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Useless Junkets

While no one familiar with American political procedure expects to see President Wilson and Vice-President Marshall resign their offices in order to permit President-elect Harding to begin at once the reorganization of the federal government, the stubborn fact remains that Mr. Bryan, in making that suggestion, did point to a serious defect in the American electoral system. The face of the country is set firmly against the present Democratic administration. That was proved clearly in the general election; but, under our present system, this administration must remain in power until March.

In Great Britain Parliament adjourns over elections and no member continues to serve the electorate after his successor has been named. The congress elected in 1918 will resume its session in December. It is hopelessly out of harmony with the spirit of the country; but the members elected this month cannot take their seats until March.

When the original text of the constitution was written there was a reason for setting the date for inauguration four months later than that of election. Then there were neither steam engines nor telegraph lines. Collection of election returns was necessarily slow. Getting the returns to Washington was also a tardy process and, in those days, the session of the electoral college was not a cut-and-dried affair. The representatives of the different states were not bound by party pledges to support any given candidate. They canvassed the field and exercised their own judgment. A delay of several weeks was possible before the electoral college made a choice.

All those delays are now eliminated. The vote of all the states is officially canvassed within a month's time after the closing of the polls. The result is forwarded by wire to Washington and the session of the electoral college is perfunctory. There is no valid reason why the new President should not be inaugurated on the first of January instead of waiting until March.

Many things are done during the four months that elapse between the time when an administration is voted out of office and it formally abdicates. During the session of a "dead" congress appropriation bills of a doubtful nature are generally passed. The retiring politicians have their last opportunity to feather their nests. It is fortunate for the taxpayers of the country that the Republicans have a majority in the present house of representatives. If the Democrats were in control the country would probably witness a final raid on the federal treasury.

Plans have already been made in the federal departments for a series of junketing trips at the country's expense for the deserving Democrats who will be promptly retired when the administration changes. Secretary of State Colby is to make a visit to the republic of South America for the ostensible purpose of discussing questions of mutual interest to the different governments. Does anyone imagine the state departments of the South American republics are going to waste their time discussing questions of public polity with dead ones? The South American statesmen know that Secretary Colby will not return to Washington until a few weeks before the administration changes. There will be a new Secretary of State as soon as Mr. Harding is inaugurated. The information which Mr. Colby gathers may be useful to him in writing his memoirs later; but it will be of no value to the

government or the people of the United States.

Anthony Caminetti, Commissioner-General of Immigration, is another department head who will enjoy a junket of at least three months at the expense of the taxpayers of the country. It is officially announced that Mr. Caminetti is to pay an extended visit to the countries of southern Europe during the winter for the purpose of making a study of immigration problems. As in the case of Mr. Colby, the information which he gathers will be of no value to the country; for he will return to Washington only in time to turn his office over to an appointee of the new President. He will doubtless enjoy a visit to the Riviera, which is second only to Southern California as a winter resort. His expenses will all be paid by the government and he will draw his salary, unless he adopts a course different from that of his political predecessors. But what return will the taxpayers of the country get for the money so expended?

We have enumerated but a couple of striking instances concerning the manner in which the deserving Democrats in the different federal departments will spend the time between November and March. The fault is with the system, for it gives to politicians a chance for a last clean-up before they are cast into outer darkness. The machinery of the federal government will practically stand still during the four months that elapse between the 2nd of November and the 4th of March; but the government expense of \$15,000,000 a day will continue to register like a faithful taximeter.

Perhaps the Nineteenth amendment will get rid of this anachronism and provide that the terms of the new President and new members of congress shall begin on the 4th of January in place of the 4th of March. —Los Angeles Times.

ITALIAN WOMEN NOW HAVE VOTE

London, Nov. 13.—The Italian chamber of deputies by a vote of 240 to 10 has granted women the suffrage, says a dispatch to the Exchange Telegraph.

WEAK WOMEN

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