SERGEANT ADMITS KILLING OF MAJOR

Roland R. Pothier Held for Cronkhite's Death.

COURT VERDICT DISPUTED

Ex-Service Man Declared to Have Confessed That He Shot Officer Accidentally.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., March 19.—Roland R. Pothier of Central Falls, formerly an army sergeant, today formally admitted that he killed Major Alexander P. Cronkhite, son of Major-General Adelbert Cronkhite, at Camp Lewis, Wash., October 25, 1918. The federal commissioner before whom he was arraigned accepted a plea of guilty to a charge of involuntary manslaughter.

Federal officers refused to discuss the case further, but it is understood that Pothier told them his pistol was discharged accidentally while he was cleaning it. Further arrests are expected, however.

Since Pothier was discharged from the army in June, 1919, the department of justice has been searching for him. He was arrested here Thursday at the Auburn freight yards of the New Haven railroad, where he was employed as a brakeman.

Major Cronkhite, who was in command of a battalion of infantry at Camp Lewis, had marched his men from camp for pistol practice, on the day of his death. During the noon hour, while his men were at mess, the major walked some yards away behind a clump of bushes and began firing at an old tobacco tin as a target.

On his fifth shot, he turned toward some soldiers idling on the ground nearby and called out: "Did you see that shot?" The men turned toward him, when suddenly another shot was heard and they saw Major Cronkhite fall. There was a bullet wound under his right arm pit.

An army court of inquiry reported that the officer had shot himself accidentally, but upon the return of Major-General Cronkhite from France a new investigation was started, the body was exhumed and experts are said to have asserted that the wound could not have been self-inflicted.

ARREST DECLARED SURPRISE

Camp Lewis Officials Say They Thought Incident Closed.

CAMP LEWIS, Wash., March 19.—Roland R. Pothier, who is said to have confessed at Providence, R. I., today to involuntary manslaughter of Major Alexander Cronkhite on October 25, 1918, formerly was a sergeant bugler in the 13th division here. He testified in the original inquest into the death of the major and with others declared the death was accidental and imposed by a bullet from the major's pistol. Pothier was standing close to Cronkhite when the wound was inflicted, the testimony at the inquiry showed.

Major Cronkhite met his death on the Camp Lewis pistol range during practice. An army board declared that death was accidental, and the body was held for his parents, Major-General and Mrs. Adelbert Cronkhite.

The matter remained closed until a few months ago when the parents started an investigation. They requested the department of justice to hold a further hearing and two weeks ago a report was made substantiating the former finding of accidental death.

Army officers here today were surprised at the confession of Pothier, as they believed that the incident was closed.

SEATTLE MEN HELP PROBE

Department of Justice Officials Investivate Death.

SEATTLE, Wash., March 19.—Department of justice agents here, under instruction from Washington, D. C., recently conducted an investigation into the death of Major Alexander Cronkhite at Camp Lewis, in 1918. When the inquiry was completed, it was said that the report of an official board at Camp Lewis, which had found Major Cronkhite met his death accidentally while on the camp pistol range, had been substantiated. A report of the investigation, which was not made public here, was forwarded to the department at Washington.

Department of justice agnts here today declined to comment on the detention at Providence, R. I., of Roland Pothier, ex-service man, in connection with Major Cronkhite's death.

FARMERS' REVOLT FEARED

(Continued From First Page.)

Parts of Oklahoma have adopted a plan which calls on the individual cotton planter to seed only as large an acreage as he can gather with his own hands. That plan would work out in Oklahoma producing this year about half the cotton it produced last year.

In yet other parts of the south the banks are so tied up that from 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the farmers will not, under any conditions, be able to borrow enough money to carry them over and get the supplies necessary to plant a crop. A Baltimore periodical, which is almost an official organ for the business men of the south, is advising the planters to reduce their acreage 50 per cent on the theory that "the small crop would sell for more than a large crop."

Corn Belt Just as Bad Off.

It may be that this tendency toward planting very much smaller crops is more marked as repects cotton than as respects grain, and yet persons who come to Washington from the districts where corn is the chief crop say that conditions there are quite as discouraging as in the cotton country. In one of the largest Mississippi valley states it is said that fully a half of last year's corn crop is still on the farm unsold and without any prospects of selling. Farmers caught in these conditions are obviously not going to feel strongly like planting a maximum new crop.

This condition of distress expresses itself in serious human hardships, and serious human hardships tend to express themselves in radical political movements. In large areas of the west fully a third of the farms are operated by renters, and these renters being left at the end of the year with an unsalable crop, have not been able to pay their obligations, and are being dislodged and reduced to the ranks of wage earners, except where this fate is avoided by wise leniency on the part of the owner.

Conditions Forebode Distress.

Large numbers of other farmers have bought their land on installment payments, or have given heavy mortgages. As the installments or interest payments fall due, the farmers are unable to meet them, and there is created a complete reproduction of those conditions which in 1893 caused such acute economic distress in the west and led to the rise of populism, and later the Bryan movement.

Some time ago I had a letter from one of the wisest men west of the Mississippi river which spoke of a probable revolt against the republican party. The writer said: "The world of 1914, I think, is gone forever. We cannot get it back, and old man normalcy is a fraud. He simply isn't. Right now there is genuine danger of a revolt among the farmers of the west, and unless this situation is cleared up, there will be the biggest revolt in the Missouri and western Mississippi valleys that there has been for 50 years.

Genuine Grief Looked For.

"The farmers will certainly join with the radical labor party, and old man normalcy will be knocked into a cocked hat. And I don't blame the farmers. They need special credit and special care in the matter of rental laws and special privileges in marketing their crops and until they get it, there is going to be a heap of trouble.

"I fancy the coming year will be the beginning of genuine grief in the middle west. I don't fear bolshevism, but I do feel that these revolutionary changes are portentous."

The net of all this is summed up in a statement issued during the present month, by David R. Forgan of Chicago who is universally accepted as a leading banker of his city and section. He was quoted as saying that American industrial conditions are as critical today as at any period within the last 44 years, not excepting 1893.

Republicans Face Big Task.

All that has been said so far, is preliminary to considering what the new Republican administration plans to do about it, and what it is possible to do about it. Within two weeks after Harding's inauguration, the New York stock market fell to a new low level. This episode suggests an ironic reflection. If it had been Cox who won last November, and if it had been a democratic president who was inaugurated on the 4th of this month, it is easy to imagine what would now be said by those who think that the mere word "republican" is a panacea for economic ills.

However, the condition is here. Let us now consider what politics can do for it and what the new administration can do for it. The first thing to be said in any consideration is that no politics and no administration and no congress can do as much as the individual can do and must do for himself. That, however, is material for a different kind of homily.

Tax Revision Not a Cure-All.

The immediate plan of the administration is first to revise the taxes. Any sound revision of taxes and any sound refunding of the public debt will, of course, help in the long run and will be a benefit for years to come. But there is no conceivable revision of the taxes that will work an immediate cure of the present situation, nor even markedly affect it.

Revision of the taxes is merely a thing that ought to be done and must be done for its own sake. Its relation to the present situation can only be the beneficient but yet quiet effect that sound principles of government have at all times. But tax revision can make little change in the present acute distress in the farming communities.

The next step in the plan of administration is to pass a protective tariff; this again cannot affect the present condition from the viewpoint of the accepted traditional purpose of a protective tariff. It is probable that in years to come we shall need protection for our standard of living more than ever before, because labor abroad is going to be compelled to work at wages which will make a standard of living lower than had existed even in Europe within recent generations, and far lower than has ever existed in America—lower, we hope, than ever will exist in America.

Foreign Trade Necessary.

But for the immediate present a protective tariff will be of no help. It is idle to tell a farmer who cannot sell his corn at any price whatever that he is about to be saved from being compelled to sell it in competition with foreign corn.

There is one thing, and one thing only, that the administration can do to be of material help; that thing is to start foreign trade moving, as Hoover expressed it the other day; the normalcycle of exchange of commodities between producers and consumers who are widely separated is paralyzed and must be revived. And when it is said that this is a thing within the power of the administration to accomplish, let not expectation go too far.

It is not within the power of the new administration nor within any human power, to bring back to the world, all the foreign trade that once existed. In Europe some seven million men are dead, to the extent that these men, once were consumers of our cotton and our copper; they can consume no longer. In normal times, more than half our cotton and more than half our copper went abroad. Not for generations can Europe again consume or pay for as much cotton or as much copper as she took before the war.

Normal Demand Must Be Met.

But there is in Europe a new and present normal demand, and a present normal consumption. What the new administration can do is to make it possible for our goods to flow out to fill that present demand, however much it may be.

Toward achieving this end President Harding this week took one sound and effective step. He appointed an able and energetic banker, Eugene Meyer Jr., to revive the war finance corporation. This name for the institution is now a misnomer, for its present peace-time function is to use government money to facilitate the export of American goods to Europe.

Mr. Meyer is the father of the idea; he believes in it, and by experience and ability he is adapted to the work. He will undoubtedly succeed in bringing about export of some products which would otherwise remain in the farmer's barn or in the cotton warehouse. To a certain extent he may be able to change the present abnormally depressed state of mind among business men and the public generally, but all that Mr. Meyer and the war finance corporation can do will be a mere drop in the bucket.

WALSH GRILLS TWO RAILROAD OFFICIALS

Rail Labor Board Hearing Unduly Prolonged.

JUDGE RAPS INQUISITOR

Alleged Dissension of Executives Sought to Be Brought Out and Irrelevant Quiz Made.

CHICAGO, March 19.—In the attempt to bring out alleged dissension in the ranks of railway executives over national agreements, F. P. Walsh, union labor counsel, put two high officials through a grilling examination before the railroad labor board today.

C. R. Gray of Omaha, president of the Union Pacific system, under questioning by Mr. Walsh, detailed his activities as chairman of the now abandoned labor committee of the association of railway executives. It was in this committee, the unions contended, that a split developed.

After outlining activities of the committee, Mr. Gray explained the basis of his majority report on establishing national boards of adjustment. This report was rejected by the member roads and a minority report of W. W. Atterbury, vice-president of the Pennsylvania, adopted.

Easiest Way Out Sought.

The majority report of March 29, 1920, Mr. Gray said, was presented with the idea that agreeing to national boards, which were urged by the employes, was the easiest way to settle disputes.

"The report was not a recommendation," he said. "The majority of the committee had an open mind on whether boards of adjustment should be national, regional or local. The objection to regional or local boards was that they would require too many men. Mr. Atterbury held that national boards meant national agreements. That was the fundamental distinction between the majority and minority representatives."

Mr. Gray declared under questioning that he had resigned as chairman when the member roads adopted the minority Atterbury report, and, although continuing as a committee member, suggested that Mr. Atterbury be appointed.

National Rules Impracticable.

J. M. Sheehan, counsel for the railroad committee before the labor board, asked Mr. Gray to tell what he thought about national agreements, contending that the line of questioning had not borne on the justness nor reasonableness of such rules.

"My feeling is that it is practically impossible to devise rules which operate justly and reasonably over the whole country," Mr. Gray said.

Mr. Sheehan asked if there had ever been any disagreement on the continuation of national agreements by the rail executives.

"Never," Mr. Gray replied.

Mr. Sheehan then referred to the 11 fundamental principles laid down as labor's "bill of rights" by union officials yesterday.

"Could any road operate with efficiency with all these rules in effect?" Mr. Sheehan asked.

Rules Considered Hampering.

"Certain of these rules are very restricted," Mr. Gray replied. "It is almost impossible to set up any set of rules which will do justice to all."

Earlier today T. Dewitt Cuyler, chairman of the executive association, was on the stand and maintained that he had had no part in the formation or adoption of any labor policy. He refused to admit there was any difference of opinion on national agreements.

Charges that the Pennsylvania and New York Central railroads dominated the policies of other roads in the opposition to national agreements with labor unions and that many individual roads favored the national agreements were made by Mr. Walsh.

Further charges that the railroads, knowing the railroad labor board had no power to enforce its decrees, were trying to smash the labor unions through public opinion and were attempting to influence public opinion through false, paid publicity, were made by Mr. Walsh. He renewed his investigation of railroad publicity, despite objection from Judge R. M. Barton, chairman of the board, that the matter was irrelevant. He called T. Dewitt Cuyler and resumed questioning along the line which yesterday brought statements from Mr. Cuyler that publicity articles supposedly written by Mr. Cuyler really were written by a press agent.

Charge Meets Denial.

"Wasn't Mr. Lee appointed press agent of the association of railway executives because he is an expert at breaking down unions?" Mr. Walsh asked.

"No," replied Mr. Cuyler.

"Do you recall the mine publicity in 1914-15, gotten out by Mr. Lee?" asked Mr. Walsh.

"I recall that he was connected with the Rockefeller foundation," was the answer.

"Well, Mr. Lee at that time published false figures in connection with salaries of union officials," began Mr. Walsh, when Judge Barton interrupted.

"Don't you realize this is entirely outside the matters to come before the board?" he asked.

Mr. Walsh then charged that the railroads' motive in their publicity was unfair.

"The duty of this board," interrupted Judge Barton, "is to decide whether national rules are fair. We know the railroads are opposed to national agreements without your telling us."

BRITISH RUPTURE FACED

(Continued From First Page.)

article 10 and some other objectionable features eliminated, he is not going to put himself in the position of demanding the league or nothing.

M. Viviani is a sincere believer in the league, but he realizes the United States may refuse to join under any conditions. The significance of the Viviani visit is in the fact that he is a member of the league amendment committee, constituted for the special purpose of considering any amendments the United States may demand and unquestionably he will go into this phase of the question with President Harding and Secretary of State Hughes.

Viviani Thorough Democrat.

M. Viviani, moreover, is a thorough democrat, and though no longer a socialist, he belongs decidedly to the "left" side of French politics. If he is able to negotiate any kind of an understanding with the United States, whether it includes the league of nations or not, the accomplishment would be of such a nature as to strengthen the liberals and progressives and win back to the Briand ministry the progressive support that the break with England threatens to withdraw.

There is no foundation for the report that M. Viviani will discuss new loans with the United States or that he will make any proposals concerning the cancellation of the French indebtedness to the American government. The warning of M. Jusserand, the French ambassador at Washington, that this was a sore subject in the United States, has been confirmed, and is just what the French government felt several months ago when it preferred to let England make overtures to America along that line.

Quarrel Could Be Ended.

At the same time there is good reason to believe that M. Viviani would not object if the state department at Washington should open the question.

Unlike some of the French reactionaries, M. Viviani would favor foregoing France's claims against Germany if this country could receive receipted bills from the United States and from England.

This project as previous dispatches have explained, would not leave the United States worse off than now, in the opinion of sound economists, but it would have the inestimable advantage of permitting France and Germany to stop quarreling and get to work.

DAMAGE CASE NON-SUITED

Window Washer Fails to Get $25,000 From Furniture Firm.

An order for non-suit in the case of Clifford E. Holmes against Henry Jenning & Sons was handed down yesterday by Judge Wolverton in federal court. The decision followed arguments of attorneys on a motion for non-suit made by the defense counsel.

Holmes instituted suit to recover $25,000 for injuries said to have been received February 27, 1920, when he fell from a fourth-story window in the building occupied by the Jenning firm at Fifth and Washington streets. Holmes was a window washer.

In support of their motion for a non-suit the defense attorneys advanced the argument that Holmes had elected to accept recompense for his injuries under the workmen's compensation act. Holmes was represented by Le Roy Keely.

SLAYER IS JUDGED INSANE

Adam Setera, Who Shot Mother, Is Sent to State Hospital.

OREGON CITY, Or., March 19.—(Special.)—Adam Setera, who shot his mother four times with a 38-caliber revolver in this city Thursday afternoon, was adjudged insane today by Doctors Homstead and Strickland. He was taken to the state asylum tonight.

At the examination Setera refused to talk and sneered at all connected with the examination. The mother, Mrs. Ann Setera, who is in the Good Samaritan hospital in Portland, is improving and according to her physician, Dr. Ross Eaton of Oregon City, has a chance to recover.

CANBY LIGHTS ORDERED

Molalla Company Told to Give Power, Pending Investigation.

SALEM, Or., March 19.—(Special.)—The Oregon public service commission, in an order issued today, instructed the Molalla Electric company to resume operation of street lights in the city of Canby, pending investigation of a new complaint filed against the corporation by the municipality. The original complaint filed by Canby charged that the electric company had demanded that the municipality rewire the street lights at an expense of several hundred dollars. Canby refused, whereupon the light company cut off its service.

The public service commission will hear the complaint within the next few days, when some definite action will be taken.

Centralia Worker Is Drowned.

CENTRALIA, Wash., March 19.—(Special.)—Sam Vahon, employed at the N. & M. mill near Rochester, was drowned this afternoon when he fell from a log into the mill pond. The body will be sent to Seattle for interment. Vahon was about 40 years of age. He is survived by a mother and sister in Greece.