

**GOSSIP
AT THE
CAPITAL**

Politics: Water Transportation, Battleships, the Ice Trust and Other Things

Washington, Aug. 2.—By far the most discussed topic in Washington today is the clash of federal and state authority in North Carolina. Speculation is rife as to the outcome of the matter, and many and varied are the opinions expressed by politicians and others who have made a study of the situation and have summed up its possibilities. All are agreed, however, that it will require extremely delicate handling if the difficulty is to be adjusted without serious consequences, and officials of the administration therefore are loath to commit themselves, refusing to express any opinion. Aside from the possibilities of a serious conflict between the federal and state governments and all which that might involve, the political aspect is of vast importance. Men of foresight, who have analyzed the matter minutely, point out that the result of the next presidential election easily may hinge upon the manner in which the situation is handled or developed, as, in the event of a serious clash, there undoubtedly will be a more or less popular demand for a recession to conservatism and anti-imperialism, the trouble being attributed by some at least to the mania for drastic and revolutionary legislation which has become epidemic in Washington and the capitals of several states. Whatever the outcome, the problem certainly will prove a knotty one, and the administration officials have more than a light summer task in effecting its solution.

France has just honored a Washington educator by appointing Dr. Joseph Dunn an officer of the French academy because of his researches in Breton folk lore and his interest in Breton literature. Dr. Dunn has been a prolific contributor to the best magazines on these subjects, and his articles have been so well received in France that the government finally decided to confer the appointment. He is one of the youngest Americans ever to receive the title, being only 29 years old. Distinctions from foreign governments are falling fast these days on scientists and educators in the national capital. Only a few days ago Oscar P. Austin, chief of the government bureau of statistics and occupants of the chair of commerce and finance in the George Washington university, was made a member of the royal commission of statistics of Belgium, an honor that is seldom conferred upon foreigners and especially upon Americans. It is only natural, however, that these honors should come to Washington, where the opportunities for research have attracted so many scientific men of national and international reputation. Because of the presence of these men here, Washington is regarded as the logical location for a typically American university, a position that George Washington university aspires to fill, and which the administration officials from President Roosevelt down believe it is amply able to do.

Simultaneously with the institution of a suit this week by the government against the "powder trust," comes the charge, in an open letter to the President, that the Georgia disaster was not, as the navy board concluded, due to a flareback of the gases, but to inferior powder which was fraudulently foisted upon the

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government by "switching" powder than the sample furnished the government for test. The powder is made by Robert S. Waddell, president of an independent powder company of Peoria, Ill., who also suggests to the President that a limit be established by the government on future efforts on the part of the men behind the gun to "beat the record" in rapid-fire target practice. This suggestion appears to have been adopted by the department without injury to the service, with benefit to the gunner, whether or not the powder was inferior, it is certain that had the gun crew been endeavoring to establish a new record for rapid and accurate firing the accident which resulted in the loss of so many lives would not have occurred. It is known as yet what action will be taken on the charge made by the Illinoisian.

Another clash of state and federal authority came this week, and though it is of interest to those familiar with the pro and con of the old question of state's rights, it hardly attains the magnitude of the North Carolina conflict. A man stationed at Fort Brandy, Mich., Sault Ste. Marie, while firing a revolver who was attempting to arrest, missed his mark and killed a Canadian girl who was crossing the reservation. Remembering the trouble which the Homer case caused, the military authorities immediately placed the man who was the shooting under arrest, and will be tried by court martial. Civil authorities have in the meantime demanded his surrender for trial in the state courts, but this was refused by the war department, notwithstanding that the shooting occurred on a military reservation. Civil authorities claim jurisdiction by reason of the fact that the man is at peace and the military force should be subservient. However, the supreme court of the United States established a precedent in the Grafton case, in which the state courts will not be allowed to have custody of the man. In the Grafton case, it will be remembered, the centers around his shooting of a Filipino on a government reservation and his subsequent conviction for manslaughter by the civil courts after his acquittal by court martial. The case was appealed and eventually the supreme court held that a second trial was illegal in that the defendant was twice in jeopardy for the same act.

Contained in five short hours of consular report this week is a found a whole sermon on the benefits of water transportation. The gist of the matter is a comparison of the cost on galvanized iron and cement from England to Johannesburg. The port is made by Consul R. R. Mott of Elizabeth, Cape Colony. It is found that the cost of transporting galvanized iron from England to Natal, a thousand miles, is \$6.07 per ton. The charge by rail on the ship from Natal to Johannesburg, 1,000 miles, is \$26.77, or more than four times as much, although the distance by sea is nearly 15 times as great. From and to the same places, a ton of cement costs 98 cents by rail and \$4.78, respectively. These figures are enlightening, and bear out the contention made by the National Rivers and Harbors congress, which has discovered that the difference between rail and water rates in this country is practically as great, and transportation on the average is one-sixth of that by rail, and in the Great Lakes much less. The saving to shippers in the United States would be much greater if the waterways of the country were developed so as to admit of steady navigation. The National Rivers and Harbors congress is working to this end, and its urging upon congress the necessity for appropriating \$50,000,000 a year to prosecute such work. The organization's special director, John A. Fox, at present is visiting the various sections of the country seeking the moral and financial support of cities, communities and persons; its secretary, Capt. J. P. Mason of Cincinnati, also is at work in endeavoring to increase membership so that the influence of the organization may be made more potent by the time the sixtieth congress convenes.

With the christening of the battleship Utah, the navy department will have exhausted its list of names for Uncle Sam's new war craft, and will have to face the serious problem of finding suitable names for the battleships of the future. Although the United States possesses only 29 battleships, the state except Utah at present has no namesake among our navy. This