

The Work of the President's Cabinet

When one begins to investigate the duties of cabinet members, the magnitude of their work and the many important matters coming under their supervision are immediately appreciated. The readers of *The Commoner* will, no doubt, be interested in reading a report of the progress being made from month to month and of the work that the various departments hope to accomplish, as far as their plans are ready to give to the public.

THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT

On the day that William G. McAdoo took the oath of office as secretary of the treasury, last March, he was asked if he had any definite plan or policy for the administration of the department.

"Yes," he replied, "I have a very definite policy mapped out. I expect to have the treasury department working for all the people of the United States, every business day from now until I turn it over to my successor."

The new secretary has been in office a little more than four months, but he has already demonstrated that he is able to carry out his policy of making the United States treasury work for all the people and all the business interests of the country, instead of a favored few.

When the secretary took charge of the treasury he found that the government had \$48,754,000 on deposit in the national banks of the country on which the government was receiving no interest. He also found that the government had \$912,000 in the banks upon which it was receiving two per cent interest. He thereupon issued an order that on and after June 1, 1913, all government depositories throughout the country would be required to pay interest at the rate of two per cent per annum on government deposits. This was followed by the announcement that he would place in the national banks \$10,000,000 of government money, upon which interest would also be required at the rate of two per cent per annum. More than ninety-nine per cent of the 1,402 depository banks readily acquiesced in the secretary's order relative to the payment of interest, and the government's net income has thus been increased to the extent of more than \$1,100,000 annually.

A few weeks later when the great money lenders began to tighten their grip on the country; when pessimistic propaganda were being sent broadcast, and threats and rumors of a panic were rife, Secretary McAdoo sounded a reassuring note in his announcement that Uncle Sam had on hand and ready for issue \$500,000,000 of bank notes, as provided for in the Aldrich-Vreeland act, which he would make immediately available for the whole country if the occasion demanded. This prompt action had an immense effect in restoring public confidence and in relaxing the money situation, and quite upset any schemes which might have been in contemplation by money hoarders for reaping a panic-grown harvest.

No sooner was the early summer panic scare allayed than another cry went up from the country that money could not be obtained from the east to move the great crops of the west and south. This emergency the secretary also promptly met with the announcement that the government was prepared to deposit \$50,000,000 at two per cent interest in the banks in those states where the heaviest crops are being harvested and are to be moved, and that these deposits would be made easily available for the banks by allowing them to offer good commercial paper as well as bonds as security for such government deposits. The result of this announcement has been an immediate and appreciative response from banks and bankers throughout the west and south, strongly commending the move and giving assurances that there is now no longer a fear of anticipated stringency or concern about the moving of the bountiful crops which the earth has yielded in the year 1913.

Besides these specific innovations and reforms, the secretary has brought into the administration of the treasury department the sound and progressive methods of a modern business man, together with the clear vision and generous impulses of a true patriot. As a thorough business man of unusually broad experience, he is closely scrutinizing the affairs of every bureau and division in the department and has already

effected many important reforms and changes in the direction of efficiency and progress. Under his immediate supervision large economies have been effected in the letting of various important contracts in which the government is concerned, and by his direction the comptroller of the currency has put into operation rules and regulations relating to the government and supervision of the 7,473 national banks now under this department, which have already been productive of good results and promise even better for the future.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR

Secretary of War Garrison has been making a tour of inspection of the army posts throughout the United States. This personal investigation will be of great service in carrying out his plans for bringing the army up to the highest standard of efficiency. It is difficult to condense into a short report the important matters in connection with the war department that would be of interest to the people. One of the most important needs of the army at this time, in the judgment of Secretary Garrison, is to have the people of the United States view it in the proper light. By confusion of thought some people appear to think that there is something incompatible between the desire for peace and the proper state of preparedness for war. Brief consideration will convince anyone that exactly the opposite is the case. Secretary Garrison is not at all in sympathy with militarism, by which he understands is meant a large standing army, imposing burdensome expense on the government. He is also an earnest advocate of peace.

Our country has now 100,000,000 population and covers an enormous amount of territory. The enlisted strength of our army is about 87,000, and deducting the garrisons in Alaska, Panama, Hawaii, Philippine Islands, and the coast artillery forts in the United States there are 33,000 men in this country. The total enlisted strength authorized by congress is 100,000. The war department has not suggested an increase in the size of the army, but has recently expressed the thought of a provision for trained reserves and for calling into action volunteers if the occasion arises. In a recent statement Secretary of War Garrison said:

"I would like to see a short term enlistment contract that will enable us to obtain young men and give them the valuable military training which will make them useful in the event of future trouble, and turn them back into the body politic better equipped than ever to conduct their economic pursuits. I would like a well-drawn volunteer law ready for use if needs should arise. Undeveloped military resources, by which I mean vast bodies of untrained men are no more valuable in time of need than the valuable minerals lying in Alaska are valuable in the time of financial panic. Every reasonable mind must reach the conclusion that in the present state of civilization it is necessary for every great nation to have a sufficient armed force to insure its safety at home and respect abroad. Let us always hope that our government will make only righteous decrees. The army in the United States is not maintained for aggression, but for the purpose of protection and for the purpose of having the necessary amount of force to carry out what our government determines to be right. I have no fear but that those who carefully consider the situation will reach the proper conclusion and will uphold the hands of the administration in advancing our small force to a high state of efficiency, so that it may form a nucleus of a school of instruction for the citizen soldiery on which we will have to rely in the event of any conflict. When our citizens fully realize the situation they will create the public opinion which always finds reflection in legislation and in administration. This is, I think, the most important thing so far as my department is at present concerned."

As this report was prepared as we were going to press, time will not permit mention of many plans which are under way to bring the army up to the highest standard of efficiency.

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The department of justice, of which the attorney general is the head, is charged primarily with the interpretation and execution of federal

laws. Some five thousand persons, scattered throughout the states and territories, are necessary to carry on this work, and their selection alone is a great undertaking. The federal and territorial judges, district attorneys, marshals and a host of deputies, assistants and clerks are appointed through this department, for all of which places the attorney general is expected to recommend suitable men.

The president and cabinet members have the right to ask the opinion of the attorney general upon any point of law necessary to enable them to proceed in matters requiring their action. As the business of the government grows, the variety and importance of these opinions increase. They greatly influence the activities of any administration.

The litigation, criminal and civil, in which the government is constantly engaged is amazingly varied and important. On the criminal side it includes prosecutions from murder down to selling liquor to an Indian. On the civil side the cases range from a suit on an ordinary bond to recover a small sum, to proceedings to dismember trusts with millions of capital. More than a fifth of the causes tried in the supreme court directly involve the interest of the government. All this litigation is subject to the superintendence and direction of the attorney general; and in the most important parts of it he must be prepared to assist by counsel or argument.

Two great penitentiaries are under the department, and their complicated affairs demand constant care. The applications for pardons alone require an amount of labor and consideration of which few have any adequate idea. The recently enacted statute permitting the parole of prisoners after one-third of the sentence has been endured, adds to the difficulties in the management of these institutions.

A corps of examiners and secret service agents constitute a part of the attorney general's staff, and through them he is expected to detect crimes, apprehend criminals and secure their conviction. In addition to this, they are concerned with supervising the affairs of the district attorneys, marshals and clerks throughout all the states, and occasionally they must ascertain the facts where a judge is charged with derelictions.

When congress is in session the department is often called upon for opinions concerning bills, for reports, papers, etc., and must be prepared for no end of emergencies.

There is no such law office in the world as the one presided over by the attorney general. All manner of troubles encountered by the various agencies of the government daily find their way to him; criminals must be detected, prosecuted and incarcerated; and civil litigation, involving the most momentous issues and sums almost beyond computation, must be originated, planned and carried into effect.

The department is sorely in need of proper housing in Washington and more well paid men, who, having learned the government business, can afford to remain and care for it.

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE POSTAL SERVICE

Since assuming charge of his office, Postmaster General Burleson has made a careful study of postal affairs and many improvements in the service have been worked out under his direction. One of the first things that he did was to make it plain that postmasters in the presidential grades would be held to strict accountability in the matter of the time that they devote to their respective offices and the character of service they actually perform. In making new appointments at offices of the presidential grades the department hereafter will require, in addition to the usual qualifications with respect to ability, character and business experience, an assurance from the appointee that his whole business time will be devoted to the duties of the office to which he is appointed. Heretofore, many of the postmasters of these offices were engaged in other business and the conduct of the offices received little or none of their attention and the service greatly suffered thereby.

And last, but by no means the least, was the executive order of May 7, 1913, which prescribes a test for determining the fitness of fourth-class postmasters for classification under civil service laws. President Roosevelt, on November 30, 1908, issued an order covering into the classified civil service fourth-class postmasters in certain northern and northwestern states, and President Taft, on October 15, 1912, extended the order to cover the entire United