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CLOUD IN BALKANS

RUSSIA ALARMED BY AUSTRIA AND GERMAN MOVEMENTS.

VIEWS OF FOREIGN OFFICE

Action Regarding Railroad Violates Agreement Entered Into and May Cause Trouble.

St. Petersburg—Baron von Aehrenthal's reiteration of the determination of Austria to build a railroad through Novipazar, a connecting link for the Austrian line through Bosnia with the Turkish line to Salonki, and the announcement by the German foreign office of its financial support to this plan, have left no illusions here regarding the fate of the agreement looking to joint action in the Balkans, negotiated by Emperor Nicholas and Emperor Francis Joseph at Muerzsteger in the autumn of 1903, which was the ground work of the subsequent program of reforms in Macedonia.

The attitude of the Russian foreign office as learned through an inspired press is that the agreement, which is regarded as already violated in spirit by the Austrian foreign ministers' efforts to extend and consolidate the Austrian sphere of influence by a private bargain with the sultan, for the construction of the railroad should be abrogated. Russia is now left a free hand to work out its own policy in the near east. Negotiations are still being conducted to the end of inducing Austria to withdraw its railroad scheme, but no hope of their success is held out on either the Austrian or the Russian side. The principal efforts at present are being devoted to arranging a new grouping of the powers, it being thought here that Russia and Great Britain might enter into an agreement for joint action in Macedonia and that these two powers would be supported by France and perhaps by Italy.

The defection of such an important power as Austria, which on account of its geographical position, shared with Russia the leading role in the efforts to settle the Macedonian problem, renders the outlook dark. Since the seriousness of the Russian opposition to Austria's plans has become evident, hints have been thrown out from Vienna that Russia and Italy, as the powers most directly interested, would be allowed in the way of compensation to construct railroad lines, Italy one through Albania and Russia a line from the Danube to the Adriatic sea. Both powers, however, decline to accept this proposal.

NAVY'S CRITICS ANSWERED.

Admiral Converse Reports on His Fighting Condition.

Washington—By direction of the president, Secretary Metcalf has made public the report of Admiral Converse on the fighting ships of the American navy, called forth by many criticisms recently published in magazines and otherwise. This report was prepared primarily to satisfy the president as to the exact state of our naval ships, compared with those of other navies, and its publication is authorized with the design to reassure the American sailors as to the quality of the weapons with which they must go into battle.

THE COLLECTORSHIP FIGHT.

Ross Hammond Recommended by the Nebraska Delegation.

Washington—The fight over the United States internal revenue collectorship for the district of Nebraska has been finally ended by the recommendation of Editor Ross L. Hammond of Fremont as the choice of the Nebraska delegation in congress. It follows as a matter of course that the president will make the appointment.

CHARLES W. MORSE ARRESTED.

Promoter and Banker Taken Into Custody on His Arrival.

New York—Charles W. Morse, financier and promoter of many large combinations, including the so-called ice trust and a merger of nearly all of the coastwise steamship lines, returned Sunday from his brief trip to Europe, was arrested in his stateroom when the steamer Euryma reached quarantine.

Will Shut Down March 1.

Paterson, N. J.—The Robbers' locomotive works, branch of the American Locomotive company, will shut down March 1, it was stated, unless there is a revival in the industry before that time.

Flowers for Assassins.

Lisbon—Republicans, who were not permitted to show their respect for the assassins of King Carlos and the crown prince at the funeral of these men, went in large numbers to the cemetery and laid flowers on their graves.

PRE-ERVAATION OF COAL LANDS.

Steps Taken for Lessening of Speculation.

Washington—The records of the general land office disclose some interesting data, especially with regard to the sale of coal lands under the act of March 3, 1872, up to and including June 10, 1907.

During the year 1906 practically all of the coal lands in the public land states were withdrawn from appropriation pending their classification, based on the distance of the land from constructed lines of transportation and the grade of the coal such lands contained. The position was taken that the remaining public coal lands should be conserved and that the coal land law, which had lost its effectiveness through subterfuge on the part of many applicants desirous of securing such lands, restricted the sale of such lands to such an extent that lands known to be coal lands and chiefly valuable for such were taken under other laws. In this connection figures showing the area of coal lands sold since the passage of the act of 1872 up to June 30, 1907, have been compiled, from which it appears that during that time, or thirty-four years, but 3,032 purchases, embracing 429,407 acres and for which \$6,463,507.69 was received, have been made of both public and Indian lands containing coal, such purchases of Indian lands having only been made in the state of Colorado.

At the time of the withdrawal of the probable and known coal area, in 1906, it is estimated that approximately 67,900,240 acres were withdrawn, at which time it was also estimated that approximately 24,683,520 acres within the area had been patented or were embraced in pending entries made under some other law than the coal land law, with very few exceptions. The figures, as compiled, plainly show that many acres of coal lands have been disposed of under laws other than the coal land law, which is accounted for largely because of the provisions of the coal land law, which tend to lessen the sales under it on account of the small area one person or association of persons can purchase (an area not sufficient to justify the necessary expenditures incident to the development of a paying mine, and the price per acre at which coal lands are sold, these lands being the most expensive of all public lands). During the last summer all but approximately 14,000,000 acres of the area withdrawn in 1906 have been classified, valued and restored, some of the lands withdrawn after being examined in the field, having been found to be non-coal.

DIVISION OF MILITIA AFFAIRS.

New Department of Army Service Created for State Relations.

Washington—In recognition of the growing intimacy between the regular army and the national militia, acting Secretary of War Oliver has issued an order creating a new division department, to be known as the division of militia affairs.

Colonel E. M. Weaver of the coast artillery has been named as chief of the new division. The jurisdiction of the new division involves the armament, equipment, discipline, training, education and organization of militia, conduct of camps of instruction and participation in the field exercises and maneuvers of the regular army, and the mobilization and the relations of the militia to the regular army in time of peace.

MEMBERS SAVE THE MILEAGE.

Crumpacker Seeks to Cut it to Eight Cents.

Washington—The reading of the executive, legislative and judicial appropriation bill for amendment was begun in the house. Mr. Crumpacker (Ala.) offered an amendment reducing the mileage allowed to senators, members and delegates from 20 cents a mile to 8 cents, but on an objection by Mr. Engelbright (Cal.) it was refused on a point of order.

Experimental Farm Scheme.

Washington—Representative Scott of Kansas, chairman of the house committee on agriculture, has conceived a novel plan which he believes, if adopted, will enable the farmers of the country to produce better and far larger crops than heretofore. Mr. Scott's proposition involves the establishment of 100 experimental farms of one acre each in every county in a group of four western agricultural states for the purpose of giving the farmers a practical demonstration of the best methods of growing different crops.

Opposition to Burkett Bill.

Cheyenne, Wyo.—George S. Walker, secretary of the National Wool Growers' association and the Wyoming Wool Growers' association, left for Washington, D. C., where he will lay before the house and senate committees on public lands the protests passed by the associations he represents against the passage of the Burkett bill or any other measure providing for leasing of the public range.

MAP OF ROUTE OF 20,000-MILE AUTO RACE.



Some of the longest stretches in the New York to Paris trip are between East cape and Moscow, one covering 3,500 miles. The distances between East cape on follow:

	Miles.
From East cape, on the Bering strait, along the shores of the Arctic ocean to the Bay of Kotlutschin and the Bay of Tschau	1,000
Thence to the mouth of the Kouyama river	600
Through Nishne, Kolymsk and Svedne	324
Thence to the city of Verchojansk	1,500
Then on to Yakutsk on the Lena river	620
Following the Lena river to Irkutsk on the Siberian railroad	2,000
From Irkutsk along the line of the Siberian railroad to Moscow	3,500
From Moscow to Paris	1,800

EMPLOYER'S LIABILITY BILL PAY FOR IRRIGATED LANDS

IT IS BACKED BY THE LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.

Measure Is by LaFollette and Provides for Recovery of Damages by Injured Employes.

Washington—A comprehensive employers' liability bill was introduced in the senate and house by Senator La Follette of Wisconsin and Representative Sterling of Illinois. The authors say the bill has the endorsement of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers and Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and is intended to meet the recent decision of the supreme court in which the employers' liability act of June 11, 1906, was declared unconstitutional.

Every common carrier while engaged in interstate or foreign commerce or commerce between the possessions of the United States is made liable to its employees, who are injured while employed in such commerce, when such injuries are due to the negligence or mismanagement of any officer or employee of such carrier, or when due to defects or insufficiencies in equipment. This provision is made equally applicable to carriers in the territories, the District of Columbia and the Panama canal zone and carriers engaged in the transportation of the United States mails.

The bill recognizes the doctrine of "comparative negligence," as it is now recognized in the states of Wisconsin, South and North Dakota, Nevada, Georgia and Florida, and in the act of congress which was declared unconstitutional. It permits an employe to recover damages if he had been guilty of contributory negligence, but says the jury shall diminish the damages in accordance with the amount of negligence they may find is attributable to such employe.

It is provided also that an injured employe shall not be held to be guilty of contributory negligence in any case where the violation of law by the carrier contributed to such injury; also that questions of fact relating to negligence shall be for the jury to determine.

In the event of a verdict in favor of the employe it is required that the court shall allow as part of the costs a reasonable attorney's fees not exceeding an amount equal to 25 per cent of judgment recovered, and an additional fee equal to 5 per cent of the amount finally recovered for each appeal. It is made a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine not exceeding \$1,000, or imprisonment not to exceed six months, for an attorney to exact or receive any fee or compensation other than or additional to the amounts so allowed by the courts.

FARMERS ARE FOR CORN SHOW.

Burt County Growers Endorse Project of National Exhibit.

Craig, Neb.—The Burt County Farmers' institute closed a most successful two days' meeting Thursday. In a resolution presented by Senator Joseph Hall, the farmers pledged their hearty support for the National Corn exposition and promised to organize and be there with the goods in December.

RULING ASKED IN REGARD TO RECLAMATION SERVICE.

Senator Burkett Interesting Himself Concerning a Matter of Importance to Nebraskans.

WASHINGTON.—Senator Burkett has been interested through friends of his in Nebraska in securing from the reclamation service some definite ruling as to payments on the North Platte project, now about due. It has been the senator's contention that the reclamation law was weak in demanding payment from entrymen at the beginning of the first year of his taking up the land and water rights on the ditch. Recently the senator received a letter from M. E. Getter, who had a holding on the North Platte project, asking for an extension of time in which to begin payments upon the lands taken under that project and which promises to be one of the great enterprises which the government has undertaken for the benefit of the people in the arid or semiarid regions of the country.

Director Newell, in a letter to Senator Burkett, states that on July 29, 1907, the secretary of the interior gave notice that water would be furnished for certain lands in the North Platte project at the opening of the irrigation season of 1908 and the first installment would be \$2.90 per acre, consisting of the building charge of \$3.50 per acre on the basis of a total cost of \$35 per acre and charges for operation and maintenance of 40 cents per acre. Under these explicit directions no payment is necessary until 1909, on the theory, as Director Newell states, that the reclamation act provides that two payments must be in default before an entry can be cancelled. Accordingly, the entry will not be subject to cancellation on account of the failure of payments until after December 1, 1909.

The question of graduated payments, which has been a subject of serious thought on the part of Director Newell and his associates, especially the twenty-payment proposition which Senator Burkett has had in mind, does not meet with the approval of the reclamation service. Mr. Newell tersely says:

"Experience has shown that no matter how easy the terms are there will be a considerable portion of the men in a new country who will not succeed and who will ask further favors. In fact, we are even now asked to endeavor to have the law amended to make payments in twenty annual installments, but with this concession it will not be possible to carry to completion many of the works now planned out."

In the judgment of Director Newell this year—1908—is the most crucial year for the reclamation service, because returns are expected to come in to the reclamation fund and the success of the act is largely dependent thereon.

Indian Bill is Passed.

Washington—The Indian appropriation bill, after days of consideration on the floor, was passed by the house of representatives practically in the form recommended by the committee. The bill carries a total appropriation of approximately \$8,000,000.

THE LAW MUST BE OBEYED.

So Says a Ruling of Interstate Commission.

WASHINGTON.—An important announcement is made by the Interstate Commerce commission respecting its attitude toward the request recently made by the operating vice-presidents of the railroads of the United States that the so-called nine-hour law relating to the employment of train dispatchers, telegraph operators, and tower men be suspended by the commission until such time as the law could be amended to meet the wishes of all concerned. The commission holds in brief that it has no authority to extend the time of suspension of the operation of the law except in a particular case or in cases where a hearing has been held and good cause shown for the extension asked.

Following is a portion of the text of the commission's announcement:

"Thousands of letters and telegrams received within the last few days indicate widespread misapprehension as to the power of the commission to 'extend the law,' which goes into effect March 1, next, limiting the hours of service of employes engaged in the movement of trains upon interstate railroads.

The only authority in the record is expressed in the law, as follows:

"The Interstate Commerce commission may after full hearing in a particular case and for good cause shown, extend the period within which a common carrier shall comply with the provisions of this proviso as to such case.

"The proviso referred to is that part of section 2 which provides that no employe who handles train orders by telegraph or telephone shall be required or permitted to be on duty more than nine hours out of the twenty-four at offices continually operated night and day, nor more than thirteen hours out of the twenty-four at offices operated only during the daytime, except in case of emergency, when four additional hours may be required on not more than three days in any week.

"No other provision of the law can be extended or modified by the commission.

"The power to extend under this proviso is extremely limited. This is evident from the plain import of the language above quoted, from the context to which it relates and from the obvious purpose of the entire enactment. It seems clear to us that nothing more was intended than to authorize the commission in exceptional instances, where conditions are unusual or are unforeseen, to enlarge somewhat the time allowed to prepare for compliance."

FIFTY THOUSAND DISAPPEARS.

Safety Deposit Box Containing Valuable Papers is Missing.

Minneapolis—A safety deposit box containing bonds and securities valued at \$50,000, the personal property of Daniel C. Hopkins, vice-president of the Hopkins Land company, has disappeared from his office in the Metropolitan Life Insurance building.

MANY PASS SUITS ORDERED.

Railroad Commission to Proceed at Once Against Nebraska People.

Lincoln—Following close upon the submission of lists of passholders by the Missouri Pacific and Union Pacific railroads, the Nebraska Railroad commission has directed Attorney General W. T. Thompson to prosecute the railroads issuing the passes and the persons who have received them in cases where the law has not been obeyed. The anti-pass law provides a penalty of a fine of from \$100 to \$1,000 for offenders. Suits are to be brought by the county attorneys of the counties having jurisdiction.

SENOR GOMEZ LOSES HIS SEAT.

Filipino Member of Assembly Unseated at Manila.

Manila—After a series of exciting sessions, Senor Gomez was unseated by a vote of 40 to 35. Senor Gomez made a sensational appeal on February 10 in which he accused party leaders of playing him false. The speaker was compelled to call him to order this morning before the vote was taken. The action of the assembly declares his election void.

TAFT SWEEPS OHIO.

All Delegates from Buckeye State Instructed for Secretary.

Columbus—The net result of the republican primaries held throughout Ohio Tuesday was in favor of William H. Taft. Four delegates-at-large, forty-two district delegates to the national convention in Chicago and a list of delegates to the state convention, to be held March 3, which will be unanimously in his favor, were selected. Hardin county held no primaries. No opposition worth mentioning developed during the day.

A More Aggressive Policy.

Madrid—The press of Spain is at present occupied with recitals of an alleged divergence of views between the governments of France and Spain relative to the inauguration of a more aggressive policy in Morocco.

FOR POSTAL REFORM

COMMISSION ADVISES CONGRESS TO MAKE MANY CHANGES.

OFFICIAL TO BE IN CHARGE

Principal Assistants to Be Permanent Appointments in Conducting Postal Matters.

Washington—Congress received a preliminary report from the joint commission appointed during the last congress to investigate the business methods of the postoffice department and postal service and submit recommendations for legislation to effect changes in their administration. The commission, consisting of Senators Penrose, Carter and Clay and Representatives Overstreet, Gardner (New Jersey) and Moon, points out many objectionable features to the business methods of both departments.

Chief among the recommendations is a plan to place the actual direction of the business of the postoffice department and service in the hands of an officer, with necessary assistants, to be appointed by the president, "by and with the advice and consent of the senate," for long terms, so as to insure the continuity of efficient service. Under this plan the postmaster general, as a member of the cabinet, is chargeable with general supervisory control and the determination of questions of policy.

The commission also recommends that the business of the department be decentralized so as to avoid the congestion at the national capital, which impairs the efficiency and increases the cost of the service; that the book-keeping, auditing and accounting be simplified, unified and centralized to secure greater accuracy, more prompt methods and elimination of duplication of work; and that the practice of requiring needless detailed reports from small postoffices be discontinued. The moderate application of the non-accounting system to small offices will eliminate about 30 per cent of nearly one-half of all the postoffice accounts from the present complex report and book-keeping system, or would at least greatly simplify the same.

The commission says:

"It appears too obvious to require argument that the most efficient service can be expected as long as the direction of the business is, as at present, delegated to a postmaster general and certain assistants selected without special reference to experience and qualifications and subject to frequent change. Under such conditions a large commercial or industrial business would inevitably go into bankruptcy, and the postoffice department has availed that it be only because the United States treasury has been available to meet deficiencies.

POSTOFFICE CHANGES VITAL.

Commission Recommends Changes to Take Department from Politics.

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Naval Officers Are Afloat.

Washington—Responding to a request by the president, Secretary Metcalf on Monday sent to the senate a statement showing the number of the officers of the navy ashore and afloat. The purpose of the statement is to refute the charge that has been made to the senate committee on naval affairs that nearly one-half of the officers have been dismissed by "social pull" and are enjoying "soft berths" in Washington and at various navy posts throughout the country.

Suffragists Will Parade.

New York—Advocates of suffrage for women are preparing for a monster parade which will take place next Sunday. The line of march will be along Fifth avenue from Union square to Central park. It is expected that there will be a large number of women in line.

Government Aid to Banks.

Copenhagen—The members of the financial committee of the Folketing, excepting the social democrats, have approved the proposal that the government guarantee the liabilities of the Freeholders' bank and the Detailhandlers' bank, which are in difficulties.