

# NATIONAL CAPITAL AFFAIRS

## Uncle Sam's Aero Boat Experiments Are Watched



WASHINGTON.—Foreign governments have had their military and naval representatives in Washington watching the experiments that this government has been conducting at the Washington navy yard with the new catapult device for launching aeroplanes. The launching machine is the design of Capt. W. I. Chambers, in charge of aviation in the navy. It practically is a compressed air gun that shoots the aeroplane into the air so that it can be launched from a warship at any time and the catapult then stored below, out of the way.

Several tests of the device have been made, various hydro-aeroplanes being used. What was generally considered the supreme test was made the other day when the new aero-boat that has been built for the navy by Glenn Curtiss was shot into the

air for a successful flight with Lieut. Theodore Ellyson, the first of the navy aviators, at the helm.

The new boat is larger and heavier than any other hydro-aeroplane the government has used. It has a body like a light, fast powerboat, and seats two passengers side by side, with a double-control mechanism, so that either man can act as aviator. The boat is driven by an eighty-horse power motor, and is capable of a speed of fifty miles on the water and sixty miles in the air.

This launching device is the first that has been practical and successful from a navy standpoint. It was proved more than a year ago, when Eugene Ely flew from the scoutship Birmingham and afterward flew and alighted on the battleship Pennsylvania, that the aeroplane could be launched at sea. In both these cases, however, a special platform was built and extensive preparations were made for the flight.

The new catapult can be clamped to the top of a turret and the turret revolved to shoot the aeroplane into the teeth of the wind without even turning the wheel of the vessel. The device takes only half an hour to erect.

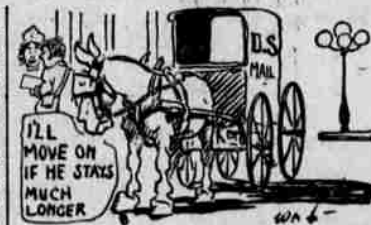
## Postmen Cannot Loiter When Mike Is on Duty

CHARLES B. MATTHEWS, superintendent of carriers in the Washington postoffice, and the man who originated what is known as the "block" system of mail delivery, a system that has been copied all over the country, said today:

"One of the most intelligent and faithful assistants I have is Mike. Mike is a very humble sort of somebody, so humble, in fact, that he even hasn't any other name.

"Mike is just an old white horse, sound of body, clean of limb and brighter in his intelligence than many human beings that have been sent to me for service.

"You can't fool him. When the hour for starting on his route comes and Ernest Miller, the carrier who owns him, in full uniform, gets in his seat, Mike looks first up and then down the street to see if his road is clear, being particularly careful to watch a little longer to see if an electric car is about to start on its way to Alexandria.



"Once started, he takes in each hotel in its turn. He will not permit the carrier who goes with him to stop on his way or loiter. If he tries to do so Mike simply walks on. So when he arrives at the hotel he allows time for the carrier to take the mail in and get back, and if he does not come back within that time Mike simply moves on to his next stop.

"Why, I can send the greenest sut in the office out with Mike and he won't go astray, if he knows how to read the labels on the mail sacks.

"He is never sick and has never lost an hour's time."

## Much Interest Being Shown in Muskrat Farming



ACCORDING to the annual report of the biological survey recently submitted to Secretary Wilson, the rearing of fur-bearing animals in the United States for their pelts continues to be a subject of much interest.

Skunks, muskrats, minks and foxes are reared in captivity or on preserves under control of breeders. The large prices asked for mature black foxes for breeding purposes have resulted in confining the industry in the hands of a very few. Comparatively few at-

tempts have been made to raise minks in the United States, but experiments are being conducted in co-operation with the National Zoological park with a view to determining the most successful methods of rearing these animals. Muskrat farming has probably reached its highest point of development on the eastern shore of Maryland. Muskrat marshes are worth more, measured by their actual income, than cultivated farms of like acreage in the same vicinity. Only one other animal in the world, the European rabbit, exceeds the muskrat in the number of skins marketed.

The report also calls attention to the experiments for the extermination of prairie dogs, ground squirrels and gophers that are being conducted by means of poison baits, traps and other methods. It is a surprising fact that the daily forage of 32 adult prairie dogs equal that required for a sheep, and that 250 eat nearly as much as a cow.

## Whites on Reservations Are as Dry as Poor Lo

WHITE men are not to be allowed to have "booze" while the Indian goes dry on Indian reservations. There is not to be one law for the red man and another for his white brother where they dwell together on the Indians' lands, the Indian bureau chief declares.

The white man can have readier access to the red ink that is really a writing fluid and which has proved palatable and exhilarating, according to the records, to those who need alcoholic excitement and find other sources dried up. And he may slake his acquired thirst from the mucilage bottle with greater facility perhaps. These and other devices have been known to the Indian while seeking ease for a parched throat.

But the white man on an Indian reservation from now on may not have whisky or other alcoholic beverage, either, for refreshment or to cure his ills or as a precaution against ailments, even on a physician's prescription, as long as the ban is on the In-



Indian. The only intoxicant not under prohibition remains the wine intended solely for sacramental purposes, to be brought into the reservations under church authority.

Circular No. 695, Indian bureau, signed by Acting Commissioner F. H. Abbott and indorsed by the acting secretary of the interior, addressed to the superintendents of Indian schools and agencies, directs observance of the law in strict conformity with its letter. It also calls attention to irregularities in observance of the law that have come to the attention of the bureau.

## HAT REALLY AN ORNAMENT

English Men and Women of Times Past Wore Wonderful and Imposing Headgear.

Ladies probably did not begin to wear hats until about the tenth century, if so early, and then it was the lofty headdress draped with some material, which it must have been most trying to keep on indoors, and quite impossible to wear in a wind.

According to the "Anatomy of Abuses," written in Queen Elizabeth's time, ladies' hats were very nearly as perplexing then as they are, today.

"These fashions be rare and strange, so is the stuff whereof the hats be made divers also; for some are of silke, some of velvet, some of tafeta and some of wool, and which is more curious, some of a certain kind of fine hair, these they call beaver hats."

In the reign of Henry VIII., hats assumed a "great richness and beauty," but in the time of the first James they became even more ornate, jewels of price and occasionally small mirrors being used in their adornment. At times of revelry the gallants wore feathers in their hats, which were said to be one of the "fairest ensignes of their braverie."

But for adornment men's hats were in their zenith in the days of Charles. The big felt hats with the long feather saucily curled around them, fastened with a buckle often of great value, gave a dash of air to the cavaliers, which absolutely cast the tall solemn hats of the Puritans and "Psalm singers" into the shade.

The monster hats of the time of the empire were almost as big as "the Merry Widow" of modern fame, and in shape today they were positively unique. Men's hats have suffered great changes since the time of Charles, and it is more than doubtful if they will ever again become ornate.

Indeed, save in very remote parts of Wales where the old women still—some of them—wear the high-crowned steeple hat, there is nothing especially peculiar about the headgear of the English peasantry.

### Statue to Potatoes.

"When I was in Germany last year," says a man who travels, "I saw some people who like potatoes even better than I do. At any rate, they erect statues to them, and even if I could afford it I hardly think I should do that.

"Offenberg was the first city to erect a monument of this kind. The upper part consists of a statue of Sir Francis Drake, who introduced the plant into Europe. This, as well as the pedestal, is draped with garlands of the potato vine, with full-grown tubers attached.

On the pedestal, on one side, is Sir Francis Drake's name, the second side explains what a blessing the potato has been to mankind, the third records that the statue is the gift of a certain Andrew Frederick of Strasburg. The fourth contains the names of the erectors. A statue similar to this is placed in the town of Murr, and I have been told that there are other copies in many small towns."

### Australia Gets Wireless.

The chain of wireless stations around Australasia will in a few months be an accomplished fact, it is said, and Australia, New Zealand and the islands will be in constant touch day and night. The station at Awanui bay, North Auckland, is practically in operation already, although not yet officially taken over by the government. The installation, a 30-kilowatt one, compares very favorably with that at Pennant Hills, Sydney, and with the high power station at Fremantle, will enable Auckland to "speak" to Sydney or Fiji at any time. A similar installation is now in course of erection at The Bluff, in the south of New Zealand, and there are three supplementary stations in the dominion.

### Chinese River Boats.

The rivers of China are notable for the queer unrigged craft that throng their reaches in the neighborhood of towns. The handsomest of these is the Hwa Ting, or flower boat. Many of the pretty craft form the resort or dwelling place of China's sing-song girls, while others are held for hire, as are our houseboats and yachts, for pleasure excursions. These are propelled by long oars, or poles, in the hands of servants who tread a narrow gangway running along their length.

These river boats are the homes, offices and shops of those whose lives are spent aboard them. Moored along the bank with the bow fastened to a long hawser, extending for perhaps a thousand feet up or down the stream, they rise and fall with the tide or with the swell of some passing steamer, year in and out. They only leave for the time necessary to pursue some call of trade in another part of the harbor, then return again to fit into their accustomed place. In Canton, alone, the boat city of China, there are said to be 84,000 of these "chop-boats," as they are called.

# RURAL LIFE IN HOLLAND

WE are on the high road to Harderwyk, one of the small "dead cities" of the Zuyder Zee. It is Saturday morning and market day, the

most important weekly occurrence in these environs. Market begins quite early and must now be over, for it is close upon 11 o'clock and we meet the returning stream of peasants. They have sold all their eggs and other produce, have made their purchases in town for the coming week and are now returning homeward, writes W. J. L. Kiehl, from The Hague, in the Chicago Daily News.

Most of them are on foot, but some come driving in carts and in wagons that are curiously carved and painted a dark green color. Some of these wagons are hooded with either white or dark blue cap-like covers. From underneath these hoods peep the smiling faces of the peasant women. Every one gives us a friendly nod and a cheerful "good morning." The drivers of the vehicles that overtake us half stop their teams as they offer us a lift. But we do not accept the kind offers, for the walk is far too enjoyable this fine winter morning.

### Fond of Blue Colors.

Every man, woman or child we meet is carrying a basket, sometimes two, and a few bundles. The baskets are all covered with kerchiefs, many of a dark blue ground with light blue floral pattern, or blue and white check

and headdresses. The younger children wear black, hoodlike caps, such as we see in pictures of the Stuart period in England.

On work days every one wears wooden shoes. Only on Sundays do the wealthier peasant women wear leather shoes with great silver buckles, the latter often ancient heirlooms of beautiful workmanship. On this market day many of the women have donned their Sunday things and are showing off their leather shoes. In wooden shoes, however, every one seems to be more comfortable and we actually met two or three girls on bicycles, with their wide skirts, curious caps, wooden shoes and all! And they seem to get along perfectly well on their "bikes" with their wooden shoes; only, somehow, it seems incongruous and a sort of anachronism to see such modern things as bicycles on the old road with its people of bygone ages, as it seems.

### Dress of the Men.

The men also still adhere to the ancient dress. The trousers do not differ much from those we see in south Holland. A double breasted waistcoat or a short black or dark blue jacket lined with very heavy dark blue flannel are worn with the kerchief in dark colors around the neck. They also carry a gold brooch that is attached to a kind of collar of white knitted cotton, on which are worked in red the name or initials of the wear-



DISCUSSING POLITICS

The bundles, too, are all wrapped in such cloths. Strange, this preference for dark blue, which also obtains in the dress of all these peasants. The women wear black skirts, with wide plaited overjackets, low at the neck, where they show a neck kerchief of spotless white, over which is pinned a bright scarlet flowered overkerchief. But the long wide aprons they all wear and which entirely cover the skirts, are dark navy blue without exception.

The headdress is curious and consists of many pieces, all of which have some meaning of their own, showing whether the wearer is maid, wife or widow, or whether she is in deep or light mourning. Most of the women we meet wear close-fitting white lace or calico caps, over which is tightly drawn the kerchief, of a bright colored flowery pattern on cream ground. Over this is laid a wide silver band, lying close to the neck and coming up over the ears. Just above the eyes two gold spirals are fastened that look like small horns. At the back, the silver headpieces have engraved the initials of the wearer and are decorated with some sprays of leaves or flowers.

Although not so costly as the gold headpieces of the Holland and Frisian peasants, these silver ornaments represent good values, costing from 36 to 40 florins (\$14.40 to \$16). Every girl, as soon as she reaches the age of fifteen is prompted to wear these caps

er. These brooches are made like two large buttons, more or less ornamented with filigree, and hold the neck kerchief in place at the throat. A black silk cap, sometimes with embroidered border, complete the costume.

Many of these men carry finely chased silver or old brass tobacco boxes, for they all chew tobacco.

The tiny boys in their dress are exact counterparts of the men. Some few men we meet wear very long coats and high hats. That is a mourning costume, we are told, which custom requires to be worn on Sunday and feast days as a mark of respect for the dead.

Few carry umbrellas. They are not very necessary here, for the clothing is almost impervious to rain. It is so thick and of so satiny a sheen that the water does not penetrate, but runs off it as from a duck's back. It is the thickness of the material and not any undue number of petticoats that makes the women's dress stand out so widely around them, and that make even the long coated jackets of the little girls stand out as if they were whaleboned. The workday jackets of women and girls have short sleeves; and only on very cold days do they wear finely knitted black woven mittens over their bare arms. But the Sunday jackets are long sleeved and of a silky brocade appearance.