

TERM 'PORK BARREL' AROUSES OBJECTION

S. A. Thompson Says Phrase Is Hindrance to Progress.

EXPRESSION CALLED LIE

Rivers and Harbors Congress Secretary Objects to Intimation of Log-Rolling.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 1.—(To the Editor.)—J. N. Teal, of your city, has sent me a copy of the editorial under the heading "A Policy for Inland Waterways," which appeared in The Oregonian of April 15.

In the main this editorial constitutes a very clear presentation of the things that must be done if we are to have the benefit of the additional transportation facilities that would be procured by the improvement and use of our waterways. It is my judgment, however, that nobody now living will see the completion of the national system of waterways that ought to have been finished in use long ago if the newspapers of the country, great and small, continue their present practice of never mentioning the subject of rivers and harbors without logging in a reference to the "pork barrel."

Public Opinion Controls.

In the long run, the action of the congress of the United States is controlled by public opinion, and the never-ending iteration and reiteration of what Secretary of Commerce Redfield properly characterized as "a greasy lie" has saturated the public mind with the idea that every river and harbor bill is reeking with graft, and that the items therein were included as a result of logrolling to promote the personal political interests of members of the senate and the house.

I cannot believe it possible that you do not know just what a gauntlet has had to be run for the past 20 years by any waterway project before it can be included in a river and harbor bill.

To state it as briefly as possible, arguments must first be presented which will induce congress to authorize the survey of the project; then, under the law, there is first made a preliminary reconnaissance, from the results of which the chief of engineers decides whether or not a detailed survey is justified. If not, the thing dies right then and there.

Investigation Is Thorough.

If, on the other hand, the decision is favorable, the surveys are made, hearings are held, and every engineering and economic factor of the situation is investigated. This work is done by the district engineer, who makes his report and recommendation for or against the project to the division engineer. The division engineer studies the report of the district engineer, and sends it forward with his recommendation, favorable or unfavorable, to the board of engineers for rivers and harbors.

This board is composed of seven of the ablest and most experienced members of the engineering corps, and the entire corps, as you know, is made up from the men who each year win the honors upon their graduation from West Point. This board, which is commonly known among the friends of waterways as the infallible board, because it kills off the great majority of infant projects which come before it, studies the reports of the district and division engineers, and if the matter is of sufficient importance, conducts independent investigations and holds additional hearings before its decision, either favorable or unfavorable, is rendered.

Report's Course Traced.

The report of the board of engineers for rivers and harbors goes to the chief of engineers, who has the power to make such additional studies as he thinks necessary, and he can either approve or disapprove the findings of the engineers who have already passed upon the matter. Unless and until a project receives the recommendation, either of the board of engineers for rivers and harbors or of the chief of engineers, it has no legislative status whatever, and has about one chance in a million of receiving favorable action by congress.

Congressman Mann said truly: "Whatever men say about the merits of particular propositions in a bill, there is no legislation which comes before congress which is so critically scanned by experts as are the river and harbor bills before they reach the house. . . . There are more processes involved, and far more expert men, wisely disinterested, unbiased, uncontrolled by politics, in reference to a river and harbor item, than for any other legislation provided by any legislative assembly in the world." (Congressional Record January 22, 1917, pp. 1976-77).

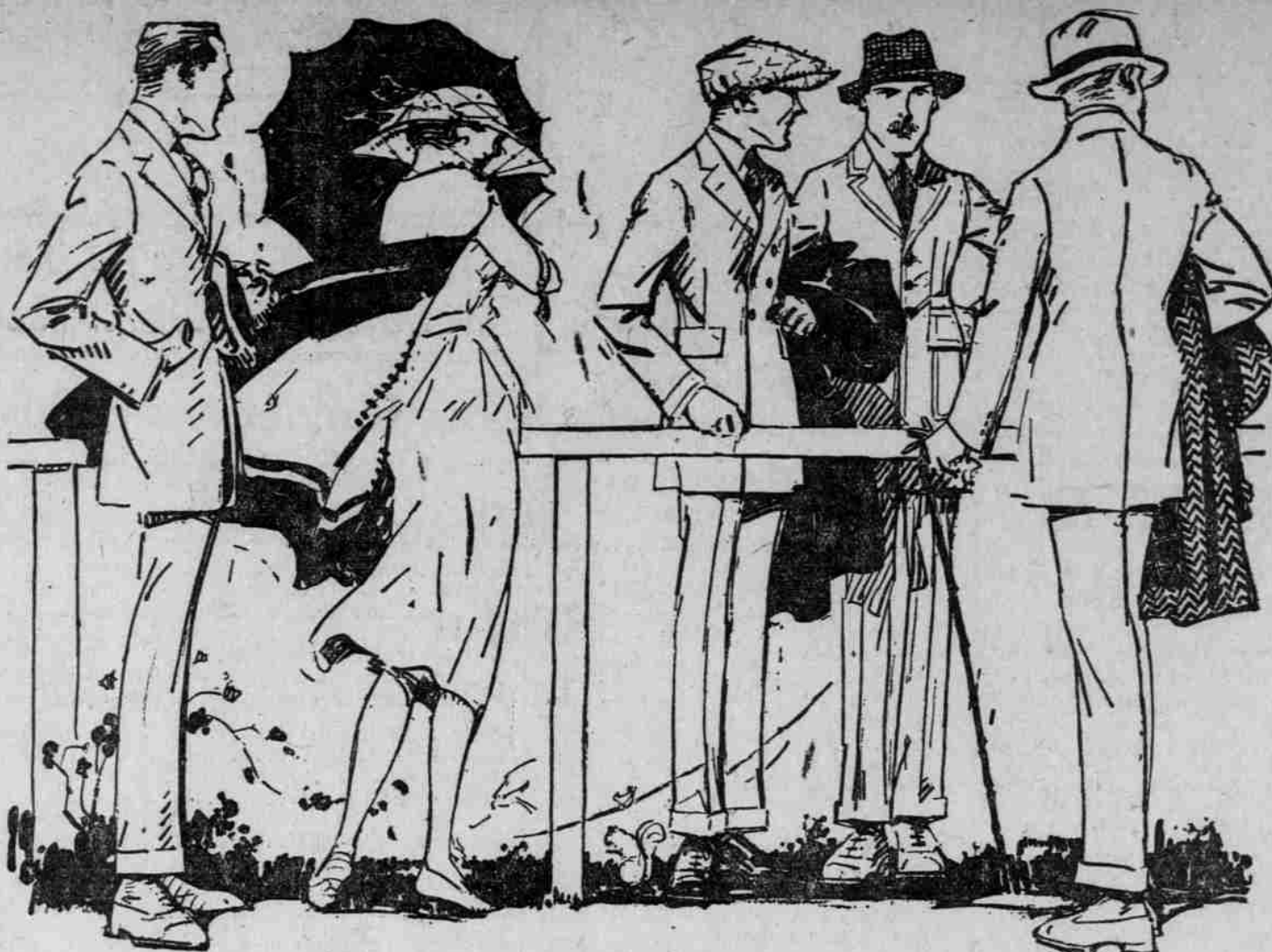
Army Engineers Involved.

Since nothing gets into a river and harbor bill without the approval of the army engineers, every charge that river and harbor bills are "pork barrels" constitutes an indictment of the integrity and an imputation upon the intelligence of this body of men, which produced Goethals, Sibley, Hodges and the lamented Gaillard, who built the Panama canal. Anyone can make general charges or shout "pork barrel," but it seems to me that justice and fairness demand that, instead of general charges, specific instances should be given. And when specific charges have been made, I feel that I am entitled to know how much of technical education and engineering experience the one who makes them has had, and the extent of the surveys and investigations he has made of the projects he criticizes, before I shall feel bound to accept his opinion instead of that of the army engineers.

Appropriation Is Cut.

During recent years congress has appropriated the full amount required for the railroads of the country, but the appropriations for rivers and harbors during 1920 and 1921 have been less than one-half the average annual appropriation for the preceding 25 years, and, taking into account the increased cost of materials and labor, will do one-fourth as much work. It would seem that the urgent need of additional transportation facilities had been made so plain by the continued and disastrous car shortage in 1920 that no one could fail to see it. A committee of expert engineers which investigated the question last fall reported that it would take \$18,000,000,000 to put the railroads of the United States in a condition to handle the traffic offered in normal times. There is no possibility that this amount can be procured, and, unless our railroads shall be supplemented by completely improved and adequately equipped waterways, we will continue to suffer the losses which inadequate transportation facilities always inflict.

Unless the newspapers of the country



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try cease to poison public opinion by the never-ending iteration of the "greasy lie" that river and harbor bills are "pork barrels," our great-grandchildren will be graced by the receipt of the benefits which a completely developed, adequately equipped and efficiently used national system of waterways would undoubtedly produce.

S. A. THOMPSON,
Secretary National Rivers and Harbors Congress.

HELICOPTER IS SUCCESS

FRENCH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALLY ACCEPTS MACHINE.

Substantial Sum Set Aside for Immediate Improvement of Vertical Rising Airplane.

PARIS, May 7.—The French aviation world, governmental and private, is deeply absorbed at the present time in the rapid development of the recently-invented helicopter, the airplane which is designed to rise straight up from the ground. The French government, after a careful investigation by a commission of experts, has officially accepted the machine and has set aside a substantial sum of money for the immediate improvement of the invention.

The Marquis R. Patenaude, of Argentina, is credited by some airplane experts with having actually proved its practicality, but several Frenchmen, among whom is M. L. Filippi, have since constructed helicopters with as much success as Patenaude. Experimental work now is going on near Paris at an army aviation field, through which the government hopes to perfect the new airplane. As yet the helicopter is in the same stage of development as were the first flying machines constructed by the Wright brothers.

At the Aero club of France, where the helicopter is the chief topic of conversation, experts predict that within two years the new airplane will be a practical reality. Considerable surprise was expressed by these same experts that the United States government had apparently not taken up the new machine, inasmuch as it may materially affect sea warfare.

The helicopter, described simply without attempt at technicalities, is a machine constructed of a series of horizontal planes revolving in opposite directions. On the Pescara machine a base similar to that of a low-flying automobile is used. On this is the Aero club of France, where the helicopter is the chief topic of conversation, experts predict that within two years the new airplane will be a practical reality. Considerable surprise was expressed by these same experts that the United States government had apparently not taken up the new machine, inasmuch as it may materially affect sea warfare.

built two series of horizontal planes, each series composed of ten planes. The usual airplane motor starts the planes and the effect is to make the machine rise straight up from the ground.

In the experimental work a small gas bag has been used for safety purposes, but the work is so far along that these bags are being abandoned.

It is hoped that the perfected machine, which is expected within two years, will be able to rise from the deck of a battleship in mid-ocean.

Pescara is conducting experiments at Barcelona, Spain, where the French army commission has spent several weeks in observation. His career has been romantic. Employed in experimental laboratories of the Italian government before the war, Pescara came to Paris soon after the beginning of the war and continued his work under army supervision. He was credited with hundreds of inventions, among them a dirigible which flew

over the enemy lines and dropped bombs at stated intervals.

Suddenly, at the height of Pescara's success, the French police arrested him as a spy and he was kept in prison for several months. The French ministry of war protested his innocence and obtained his release on condition that he be deported. He left for Spain and soon after the armistice began his helicopter experiments.

JOB HELD ON SUFFERANCE

Resignation of Seattle Customs Collector Expected Soon.

THE OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, D. C., May 7.—Roscoe Drumheller is permitted to retain the job of collector of customs at Seattle only by the fact that the two Washington senators have not found time to get together on the

two most important jobs in the state. It was said Friday. Mr. Drumheller's resignation is to be asked soon and the request only awaits word from Senators Jones and Folger that they are ready to name the successor to Mr. Drumheller as well as the man they prefer to succeed David M. Williams as collector of internal revenue at Tacoma.

Seniors Present Comedy.

CENTRALIA, Wash., May 7.—(Special.)—The senior class of the Centralia high school presented a three-act comedy, "All of a Sudden Peggy" before a packed house at a local theater last night. Members of the cast were Perry Acker, William Harris, Frank Arvason, George Griggs, Newell Banks, Rex Fulton, Alberta Sonneveld, Martha Uhlmann, Jessie Buchanan, Sara Castle and Erel Foron.

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