

THE FRONTIER

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WHAT THE WILSON ADMINISTRATION LEFT TO THE COUNTRY

Speech by Hon. William J. Graham, in the House of Representatives, May 18, 1922, extract from the Congressional Record—Free.

(Continued from last week)

Under various Liberty loan acts President Wilson was authorized to purchase bonds from the countries engaged in war with our enemies, bearing the same interest of the same maturities and same conditions as the bonds we issued and sold to our people. Under this authority President Wilson dispensed to our allies and to a flock of little nations whom he was seeking to incubate immense sums, which, with the interest accrued and unpaid, now amount to more than \$11,000,000,000. The act authorized loans to our allies. About \$300,000,000 of that money was loaned to countries not in the war at all. One billion five hundred million dollars of it was loaned by the Secretary of the Treasury after the armistice, and when every reasonable man will concede he had no right to do so under the law.

Mr. Johnson of Mississippi. Does that include the Liberian loan of \$5,000,000?
Mr. Graham of Illinois. No, it does not; but the Liberian loan was like a lot of other things left over by the last administration. The faith of this Government was pledged by the last administration, and when the present administration came into power it had either to refuse to keep the promises that you fellows had made in the name of the Government, or go through with it.

Mr. Johnson of Mississippi. And yet the gentleman voted for it a few days ago.

Mr. Graham of Illinois. No; I did not. I was not here. I have always been a great believer in standing by my promises if I make them myself, and by them if my Government made them. That is the way I felt during the war, when I did not believe the President was doing many things right. Yet I went along with him.

Mr. Johnson of Mississippi. And the gentleman's party claimed all of the time that that was an illegal authorization, and yet a few days ago it voted the loan.

Mr. Graham of Illinois. The Republican Party never breaks the faith of the Nation when it is once pledged. It was intended by the Liberty loan acts that we should buy the bonds of foreign nations. Instead, all that the present administration found to show for this vast sum were memoranda of some diplomatic agents or officials. Not only was this true, but there was the general impression and belief existing in every country to whom this money had been advanced, induced no doubt by the conduct and public utterances of President Wilson, that the United States never intended to collect these amounts. The incoming administration and a Republican Congress has had, therefore, two things to do: First, to overcome the erroneous impression held by foreign countries and convince them of the necessity of paying these debts; second, to obtain from them the properly authorized bonds to represent these debts. Even after the almost inextricable confusion that had been created by the last administration in the matter, when a bill was brought in by the Ways and Means Committee to appoint a commission and adjust these debts, the Democrats of both House and Senate opposed the project almost

to a man. In 1916, as a part of the machinery for stimulating the building of a merchant marine by act of Congress, the Shipping Board was created. After the declaration of war Congress, by the urgent deficiency act of June 17, 1917, conferred vast additional powers upon the President to requisition and build ships. This power, by executive order dated July 11, 1917, the President delegated to the Emergency Fleet Corporation. Thereafter occurred the monstrous expenditures of our shipping program. They cost us \$3,306,000,000. Contracts were made with anyone and everyone who said he could build a ship, or anything for us, irrespective of price or quality. There was no uniform plan for these ships adopted. No thought was given to what use the ship might be put after the war, no cancellation clauses in the contracts, so that if the war ended the work might stop. Five hundred and eighty nine wooden ships of 1,885,250 dead-weight tons were built, costing approximately \$375,000,000, and which were absolutely worthless. Thirty concrete and composition ships costing about \$27,000,000 more were equally worthless. Two thousand and two hundred and eighty-eight ships altogether were built and delivered. Only about 450 of these were delivered before the armistice, and all the rest, or about 1,838, have been delivered since the war was over and the further necessity for them had disappeared. Because of the contracts which had no cancellation clauses and the incessant pressure of the Democratic administration, ship-building went on feverishly until the present administration came into power. One thousand one hundred and eighty ships were delivered in 1919 and 473 in 1920, the most shameful part of which was that in 1919, 408 of these were wooden ships, and in 1921, 61 were wooden ships, conceded by all to be worthless.

When the present administration came in on March 4, 1921, it tried to take stock. It now finds about 5,000,000 tons of steel ships which are salable for approximately \$150,000,000 and estimated other assets of \$190,000,000. It finds claims pending against the Government of \$298,428,845.50 which, if allowed in full, would just about wipe out all our assets and leave us nothing to show for our \$3,306,000,000 of the people's money expended. Countless millions had been sunk in Hog Island and every other mudhole in the country. To show the rank incompetency of the preceding administration, it has been found that mortgages and other liens securing the government for vast sums had not been recorded and the liens were lost. Liens for millions which should have been taken were not. Vast sums for repairs and reconditioning were charged against the corporation for things which the slightest care might have prevented; ships had been sold without a cent of deposit or a letter of security; vast contracts, uncancelable, for materials were found. To illustrate, a contract to take 40,000,000 barrels of fuel oil a year. The board is involved in 50 concerns which are in the hands of receivers. Three thousand five hundred lawsuits in the civil courts are pending and \$62,739,315.76 of claims in the Court of Claims, and a business which is now losing \$4,000,000 a month.

Now, we have this wreck to salvage. For 50 years the contingent liabilities of this experiment will haunt us. We have not only spent our three and one-third billions, but we must contrive some method of subsidy to keep what ships we have upon the sea. And in this last attempt to get something constructive out of this insolvent business, we are meeting the almost undivided opposition of the Democratic minority in the Congress.

Mr. Andrews of Nebraska. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. Graham of Illinois. Yes.

Mr. Andrews of Nebraska. Did not the Government make a contract with Henry Ford to manufacture a large number of Eagle boats?

Mr. Graham of Illinois. Yes.

Mr. Andrews of Nebraska. Were any of them furnished and put into service?

Mr. Graham of Illinois. I do not know. I have seen some of them since. I doubt whether any of them were actually in service before the armistice.

Mr. Andrews of Nebraska. I have heard it stated that he made a profit of \$30,000,000 and that he donated that back to the Government. Has any such fund been turned in?

Mr. Graham of Illinois. I do not know as to that.

Mr. Cooper of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. Graham of Illinois. Yes.

Mr. Cooper of Wisconsin. Does the gentleman have any information as to why a building 400 feet long and 200 feet wide, at Corlies, on the prairie 7 miles west of my city in Wisconsin was filled as late as the fall of 1920 and the winter of 1921 with marine engines stacked one above the other,

the building full, and it about a thousand miles from the sea or any place where those engines could be used. Mr. Graham of Illinois. That is only typical of a lot of other things. I was down in Charleston, S. C., while our committee was doing its grinding work in 1919 and 1920, and they were then shipping stuff into that terminal, a terminal that had been built at an expense of \$20,000,000, out of which not a pound of produce had ever been shipped or a soldier taken. Yet they were shipping stuff there long after the war was over.

And they were doing it all over the country. I do not know why they did it. I have not any conception, but it appeared that the administration representatives were trying with all their hearts to spend money and they did spend it. Now, just a word on the Railroad Administration.

Prior to the World War no country had a healthier railroad condition than did the United States. Service was speedy, rates for passenger and freight carriage low, and the roads were making fair returns upon capital invested. In the two and one-half years from the outbreak of the European war until our own entrance into that war this condition continued. In the military appropriations bill of August 29, 1916, a provision had been inserted authorizing the President, in time of war, to take possession and control of any system of transportation and to use the same as might be needed or necessary in the emergency. Immediately after the entrance of the United States into the war with Germany various semi-civilian, semi-official boards were set up which began to issue various and conflicting priority shipment orders. So great became the confusion and congestion that the ports of the East, notably New York, became blocked. The judgment of those with most intimate knowledge is that official inefficiency is solely responsible for this condition. President Willard, of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, President Wilson's appointee as chairman of the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense, now openly charges this to be the fact. Then President Wilson, by proclamation dated December 26, 1917, took over all the transportation systems of the country absolutely. The administration was not content with proper orders by which the activities of the transportation systems of the country could be coordinated under a proper governmental bureau and whereby they could be operated by their private owners but took over everything and started Government operation of railroads. The one act, with its natural consequences, has immensely added to our national indebtedness and has entailed consequences that are far-reaching and disastrous.

The Government operated the railroads until March 1, 1920. On December 24, 1919, the President issued a proclamation that 60 days thereafter, to-wit: March 1, he would deliver back the roads to private control. Having involved the affairs of the railroads in inextricable confusion, having permitted their rolling stock and equipment to deteriorate, having inflated their pay roll and maintenance charges by billions, having destroyed both the credit and the morale of the roads, the President without the slightest opportunity for adequate preparation, said to Congress and the country, "Here's the mess we have made; now you clean it up." In the two months "remaining a Republican Congress, trying to do the best it could with a hostile administration, hastily wrote and passed the transportation act of 1920. During the 26 months of federal control, the Congress, responding to the urgent and repeated requests of the administration, appropriated \$1,750,000,000 from the Treasury for the railroads. In addition to this vast sum for the six months' guaranty period under the transportation act, \$700,000,000 more will be required. In addition, \$200,000,000 will be required to settle outstanding claims and \$300,000,000 more has been provided to make loans to the railroads under the transportation act. Thus we find a total burden on the Treasury of \$2,950,000,000 caused by the utter folly of the last administration in its railroad program.

Nor is this all. Thousands of lawsuits are pending in which the Government has a contingent liability. In Minnesota alone 6,000 lawsuits originated in one fire. Many of the equipment trusts and definitive obligations we have taken run for 10 years yet. We must maintain a railroad administration for at least 10 years to come and until its end, no one can tell what our obligations are.

Nor was this the worst. No sooner were the roads under Government control and operation than a systematic course of exploitation began for personal and party advantage. Wages were raised when wages burdened total additional annual wage burden caused by Government operation was \$1,765,000,000. The price of materials and repairs were boosted to the skies. Executive orders were issued with confusing frequency, almost all of which tended to destroy discipline and morale. Minimum wages were established for all branches of the service. A fair illustration of these orders was that of February 14, 1918, when Mr. McAdoo ordered: "Mechanics applying for employment will not be denied such employment for any other cause than inability to perform such work," and by which order any anarchist or I. W. W. who applied for work which he could do, must be employed. When the Government took over the roads 80 per cent of the cars were upon their own roads; when the roads went back to their owners 80 per cent of the cars were on other roads, from which they did not return for long periods.

All this was done without any corresponding increase in rates to compensate for such additional burdens. Increased rates are not popular.

Finally, when the problem was turned over to the Republican Party on March 4, 1921, the number of railroad employees was largely increased, the general efficiency of the roads decreased. Freight and passenger rates were raised to a point where traffic could not move, the credit of the roads was weak, and the Government with a staggering weight of financial obligation. Nothing can exceed the utter carelessness of the railroad administration during Government operation. Already, on a partial audit of claims and accounts, over \$85,000,000 of errors

and overpayments have been discovered, which the Government is now attempting to recover.

Today we have no more serious problem than the question of the reduction of our railroad passenger and freight rates. The problem was created by the absolute lack of wisdom and horse sense characterizing the Wilson administration handling of the railroad question. Now they loudly cry for a reduction of rates and vociferously denouncing a Republican Congress for inaction. I am reminded of the man who deliberately fouls his water supply and then loudly abuses the board of health because his family gets typhoid fever.

Of our total debt, therefore, of approximately \$24,000,000,000, five-eighths of it is attributed to the following causes:

Probable waste in war contracts	\$7,250,000,000
Illegal loans to foreign countries	1,300,000,000
Shipping program	3,300,000,000
Government operation of railroads	2,950,000,000
	\$14,800,000,000

Mr. Andrews of Nebraska. Will the gentleman allow a question? How long could we have run the Government without raising a dollar by taxation if we had all this wasted money to be used for that purpose?

Mr. Graham of Illinois. If we had the money that was wasted in this war this country would be in excellent financial condition.

Mr. Andrews of Nebraska. Could not we have run it for over two and a half years?

Mr. Graham of Illinois. Yes. At our present rate of expenditure under this administration, if we had the money absolutely wasted during and since the war by the last administration we could pay all the running expenses of the Government for four years without a cent of taxation.

Mr. Johnson of Mississippi. Was the gentleman opposed to loaning money to the Allies to help carry on the war?

Mr. Graham of Illinois. If the gentleman means did I vote for the measure, I voted for the measure; and I did not know whether it was wise or not. Nobody knew except the President, and he was charged with the responsibility. He asked for the funds and he used them, but we have the right, however, if the gentleman from Mississippi will indulge me, to say to you and your administration now we shall hold you to a strict accounting for what you did.

Mr. Johnson of Mississippi. Will the gentleman tell the Congress how his own administration during the Spanish-American War acted in feeding the soldiers rotten meat and—

Mr. Graham of Illinois. I am not going into the Spanish-American War or any other war. I am bringing up the issue of today, the issue you made through your National Democratic Committee and the other issues you are making on the floor of the House. It is time the people learn to know the truth, and when they do there will be no doubt about their attitude.

Nothing that our people have suffered as a result of the war has been more burdensome and oppressive than the high cost of living. During the war period, and since, and continuing to a considerable extent today, prices of the necessities of life have soared to the skies. While high prices came with war conditions, most of this stupendous increase is directly traceable

to the last administration and its activities.

(Continued next week.)

MORE LOCAL MATTERS.

Fay Miles returned to his duties in the printing department of the state university.

George A. Miles went to Omaha this morning where he will attend a meeting of the Nebraska Press association.

Miss Gladys Miles will go to Bladen, Nebraska, tomorrow to assume her duties as an instructor in the public schools.

NOTES FROM THE NORTHEAST

C. E. Downey, of O'Neill was in this vicinity Friday.

Miss Lena Cole who is in the hospital at Lynch, is reported improving.

This part of the county was represented at Page during Chautauque week.

We are informed there has been some change in real estate recently in this part of the county.

John J. O'Brien and family, of Sioux City, were Saturday and Sunday visitors at the Badgerow home.

Two threshing outfits are in the neighborhood. We are informed the yield of small grain is below normal. Dry weather and prevailing south winds have no doubt lowered the per

(Continued on Page 5.)

CHURCH DIRECTORY.

S. PAUL'S CHURCH EPISCOPAL
Second Sunday of each month Holy Communion at 8:30 a. m. Vespers and sermon 7:30 p. m.
Fourth Sunday vespers and sermon 7:30 p. m.

Rev. W. A. Render, Pastor.

O'NEILL CONCERT BAND.

Meets for practice every Monday night at American Legion hall at 8.00 o'clock p. m. Also Friday at 8.

Jess G. Mills, President; Elmer E. Davey, Librarian, E. D. Henry, Secretary-Treasurer.
Jess G. Mills, Leader.

PUBLIC LIBRARY HOURS.

The Public Library will be open each day except Monday from this time on until further notice:

Afternoons, 2:00 to 5:30.
Evenings, 7:00 to 9:00.
Sundays, 2:00 to 5:30 p. m.
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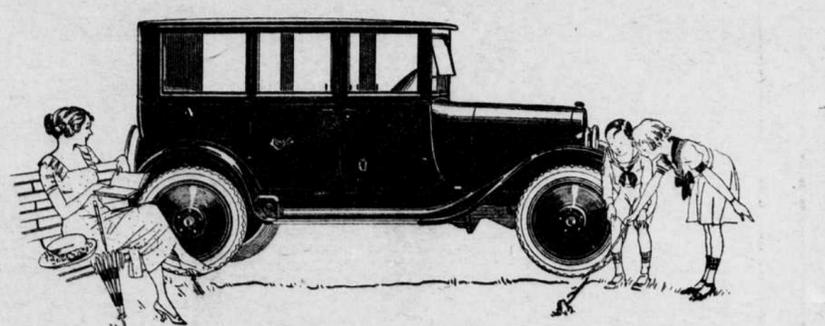
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4-5-6 7-8

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