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Hunt's
Daily
Letter

(By HARRY B. HUNT)
WASHINGTON (NEA Special).—Loopholes and laxities located to date by the Couzens committee, both in the revenue law and the method of its enforcement, make it certain that a stringent tightening up on many provisions in the law will be urged in the next congress.

On the face of facts developed the government is shown to have lost tens of millions of dollars because of ambiguities in the wording of some sections and the secrecy surrounding their enforcement.

Congress enacted a law and then set up rules of secrecy so strict that even congress itself could not find out how it was being administered.

The report of the Couzens committee will for the first time, show the legislators what has been happening and will make possible the remedying of situations which open the way to favoritism, discrimination and even graft.

Take, for instance, the administration of the "estate" or inheritance tax. The law providing that transfers made in expectation of death shall be taxed.

It also provides that transfers made within two years prior to death shall be "deemed to have been made in contemplation of death" unless otherwise shown.

Now see how this works out—or, rather, doesn't work out. The facts are from actual cases studied by the committee.

Mr. A. suffering from spinal trouble, almost deaf and blind, with a nurse in constant attendance, transfers to his heirs property worth \$2,500,000. Within two years after the transfer, he dies.

Treasury agents who investigate the case recommend that the federal estate tax, amounting to \$355,000, be assessed. This recommendation is reviewed by the estate tax review board, consisting of five members, all lawyers, who approve it.

Attorneys for the beneficiaries appeal this finding to the solicitor of the Revenue Bureau. The solicitor says that, although the transfer was made within the two-year period, it could not be proved it had been made in contemplation of death. And he remits the \$355,000.

Mr. B. forms a corporation with himself and members of his family as stockholders. The members of his family sign all their stock back to him in blank and all earnings of the corporation are pocketed by him as "salary."

He dies and the revenue agents hold that the corporation has been a mere "legal fiction." They assess \$62,000 in estate taxes. The board of review approves the assessment.

But the solicitor reverses the finding and the government loses the tax.

Where the finding is adverse to the government, there is no appeal from the decision of the board.

(Continued on Page 6.)

Stores to Be
Open Nights

Despite admonitions to shop early, it appears that this year, as in the past, the stores will be rushed by hundreds of persons eager to purchase gifts during the last few days before Christmas.

Realizing this, the business men of La Grande have decided through the chamber of commerce committee dealing with such matters to keep the doors of their stores open until 8:30 o'clock Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights next week.

The Evening Observer will make no paper Christmas day.

"City Quiet; Awaiting Normal Winter Weather"

"Yes, we have no business," But, oh boy, how the "Hot Shove" leagues are functioning these sub-zero days!

COLD WAVE
CONVULSES
IN VALLEY

La Grande Registered 15
Below Zero Early
This Morning

LITTLE IMMEDIATE
RELIEF IN SIGHT

Citizens Undergo Less
Hardships, However, as
All Precautions Taken
Last Night.

8 a. m.: 13 degrees below zero.
Coldest last night: 15 below zero.
1:30 p. m.: 3 above zero.

"Let's see, was it five or six years ago that we had a cold spell just like this?" It was one of the two but that doesn't spell much, because, after all, it is the present that counts.

Yesterday afternoon, with the mercury already below zero, the weather bureau forecast continued cold for last night and today. It is not only "continued cold" but it is colder.

15 Below Here

The thermometer registered, some time early this morning, the coldest weather that has hit the Grande Ronde valley for five years when it showed a minimum of 15 degrees below zero.

By eight o'clock this morning it had climbed to two degrees and was resting comfortably at 13 below. It is very doubtful if zero will be reached on its upward climb during the day.

Meacham Shivers

A railroad employee, who spent seven hours in Meacham last night declared the weather here was "like summer." At Meacham the thermometer hit a low mark of 22 degrees below. A similar point was reached in Joseph yesterday and Enterprise and Vesper respectively, 25 and 24 degrees below zero.

The coldest place yesterday, according to press reports, was 30 below, where 42 below was registered.

Not So Much Trouble

Last night, although five degrees colder than Tuesday evening, found much less difficulty and hardships experienced. The first really cold night caught most of the citizens more or less unprepared but last night, every precaution was taken with the result that not nearly so much trouble with frozen water pipes, etc., was reported this morning.

With the wind abated and a still cold prevalent, the cold wave is really not as severe here in some respects as it was 24 hours ago. Minus that piercing wind, the "great open spaces" seem warmer although such is not the fact.

Immediate relief is not due yet, although it is doubtful if the mercury will drop further than it did early this morning. The cold wave is general throughout the northwest and in Canada. This morning train No. 17 was late owing to intense cold to the east, given twice daily.

MARX IS ASKED
TO FORM A NEW
GERMAN CABINET

BERLIN. (By the Associated Press).—President Ebert today consulted again with Chancellor Marx and authorized him to make a thorough survey of the parliamentary situation in a last attempt to form a ministry which would command a necessary majority in the reichstag.

The summons followed Foreign Minister Stresemann's failure to construct a straight non-Socialist cabinet.

Shopping Now doesn't score the slightest hit.

But yesterday, the clothing stores did a land office business in mittens, caps with ear muffs, Warth Parameont.

Yes, verily, even the ladies with the most shapely of limbs are discarding the slither hose for the warmer, woolen stockings.

Last night fires burned merrily in every home and this morning the water pipes and faucets behaved naturally instead of giving a tiresome exhibition of treachery.

At times Adams avenue almost looks like a deserted thoroughfare. Shopping is at a low ebb and social functions are nearly all.

Santa Claus Can Wait.

The people are postponing both until normal temperature returns.

In fact, "Do Your Christmas

Tonight Will
Be Cold One
Is Forecast

Continuation of Freezing
Wave Is Seen; All Oregon
and Washington Hit.

PORTLAND, Ore. (By the Associated Press).—Continuation of the Oregon, Washington cold spell is forecast.

Sub-zero temperatures east of the Cascades and sub-freezing west of the range is reported today.

Portland's minimum last night was 12 degrees above, Roseburg's 20, Medford's 23 and Eugene's 2.

Baker reports 20 below, Bend 17 below, Yakima, Wash., 6 below and Seattle, Wash., 12 above.

BOISE, Ida. (Special).—Winter swooped down on southern Idaho Wednesday, on the wings of a severe windstorm, and zero and near-zero temperatures were general throughout the state. The coldest official temperature reported was 25 below, at Warren, while even at the warmest points temperatures of 2 above were reported. Snow in many places accompanied the cold.

In Boise Wednesday's above was the warmest and 2 above the coldest. At 8 o'clock Wednesday morning the mercury stood at 15 above, while at 5:45 Wednesday night the official reading was 2 above. Official reports of the cold wave would continue.

At 7:30 p. m. on the bench, the reading was 10 below.

From mountainous sections came reports of still lower temperatures, ranging from 6 below at Halley to the extremes in Valley and Adams county of 10, 25 and 29 degrees below. In all cases stiff winds added to the intensity of the cold.

Some enlightening figures showing what may be accomplished by diversified farming and irrigation were recently uncovered by the La Grande Realty board during a meeting held at Cove for the purpose of investigating agricultural resources.

The Cove district is more intensively farmed and more extensively irrigated than any other section of the valley and brings in correspondingly greater returns financially than any other agricultural district. The land is worth more per acre, bringing greater returns per acre and the residents are worth more per capita financially than any other area of similar size, according to the figures.

A report from Karl Stackland covering a period of 15 years of cherry growing stated that the cherry crop had averaged a net return of \$324 per acre per year during this time. This average includes one complete failure.

AGITATION OVER
JAP RELATIONS
HELD NEEDLESS

WASHINGTON (By the Associated Press).—Agitation over the American-Japanese relations is puzzling and disturbing officials of the American government.

In the opinion of the administration there is no international question between Washington and Tokyo of a character to alarm the people of the two countries.

The new Japanese ambassador will find virtually a clean slate when he takes up his duties and his reception here is expected to seal the new bond of friendship between the United States and Japan.

President Coolidge declared that the relations are all that could be desired.

AMBASSADOR HOPEFUL

TOKYO. (By Associated Press).—After his formal installation as ambassador to the United States, Tameo Matsuda said today to the Associated Press: "I fully realize the importance of the mission I am undertaking, yet my determination to do my best is strengthened by my confidence in America and its people and it seems clear to me our two nations are destined to stand together to preserve the peace of the Pacific region."

Sleep have maintained their condition of a month ago and average 89 per cent of normal compared with 83 a month ago and 97 a year ago. Recent rains and snows have improved the desert.

(Continued on Page 5.)

Below Zero

U. S. Weather Report: Continued cold below zero in East Oregon Friday morning.

MINIMUM MARKS
La Grande, Ore., 15 degrees below zero early this morning.
22 in, Ore., 18 degrees below.
Union, Ore., 18 degrees below.
North Powder, 21 degrees below.

Meacham, Ore., 32 degrees below.

Baker, Ore., 20 degrees below.

Bend, Ore., 17 degrees below.

Yakima, Wash., 6 degrees below.

Warren, Idaho, 29 degrees below.

Idaho City, Idaho, 19 degrees below.

GOMPERS IS
BURIED IN
TARRYTOWN

Labor Leader's Funeral
Services Held This
Morning

JEWISH RITUAL
FOR DEAD GIVEN

Eulogy, Pronounced by
James Duncan, Sent
Over Nation by Radio.

NEW YORK (By the Associated Press).—Impressive funeral services were held today for Samuel Gompers, deceased head of the American Federation of Labor, at the Rikhs club.

After the services the body was taken to Tarrytown cemetery.

Lodge officers conducted the obituary ritual and the Jewish ritual for the dead was intoned by Rabbi Stephen W. Wise.

James Duncan pronounced the eulogy.

The services were radio-cast.

IRRIGATION AT
COVE SUCCESS

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Mrs. Sweetin
Accused By
Aged Father

"Elsie Told Me She Gave
My Son Poison Three
Times," C. C. Sweetin
Testifies.

MOUNT VERNON, Ill. (By the Associated Press).—The state closed its case against Elsie Sweetin, who is on trial with Lawrence M. Hight, former clergyman, charged with the murder by poison of her husband, late Wednesday with the testimony of C. C. Sweetin, aged father of Wilford Sweetin, that "Elsie told me she gave my son poison three times." The jury was instructed that this statement was not to be regarded as evidence against Hight.

The state had saved Sweetin as its last witness and his testimony of the alleged confession made to him by his daughter-in-law in the jail at Salem a few days after her arrest, went to the jury over the opposition of H. E. Smith, counsel for Mrs. Sweetin.

Following this testimony the defense was called to present witnesses but Attorney Smith asked that he be given time to confer with his client and Judge J. C. Kern granted the request.

After this conference, W. A. Toney, a telegraph operator of Ina was called as the first defense witness.

Toney testified that he was familiar with the reputation of Mrs. Sweetin in the community and said that it was good. The state did not cross examine.

Arthur Brown, farmer, the second witness stated that while Mrs. Sweetin's reputation had been good, he had "heard talk about her and the preacher."

Mrs. Maggie Prazler, the last witness called asserted Mrs. Sweetin's character had been good. She added, "up to last summer when I heard some talk about her."

REBELS SWEEP
DEFENSE BACK

ATLANTA PRISON PROBE
MAY LEAD ELSEWHERE

WASHINGTON (AP).—Some indication that the investigation of the Atlanta federal prison, now underway, may lead elsewhere and possibly into the federal parole board, has been given by Attorney General Stone.

The attorney general would not hint at the information he has, and announced that he hesitated to predict the extent to which the investigation may develop. He asserted, however, that he did not believe it involved other federal prisons.

SEATTLE (AP).—Six miners were killed in an explosion from an underground cause in the Burnett mine of the Pacific Coast coal company, 50 miles south of Seattle, last night, according to company officials. Two others are in a critical condition. Four of the bodies have been recovered. Officials are to investigate the explosion.

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Saved By Unwritten Law



Mrs. Billie Meek (above), 19, Amarillo, Tex., successfully pleaded the unwritten law when arraigned on charges of killing Mrs. Bessie Summers, 19 (lower center), Allen Meek (lower left), her husband, was her chief witness. J. H. Summers (lower right), husband of the slain woman, denied his wife had been untrue to him.

GUM MACHINES
IN LIMELIGHT

Discussion of the gum vending machines in use at various pool halls and confectionaries in La Grande was continued by the commission at the regular meeting last evening.

The machines in question were recently closed by Chief of Police Clint Haynes pending investigation by the commission. The problem of the question of whether or not the machines are gambling devices. The owners maintained that they are not gambling devices because the player was aware of his prize before depositing his nickel.

DR. BAST RELEASED
COPENHAGEN. (AP).—The superior court today after long deliberation, ordered released from custody Dr. Anton Bast, Methodist Episcopal bishop for Scandinavia, pending proceedings in connection with alleged misappropriation of charity funds.

POPE PIUS HITS
RUSSIAN SOVIET*
ADMINISTRATION

ROME (By the Associated Press).—Strong condemnation of the Russian soviet government was voiced in a Pope Pius allocation, delivered at a secret consistory today.

The Holy Father also praised the congress of Holy Name societies recently held in Washington, which culminated in an address by President Coolidge declaring religious freedom and toleration fundamental laws of the United States.

Santa Fe To Build Hospital

ALBUQUERQUE, N. M. (AP).—Early in the year 1925 the Santa Fe Railroad Hospital association will begin the erection of a \$175,000 hospital plant here, officers of the association announced Monday.

In Minnesota it was from 3 to 29 degrees below zero, while in

North Dakota the temperature ranged from 16 below at Fargo to 24 below at Williston. South Dakota's mercury ranged from 10 to 16 degrees below.

In the Rocky mountain region a moderate of the cold was accompanied by a heavy snowfall, extending into western Wyoming and through southeastern Idaho and into eastern Nevada. The Rocky mountain storm, entering on its third day, hindered rail traffic and caused trouble to wire communication.

Montana roads were reported most impassable with snow drifting and raising much suffering some extent. The cold weather in this region will continue, it was predicted.

In the Pacific coast states, temperatures several degrees below freezing were reported, with Baker City, Ore., announcing a 10 degree below zero reading. Southern California citrus growers were warned to prepare for below freezing temperatures Wednesday night and Thursday.

In Chicago people awoke Wednesday to find streets and sidewalks a glare of ice. One man was killed in a fall and upward of a score were seriously injured.

WASHINGTON
STIRRED BY
GRAFT TALE

Justice Department to Investigate
"Legislative Bribery"

BOARD EMPLOYEE
IS SUSPECTED

Is Alleged to Have Taken
Money for Using Influence to Secure Passage of Legislation.

WASHINGTON (By the Associated Press).—The justice department has begun an investigation into charges that an employee of a senate committee has accepted money to use his influence to secure passage of legislation.

Attorney General Stone announced today that it had not been revealed that the money had actually been passed, but he declined to indicate the legislation concerned or the identity of the employee. He refused to divulge the source of his charge.

Asked if President Coolidge's attention had been called to the charges, Stone said he had no knowledge of this phase.

Coolidge May Know

Some senators were reported as having expressed the belief that the president said he was informed of the alleged bribery. The belief in some quarters that this had already taken place and that Coolidge had referred the matter to Attorney General Stone, who has had several conferences with the chief executive in the last 24 hours, Stone explained, each as relative to "unexpected developments."

WANTS CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON (By the Associated Press).—A resolution calling a conference of white nations bordering the Pacific ocean was introduced today by Representative Britten, Republican of Illinois, over the protest of several of his colleagues, including some from the Pacific coast. Britten also announced he would introduce a resolution to "force an investigation" of the relative condition of the American navy.

U. S. DESIRES
NO PARTIALITY

WASHINGTON (By the Associated Press).—France's reported intention to open discussion with Great Britain concerning funding her debt to the London government occasioned the prediction at the treasury that the United States would expect settlement from France when she settles with England.

High treasury officials declared it was obvious that the United States should expect settlement from France when she settles with England.

MARKETS TODAY

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP).—Cattle slow, hogs steady to ten cents lower, sheep steady, lambs 50 cents higher.

Eggs and butterfat firm. Butter 45c.

All Northwest Grippd
By Cold; Snow Falling

CHICAGO. (By the Associated Press).—Winter is enthroned in the west and middlewest and his heralds had reached eastward to the Ohio valley region.

The arrival of the most severe cold of the season in the northwest and west was responsible, directly or indirectly for the loss of a dozen lives, while in the Rocky mountain region huge snow drifts played havoc with train schedules and interrupted wire communications.

While the entire northwest, including Minnesota, the Dakotas, northern Iowa, western Wisconsin and the Canadian provinces were in the icy grip of sub-zero weather, the nip of the cold in the middle western and central states was not so severe as had been anticipated.

The severe cold was expected to continue for another 24 hours. Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta, reported a minimum of 44 below zero while Red Deer in the same province with 82 below boasted the distinction of being the coldest city on the North American continent.

In Minnesota it was from 3 to 29 degrees below zero, while in