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CONGRESS ADJOURNS

Dramatic Scenes Enacted in Both Houses.

SPEAKER REED IGNORES WHEELER

Patriotic Songs Sung During the Closing Hours—Three Cheers for Dewey and the Army and Navy.

WASHINGTON, March 4.—Vice-President Hobart declared the senate of the 55th congress adjourned without day eight minutes after 12 o'clock today. It was after a continuous session beginning at 11 o'clock Friday, with the exception of one hour recess during the forenoon.

The day of final adjournment broke with the senate in executive session disposing of a large number of nominations. When the doors were opened there was seen but a handful of tired and haggard-looking senators, who were waiting for the final reports from the conferees on the two bills yet in dispute. Finally Hale appeared with both. The deficiency bill was quickly passed, and then came the final and closing fight on the naval bill and the price of armor-plate factory. This was finally over, and the weary senators took a short recess.

Upon reassembling the senate took on a new appearance. The chamber had been cleaned up and the senators came back to the closing meeting with a more spruce appearance. Some few attempts at legislation were made, but all were unsuccessful. Then the galleries filled with gaily dressed visitors, who were there to see the final ceremonies. They were not long permitted to enjoy themselves, as an executive session drove them into the corridors, where they patiently waited for the doors to be opened. When this was done only a few minutes remained of the congress, but the hands of the clock were turned back 10 minutes, to give time for the usual complimentary resolutions and the address of the vice-president.

President McKinley and his entire cabinet had come to the capitol and were in the president's room back of the senate chamber, where the various bills were hurried for signature. Finally, the last big appropriation bill had received the president's approval, and everything was ready for the close. The resolutions thanking Vice-President Hobart and Frye, president pro tem, were adopted, and the vice-president responded in an appropriate address, and the senate, which had been in a turmoil for several days, quietly came to an end.

Wearily the house sat through the silent watches of the night, recessing from time to time, while awaiting conference reports upon the appropriation bills. The floor of the house was littered with waste paper, which drifted ankle deep about the desks and made the hall look as if it had been swept by a snow storm. Still the weary and heavy-eyed legislators kept to their posts through the night. The leaders upon whom the strain and burden of the closing hours fell most heavily, and the speaker, who had the greatest responsibility of all, remained constantly in their places, watching vigilantly the progress of the contests between the two houses. The final agreement on the river and harbor bill, containing the compromise on the Nicaragua canal, was secured about 3:30 a. m.; the sundry civil bill, in which the house forced the senate to surrender the provision for the Pacific cable, about 6; the District of Columbia bill, with the provision for sectarian institutions eliminated, about 7 o'clock; the deficiency bill at 8:30, and the final conference report upon the naval bill at about 9:30 a. m.

The hall presented a sullen, bedraggled looking scene until the daylight, sifting through the ground-glass ceilings, dimmed the yellow lights this morning. Outside a fine, drizzling mist was falling, completely shrouding the top of the dome, and gluing the wet, half-masted flags over the two wings, to their staffs. The red-eyed members sat listlessly in their seats and the few persons in the galleries slumbered peacefully.

About 7 o'clock Henderson aroused the house by an electric speech. It was one of the most eloquent of this congress. The surroundings added impressiveness to his utterances. The disheveled members and the wreckage of the night were about him. It was on the question of sectarian institutions in the District of Columbia, provision for which had been stricken out of the district appropriation bill. With force and pathos he denounced the bigotry of the conferees, who, he said, were willing, at the behest of a secret organization, to turn the homeless and friendless into the streets. The scene was dramatic in the extreme when Henderson recalled the dark days of the war, when the white-capped Sisters of Mercy were administering on the battle-field to the sick and dying soldiers. With the advent of the day the house

again took on the appearance of life. Members went below for baths and breakfast, and returned refreshed to their stations. As early as 7:30 the people began to pour into the galleries, the first party to arrive being a dozen ladies, who took their places in the public galleries. The important business of the house had been virtually completed when the house recessed for an hour at 9:30. All that remained was the enrollment of bills and the final ceremonies.

At 10:30, when the house reconvened, the galleries were again packed to the doors and the hall buzzed with confused murmurs of voices. An American flag had been lowered from the press gallery above the speaker's chair.

The closing scenes in the house were of more than usual interest. After all the bills had been passed there followed the usual resolutions. That offered by Bailey, thanking Speaker Reed, and the remarks of the minority leader were of a character to lend a dramatic turn to the proceedings. The action of the house and the speaker's reply aroused the house and spectators to enthusiasm.

After adjournment, members and visitors joined in singing patriotic airs.

Last Day in the House.

The house proceedings lagged after midnight, as the conference committee on the various appropriation bills were not ready to report. Time was consumed by frequent recesses and the members were kept in good nature with soup and stories.

At 4:30 A. M. the river and harbor conference report again was reported by Chairman Burton, and was adopted.

At 5 A. M. Boutelle presented a partial conference report on the naval bill. The house refused to recess from its opposition to an armor plate plant and also insisted upon its position as to ships and armor plate.

The two hours from 5:30 to 7:30 were spent in recesses, reassembling every now and then to see if the work was ready. At 7:35 the District of Columbia report was presented and adopted.

The conference report upon the deficiency bill containing a full agreement upon all disputed points was presented at 8 o'clock and agreed to.

At 8:30 o'clock the final conference report on the naval bill was presented by Boutelle. He explained that the senate had yielded to the house as to the number of ships to be authorized (12), and the house had confirmed the armor-plate provision so as to limit the cost of armor to \$300, but had secured elimination of the provision for an armor-plate factory. The report was adopted and the house recessed again until 10:30.

At 11 o'clock a resolution was adopted directing the speaker to appoint a committee of three to join a similar committee from the senate, to wait upon the president and inform him that the two houses had completed business and were ready to adjourn, unless the president had some further communication to make to congress. The speaker appointed Daltzell (rep., N. Y.), Reeyer (rep., Ill.) and Lanham (dem., Tex.) and another recess for an hour followed, when the house reconvened for the last time, the hour of final adjournment being but half an hour away.

The engrossing clerks were now the busiest people about the capitol, and almost every minute one of them rushed in with belated measures in his arms.

The last legislative act of the house was the passage of a joint resolution authorizing the acceptance by the United States of the cession of a tract of land from the state of Massachusetts, needed to extend the lines of Boston navy-yard. It was now 11:45 by the clock, but the assistant doorkeeper with a long pole set back the hands 10 minutes. This raised a loud laugh.

Immediately afterward there was a most dramatic episode. General Wheeler, who has carefully refrained from exercising his privilege as a member of the house pending determination of the question as to his right to his seat in the house, arose from his old seat down near the front on the democratic side, and loudly asked for recognition.

"Mr. Speaker," he called. The speaker's face was flush slightly, but he looked straight ahead as if he did not hear. "I ask unanimous consent to speak for five minutes," shouted the general, but the speaker disregarded him. Every eye was now riveted upon the diminutive figure of the grizzled old veteran of two wars. The situation was intensely dramatic, but Payne, the floor leader of the majority, hurried to the rescue. He moved a recess for 10 minutes.

"Pending that I ask unanimous consent to speak for three minutes," demanded Wheeler. The speaker then turned toward him for the first time, and, looking straight into the gray eyes of the general, ignored his request completely, putting the motion of Payne and declaring it carried.

As the hands of the clock pointed to seven minutes to 12, although it was really three minutes past the hour, the committee appointed to wait upon the president marched down the aisle. The

speaker had retired to his room and Payne, speaker pro tem., was in the chair. Daltzell, in the center, announced that the committee had fulfilled its duty, and the president had made reply that he had no further communication to make.

"The president requested us to state," he continued, "that the 55th congress had performed its extraordinary duties manfully, and he requested me to extend to each and every member his best wishes for a safe return home."

But five minutes remained. In it was enacted one of the most dramatic scenes ever witnessed in the hall of representatives. Payne summoned Dockery (dem., Mo.) to the chair, and he in turn recognized Bailey, the minority leader in this congress, to present a resolution thanking the speaker for the impartial manner in which he had presided over the deliberations of the house. Bailey said:

"It is an admirable trait of the American character, and it is one which will tend to the permanence of our institutions, that, no matter how we contend against each other over our differences of opinion, each is already to accord to the other whatever praise may be deserved. This commendable spirit has led some shallow men to criticize us because they could not comprehend how we could so strenuously combat the principles of our adversaries and still respect those adversaries themselves. These men do not know that a large majority of the men in every other party are earnestly anxious to promote our country's welfare. (Applause). And it is out of this broad spirit that a custom has grown which is as old as the house itself, that in the closing hours of every session there shall be offered a resolution like that which I now send to the clerk's desk."

The resolution was read, as follows:

"Resolved, That the thanks of the house are tendered to the Hon. Thomas B. Reed for the able, impartial and dignified manner in which he has presided over its deliberations and performed the arduous and important duties of chairman."

The reading of the resolution was greeted with tumultuous applause.

"Mr. Speaker," continued Bailey, "we have not always agreed with the distinguished occupant of the chair, and we have taken more than one occasion to emphasize our dissent; but, remembering the momentous questions which have confronted us in this congress, and remembering, too, the intense excitement which they aroused throughout the country as well as in this hall, the wonder is that those occasions were so few, and in this hour of impartial retrospect I do not hesitate to say that he has been as fair to us and our side as any of us, were our positions reversed, would have been to him and to his side." (Loud applause.)

The chair called for a rising vote. Every member was on his feet, and the resolution was unanimously agreed to amid prolonged applause.

Dockery, when the applause had subsided, appointed Bailey, Bell (pop. Colo.) and Paine to escort the speaker to the chair.

A moment later as the speaker emerged from the lobby, escorted by the committee the cheers that greeted his appearance made the rafters ring. Slowly the speaker ascended the rostrum, gracefully Dockery informed him of the action of the house, and then relinquished the gavel to him. As the speaker faced the house, the stillness of death settled down upon it. People in the galleries seemed to have ceased to breathe, so oppressive and impressive was the silence. The speaker fairly towered over the surroundings. Slowly and with great deliberation he returned thanks for the compliment the house had conferred upon him.

Half a dozen times during the progress of his remarks the speaker was obliged to pause, owing to spontaneous applause, which arose from all sides, and when he concluded with the announcement that the house stood adjourned sine die the applause and cheers were deafening. The galleries joined in the outburst. Suddenly some members began singing, and above the din arose the strains of "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." The air was taken up, the galleries caught the inspiration, and as one man everybody rose and joined in the singing, until in one grand chorus thousands were voicing the beautiful words of the national anthem. It was a scene to live a lifetime to witness, and a fitting and patriotic climax for the great war congress.

When the anthem was concluded, General Henderson started "Auld Lang Syne," and it was also sung with a will. Suddenly John Murray Mitchell waved aloft a small American flag, and members and the galleries went wild joining in singing "The Red, White and Blue." While the singing was in progress Mr. Hull, of Hull bill fame, jumped upon a desk with a large red, white and blue streamer, waving it to the rhythm of the air, and redoubled the tumultuous nature of the demonstration. A voice in the gallery shouted, "Three cheers for Dewey," and they were given with volcanic and explosive vigor. Then came cheers for the army and navy, and finally for Joe Wheeler. The demonstration concluded with the singing of the doxology.