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PLAN TO RESUME RAILWAY INQUIRY AFTER MARCH 4TH

Postponement Forced by Press
of Congressional Business.

COUNTRY DEMANDS ACTION

Shippers, Investors and Representatives of All Branches of Business Demand Unification of System of Railway Regulation—Roads Ask Fewer Masters.

Washington, Dec. 18.—The Congressional Joint Committee on Interstate Commerce, which has been conducting the inquiry into government regulation and control of transportation, last week decided to suspend its hearings on the subject and adjourned, subject to the call of the chairman, because of the pressure of other work before Congress. According to the resolution creating the committee, it is required to submit a report by January 8th next. It is understood that before that time the committee will ask for an extension of time and that the hearings will be resumed at a later date, when some of those who already have appeared before the committee will be questioned further and a great many others will be heard. "It is probable, however, that the hearings will not be resumed until after adjournment of Congress on March 4th. In addition to regular routine business the commerce committees of the two houses are charged with the important duty of preparing and presenting the legislation asked for by President Wilson to make impossible a railroad strike without previous investigation. This will leave little or no time for the consideration of the general questions of railway regulation.

Country Wants Something Done.
Members of Congress and others who are interested in the inquiry undertaken by the Newlands Committee insist that there is no intention of abandoning it. It seems doubtful, indeed, if the country would permit the matter to be dropped if there were evidence of a desire on the part of Congress to do so. The nation-wide evidence of interest evoked by the subject for the people of the country—shippers, consumers and investors, as well as railway men themselves—are alive to the fact that the railway situation is highly unsatisfactory and that steps must be taken without unnecessary delay to meet the growing needs of the nation. From reports received here it seems as though almost every commercial organization and business interest in the country were engaged in studying the railroad question. The Chamber of Commerce of the United States has been conducting an elaborate inquiry into various phases of the subject for many months past. Many local and state commercial bodies in every part of the country have committees engaged in study of the problem and have indicated a desire to come here and present their views. National organizations of manufacturers, lumbermen, coal operators, wholesale and retail dealers, have expressed through resolutions their desire for the unification of the system of railway regulation. The National Industrial Traffic League, speaking from the viewpoint of shippers using the railways, has endorsed exclusive federal regulation providing it is accomplished in such a way as to give full protection and prompt adjustment in matters relating to transportation within the states.

Many Interests Studying Problem.
All these organizations represent primarily the shippers of the country, but they are not the only ones who are taking a hand in the discussion. The investors of the nation, through their own associations and through committees representing the savings banks and other financial organizations, are preparing to show the necessity of improving railroad credit and protecting the rights of those whose money is invested in railway securities. Finally the railroads themselves, being vitally concerned in the improvement of existing conditions, are planning to submit their views through their executives, operating officials and traffic experts and to assert their willingness to accept far-reaching federal regulation along lines that will enable them to attract capital and to provide the facilities needed for the prompt and efficient handling of the country's transportation business.

Main Trouble Is Too Many Masters.
Not all of these interests are in accord as to the remedies that should be adopted. There seems to be a general agreement, however, that many of the difficulties which confront the railroads and which make it impossible for them to meet the requirements of the nation's commerce promptly and satisfactorily arise from the haphazard and often conflicting measures of regulation that have been adopted from time to time by the federal government and the forty-eight states and that what is needed is a well ordered, systematic scheme of federal regulation that shall cover the whole country and make it possible for the railroads to provide the extensions and improved facilities so badly needed, while at the same time protecting fully the public interests.

GENERAL MANGIN



General Mangin, the French commander who recently drove the Germans back at Verdun.

BRIEF WAR NEWS

Minor engagements only are reported from the Russian front in Galicia and from Macedonia.

In attacks along the Transylvanian frontier, Teutonic troops have driven ahead in the face of strong counter attacks.

Except for a French attack on the new German lines on Dead Man hill, near Verdun, which was repulsed, there is little activity along the front in France.

The Teutonic line of advance from the Wallachian plain now lies well to the north of Rimmik Sarat, on the railway from Buzeu to Fokshani, while on the right flank a still nearer approach has been made to Braila, the Danube granary, which is one of the main objectives of Von Mackensen.

Although Berlin reports that the Teutonic allies in Dobruja are keeping up their pressure against the Russians and Roumanians and have forced the Russians from fortified height positions east of Matchin, on the east bank of the Danube, opposite Braila, Petrograd announces that the invaders south of the Danube have been repulsed with heavy losses, except at the village of Rakel, which has been occupied by them. British armed motor cars, says Petrograd, did great execution in this fighting.

SHORT NEWS NUGGETS

A Vienna dispatch announces the death of Eduard Strauss, the composer of dance music.

The record time for passing a ship through the Panama canal has been lowered to six hours and 20 minutes.

The coronation of Emperor Charles and Empress Zita, of Austria, as king and queen of Hungary took place in St. Mathey church at Budapest. Argentina's wheat harvest this year will be one of the poorest the country has ever seen, due to injury by drouth and locusts, according to consular reports.

Five hundred gallons of fine whiskey, wines and beer were poured into a city water wagon at Phoenix, Ariz., and the streets of the business section sprinkled with the liquor.

Denial that Great Britain has agreed to furnish Japan, after the war, with six battleships as part of the price of Japanese participation in the conflict, was made at New York in a cable message from the Japanese government.

David Caplan, last of the four alleged dynamiters brought to trial for the destruction of the Los Angeles Times building October 1, 1910, and the death of 20 men, was sentenced to ten years in San Quentin penitentiary on a charge of manslaughter.

Railroad Strike Not Imminent.
Cleveland, Ohio.—Warren S. Stone and W. G. Lee, heads of the railway engineers' and railway trainmen's brotherhoods, declared that it is highly improbable that there will be an immediate strike as a result of the rejection by the managers' committee of their demands that the Adamson law be placed in operation January 1.

Oregon Beats Pennsylvania.
Pasadena, Cal.—The west triumphed over the east here New Year's day, for the second time in the second annual post-season football game, when the husky University of Oregon eleven defeated the speedy and more experienced University of Pennsylvania team by a score of 14 to 0.

Washington State College defeated Brown University here last year by a like score.

Carranza Wants Pershing Recalled.
Washington.—Continuation of the conferences of the Mexican-American joint commission, without regard to the question of withdrawing American troops from Mexico, is proposed by General Carranza in his message refusing to ratify the Atlantic City protocol. Coupled with this suggestion, however, is a new appeal for recall of the Pershing expedition.

ALLIES REJECT THE PROFFER OF PEACE

Declare Central Powers' Proposal Insincere and Merely "War Maneuver."

Paris.—In reply to the proffer of Germany and her allies for a peace conference, the entente allies, in a collective note, declare that they "refuse to consider a proposal which is empty and insincere." The note was handed to the American ambassador, William Graves Sharp, by Premier Briand.

The note declares that the proposal of the central powers is not an offer of peace, but a "war maneuver." It is declared to be founded on "calculated misinterpretation of the character of the struggle in the past, the present and the future."

Appended was a special Belgian protest against the crimes committed by Germany against that country. In this statement Belgium declared the king and people of the country desired no peace that does not include legitimate reparation and guarantee of security for the future.

The note declares that the present strife was desired, provoked and declared by Germany and Austria-Hungary, and that Germany made no effort to bring about a pacific solution of the trouble between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, as did Great Britain, France and Russia.

The German overtures are described as a calculated attempt to influence the future course of the war and to end it by imposing a German peace. The overtures also are said to have the effect of intimidating neutral public opinion, as well as to stiffen opinion in the central powers, "worn out by economic pressure and crushed by the supreme effort which has been imposed upon their inhabitants."

"Finally," it is asserted, "these overtures attempt to justify in advance in the eyes of the world a new series of crimes—submarine warfare, deportations, forced labor and forced enlistment of the inhabitants against their own countries and violations of neutrality."

ANSWER TO PEACE NOTE NOW READY

London.—The final draft of the reply of the entente allies to President Wilson's peace note, which already has been approved by France and Great Britain, has been forwarded to Italy and Russia and, as no changes have been suggested thus far from those quarters, it is not improbable the note will be delivered to the American ambassador in Paris, William G. Sharp, without change.

In its present form the reply is about the same length as the note to the central powers and has the same characteristics of general and guarded language. One of the most important points is a differentiation between peace among the present belligerents and such future arrangements as may be made for permanent peace, the purpose being to show neutral upholders of a future permanent peace that this is attainable.

CLAIM VICTORY ON SOMME

Haig Says Allies Can Defeat Germans on Western Front.

London.—The battle of the Somme is pictured as a sweeping triumph for entente allied arms in a detailed report by General Sir Douglas Haig, which covers operations from July 1 to November 18. General Haig terms the battle a triumph in which the German western armies were only saved from complete collapse and a decisive defeat by a protracted period of unfavorable weather that prevented the Anglo-French forces from taking full advantage of their successful advance. He declares that nevertheless it was a triumph which proved beyond doubt the ability of the allies to overthrow Germany "when the time comes." The British commander shows himself a firm believer in the doctrine that the entente allies can win the war on the western front.

Madras Grabs County Records.
Culver, Or.—Seventy-five residents of Madras, headed by William S. U'ren, of Portland, attorney for the people of Madras in the county seat fight with Culver, came to Culver New Year's day, piled the county records in automobiles and sleds and carted them over to Madras.

Town in Canada Is Under Martial Law.
Kitchener, Ont.—Following a sweeping victory at the polls of the Citizens' league, formed when the name of the city was changed from Berlin to Kitchener with a view to reverting to the original name, a riot was started by the men of the 108th battalion, who are on furlough, and the city is under martial law.

PRESIDENT WANTS RAILWAY LEGISLATION

Visits Capitol Unannounced to Discuss Bills to Prevent Strikes.

Washington.—President Wilson at a conference with Senator Newlands in the senate office building urged the immediate enactment of a compulsory arbitration bill as a protection to interstate commerce against railroad strikes.

It is understood to have been agreed at the conference that such an answer should be made by congress to the latest disagreement between the brotherhoods and the railway managers.

The president did not even permit Secretary Tumulty to know of his plan to visit the capitol. He telephoned to Senator Newlands and made the appointment himself. The chief executive is said to have approved the bill which has been drafted and desired to urge that it be passed with the least possible delay after congress convenes.

Tariff Duties on 3 Items Probable.

The advisability of restoring tariff duties on wool, rubber and coffee and of increasing the present tariff on sugar is under consideration by treasury department officials and in congress as a means of averting the threatened deficit at the end of the next fiscal year.

The tariffs under consideration are understood to be nominal and designed to provide revenue only. Rates that would amount to a protective tariff are understood to be opposed by department officials and administration leaders in congress alike.

No return to the recent stamp taxes is contemplated in the administration programme, officials assert. The unpopularity of this form of taxation was fully demonstrated, it is felt, in the operation of the emergency revenue legislation adopted soon after the war.

New Reclamation Bill Is Introduced.

The irrigation of countless acres of arid lands, and the drainage of still greater areas of swamp lands, will be made possible if congress passes the bill recently introduced in the senate by Senator Chamberlain, of Oregon, and in the house by Representative Smith, of Idaho. Whether the bill can receive final consideration this session is problematical, for it is a radical departure from existing methods of reclamation, and will probably lead to much discussion. The probabilities are that the bill will have to go over, but its presentation to congress will give the plan new publicity, and sentiment in support of it may be developed during the coming year, if the plan is generally approved.

8-HOUR CONFERENCE ENDS

Railroads and Brotherhoods Abandon Effort to Reach Agreement.

New York.—Conferences between representatives of the railroads and the four brotherhoods of railway employees, at which were discussed the possibilities of a settlement of the eight-hour controversy, were discontinued abruptly when it became apparent an agreement could not be reached.

It was announced by both sides that there would be no more meetings until after the United States supreme court handed down its decision on the constitutionality of the Adamson act.

The break came when the railroad representatives refused to concede the demands of the brotherhood chiefs for an agreement looking toward the enforcement of the new wage schedule, fixed by the Adamson law, which goes into effect January 1.

Two Take Oath as Governor.

Phoenix, Ariz.—The gubernatorial contest in Arizona became more complicated when both Governor George W. P. Hunt, democrat, and Tob Campbell, republican, claimant of the office through the recent election, took the oath of office. A recount of the ballots, which gave Campbell a slight lead, is incomplete.

Ferris Bill Signed by Wilson.
Washington.—President Wilson has signed the Ferris bill opening up 640-acre homesteads for stockraising and grazing purposes. It is accounted of great importance to the western states.

Huge Inflow of Gold.

New York.—The inflow of gold last week carried the total of the year's imports to \$684,700,000. This is by far the greatest amount of gold to enter the United States in a single year.

Filipino Can't Be American Citizen.

Honolulu.—United States District Judge Vaughan in a decision handed down here holds that Filipinos are ineligible for naturalization, inasmuch as they are neither white, of African descent nor native-born.

MRS. SKEFFINGTON



Photo by American Press Association. Mrs. F. S. Skeffington, widow of the Irish editor slain by the English, who recently escaped to America with her son.

TEUTONS PUSH BACK ROUMANIAN LINES

Berlin (by wireless to Sayville, N. Y.).—The Russians defeated in eastern Wallachia are being driven toward the Sereth by their pursuers, who are pressing on closely at their rear.

In vain did the Russians attempt to hold the strong prepared position east of Rimmik-Sarat and between the Rimmik and Buzeu rivers. The country was fitted excellently for defense, being covered with swamps, winding rivulets, ponds and extensive lakes. But again they were defeated, and everywhere the battlefield was covered with heaps of dead Russians.

Rimmik-Sarat, in spite of a tenacious defense, was taken with such speed that the Russians succeeded only in destroying one bridge south of the town, while the most important bridges across the Rimmik fell undamaged into the hands of the conquerors.

In the Dobruja the Russians are making desperate efforts to protect the Matchin bridgehead and the Danube swamps toward Galatz. However, they were again driven back by the Bulgarian and Turkish troops.

WILL NAME LOAN OFFICERS

Man From Each State in District to Get Farm Bank Position.

Washington.—The farm loan board has informed Representative Dill that within two weeks four salaried officials of the Spokane farm loan bank probably will be named, a president at \$6000, a registrar at \$4000 and secretary and treasurer at \$3500 each.

It is planned to select one of these officials each from Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana, the states embraced in the northwest district. Numerous applications are on file, but selections have not yet been made. At the time these appointments are announced the board expects also to name the preliminary board of directors.

8 Army Aviators Make Record Flight.

Philadelphia.—Eight of the 12 army aviators who started from Hempstead, L. I., for this city in a qualification test for government pilot licenses arrived at the Philadelphia navy yard, completing the flight of 165 miles in less than two hours.

Wisconsin Omits Inaugural Pomp.

Madison, Wis.—As a measure of economy, for the first time in the history of Wisconsin, the constitutional state officers-elect took possession of their respective state offices Monday without the usual inaugural ceremonies.

Seven Eclipses Due in 1917.

Washington.—Four eclipses of the sun and three of the moon, the greatest number possible in a single year, will occur in 1917, according to a memorandum issued by the naval observatory.

THE MARKETS.

Portland.

Wheat—Club \$1.42; bluestem \$1.53; red Russian, \$1.40; forty-fold, \$1.46. Barley—No. 1 feed, \$37 per ton. Hay—Timothy, \$21 per ton; alfalfa, \$18.

Butter—Creamery, 34c. Eggs—Ranch, 40c. Wool—Eastern Oregon, 36c; valley, 35c. Hops—1916 crop, 6@9c.

Seattle.

Wheat—Bluestem \$1.51; club \$1.47; forty-fold, \$1.47; red Russian, \$1.36; tife, \$1.47; turkey red, \$1.53. Barley—\$37 per ton. Butter—Creamery, 33c. Eggs—43c.

BRYAN AGAINST OWNERSHIP BY THE GOVERNMENT

Gives Newlands Committee His Views on Railroad Control.

COMPETITION PREFERABLE.

Federal Regulation Should Not Be Allowed to Exclude Exercise of State Authority, He Contends—Thinks Railroad Stocks Should Represent Actual Value and Be Stable as Government Bonds.

Washington, Dec. 11.—William J. Bryan, who started the country ten years ago by advocating government ownership of railroads, appeared before the Newlands Joint Committee on Interstate Commerce last week in support of the claim that the states should be allowed to retain authority over the regulation of all transportation lines within their borders. Mr. Bryan explained that he had long regarded government ownership as inevitable, but only because of railroad opposition to effective regulation.

Against Government Ownership.
"Personally I cannot say that I desire government ownership," he explained, "because I lean to the individual idea rather than to the collective idea; that is, I believe that government ownership is desirable only where competition is impossible."

Alfred P. Thom, counsel to the Railway Executive's Advisory Committee, previously had presented before the members of the Newlands Committee as one of his reasons for urging a better balanced and more systematic regulation of railroads the argument that this is the only alternative to government ownership. Calling attention to the restrictions imposed upon the transportation lines by conflicting state laws and regulations, to the practical cessation of new construction and to the impossibility under existing conditions of securing the new capital needed for extensions and betterments of railway facilities, he warned the Congressmen that unless they provided a fair and reasonable system of regulation that would enable the railroads to meet the growing needs of the country's business the national government would be compelled to take over the ownership of the lines with all the evils attendant upon such a system.

Preservation of Competition.
Mr. Bryan, on the other hand, holds that the further extension of federal authority over the railroads would be a step in the direction of government ownership. He advanced the view that the centralization of control in the hands of the national government would impose too great a burden upon the regulating body, would offer strong temptation to railroads to interfere in politics and would encourage the general movement toward centralization of power in the federal government at the expense of the states. He said that he did not object to consolidations of railroad lines so long as they did not destroy competition, that he knew of no complaint against great railway systems because of their size and that he believed that the preservation of competition was the test to be applied to all consolidations.

Regulation of Securities.
Mr. Bryan declared himself in favor of national regulation of railway stock and bond issues, but added that he saw no reason why that should exclude the states from acting on the same subject as to state corporations. "I would like to see the stock of a railroad, as long as it is in private hands, made as substantial and as unvarying as the value of a government bond," he asserted. He suggested that railroad capitalization be readjusted to equalize it with actual valuation of the property represented, making due allowance for equities, and that when this was done the roads should be allowed to earn sufficient income to keep their stock at par and to create a surplus. The latter, he tentatively proposed, might be allowed to amount to 25 per cent of the capital.

Railway Earnings Low.
This subject of railroad capitalization and the amount of railroad earnings received further attention from the committee during its recent sessions. In answer to questions by Senator Cummins, Mr. Thom submitted figures showing the net earnings of the roads in recent years. These figures show that during the five years from 1905 to 1910 the average net earnings were 5.25 per cent of the net capitalization, while for the five years from 1910 to 1915 the average was only 4.96 per cent. The total earnings on the stock, computed by adding to the net operating income the income from the securities owned and deducting bond interest, were for 1910, 7.00 per cent; for 1911, 6.17 per cent; for 1912, 4.97 per cent; for 1913, 5.94 per cent; for 1914, 4.06 per cent; for 1915, 3.44 per cent, thus showing an almost continuous decrease throughout this six year period. It was announced that Harold Erickson, formerly chairman of the Wisconsin Railroad Commission, would submit more complete information on this subject to the Committee at a later date.