued from page 112)

grade baseball under conditions of reasonable comfort. But for this privilege you have paid an honest price and paid in advance. It is no concern of yours whether a few magnates wish, for selfish or misguided reasons, to continue an exhausting war. But it is a vital concern of yours to get your share of high grade baseball. If you live in a major league city which has baseball but half the time when it should have continuous service, or if you live in some large city which should have major league rating but doesn't, you have a right to ask why you are thus discriminated against. You have a right to ask who gave a few men the rulership of the baseball world, a perpetual monopoly on the peoples' game. You have a right to ask, in no uncertain tone, how long must baseball, the great pastime of the nation, of other nations, be warped and twisted and stifled and stunted to suit the intolerant bigotry or the utter selfishness of a handful of men? You have a right to ask why not let us have needful and profitable expansion? Why not let us have peace? Eventually, Why not now?
