

ony Seen in Impeachment Action

WARREN C. PRICE

Professor of Journalism at the University of Maine, Robert Hale from Portland, Me., introduced into the House of Representatives a resolution calling for the impeachment of President Harry S. Truman.

Hale advanced a compromise resolution under which the president would declare that the mills had violated the Constitution in seizing the steel mills and that the mills should be returned to private operation.

Rep. Harris, of the Fourth Congressional District of Oregon, have used the word "impeach" in recent days. Ironically, it is a man from Maine who takes the first overt action.

Because of the "ironically?" Because it was a man from Maine who also took action in the impeachment proceedings. In that case, however, it was a final step. By it this Congress would have impeached Sen. William Pitt Fessenden.

Sen. Fessenden was a Republican, too, a member of a party which in the post-Civil War days was the brutal duet with Reconstruction. Most of the Republican members of what was known as the Radical wing, were "get Johnson" by what means came to hand, and the impeachment trial in the year of 1868 has been labeled by historians "as the regrettable and shameful expression of personal spite and party partisanship in American history."

When the impeachment finally came to a vote, on July 14, 1868, Fessenden of Maine voted to abide by the Radical's expressions of justice. His sense of fairness overcame the power of discipline. And since his name came early in the roll-call, Fessenden was the first to vote the Radical core against Johnson. He called out, "Not guilty."

Almost any others of the 435 members of the House of Representatives in 1868 had introduced a resolution impeaching Johnson. It could hardly have given a spark to a historical news feature such as this. Maine, however, has only three congressmen among the 435, seven-tenths of one percent of the membership. A dramatist perhaps could call upon the shades of William Pitt Fessenden and wonder what he would say today.

OF COURSE, Andrew Jackson was not acquitted by the vote of Sen. Fessenden alone. The President needed seven Radical Republican "backsliders" in order to stay in office. He got exactly seven and the final impeachment vote was 35-19, one short of the two-thirds necessary to remove him. Only the 12 Democratic votes in the Senate could be called sure for Johnson, so completely did the Republicans dominate at the time.

The other six Republican supporters of Johnson were S. J. Fowler of Tennessee; J. W. Grimes of Iowa; J. B. Henderson of Missouri; E. G. Ross of Kansas; Lyman Trumbull of Illinois; and P. G. Van Winkle of West Virginia. Yet, they followed Fessenden on the roll-call. Some one had to break the Radical phalanx that opposed the President. If Sen. Fessenden had not had the courage, no one can answer nearly a century later whether the others would have followed.

There is conjecture among historians today that, in any case, Johnson would have been saved. If these seven had not voted for him some other Republican



WM. PITT FESSENDEN
Bolted Party Rule



ANDREW JOHNSON
Saved by Republicans

Lyman Trumbull lived until 1896 and came fleetingly back into politics in 1876 as counsel for Samuel J. Tilden in the disputed Hayes election of that year. Henderson disappeared completely, though he was only 42 when he cast his critical vote; he lived 45 more years and died in 1913 at 87. Ross came back momentarily as governor of the barren New Mexico territory by appointment of Democrat Grover Cleveland in 1885. Only to be removed when Old Guard Benjamin Harrison took office in 1889.

Fowler and Van Winkle vanished from notice so completely that their names today are not even listed in such an all-inclusive work as Webster's Biographical Dictionary. Only Fessenden among the seven has a biography in the Encyclopedia Britannica.

THAT was the fate of those who dared to defend a President in 1868. All of them had had distinguished careers before that year.

The story of the Johnson impeachment is told in many places, in many biographies of the President; passionately, almost, with great sweeps of description in Claude Bowers' "The Tragic Era"; legally and coldly in constitutional histories of the United States; in newspapers of the day; and in personal memoirs of the politicians; even in doctoral theses.

WHAT STARTED it all? President Johnson had removed Edwin M. Stanton, secretary of war, in what Congress called violation of the Tenure-of-Office Act. The act forbade the president from removing an executive appointee without advice and consent of the Senate. Fifty-eight years later the Supreme Court declared the act unconstitutional. But at the time the House trumped up 11 gross charges of "high crimes and misdemeanors." In the purely political trial before the Senate the Radicals almost made the charges stick.

The uproar over Harry Truman in 1952 and his action on steel is picaresque by comparison. Reporters say that Hale's resolution, now before the House Judiciary Committee, will languish there. In any case, it may pay to withdraw from the current scene momentarily, let tempers cool, and survey the carnage of 1868.

Grove Pioneer Dies in Portland

William Wesley (Wes) Chrisman, a life-long resident of Lane County died Thursday, April 24, 1952, in Portland at the age of 85.

He was born in Eugene Dec. 4, 1866, the son of W. S. and Caroline Chrisman, early-day pioneers in the Willamette Valley. He was married to Anna L. McFarland in Eugene, Oct. 12, 1886. She preceded him in death in 1944.

He had lived in and near Cottage Grove since infancy and was a retired stock rancher.

Surviving are two daughters, Mrs. Ethel Scott, of Cottage Grove, and Mrs. Jennie Bogan, Long View, Wash.; a granddaughter, Mrs. Glennie Lojeski, Cottage Grove, and a great granddaughter, Julie Lojeski, Cottage Grove.

Funeral services will be Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. at Mills Mortuary in Cottage Grove. Interment will be in the Cottage Grove I.O.O.F. Cemetery.

TWINS KEEP PACE

BOONSVILLE, Miss. — (AP) — During the current session of Northeast Mississippi Junior College, seven sets of twins enrolled in the freshman class. Faculty members said they noticed a marked similarity in scholastic standings between twins of the same pairs.

Radio Hams Enlisted

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — (AP) — Emergency communication aids of amateur radiomen proved of such value at a Woodstock, Ala., train disaster that 11 "hams" were deputized to perform the same service again.

Sheriff Holt McDowell said the help of amateur radiomen proved invaluable after two streamliners collided killing 17 persons and injuring 60 others. He said only two telephones were available to shaken passengers and emergency crews.

The sheriff said the men will have authority to go to the scene of future tragedies and assist in communications.

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