

POLICY OF HARDING ON SHIPPING UPHOLD

Democratic Antagonism Laid to Misworded Thought.

MERCHANT MARINE GOOD

Mark Sullivan Declares Problem Has Caused President to Sweat Blood More Than Any Other.

BY MARK SULLIVAN.

(Copyright by the New York Evening Post, Inc. Published by Arrangement.) WASHINGTON, D. C., Aug. 22.—(Special.)—President Harding spoke with exactness when he said of the shipping board situation:

"These things must be charged to the great war emergency and the feverishness of the country to build ships in a period of great anxiety, to the establishment of a merchant marine on the basis of the abnormal conditions which prevailed during the war emergency."

Unhappily in the more conspicuous beginning of his letter, urging congress to be willing to pay high salaries for assistance in unloading the shipping board, President Harding used a less exact phrase and involved what ought to be a relatively unimportant question in party feeling. When the president said: "The shipping board situation is wholly an inheritance of a previous administration," the democrats began to "get their backs up."

Prejudice Is Increased.

This adds to the natural prejudice already existing among members of congress against paying shipping experts and lawyers from three to four times what the congressmen themselves receive, more than four times the pay of United States circuit judges, and more than twice the pay of cabinet members and justices of the supreme court.

If President Harding were less hurried than he is he would be the last man to express the situation in just this way. It would be more likely to soften prejudice and would be more nearly accurate as well, if he had said: "The shipping board situation is wholly an inheritance from the war."

It is true that the theory of regulation shipping and of government owned ships was developed by members of the Wilson administration and was put into effect during President Wilson's term, before we had entered the war, but aside from the inefficiency inherent in any project of government management of business things that have been disastrously extravagant and costly in connection with the shipping board have arisen out of the war.

War Feeling Is Recalled.

In this respect Mr. Wilson's management of the war is penalized now by the difficulty of remembering, in quiet times of peace, what the feeling was about ships when we were participating in the war. In the early part of 1913 the allies were in extreme danger because the German submarines were sinking ships faster than all the allies, including ourselves, seemed able to build them. It was out of this situation that arose the frantic effort to build the greatest possible quantity, at any cost, and of any material that could be made to float. Of this emergency situation in our government shipping experiment it would probably be fair to charge off three-fourths to the cost of the war, in the same sense that shells and cannon were part of the unrecuperable cost of the war.

Management Held Poor.

The one charge that can fairly be made against the Wilson administration is failure to put our shipping experiment under expert management and to handle it on a purely business basis immediately after the armistice. At that time shipping was in great demand, and we could have sold at cost or possibly even at a profit the vessels which today we cannot sell at a price which would pay for the cost of the ship.

If Laakso, or the equivalent of Laakso, with his sense of salesmanship and market psychology, had been put in charge then we might have had a different story.

But the best way to treat the shipping board situation as it stands today is to forget the past and handle it in relation to present conditions. The theory upon which President Harding and his appointees have taken up his problem is that of the greatest possible savings in liquidating past losses, preventing future losses and putting the institution on a reasonable business basis. Granting that speed is the heart of the situation the most economical thing for congress to do is to authorize the salaries asked for experts and lawyers.

If there were leisure years to do it in, a legal staff might be built up for the shipping board of younger men, willing to work at the modest normal salary of ordinary government lawyers, but if the situation is to be handled with promptness and vigor, if the \$200,000,000 of claims against the government are to be defended with the energy with which a private litigator would defend them, then ship yard and shipping board has gone at it the way most men engaged in private business would go at it in the defense of these \$200,000,000 of claims against the government. The difference between the "first-class lawyers" and what Mr. Laakso invidiously called "flapdoodle" political lawyers is probably not less than \$50,000,000 in the sum that the government will finally have to pay.

It is evident that two of the things closest to President Harding's heart are the cutting short of the appalling expense which the government now suffers in its management of the shipping board and after that the salvaging and upbuilding of a reasonable mercantile marine for the United States on a sound business basis. At times, President Harding has come nearer to sweating blood in his anxiety about the shipping board than about any of his other cares.

BIG SUM VOTED FOR SHIPS

(Continued From First Page.)

gave the president full authority to address either branch of congress at his pleasure, saying that it would be impossible for the president to speak to both houses if only one were in session. Assuming that he never heard "such a violent denunciation of Wilson" as had been directed at Mr. Harding, Senator Kellogg, republican, Minnesota, said he was unable to understand the reason for it.

Borah Upholds President.

Mr. Borah explained that he was in full accord with the president on the bonus question, but that his criticism was aimed at the appearance of a president, whether Mr. Wilson or Mr. Harding.

"I am unable to find anything like it prior to the Wilson administration,"

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"Some of the most venomous attacks on the 18th amendment are camouflaged as personal liberty, Americanism, humanitarianism and patriotism," said Dr. Matthews.

"The 18th amendment is an integral part of our constitution, a document which represents the wisdom, foresight and discretion of the American people, articulating through a legislative system second to none on earth. This amendment is not the result of a hectic movement 'put over' while the boys were overseas. It is the product of evolution, as are all other reforms."

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GOMPERS GRILLS CAPITAL

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