

WILSON AND PRESS

PRESIDENT RESUMES WEEKLY CONFERENCES WITH THE CORRESPONDENTS.

THUS GIVES OUT HIS VIEWS

Chief Executive is Careful to Avoid the Possibility of Being Misquoted—Big Stories Sometimes Come From These Talks.

By GEORGE CLINTON.

Washington.—President Wilson has resumed his once-a-week conferences with the newspaper men. Every Monday 45 or 50 Washington correspondents assemble at the White House to talk things over with the president and to publish some of the things that he says, provided he will let them.

It was a good while ago that Mr. Wilson called off the meetings with the newspaper men promising to resume them when it was possible so to do. The reason for the stopping of the interchanges between the president and the news gatherers was that Mr. Wilson felt he could not discuss foreign affairs, and as they were uppermost in the people's minds the conversation naturally would drift to them and it would be difficult to avoid reference thereto.

It is entirely probable now that the newspaper men will avoid asking any questions about foreign affairs which are in their nature too delicate for the president to answer. Other subjects, however, will be discussed thoroughly and even if the president does not wish his views on certain matters to be given out, his words will be a guide to the newspaper men and will prevent them from making possible errors of judgment when writing on the supposed attitude of the administration toward this question or that.

Careful About Being Quoted.

When the president is willing that his views on certain subjects shall be put on the wires at once he so signifies, but he frequently says he prefers it shall be said that the president views a certain matter in a certain light, rather than to put his words in quotation marks.

Occasionally, however, Mr. Wilson agrees to be quoted and then it is almost his invariable custom to ask the stenographer who is always at his elbow to take down what he has to say, to make manifold copies of it on the typewriter and to submit a copy to him for approval. In this way he avoids possible misquotation, although it can be said that rarely has the president of the United States had occasion to say that any of the correspondents have misconstrued his words or mistaken his meaning.

Sometimes a big story comes out of these newspaper conferences. About three and a half years ago the president in the middle of one of the talks with the newspaper men said: "There is an insidious lobby working in this city." It is proper to quote what he said because he allowed himself to be quoted at the time.

Instantly newspaper men said almost in chorus, "There is a big story in this, Mr. President, if you will allow us to quote you." He called in a stenographer and made the statement concerning lobbying methods in congress, a statement which resulted in the great lobby investigation in which the doings of some men were shown up in rather an unpleasant light.

These talks with the president are interesting affairs. The round office room of Mr. Wilson when the talks are on looks like the setting of an old-fashioned spelling bee. The correspondents, shoulder to shoulder, are lined in a semicircle about the president, who stands in what would be the center of the circle if it were complete, and answers questions or parries them as he sees fit. More than occasionally he puts the question himself.

National Press Club Flourishes.

President Wilson, cabinet officers and prominent men from all parts of the world will address the National Press club of this city before the winter has waned. This national organization of newspaper men, it is a pleasure to chronicle, is in a flourishing condition.

Once in a while a man likes to talk shop, and if those who have to listen may be believed, the once in a while comes often. The Press club of this town is just what its name signifies, a national organization.

Years ago there was a press club in Washington which went the way of death before it had attained many years of age and, it may be said without acrimony, before it could attain the age of entire discretion. It was succeeded after a lapse of considerable time by the present National Press club, which has been a success since its inception.

When it is said that the Washington organization is a national press club, the proof can be adduced by a glance at the list of active members and at that of the papers they represent. It is almost unnecessary to say that most of the Washington correspondents come from the towns in which are located the papers which they represent. In other words, here in Washington are gathered newspaper men who have done reportorial work in most of the big cities and in many of the smaller towns of the United States.

Looking at the list of active members and the papers represented, we jump within the space of a line or two

from Greensboro, N. C., to Seattle, Wash., and from Birmingham, Ala., to Minneapolis, Minn. The towns which lie in between also, of course, are represented.

Is Host of Prominent Men.

The National Press club in its rooms at the top of the Riggs building, acts as host every year to many of the most prominent men of the world. Its rooms have echoed the voices of royalty and semiroyalty, of democracy in its broad sense, of science, of travel, of exploration, of invention, of diplomacy, of politics and of journalism.

There are four classes of membership in the National Press club, active, non-active, associate and non-resident. The non-resident list comprises the names of 385 newspaper men of the United States. The National Press club is their headquarters when they come to this city. They have every privilege of active membership while staying here, and perhaps it may be said that they get a companionship which personally and professionally is pleasurable and mayhap, in its way, profitable.

The rooms of the Press club include the great general room, with one of the most beautiful open fireplaces to be found in all the country. There is a commodious library with plenty of books. The restaurant is a model. There are a billiard and pool room, a card room, a writing room and a good-sized office for the necessary clerical force.

Foreign Diplomats Work Hard.

Officials of the American department of state may think in these days of war that they are the hardest-worked men in Washington but if they do so think they are thinking beside the mark. There are certain foreigners in this town who know little sleep in these days when their countries are at war with one another.

The diplomatic list issued by the department of state gives the foreign ambassadors and ministers in Washington in the order of their rank of service. One of the foreigners the other day picking up the list, spoke of it as a "labor list." He was telling the truth in large part. As for himself, he has not seen a day's vacation in two years and a half and his working condition is that of seven or eight of his colleagues and of all the members of their staffs.

First in order, as he is in length of service in America, is J. J. Jusserand, the ambassador of France to the United States. Since August 1, 1914, Mr. Jusserand has been absent from Washington only on two or three occasions and these were occasions which called him forth to labor in other cities just as he has been laboring in Washington. He has been in America for almost fourteen years as the ambassador of his country. He, unquestionably, is the best-known diplomat personally now in America.

From the pen of Mr. Jusserand have come many books. He has made a special study of the relations of France to the United States in all periods since this country became a country.

Next in rank to Mr. Jusserand is Count J. H. von Bernstorff, the ambassador from Germany. The count has been a representative of his country in the United States for eight years. The newspapers from time to time have given full accounts of the activities of the German ambassador. Enough has been written about him to show that his laboring hours are long. It is possible that he has had more perplexing and delicate duties to perform in the last two years and a half than have fallen to the lot of any other foreign ambassador.

The ambassador of Russia to the United States is George Bakmeteff, master of the imperial court of Russia. It is perhaps worthy of note that each of the ambassadors thus far named has an American woman for his wife. Presumably it is right to call Madame Jusserand an American woman, although she was born in Paris, her father and mother both being Americans.

Ambassador Bakmeteff has just completed the fifth year of his service in Washington. Like the first two ambassadors named he at present has a hard-working time of it. A friend of his said the other day that figuratively speaking there were as many trenches to be dug in Washington as on any front in Europe.

Spring Rice, Busy, Too.

Next in order of rank is Sir Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, who has been in this country for a little more than three years, a period of time which, of course, includes the continuance of the present war in Europe. The duties of Sir Cecil have been as onerous as those of his colleague ambassadors. Like them he takes no vacation and almost constantly is at his post in the big embassy which belongs to the British government and which is situated on Connecticut avenue.

Sir Cecil, previous to his appointment as ambassador, had served in a junior diplomatic capacity in Washington. From here he went to Persia and then was changed to Washington.

The Italian ambassador, Count V. Machioli di Cellere, came to Washington after the outbreak of the war in Europe, but before his own country had entered into it. He shares the burdens of work of the other foreigners here present. Today there is no ambassador from Austria-Hungary in the United States, the hard work falling upon the counselor, Baron Erich Zwiadinek.

A new ambassador has just come from Japan, Mr. Almaro Sato. He speaks English fluently. Within a night or two he made an address at a dinner given by a famous club in Washington in which he showed that his wit is equal to that of any ambassador, occidental or oriental, who ever saw service in this city.

CONDENSED NEWS

OF INTEREST TO ALL.

DATES FOR COMING EVENTS.

- January 1 to 6—State Poultry Show at Kearney.
- Jan. 10-11—Odd Fellows' District Convention at Alliance.
- January 15-20—State Improved Live Stock association meeting at Lincoln.
- Jan. 15 to 20—Organized Agriculture Annual Meeting at Lincoln.
- January 16—Nebraska Association of Fair Managers' Meeting at Lincoln.
- January 16-17-18—Annual convention of Nebraska Volunteer Firemen at Auburn.
- January 16-19—Winter Apple, Floral and Potato Show at Lincoln.
- Jan. 19—Northeast Nebraska Editorial Meetings at Norfolk.
- Feb. 7-8-9—Nebraska Retail Lumber Dealers' Association Convention at Omaha.
- February 15—State Volleyball Contest at York.

North Platte is laying plans for a semi-centennial celebration to be held June 26 to 30, that promises to outdo anything in the line of municipal celebrations ever held in western Nebraska. No program as yet has been outlined other than to live over again the days of fifty years ago, when the west was "wild and woolly."

Three hundred and fifty thousand bushels of grain, mostly wheat and corn, were lost in a fire which destroyed Elevator B of the Nye-Schneider-Fowler company at Fremont. The loss was estimated at \$500,000, practically covered by insurance.

Eight banks of Harlan county have per capita bank deposits of \$172.19, according to an official statement issued recently. The total bank deposits is \$1,721,954.19. Every bank in the county has over \$100,000 and all but two have over \$200,000 on deposit.

Milk stations, where milk will be sold as drinks and tables with reading matter furnished, to take the place of the saloons after May 1, were suggested at a meeting of the Omaha Epworth League union.

The Barnston Mutual Telephone company had an unusually prosperous year, according to the report of the secretary-treasurer, just issued. The company has installed a new switch board and other improvements at the plant during the year.

The Fourteenth district bar association, comprising nine counties in southwest Nebraska, went on record favoring the calling of a constitutional convention during the annual meeting at Cambridge.

Christmas boxes weighing 283 pounds were sent to members of Company G Nebraska National Guards on the Mexican border by the people of Hastings. Delicacies of all kinds were included in the shipment.

Lieutenant Governor-elect Edgar Howard was tendered a complimentary banquet by men of Columbus last Monday. A number of guests from outside the city were in attendance.

Mr. and Mrs. B. Pont of Shubert recently celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. The aged couple have lived in the town nearly fifty years.

Three dozen fancy chickens were sent to the National Poultry show at Chicago from the 1733 Poultry Ranch near Kearney. This ranch has fowls that are valued at \$250 each.

Fire of an unknown origin destroyed the big flouring mill at Dodge, with a loss estimated at \$13,000. The mill was insured for \$10,000 and will probably be rebuilt.

Superior is to have a new hotel which will cost in the neighborhood of \$50,000.

After nearly forty-six years of continuous service with the Burlington railroad and after rising from the position of chairman with a surveying party, out near Kearney, to that of chief engineer, Thomas E. Culvert died of heart failure at his home in Lincoln.

The Grand Island Horse and Mule company closed a new contract with the British government for an indefinite number of horses. It is expected that between 10,000 and 15,000 horses will be delivered under this contract.

Citizens of Greater Omaha are planning to make the city still greater by annexing two more suburbs, Florence and Benson. A bill to permit the merger will be presented to the state legislature the coming session.

Frank Howard, of Pawnee City, purchased eighty-five head of horses in Beatrice. He said that the horses were purchased for use in England, France and Italy, and that they will be shipped to Europe as soon as possible.

The American Beet Sugar company employes at Grand Island will receive at the close of the campaign, which will last 100 days, a bonus of 40c a day or \$40, officials of the firm announced.

Ashland voted bonds to the sum of \$60,000 for the purpose of erecting a new high school building. It will occupy the site of the present structure, which was erected fifty years ago and has been condemned.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Young of Brock, recently celebrated their sixty-first wedding anniversary.

Bishop Thien of Lincoln delivered the sermon at the installation of Archbishop Harty as bishop of the diocese of Omaha, which took place in St. Cecilia's cathedral, Omaha, last Thursday. Most Rev. James Keane, archbishop of Dubuque, Ia.; Rt. Rev. J. J. Hennese of Wichita, Kan.; Bishops Cunningham of Concordia, Kan.; Burke of St. Joseph, Mo.; Duffy of Kearney, Neb.; McGovern of Cheyenne, Wyo.; Muldoon of Rockford, Ill.; Dowling of Des Moines, Ia.; one hundred and twenty-five priests, and 2,000 persons attended the ceremony. Archbishop Harty is a man who was beloved and held in the highest affection and esteem by the people of Manila, Philippine islands, where he was archbishop for twelve years.

The Mid-West Oil company of Casper, Wyo., is making rapid strides with its drilling operations near Chadron. It is estimated that the 1,000-foot mark has been passed. Various oil companies from different parts of the United States are making every effort to obtain control of the unleased land in this district. Geologists who have investigated this field claim that if oil is found it will be one of the largest fields in the United States.

Three hundred and fifty sheep feeders of the North Platte Valley and representatives of the stock yards and commission men of Omaha, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City and St. Joseph and officials of the Burlington and Union Pacific railroad attended the annual lamb feeders' dinner at Mitchell. Lambs to the number of 340,000 are being fed in the North Platte Valley this year and great interest was shown at the gathering.

E. P. Haynes and "Daddy" Vance of Hastings claim to be the champion rabbit hunters of Adams county. One day last week they went hunting and returned "in four hours with ninety-two rabbits. These animals are reported to be the most numerous in the history of the county and hundreds are being marketed in Hastings, which is said to be responsible for the slight lowering of meat prices.

Six thousand eight hundred dollars was the price paid for the Wahoo Mills at an auction sale last week. The mills were built ten years ago at a cost of \$25,000. The owner of the plant suspended business in July, 1915, and since that time they have stood idle. The Farmers' Co-Operative company of Wahoo are the new owners and expect to put the mills in operation in the near future.

Parents-teachers associations have been organized in each of the schools of Norfolk. The object is for greater co-operation among the mothers and teachers in training the children. They plan to have the teachers give the parents advice and the parents to give the teachers advice and so make the school life and home life of the pupils closely related.

Kearney Commercial has set aside a fund of \$500 for the purpose of carrying on the freight rate fight which the city is making and more will be available if needed. Expert Powell has been engaged and the citizens and business men are determined that Kearney must have equalized rates "competitive with other cities of like size.

Dr. G. J. Collins of West Point was elected president of the Nebraska Veterinarians' association at its annual meeting at Lincoln. The by-laws of the association will be changed so that in the future the meeting of the association will come the week after the national meeting, instead of at the same time, as now.

Hogs reached \$10.15 on the South Omaha market a few days ago, which is the highest price ever paid for hogs in December there.

Young men of Elk City, Douglas county, are soliciting funds for the purpose of establishing a community center meeting place.

Nebraska farmers have planted increased acreage in winter wheat this year to the amount of 8 per cent over 1915, according to a summary issued by the U. S. department of agriculture. The report shows 40,090,000 acres in the United States seeded in winter wheat, the greatest ever planted in the history of the nation.

The State Dairymen's association will hold the most important meeting of their history in the new dairy building on the state university farm, Lincoln, on January 17, 18 and 19, 1917.

The Brick feed and boarding barn at Holdrege was completely destroyed by fire, burning fifteen horses, five horse-drawn hearses, twenty tons of hay, about thirty carriages, harness and all grain, causing a total loss of \$25,000. It is understood that the property was insured.

Frank Fowler of the Nye-Schneider-Fowler Elevator company announced that the big elevator destroyed by fire at Fremont recently will be replaced in the spring by a huge new modern steel structure.

James Brennan, residing near O'Neill, killed a rabbit recently that had a pair of horns fully two inches long. They protrude just inside of the ears, resemble bone, and are jagged, but curved similar to cattle horns. Mr. Brennan caught the freak in a trap intended for barn rats.

The Omaha school board faces a deficit of \$234,373 at the close of the year, according to a report of the financial secretary.

Rev. S. J. Megaw of Fairbury has taken up the work as pastor of the Presbyterian church at Fullerton.

REMIT HALF MILLION

DECEMBER RETURNS SWELL TREASURY'S GENERAL FUND

PROBLEM OF EMPLOYMENT

Items of General Interest Gathered From Reliable Sources Around the State House.

Western Newspaper Union News Service.

Unexpectedly large remittances from county treasurers, which have been coming in to State Treasurer Hall since December 1, are again building up the state general fund and other funds at a rapid rate. The money has literally been pouring in, indicating that the people of Nebraska have plenty of money to pay their taxes and are doing so earlier than usual.

The total amount received by the state treasurer from sixty-five county treasurers so far heard from in December is \$449,360, of which \$243,906 is for the general fund. As the general fund contained \$247,000 on November 30, and as not to exceed \$100,000 has been paid out of it this month, the balance on hand in that fund is now about \$390,000.

This will be depleted to some extent by the first of the year, as the quarterly payroll of state officers will have to be met, besides other unusual expenses. It is probable, however, that Treasurer Hall will get through and start the new year with at least \$300,000 to go on in the general fund.

State Engineer to Be Reappointed

State Engineer George E. Johnson will be reappointed for two years, under the incoming state administration and Roy L. Cochran, of North Platte, will be his deputy. All three members of the new state board of irrigation—Governor-elect Neville, Attorney General Reed and Land Commissioner Shumway—have indicated that they are agreed to make these appointments.

The state irrigation association, which held its annual convention at Bridgeport last week, passed resolutions asking the reappointment of State Engineer Johnson and also requesting that Cochran be made his deputy. Governor-elect Neville and Land Commissioner-elect Shumway, who were present, stated that they would be guided by the recommendations and Mr. Neville said he also had the promise of Attorney General Reed to abide by them.

Problem of Employment

The problem of employment for many members of the Nebraska national guard, who will be here before long, according to authentic reports here, will be a keen one. General Hall has endeavored to start its solution by enlisting the aid of the labor commission in finding places for a portion of the men. It is said that many will step into places which they left nearly six months ago to respond to their country's call. But that number is small compared to the number of men enlisted from this state, and it will be up to most of them to find work after they arrive home.

Will Re-organize Department

Announcement regarding the composition of his office force was made by State Superintendent-elect W. H. Clemmons of Fremont, during a short visit in Lincoln last week. Mr. Clemmons stated that Miss Cora A. Thompson of Bridgeport, superintendent of schools for Morrill county, is to be one of his assistants. He has tendered her a place and she has accepted. The superintendent-elect also told that he plans to organize the department of education on a somewhat different basis than heretofore. At the same time, he said that some of the people now employed in the office will be retained. This will include most of those filling clerical and stenographical positions.

Nebraska legislators get \$600 for their session's work. That is their pay, no matter whether they stay at Lincoln sixty days or a hundred and sixty—or even if they have to sandwich a special session in during their tenure of office.

Agitating New State House

It begins to look as though some decisive action will be taken by the incoming legislature with reference to a new state capitol building. There are a few who would "patch up" the old state house and run along a few years. Then there are many more who believe that the great development of the state and its rapidly growing interests demand immediate relief in the construction of a modern, commodious and sanitary capitol building, capable of accommodating a great commonwealth.

Acting upon the recommendation

of Land Commissioner Beckmann, who recently viewed several tracts of state school land in Morrill, Banner and Cedar counties, the board of educational lands and funds has voted to raise the valuations materially over the appraisements made by county boards. The increase amounts to \$9,796 on all these lands, aggregating about two sections. The valuations so fixed are the prices at which the lands will be sold by the state to those having contracts for them.

OFFERS A SUGGESTION

Superintendent Thomas is Strong for Consolidation.

There are 867 school districts in the state with a census of one to twelve children of school age; fifteen of them with one child each, twenty-two with two, twenty-seven with three, forty-five with four, sixty with five and the balance with between six and twelve children of school age.

This, according to an educational survey, by State Superintendent Thomas, shows that consolidation is to be desired, for operation of schools with a small number not nearly as productive as larger schools.

The state officer continues by showing that of 6,571 schools operated in the state during the past school year there were 3,390 operated with from one to twelve pupils each.

Thirty schools had but one pupil each. One hundred and one schools had two pupils each, while 151 schools had only three pupils each. A total of 220 schools had but four pupils each and 299 schools had five pupils each. Of six-pupil schools there were 319 and of seven-pupil schools 363. The balance of the schools up to 3,390 had between seven and twelve pupils each.

Plan to Cure Defects

A meeting of the joint committee of the legislature and state bar association was held at the legislative reference bureau rooms last week. There were present: J. J. Thomas, Seward; Hayard H. Paine, Grand Island; John Mattes, Nebraska City; C. E. Sandall, York; J. N. Norton, Polk; J. P. Palmer, Omaha; J. H. Broady, A. E. Sheldon and C. E. Sorenson, Lincoln.

The plans for securing improvement in legislative methods were discussed and an agreement reached for a report which will be submitted to the state bar association on December 29, and the state legislature when it convenes. The points covered include appointment of a committee of three from the senate and three from the house to be called a revision committee to work in connection with the legislative reference bureau in revising bills before their introduction in either house and the purpose of securing the correction of obvious errors in form. This revision will be advisory only and the member, who desires to introduce a bill may disregard it if he chooses.

Discusses State's Oil Prospects

Whether there is oil and gas down near Table Rock, or whether there is not, is discussed in an article just written by G. E. Condra, director of the Nebraska conservation and soil survey. After showing that a great anticline exists in Nebraska similar to the one in Kansas where oil and gas have been found in immense quantities and this Nebraska anticline is really an extension of the Kansas formation, Doctor Condra in a recent newspaper story, tells of a trip he, in connection with C. J. Hurst, an oil operator, made through southern Nebraska and down into Kansas, where he proved to the satisfaction of Mr. Hurst that the geological formation of the two states is similar in this respect.

Deplores Educational Situation

Nebraska's fortune is to have some excellent teachers in the normal schools.

But Nebraska's misfortune is to lose them too often to states which pay more money—so states the normal board report given at a recent meeting of that body. In addition to making this interesting observation the board says that it will need more money for the future than it has during the past year. The state levy need not be changed, however, the board says, but may remain at five-eighths of a mill. The increase in valuation will take care of the greater sums needed for this work.

Dr. G. E. Condra, director of the state conservation and soil survey, has gone to Washington, where he will check up the soil survey work done in co-operation with the United States bureau of soils. The survey of five Nebraska counties has been completed this year. He will also be in conference with federal roads department and with the national committee on topographic mapping, of which he is a member.

Commission Needs More Money

If the railway commission wants to serve the people to the utmost it will have to have more money. The \$93,000 which it has had for the past biennial period will have to be increased by at least \$9,000—and the commission could use \$20,000 more if the legislature would vote it. That is the statement which Retiring Commissioner Henry T. Clarke makes to Governor Morehead as the latter in fulfilling his duties as budget officer, casts about to make the expense list for the coming biennial period.

Will Prosecute Raffle Cases

Since Attorney General Reed announced that raffling automobiles to stimulate trade constitutes a violation of the state law, numerous calls have come in to him from out in the state asking "if he meant it," and "if such and such a proposition" would come under that head. To practically all of which he has responded that he meant just what he said and that prosecutions would follow fractures of the law.