

THE WORK OF THE FIFTY-NINTH CONGRESS

The Washington correspondent for the New York Tribune presents the following summary of the things accomplished by the Fifty-ninth congress:

"Railway rates to be fixed by enlarged interstate commerce commission; rebates and other discriminations penalized.

"Panama canal to have 85-foot level, with locks; Panama canal bonds to enjoy same privileges as all other United States bonds; Panama canal supplies to be domestic products.

"Pure food: Label must tell the truth, especially on popular remedies.

"Meat inspection, 'from hoof to can,' at government expense.

"Free alcohol, denatured, for use in the arts.

Oklahoma (including Indian Territory) admitted to the union, and Arizona (with New Mexico) if they agree to union.

"Consular service reorganized on merit basis.

"Quarantine against yellow fever nationalized.

"Alaska allowed a delegate in the house. Alaska liquor revenue devoted to schools and road building. Prohibition of aliens fishing in Alaskan waters.

"Naturalization safeguarded and made more difficult.

"Steamboat inspection made more rigid, due to General Slocum loss. Motor boats operated for profit required to have federal licenses.

"The Philippines: Application of coastwise law postponed until April 11, 1909. Minor tariff modifications made, and ratio of gold and silver in insular coinage changed. Batan coal mines to belong to government. Tariff duties collected before 1902 legalized. Naval vessel for Philippine naval militia.

"Gold bullion reserve in excess of \$50,000,000 to be coined. National bank liabilities limited to 30 per cent of capital.

"Employers' liability statute: Negligent common carriers within United States jurisdiction liable for damages to employees.

"Federal donations to state agricultural experiment stations increased, so that within ten years they shall each receive \$30,000 annually.

"President's traveling expenses defrayed to the extent of \$25,000 annually.

"American representative at Constantinople made ambassador, and \$150,000 appropriated to purchase legation property.

"Niagara Falls to be preserved.

"Production of pure domestic sweet wines encouraged by reduced taxation.

"Immunity of witnesses in criminal cases limited (anti-immunity bath).

"United States district judge and court officers for China, and additional judge for New York, southern district provided.

"Destruction of antiquities on United States lands forbidden and the president authorized to acquire lands which have historic value. Mariposa big tree grove accepted from California. National park established in Oklahoma and named Orville Hitchcock Platt. Battle mountain sanatorium reserve in South Dakota established for disabled soldiers.

"Trademark law amended.

"Militia efficiency to be promoted by aid of \$2,000,000.

"Final disposition of affairs of the five civilized tribes of Indians.

"Secretary of interior authorized to establish town sites of not more than 160 acres each in irrigated areas.

"Unlawful wearing of insignia of G. A. R. and other soldier organizations forbidden.

"Secretary of the navy given greater discretion in suppressing hazing at Annapolis.

"Falsely marked articles of gold or silver, or their alloys, not to be imported, exported or carried.

"Sponge growing in American waters protected.

"San Francisco sufferers aided; \$2,500,000 appropriated.

"Extending period for continuous shipment of cattle to thirty-six hours.

To destroy derelicts, \$250,000 steam vessel authorized.

"Numerous lighthouses and beacons authorized.

"Census office directed to collect and publish vital, social and other statistics.

"For District of Columbia: A juvenile court, compulsory education, sale of poisons restricted.

"Grave of Andrew Jackson, with fifteen acres of land, made a national cemetery. Marking graves of confederate soldiers ordered.

"Jamestown exposition, 1907, given aid.

"Monuments authorized: King's Mountain battleground, South Carolina, \$30,000; landing of the Pilgrims, at Provincetown, Mass., \$40,000; Princeton battleground, New Jersey, \$30,000; John Paul Jones, in Washington, \$50,000; Commodore John Barry, in Washington, \$50,000; H.

W. Longfellow, in Washington, \$4,000 for pedestal.

"Incorporations: Carnegie foundation for the advancement of learning; Archaeological Institute of America, and Ohio and Lake Erie Canal company.

"Thanks of congress extended to General Horace Porter for recovering the body of John Paul Jones.

"Restrictions on cabinet officers to prevent deficiencies of appropriation.

"Sixty-nine laws enacted authorizing bridges or dams across navigable rivers.

"Forty-three acts for the government of the District of Columbia.

"Three hundred and twenty public acts altogether.

"Three thousand six hundred and ninety Civil war pension acts; 696 private pension acts.

"Bills, introduced: House, 20,475; senate 6,551.

"Number of pages of Congressional Record, over 10,000—a new record."

The bill providing federal insurance regulation and the bill making the representatives term four years were killed.

Measures not acted on were as follows:

"Santo Domingo treaty; Isle of Pines treaty; Morocco treaty to be voted December 12; immigration restriction (in conference); Senator Smoot's right to seat; publicity of campaign affairs; prohibiting corporation campaign contributions; ship subsidy; to make Porto Ricans United States citizens; reduction of tariff on products of Philippines; United States to own its embassies and legations abroad; to build government powder factory; Appalachian and White Mountain forest reserves; copyright revision; modification of Chinese exclusion law; prescribing punishments on high seas; codification of revised statutes; navy to have biggest battleship afloat; removal of customs duty on works of art; swamp reclamation similar to irrigation statute; cable to Guantánamo and canal zone; anti-injunction bill; eight-hour law; nominations of Isthmian canal commissioners; army and navy dental surgeon corps; increase in artillery corps; to punish improper use of the stars and stripes; retirement of superannuated federal clerks; to establish postal savings banks and parcels post; limiting working hours of railway employees."

"The president vetoed eight acts of congress: Four changing jurisdiction of courts, two Indian bills, one pension bill on account of beneficiary's death, and the bill allowing carriage of dangerous explosives on passenger vessels."

What "Influence" Did in the Republican Congress

President Roosevelt appears to be well pleased with the work of congress. He gave to the Associated Press the following statement:

"In the session that has just closed, the congress has done more substantial work for good than any congress has done at any session since I became familiar with public affairs. The legislation has been along the lines of real constructive statesmanship of the most practical and efficient type, and bill after bill has been enacted into law which was of importance so great that it is fair to say that the enactment of any one of them alone would have made the session memorable; such, for instance, as the railroad bill, the pure food bill, the bill for free alcohol, the consular reform bill, Panama canal legislation, the joint statehood bill and the naturalization bill. I certainly have no disposition to blink at what there is of evil in our social, industrial or political life of today, but it seems to me that the men of genuine patriotism who genuinely wish well to their country have a right to feel profound satisfaction in the course of this congress. I would not be afraid to compare its record with that of any previous congress in our history, not alone for the wisdom, but for the disinterested high-mindedness which has controlled its action. It is noteworthy that not a single measure which the closest scrutiny could warrant us in calling of doubtful propriety has been enacted and, on the other hand, no influence of any kind has availed to prevent the enactment of the laws most vitally necessary to the nation at this time."

The New York Press, a republican paper, does not agree with the president in the tribute he pays to congress. The Press says that "nearly

everything congress has done was the result of the pressure brought upon it by the executive." The Press adds:

"Some will not be willing to go so far in commendation of the congress record as the large-hearted executive has gone. We can agree with him that, so far as is known up to date, 'not a single measure which the closest scrutiny would warrant us in calling of doubtful propriety has been enacted.' There have been too many watchmen on guard, both in congress and the White House and elsewhere, and public vigilance was never so wide awake. Rascality has contented itself, for the most part, with trying to weaken as far as could be the measures meant to improve the public welfare. It is what has been done along this latter line that prevents us from agreeing with Mr. Roosevelt in his opinion (for it can not be a statement of fact) that 'no influence of any kind has availed to prevent the enactment of the laws most vitally necessary to the nation at this time.'"

"The country happens to have knowledge of facts against which Mr. Roosevelt's opinion can not stand. Influence did avail to insert the Allison amendment in the Hepburn act, which the president has now signed—Standard Oil and railroad influence, which overthrew Mr. Roosevelt's original plan for limited court review of the acts of the Interstate Commerce commission. Influence did prevent congress from providing for a valuation of the railroads, so as to determine what are reasonable rates for transportation. Influence did avail to prevent railroads from changing classification, to end long and short haul discriminations, and to compel the companies to adopt mechanical devices which would save thousands

of lives sacrificed every year to railroad shortsightedness and cupidity. Influence did avail to prevent abolition of the vicious pass system, and in short it availed to continue nearly all the abuses and extortions practiced by the syndicated railroads.

"Also there was beef trust influence in the shaping of the meat inspection bill, and it did avail to the extent desired by the beef trust and its representatives, Wadsworth and Lorimer. Influence undoubtedly availed the shortweight food manufacturers, who had their way in the Sherman amendment to the pure food bill. Thus, while there was no mileage grab at this session, and the worst positive performance of congress was the public buildings graft, it is not necessary to give congress a general indorsement because it has done only some things public opinion and presidential pressure have compelled it to do. In by far the most important matter of the session—of twenty sessions—the rate bill, congress has fallen far short of the public wishes, though it has gone further than was hoped.

"Mr. Roosevelt, we think, does not overstate the case when he says congress has done more for the public good than in many years. But to say this is not to say that congress has come anywhere near doing what the people wanted done and what congress, in doing its duty, would have done. It must be remembered that for years congress has done nothing whatever to stop railroad extortion, and for nearly a decade has encouraged the corrupt alliance between railroads and trusts for the robbery of the people. From doing nothing, or helping the enemies of the people, to doing anything whatever for the people,

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