

WILSON'S RAILROAD POLICY IS PUZZLE

Everybody Wonders What Chief Will Do.

SURRENDER JAN. 1 DOUBTED

Veto of Bill if Passed Is Declared Likely.

LABOR INTERESTS FACTOR

Belief in Some Quarters Is That Government Control of Roads Will Continue for Time.

OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16.—Votes sufficient to insure the passage of the railroad bill within the next few days have been rounded up, Senator Watson of Indiana reported this afternoon, but there is growing curiosity as to what the White House is going to do with the railroads and railroad legislation.

There are 54 votes sure, and maybe more, favorable to the bill, Senator Watson said, and he was confident that the president would sign whatever bill is finally agreed upon by the two houses of congress, but this is at variance with opinions most generally heard around the capitol.

Veto Declared Possible

Whatever bill is passed is certain to carry provisions not entirely satisfactory to labor, and there is a strong element in the leadership of Mr. Wilson's party which is hoping that he will veto the measure if it fails to square exactly with the desires of the brotherhoods. The hope of these leaders is so strong that they already are predicting that he will veto it.

Several Senators on the Republican Side Would Like to Have White House Co-operation in Framing the Measure

and have been trying to obtain some idea of the president's wishes in the advance of the legislative process. Several senators on the republican side would like to have White House co-operation in framing the measure and have been trying to obtain some idea of the president's wishes in the advance of the legislative process.

Good Jobs Endangered

The extension of government control under one pretext or another, of course, means an extension of numerous good jobs for men who cannot expect to remain on the payrolls of the railroads when they pass back to the private owners. As is well known, railroad corporations do not pay fancy salaries to men who are without railroad work, and these job holders know it. They may not have had railroad experience but they have political pull and their pull just now is backward in an effort to prevent the dissolution of government control and consequent loss of their satisfactory incomes.

Treaty Conferences Go On

Notwithstanding President Wilson's dictum that there is to be no move from the demerit side to bring the peace treaty forward again, conferences continued between democratic senators today to effect a compromise. If the president's letter had any effect, it was to make it plain to the democratic leaders more determined than before. Up to the time he issued his statement, their sole purpose was to get the treaty ratified. Now they are working as angry men with an added purpose, which is to show that they feel that their obligation to him was discharged when they went through with the votes that knocked out the Lodge resolution on November 19.

For the first time since the treaty debates began months ago, senators prominent on the democratic side are willing to speak in disapproval of their leader's position.

A sensation was created, however, by the publication today of an unauthorized interview from Senator Walsh of Montana, who is not at all in accord with Mr. Wilson's position as expressed in the statement. Senator Walsh discussed the president's statement frankly yesterday and said much that everybody understood was not for publication.

Democrats Invariably Rage

A part of the interview, which was not for publication, appeared on the first page of the Washington Post today as follows: "The democratic senators are inwardly seething over the position taken by the president. They are all wondering whether the statement was really written by the president or by some cheap politician assuming to speak the president's mind."

Some who talked with Senator Walsh yesterday verified the language of this interview, but said they did not repeat it because it was understood at the time to be confidential. He did give an interview for

WOMEN START DRIVE AGAINST HIGH PRICES

4,000,000 ARE ENLISTED IN THRIFT CAMPAIGN.

Account of Daily Expenditures to Be Kept and Unnecessary Items Eliminated.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16.—An army of 4,000,000 women, representing ten national organizations, has been organized by the savings division of the treasury department to enter the fight against the high cost of living. Beginning January 1 and extending to April 1, a great thrift campaign will be conducted in an effort to induce women to keep strict accounts of their daily expenditures in order by study of them to eliminate unnecessary items.

According to the plan, amounts saved by this means would be invested in government securities.

Women's organizations which have been enlisted in the campaign include the Association of College Alumnae, Daughters of the American Revolution, General Federation of Women's Clubs, National Catholic War Council, National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher associations, National Council of Jewish Women, National Federation of Business and Professional Women's clubs, National League for Women's Service, women's department of the National Civic Federation and the Y. W. C. A.

LEAGUE SUPPORTER WINS

Democrat Elected Representative in North Carolina.

CHARLOTTE, N. C., Dec. 16.—In a special election in which the league of nations was one of the leading issues, voters of the Ninth North Carolina congressional district today chose Clyde Hoer, democrat, and supported the league, over the republican, Morehead, republican, and opponent of the league, to fill the vacancy caused by appointment of Representative Webb to a federal judgeship. Practically no votes returns indicated a majority for either candidate. Morehead conceded his defeat by 1300 to 1400 votes.

Two years ago Webb, running on the league ticket, was defeated by a majority of 4152 over his republican opponent.

DOUGLAS TURKEYS HIGH

Market Expected to Be Stronger Than at Thanksgiving.

ROSEBURG, Or., Dec. 16.—(Special).—The turkey market opened here today and from early indications it would appear that it will be much stronger than during the Thanksgiving season. On account of weather conditions the birds failed to fatten in time for the November holiday, and many of the turkey raisers of Douglas county have held their turkeys for the Christmas market.

The extension of government control under one pretext or another, of course, means an extension of numerous good jobs for men who cannot expect to remain on the payrolls of the railroads when they pass back to the private owners. As is well known, railroad corporations do not pay fancy salaries to men who are without railroad work, and these job holders know it. They may not have had railroad experience but they have political pull and their pull just now is backward in an effort to prevent the dissolution of government control and consequent loss of their satisfactory incomes.

LIQUOR STORAGE PLAN UP

Kentucky Distillers May Ship Stocks to Cuban Warehouses.

LOUISVILLE, Ky., Dec. 16.—A way out apparently has been found for distillers caught with large stocks of liquor on hand by the supreme court's decision holding war-time prohibition constitutional.

A plan was presented to distillers here today by representatives of steamship lines operating out of Charleston, Brunswick, Jacksonville, Savannah and Wilmington to Cuba, South America and Europe. It contemplates shipment of liquor stocks in Kentucky, estimated at 25,000,000 gallons, largely to Cuban ports for storage and subsequent re-sale in Cuba or shipment to other foreign countries.

DESERTERS BLAME GIRLS

Navy Men Say "They Insisted on Making Love to Us."

NEW YORK, Dec. 16.—Of 1500 alleged deserters court-martialed at the New York navy yard since the United States entered the war, 25 attributed their overstay leaves to girls who "insisted on making love to them," it became known today.

Several explained that their overstay leaves were due to their widowed mothers' need of their assistance. One bluejacket said his ship sailed while he had "gone across the street to purchase tobacco" and that he had vainly tried to overtake the ship with a tug he hired for the occasion.

DRASTIC REDUCTION MADE

Committee Cuts Millions Off Appropriations Estimate.

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Urgency deficiency appropriation estimates for the public health service and employees' compensation commission were reduced from \$7,289,500 to \$3,110,000 by the house appropriations committee, which recommended \$1,100,000 for a compensation fund and \$2,000,000 to care for war risk insurance patients.

The sundry civil bill in July carried \$4,000,000 for war risk needs, but an additional \$2,000,000 is needed, the committee report said to sustain the service until the regular deficiency appropriation bill is passed.

U. S. TO CONTINUE SUGAR REGULATION

House Passes Equalization Board Bill.

SENATE ALREADY HAS ACTED

Amendments Retaining War-Time Powers Approved.

EMBARGO TALK DEcriED

Debate in House Largely Criticism of President for Failure to Purchase Cuban Crop.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16.—By a vote of 256 to 34, the house late today passed the senate bill continuing the sugar equalization board through 1920. Amendments retaining in force the war-time powers of the government for controlling prices and movements of sugar were approved, necessitating the sending of the measure to conference committee of the two houses.

While the only disputes to be settled in conference are the continuation of the war-time powers permitting licensing control of the sugar business, and the requisitioning of stocks at refineries, leaders in congress were doubtful whether an agreement could be reached before the holiday recess. As passed by the senate, the bill repealed the license control, and contained no reference to the requisitioning power.

Opposition of the bill's supporters to the repeal of these powers and the unanimous criticism of the sugar equalization board that the senate bill would serve no useful purpose were placed before the house committee before it decided earlier in the day to recommend continuance of the powers. The board declared it should be vested with these powers as well as the power to place an embargo on export.

The house interstate commerce committee began hearings today on the proposed to place an embargo on sugar, but deferred final action until Friday.

Several members of congress appeared before the committee to urge favorable action.

In the house debate, however, Representative Fordney, republican, Michigan, declared "this embargo talk is nonsense," as under an agreement of the equalization board with Great Britain, France and Italy to keep them out of the Cuban market, the United States was compelled to export some sugar to these countries.

House action on the bill resulted

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WORLD IS DECLARED IN NO DANGER TODAY

PROPHECY OF END BRANDED MERELY AS OLD STORY.

Porta's Mental Belfry Contains Covey of Fluttering Bats, Think Fellow Scientists.

Full many a time and oft, in the centuries which are dust, prophets have predicted the end of the world. With confident calamitous pessimism they have foretold the exact minute of the given day on which the fine spheres should revert to the elements of eternity and cease its folly and its wisdom once and for all.

So there's really nothing new at all in the forecast of practical finality, set for today, December 17—except that for once, the prediction has the semblance of isolated scientific approval. It is the dictum of one astronomer alone, Professor Porta, an European meteorologist—and against his prophecy in absolute denial stands the remainder of the scientific world. Others equally or more learned in the stars and the mysterious forces that wheel the planets on their cycles, agree to the last savant that Porta's mental belfry contains a vast covey of bats, whose flutterings have seriously impaired his scientific judgment.

Cataclysm Is Scouted

"The world is in no danger whatever of ending, nor are cataclysmic storms to rage over the face of earth—in brief, Professor Porta's prediction is the acme of unlimited bunk" would serve as a free translation of the weight of learned opinion that bears down upon the European astronomer.

Actually Professor Porta's forecast for today is not for the end of the world, but the terrific disturbances that he asserts will rock the earth between today and Friday of this week, are of such predicted magnitude that, should they occur, humanity might as well close up shop and call it a day. It is the terrible nature of these alleged scientific divinations that have led to world-wide alarm and the belief, among the credulous, that the clock of destiny is to toll its final hour.

Basis of Prophecy Explained

Briefly, the Porta prophecy is based upon the peculiar conjunction of the planets of the solar system, which will be grouped today practically in a straight line from the sun, juggling with the immeasurable energy of their combined magnetism against the glowing surface of the orb of day. In this league are Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and Neptune—also in a straight line, but on the opposite side of the sun, appears the planet Uranus.

It is Porta's contention that the electro-magnetic energy of these planets, concentrated by their conjunction, will create a vast sun spot capable of engulfing worlds, on what to us is the eastern side of the sun, and that the result will be a solar explosion which is to flame millions of miles into space. It is the force of this prophesied solar demonstration that will, according to Porta, create horrid storms upon the earth, causing

(Concluded on Page 2, Column 1.)

PORTLAND AVIATOR TO FLY AROUND WORLD

G. M. GORDEN PLANS START FROM SAN FRANCISCO.

Journey Calls for First Stop at Honolulu, Across Orient and Home Via Azores.

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 16.—G. M. Gordon, a Portland aviator, announced here today that he proposed to start out from San Francisco before February, in an attempt to fly around the world. He said he would use a seaplane of the type in which Commander Read crossed the Atlantic last summer.

Honolulu would be his first stop, he said, and his route from there would be via Japan, Hongkong, Singapore, Colombo, Bombay, Aden and Port Said; across the Mediterranean to Lisbon, then a side trip to Paris and London and back, and then across the Atlantic, via the Azores to New York, thence to Central America and home by way of San Diego.

G. Muri Gordon lived at 1145 East Pine street after his demobilization until recently. At a late hour last night no details of his record as an aviator were available.

STRIKE LOSS \$126,000,000

Ohio Estimates How Coal Miners Alone Out \$60,000,000.

COLUMBUS, O., Dec. 16.—Loss to the United States on account of the recent coal strike amounted to approximately \$125,000,000, while that to Ohio was about \$27,000,000, according to W. D. McKinney, secretary of the Southern Ohio coal exchange. Additional loss to railroads from curtailed service to industries forced to shut down on account of the fuel situation could not be estimated, and no allowance therefore is made in the estimate, Mr. McKinney stated.

The miners were the greatest losers in the strike, Mr. McKinney's figures showed. Sixty million dollars was his estimate of their losses in wages. The loss to the railroads he placed at \$40,000,000, while the operators' figures he set at \$26,000,000.

FOOD POISONS FAMILY

Two Children Dead; Mother and Father Critically Ill.

SAN RAPHAEL, Cal., Dec. 16.—Two children died here today and their parents, Mother and Anna Cantone, were in a hospital in critical condition as a result, according to their physicians, of poisoning from canned string beans, which the family ate Saturday night.

TWO POLICEMEN ARE HELD

Theft of \$12,000 in Furs Charged to Brooklyn Officers.

NEW YORK, Dec. 16.—Two policemen, Peter Reuger and Herman Craus, were arrested today by order of District Attorney Lewis of Brooklyn, in connection with the theft of furs valued at \$12,000 from a manufacturing furrier's plant on November 30.

THE WORLD: "I MAY BE PRETTY WELL BUNGED UP, BUT I ALWAYS MANAGE TO PULL THROUGH!"



MEMBERS' PAGE LIFT HELD LIBERAL ONE

Increase of 28 Per Cent Declared Assured.

SENATE INQUIRY CONTINUES

Settlement Probe Brings Out Interesting Facts.

FUEL SITUATION IMPROVES

Last of Restrictions on Delivery of Coal Removed and Embargo on Oil from West Lifted.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16.—The senate coal investigating committee, resuming today its inquiry into the administration strike settlement agreement,

was told by Tracy W. Guthrie, president of the Hillman Coal & Coke company, that one clause in the proposition advanced by President Wilson and accepted by the miners, would "bring about an increase in the miners' wages at least doubling the 14 per cent which Dr. H. A. Garfield, resigned fuel administrator, thought justified."

The railroad administration "withdrew the last semblance of a coal embargo on fuel and began delivering coal to original consignees instead of distributing it to points of greatest need. It rescinded the embargo on the movement of fuel oil out of the west, and the orders reducing the amount of coal permitted to go to cooking ovens."

At the white house it was said that President Wilson would not appoint the settlement provided in the strike settlement proposal until the strike general Palmer returns from the west last week.

The senatorial inquiry was reopened with the calling of R. V. Norris, engineer for the fuel administration, who was conducted by Senator Frelinhuysen and Senator Townsend, Michigan, through a maze of statistics bearing on labor costs and prices of necessities.

2 STORMS DELAY LINERS

Scores of Passenger and Freight Vessels Are Overdue.

NEW YORK, Dec. 16.—A dozen large passenger liners and scores of freighters, several days overdue here, are being held up by rough seas, high winds and fog, according to wireless reports today, telling of reduced speed made necessary by two storms which have swept across the Atlantic in the last ten days.

After having fought their way through the storms, several craft have run into thick weather, as a result of which the freighter Grand Park grounded off Long Island and the liner Carmania is in Halifax undergoing repairs resulting from a collision.

Among liners overdue are the Rotterdam, Baltic, Veronica, Carmania, Royal eGeorge, La Fayette, Bergensfjord, Vasari, Europa and Antonio Lopes.

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MERCURY RISES AND PORTLAND HAS RAIN

WEATHER CHIEF SAYS SILVER THAW IS HARDLY PROBABLE.

Thermometer Stays Around Freezing Point All Day—Strong Gale Reported on Coast.

Fingers of rain tore at the snow-drifts, relics of last week's epochal storm, from early morning yesterday and all throughout the day, while the mercury, for the first time since December 8, ran up the tube beyond the freezing point. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the highest reading of the day was reached, at 33 degrees, or one notch above the frost line.

Though the streets were profligate of slush and umbrellas replaced were hoisted against the steady downfall of moisture, Portland breathed a sigh of sincere relief that the province of the cold spell again had been passed. But one dread remained—the anxiety lest falling rain should plunge through a strata of cold frosty atmosphere and reach the earth as sleet, inaugurating a beautiful but disastrous chain of a genuine silver thaw.

Edward L. Wells, chief of the Portland weather bureau, said last night that present conditions do not warrant expectations either of a silver thaw or flood, though a turn in the weather, either way, might bring one or the other. But he bade Portland find heart in the fact that the odds are for a genial and gradual waning of the spell of weather.

All day yesterday the thermometer hovered around the freezing point, a pleasant temperature when compared with the minimums of a few days ago, and at 4 o'clock it crept one degree above. The forecast last night was for rain today, with warmer atmosphere and southerly winds.

Along the coast, as predicted, southerly and southwestern winds wrought a strong gale. Reports received from North Head were to the effect that the wind attained a maximum velocity of 45 miles an hour yesterday afternoon, sinking down to 45 miles at 5 o'clock.

While rain fell in the downtown district yesterday morning, sections of the suburban districts, more exposed and at slightly higher altitude, experienced the threat of a silver thaw. Moisture in many such districts fell as sleet, coating the trees with the typical pearly ice film of the dreaded thaw. It is this weight of ice, redoubting through days of rain, that plays havoc with light and power lines, renders the streets almost impassable and brings about conditions that are fully as onerous, though entirely different, from those which attended the recent blizzard.

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