

WASHINGTON NEWS

The 63d congress convened at noon for its last and shortest session, Monday, December 7. According to both majority leaders the appropriation bills will have the right of way and be rushed as rapidly as possible. Conservation legislation, the ship purchase bill and the house bill to pave the way for ultimate Philippine independence are first on the program of general legislation.

A press dispatch says senate democrats in caucus December 12 determined to speed up the legislative program to avoid the necessity of an extra session at the end of the Sixty-third congress March 4 next. It was decided to abandon a long holiday recess, the senators agreeing to confer with house leaders on a plan to recess over Christmas from December 22 to December 28, and to remain in session New Year's week, except for New Year's day. It was also decided to hold night sessions of the senate at least once a week and oftener, if, in the opinion of the steering committee, it should be necessary.

Appropriation bills will have the right of way in the senate as rapidly as they come from the house. Senator Kern, chairman of the caucus, said:

"The legislative program will not be extensive otherwise. The conservation measures, the Philippine bill and the ship purchase bill will be taken up as soon as they come from committees, but appropriations will be taken up whenever they are ready. The immigration bill was not discussed in the caucus, as it is expected that it will be voted on before many days.

"We certainly will complete the program by March 4."

"The annual report of Postmaster General Burleson, submitted to President Wilson, December 13, records enormous growth in the parcel post and savings bank divisions, and recommends a program of postal legislation to increase the scope of the department's activities. Mr. Burleson features his report with an estimate that surplus of \$3,569,543, the second of his administration will be shown for the fiscal year of 1914 when all claims and charges have been met. The legislative program as summarized in the press reports, is as follows, as to its most important features:

Early action toward government ownership of telegraph and telephone lines, and immediate taking over of these systems in Hawaii, Alaska and Porto Rico. Transfer of the Alaska cable from war to post-office department control.

Substitution of contract "star route" system for salaried rural carrier service to eliminate \$40,000,000 annual loss on rural delivery.

Postoffice co-operation with state governments in road building where improvements insure better postal service.

Raising maximum balance acceptable at postal banks from \$500 to \$2,000, interest payments to be limited to \$1,000. Removal of monthly deposit limit restriction.

Aerial mail service where topography warrants and extension of motor truck and automobile service in view of recent successful experiments.

Passage by senate of pending bill providing space basis of compensation for railroads on mail carried instead of weight basis.

Pending change in rural delivery system, computation of carriers' salaries on basis of services performed, dependent on bulk of mail carried, to stimulate business.

Readjustment of postmasters' salaries on basis of changes in business handled due to parcel post development.

Raising of second class rates on publications other than newspapers issued once a week from 1 to 2 cents a pound.

Granting the department legal jurisdiction over selection of sites and designs for postal buildings.

The house disposed of the bill to increase the amount of circulating notes based on commercial paper to 100 per cent of the capital and surplus of the banks by defeating it, 268 to 28.

Estimates presented to congress, December 7, put the cost of conducting the government during the fiscal year 1916, which begins on July 1 next, at \$1,090,775,134, according to an associated press report.

This sum is \$3,392,962 less than the congressional appropriations for the current fiscal year ending June 30, 1915, and \$17,906,643 less than the estimates for the current year.

Without salary increases of any kind, no estimates whatever for new public buildings and all items reduced by order of President Wilson to what departmental heads consider the minimum, the estimates represent the administration's effort to keep the governmental expenditures within its income, which has been decreased by the European war.

By grand divisions, the estimates as submitted are as follows: Legislative establishment, \$7,641,049; executive establishment, \$31,845,889; judicial establishment, \$1,240,580; department of agriculture, \$20,706,013; postal service, \$297,355,164; foreign intercourse, \$4,607,182; military establishment, \$105,866,849; Naval establishment, \$142,619,003; Indian affairs, \$9,533,263; pensions, \$166,100,000; Panama canal, \$18,931,865; public works, \$79,917,541; miscellaneous, \$82,843,325; permanent annual appropriations \$121,567,207.

With the expectation that the postal service will continue to be self-sustaining the postal item of \$297,355,164 will be deducted, as it is returned to the treasury from postal earnings, leaving the actual total of expenditures at \$793,419,970.

The issues of national prohibition and woman suffrage will be placed squarely before the house of representatives as a result of action taken December 12 by the house rules committee, when it decided to report special rules for the consideration of constitutional amendments on both subjects, says the Associated Press report. Incidentally the committee put an end to all hope of an extended holiday recess.

Representative Henry, chairman of the rules committee, asserted the rule on the Hobson prohibition resolution would be presented December 22 and that the resolution, after eight hours of debate, would be pressed to a vote on that date. The suffrage resolution, he said, will follow immediately.

Members of the house who were anxious to get away for a Christmas recess construed the committee's action as evidence of a determination by democratic leaders to limit the

Christmas holiday to two or three days. Prohibition and suffrage supporters immediately began to line up their forces for the coming encounter. Members who had determined to go home for Christmas, whether congress had adjourned or not, revised their program.

It was generally believed in the house that the special rules would be adopted, as a majority vote only is required. It was also predicted, however, that the suffrage amendment would be unable to secure the necessary two-thirds vote in the house, and opponents of prohibition expressed confidence that it would be defeated.

As framed by Representative Hobson, the prohibition bill would prohibit the sale, manufacture or importation and exportation for sale of "intoxicating liquors for beverage purposes in the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof forever."

The suffrage amendment would declare that the rights of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex.

Proposed increases in freight prices on live stock, fresh meats and packing house products from Chicago, St. Louis and other western centers to eastern cities, were suspended December 14 by the interstate commerce commission until April 15, for further investigation. It is estimated that had the increased rates been permitted to go into effect, they would have yielded to the roads an added income of nearly \$10,000,000 annually. The proposed advances affected not only live stock of all kinds, but fresh meats and packing house products of every description.

A press dispatch says: The \$135,000,000 cotton loan fund plan to finance the surplus cotton crop was approved unanimously December 14 by representatives of the committee which are to aid in handling the fund in the southern states. After an all day conference with the cotton loan committee, which has final supervision of the funds, the representatives of the committees pledged themselves to give their best efforts to the successful operation of the fund.

The conference ended and most of the state committeemen left for the south to begin active work in putting the fund into the hands of cotton producers.

Although no definite information was forthcoming at the conference on how much cash actually will be drawn from the fund to carry the surplus cotton crop, estimates ranged from \$10,000,000 to \$70,000,000, and members of the cotton loan committee were confident that hundreds of applications for loans would be in before January 1.

It was the opinion of most of those present that between 4,000,000 and 5,000,000 bales of cotton must be carried over until next year. It was estimated that about \$150,000,000 would be needed to take over this cotton and the general opinion was that unless there was a natural expansion of credit throughout the south, a large part of the loan fund will be used.

"Economy" was the watchword of the appropriations committee in preparation for the legislative, executive and judicial appropriation bill, first of the big supply measures, which was reported to the house December 14 according to the Associated Press report. The committee lopped off nearly \$2,000,000 from the estimates submitted by the various departments, cutting salary allowance all along the line, and

brought in a measure appropriating \$38,744,753.50.

The total of the bill shows an increase of \$1,128,843 over last year's measure. But this year's measure includes a special appropriation of \$2,286,100 and authorizes one thousand additional employes for taking the agricultural census authorized by the law covering the last regular census in 1910. The committee in its report says that this is an extraordinary expenditure, which will come once every ten years, and maintains therefore that this year's measure is materially less than the last appropriation.

The bill contains the usual provision cutting down the mileage allowance of members of congress from 20 cents a mile to 5 cents a mile.

The following is taken from the annual report of Secretary of the Navy Daniels:

"The navy was not neglected in the unparalleled record of constructive legislation made by the second session of the Sixty-third congress. That forward-looking body evinced a true appreciation of the country's real need for a continuously healthy and normal growth of the Navy; and the legislation it enacted approved nearly every recommendation made in the department's report of last December. As a result of the ready spirit and wise discrimination of that congress, the naval appropriation bill, decreased below last year's figures, provided for two dreadnaughts instead of one, and, later in the session, seizing upon a rare opportunity, congress authorized the sale of two old ships, ill-adapted to the present needs of our navy, and the construction in their stead of a powerful dreadnaught.

"The second session of the Sixty-third congress has, therefore, to its credit the authorization of three new dreadnaughts. In addition to these new dreadnaughts, there were authorized six torpedo-boat destroyers and eight or more submarines, one of which is to be a sea-going vessel, the first of its kind."

"The appropriations for the fiscal year 1914-1915 for the naval establishment amounted to \$140,233,716.61, exclusive of the \$4,635,000 appropriated from the proceeds of the sale of the battleships Idaho and Mississippi for the battleship authorized in their stead."

The following is taken from information given to the public by the navy department:

"Last year's building program consisted of but one super-dreadnaught, six destroyers, four submarines, one transport, and one supply ship. Though this year's bill is \$484,717.92 less than last year's it provides a building program of two super-dreadnaughts, six destroyers and eight or more submarines, one of which will be able to accompany the fleet, the first of her kind, and allows for the construction of a third super-dreadnaught by authorizing the sale of the Idaho and Mississippi and applying the proceeds to the new ship.

"If we eliminate the third new dreadnaught authorized by last year's bill, which will be constructed from the proceeds of the sale of two older ships, we find on comparing last year's bill with that of the year before that it involves the expenditure of \$484,717.92 less money but provides \$1,131,039 for new construction. In other words, the money is going into the navy proper, the part which goes to sea."

Representative Sereno E. Payne, of New York, died suddenly of heart failure at his apartment in Washington, December 10. Mr. Payne, who was 71 years old, was a veteran