

EDITORIALS



NEW YORK is to be congratulated as a baseball center. At last she has a club in the National League which will compare favorably with the ablest combination ever gathered together in the ancient circuit. And her American League representative is the gamest club in the ranks. Pennant winning in New York was confined strictly to the Brooklyn Borough. But Manhattan may well rest content with a new world's record made in that memorable rush of twenty-six straight victories. 1916 was a great year for baseball in New York. But 1917 should be still better.



RUMORS of a third major league have contributed to the winter gayety. Whether or not they will take concrete form remains to be seen. But even as rumors they are a hopeful sign of almost human intelligence on the part of the powers that be.

For several seasons the *BASEBALL MAGAZINE* has urged the establishment of a third major league. We don't claim any great credit for so doing. We merely suggested what any normal person of ordinary intelligence would have advocated. But simple, obvious, desirable as the proposition was, it eluded the mental grasp of those sage personages who control the national game.

We recall a shrewd observation of the late R. B. Ward of Federal League fame. Said Mr. Ward, "The major leagues ought to have organized a third league on their own initiative. But we caught them asleep at the switch."

Circumstances which we have neither the space nor the inclination to discuss wrecked the great project in which Mr. Ward had embarked his hopes and a large part of his ample fortune. But the merits of the third league as a proposition had nothing to do with this failure. There has been no doubt, could be no doubt of the desirability of a third major league. This new league when formally established, and it will be established some time, even if the obstructive and destructive tactics of the baseball potentates postpone it now, will doubtless include the larger cities of the International League and the American Association. These cities are of distinctly major league calibre. The fact that some of them, particularly Baltimore, failed to show proper interest years ago, proved nothing. Times have changed wonderfully in the past ten years. And the fact that some of them did not support minor league baseball in a lively fashion proves even less. There are many regular patrons at major league games who wouldn't attend minor league contests especially when they felt that their home city merited major league rank.

But it's a great thing to see the powers that be waking up. And it's just as significant to note the newspaper men who were the bitterest opponents of a third major league when the *BASEBALL MAGAZINE* was championing that common-sense proposition now falling dutifully into line and chirping their parrot-like commendation.

If a man has eyes to see there are many interesting sights in our national game.



STRIKE involving the organized ball players of this country would be as unwelcome as frost in May.

No publication has been a better friend of the ball player than the *BASEBALL MAGAZINE*. We don't think we would be exceeding the bounds of modesty if we claimed that no other publication has been as good a friend to the ball player as the *BASEBALL MAGAZINE*.

But we have never allowed either friendship or enmity to bias our judgment into championing a cause which we didn't favor.

We have been close to the Fraternity from the date of its origin. And we have at all times had the friendly ear of its councils. But we will state without hesitation that if the Fraternity attempts to precipitate a general baseball strike it will be playing with fire or rather with nitroglycerine, and that it will forfeit and perhaps deservedly forfeit the popular commendation.

We realize the hard path that the Fraternity has followed in gaining recognition for its organization. We know that David Fultz is a man of integrity and that his principles are admirable. But David Fultz is not infallible.

Organized baseball is an extremely delicate framework. It is not a business like the steel industry or the cotton trade. It would be shaken to its foundation by events which would hardly be felt in more securely established interests. The destructive effects of a strike are to be deplored in any industry. But a wholesale strike in baseball circles would be, in our opinion, that thing which Talleyrand called "worse than a crime, a blunder."

The astounding imbecility of certain minor league interests are no doubt exasperating enough. But there is no need to use a 42-centimeter howitzer where a shotgun would do the trick. The players as a class are well off and well treated considering the precarious nature of baseball as a business and the minor defects which have crept into certain contractual obligations are of comparatively slight significance. They could be remedied in time by sheer force of public opinion wisely directed by the Fraternity.

There are cases in the life of a nation when resort to war is the only alternative. There are cases in the life of a labor organization when resort to a strike is the imperative demand of self-preservation. But in our humble opinion, and we are certainly not biased by the silly arguments of organized baseball against the Fraternity, no such critical period now faces that well meaning and in general commendable organization.



THE high-handed attitude of the minor league magnates in practically ignoring the recent demands of the Fraternity are about as dignified and worthy of respect as the antics of a clown at a circus. The Bourbon attitude of no conciliation on the part of some of the minors is so pronounced that it ceases to be a matter for condemnation. It is merely ridiculous.

Most of the complaints of the organized baseball player have focused on the minor leagues. Criticism of the majors has been slight and in the main unimportant. But the minor leagues are a shifting sand of changing forces and personalities which give little foundation to build upon.

Had the minor league magnates with any degree of fairness examined into the demands of the Fraternity and then rejected them on reasonable grounds the case would have been different. But the magnates showed all



Photo by International Film Service

An indication of good baseball spirit. Waiting in line to get into Ebbets Field for the third game of the World's Series.

too clearly that their intention was to deny any possible claim which the Fraternity might make no matter how worthy of consideration.

It is this attitude, quite out of keeping with the present trend of mutual co-operation between capital and labor, which harks back to the days of the medieval barons and which doesn't set well on the modern stomach.

The minor league magnates have had a bad business year. But they won't mend their fortunes by intolerance. If they wish to prove themselves minor in intellect as well as name they will need to show very little more of that littleness of mind which actuated them in their recent so-called examination of the Fraternity demands.



THE change in the personnel of the National Commission proposed by Barney Dreyfus in a spirit of pique over the Sisler case and backed up by Ban Johnson for reasons best known to himself is a topic of timely interest.

The exacting duties which devolve upon the chairman of Baseball's Supreme Court demand an executive of high capacity. We confess Mr. Herrmann has often disagreed with us on policies which we deemed for the best interests of baseball. But we think no one will deny that he

has genuine ability for the task which occupies his labors and we seriously question if a better man for the place could be found anywhere.

The weak spot in the National Commission nevertheless centers in that same able executive. Herrmann, a mere magnate in the National League takes precedence over the president of his own organization and passes upon matters which vitally concern the rival American circuit.

We doubt if Herrmann's alliance with the National has ever biased him against the American League. But the mere fact that two of the three members of the commission are from the National League doesn't seem a fair distribution of authority.

Perhaps the proposed abdication of Herrmann as president of the Reds so that he could devote his entire time to Commission matters would be a step in the right direction. As president of the local club he has shown no such fitness as he possesses for the Commissionship. He has been too easy going in his dealings with players, too unlucky in trades and deals, in fact far from a shining example of successful ownership. Christy Mathewson has been mentioned as a possible successor. Certainly few names carry greater weight than that of the renowned pitcher.



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