

CONDENSED NEWS OF THE WEEK

On November 30 the United States supreme court affirmed the constitutionality of the eight-hour law of the state of Kansas regulating labor on public works. A Washington dispatch carried by the Associated press under date of November 30 said: The Kansas law, whose validity was called into question in the suit, was enacted in 1891 and provided that eight hours should constitute a day's work for workmen employed by or on behalf of the state, or by any county or city or other municipal polity in the state. It also prohibits contractors from requiring laborers engaged on work for the state to perform more than eight hours' labor in a day. Both fine and imprisonment are provided for violation of the law.

Ex-City Attorney L. K. Salsbury of Grand Rapids, Mich., made a confession of his part in the notorious water scandal now under investigation in that city and his confession has created a sensation, as it implicates no less than seventeen officials who have been arrested on bribery charges. According to the Salsbury testimony, six separate water conspiracy deals were on in Grand Rapids at one time, each calling for a boodle fund. It is also charged that two newspapers in Grand Rapids have been given money in connection with the water deals.

The executive board representing the striking coal miners in Colorado sent a telegram to President Roosevelt on December 2 asking him to enforce the civil rights statutes for the benefit of the citizens of Telluride, Colo., many of whom have been ordered by the military officers to leave the city. The miners claim that the law of the United States is being violated by the military authority in this matter and so have appealed to the president.

The federal grand jury in session at Omaha, Neb., is considering the charges of fencing in the unoccupied government lands, which it is alleged is being carried on to a great extent in the western part of the state of Nebraska. For some time the government has been investigating reports of illegal fencing and it has found that from 7,000,000 to 8,000,000 acres of government land has been fenced, and is being used by cattlemen.

Although not yet officially announced the rumor has been current for some time that Lord Roberts, commander-in-chief of the British army, will resign his position on account of the condition of his health. It is believed that when Lord Roberts resigns, the office he holds will be abolished, and the administrative business of the war office will be in charge of a board.

At the close of the ministerial council at Madrid on December 3 the premier proceeded to the palace and laid before King Alfonso the resignation of the cabinet. This action is due to the difficulty encountered in getting the budget voted in the face of the republican policy of obstruction. It is thought that the president of the senate will be asked to form a new cabinet.

A plan is on foot to cut the representation from the southern states in the national republican convention and the representation from the north would be added to. General Charles Brayton, member of the national committee from Rhode Island and party leader in that state, has proposed the plan which will be brought before the committee soon.

The grand jury at St. Louis on December 3 returned two indictments against James L. Blair, former general counsel of the World's fair, each indictment charging forgery in the first degree. The indictments are based on the alleged forgery by Blair of deeds to gain large sums from an estate which he has held in trust.

It is believed that China will hereafter prohibit the recruiting of laborers for South Africa in any part of China, and this decision is mainly due to legislation by Canada excluding Chinese laborers from Canadian territory. It is thought that if necessary emigration from China will be prohibited altogether.

On November 30 the wages of about 32,000 cotton textile operatives in the New England mills was reduced. This addition makes the total number of those in New England who have had their pay cut down this fall about 64,000 and further reductions in several mills will bring it to about 75,000.

An interesting decision was made by the house of lords in London on December 2 when it was decided that women are debarred by their sex from becoming qualified lawyers in England. According to a London cablegram carried by the Associated press, it is said that the question arose on the appeal of a Londoner, Miss Bertha Cavo, against the decision of the benchers of Gray's Inn not to admit her as a student for the purpose of being called to the bar. The court decided that there was no precedent for woman's admission to the inns of court and no reason to create a precedent. The benchers assert that the students of Gray's Inn ignore women so absolutely as to leave them no power to admit a woman.

The special session of the Montana legislature met at Helena on December 1 to consider a bill which will give the supreme court authority to review facts in cases of equity and change of judgment. It is said that this bill is the outcome of the recent copper troubles in Montana which resulted in the closing of all the Amalgamated Copper company's mines, and throwing of 20,000 men out of employment. The properties resumed only on promise that Governor Toole would call a special session of the legislature to pass a law known as the "fair trial bill."

Some attention is being directed to the efforts of Alfred Dreyfus in France to secure a judicial examination of his case, it being announced from Paris on November 28 that his request has been submitted by the minister of war to a commission who will pronounce upon the admissibility of granting it. This commission will render its decision in the matter in the near future and in the meantime public interest in France is aroused to a high pitch.

A strike among the iron workers employed by the George A. Fuller Construction company, which company operates in New York city and has also contracts in many other large cities of the United States, was declared on December 2. Nearly 10,000 men will be affected by this strike and in case a sympathetic strike is ordered, as some think will be, more than 70,000 men would be called out.

Fifteen different suits against the Ellsworth Coal company of Pittsburg, Pa., were filed in the district court on December 2, alleging violation of the alien contract labor law in bringing to this country Welsh miners to work in the company's mines at Ellsworth, Pa. The penalty for violation of the alien contract law is a \$1,000 fine in each case.

The town of Butler, Pa., has had 1,300 cases of typhoid fever since September 18, and recently the state board of health investigated the cause of the unusual conditions and found that the water supply of the town had been contaminated. The town has applied to Pittsburg for help in obtaining nurses and domestics, as many of the typhoid patients are without adequate attention.

Advices recently received from South China, by way of Victoria, B. C., give news of the loss of many lives as a result of heavy storms in that section. Several hundred fishing junks near Swatow, China, were destroyed and it is believed that thousands of lives have been lost, in the regions affected by the storm.

A number of coal companies in Maryland have announced that beginning December 16 a reduction to the miners of 10 cents a ton in the wages paid will be made. Three companies employing upwards of 2,500 men have already made the announcement and it is thought that other companies will follow suit.

All the coal mining camps in the Utah coal district are being placarded with official notices of the United Mine Workers of America, declaring a strike in the Utah coal fields and calling on all the miners to cease work. A systematic fight is hereafter to be made to obtain the demands made by the miners.

The International Live Stock exposition opened on November 28 at Chicago with a record-breaking display of cattle, sheep and hogs. No less than 11,500 entries of live stock were made and visitors are expected from Canada, Brazil, Belgium and Scotland, as well as from all over this country.

The banking firm of W. A. Denecke & Co., of Casper, Wyo., failed on November 27 and was taken possession of by the sheriff. The bank's failure caused the suspension also of other concerns and it is said that much loss will be sustained. Charles Weston, state auditor for Nebraska, a stockholder in the bank, as well as the president and cashier, were arrested, charged with fraudulent banking, but it was later announced that the shortage will be made good by the stockholders, Auditor Weston declaring that he will do all in his power to help satisfy the claims of the creditors of the institution.

The eastern question which has been the source of many rumors of trouble between Japan and Russia recently, is in a fair way to be amicably settled, according to an Associated press cablegram. It is believed that the settlement will be brought about through the friendly offices of France and Great Britain, and that the basis agreed upon will secure to Japan various rights in Korea for which Japan will accept Russia's treaty with China respecting Manchuria.

A new bar has been raised against the Jews at the Russian frontier. It was announced from Berlin on December 1 that American Jews are no longer to be permitted to cross the Russian frontier without a special permit in each case from M. von Plehwe, the Russian interior minister. It is said that this new restriction is an extension of the policy initiated by the recent withdrawal of the visa powers from the Russian consulates in America.

The International Harvester company of Chicago has decided to lay off 7,500 of its 19,000 employees and thereby effect a saving of \$5,000,000 a year. This reduction by this company is not the only one to be made, it is said, as several of the other harvester companies doing business in Chicago have also decided to reduce their force of workers, and the retrenchment will affect also the mills at Milwaukee, Springfield, O., and Plana.

A settlement has been effected in the litigation going on for the past year in the courts of New Jersey, Rhode Island and Oklahoma over a suit as regards the title to over 1,800,000 acres of valuable oil and gas fields in the Osage reservation in Oklahoma. By the terms of the settlement, all the stock in the concern has been turned over to a new company under John H. Brennan of Wisconsin, general counsel for the companies.

It was reported from Salt Lake City, Utah, on December 1, that following another fruitless effort to settle the labor difficulties in the coal miners' strike, the governor has said that he may call a special session of the legislature to provide funds for keeping the state militia in the field. It is said that the settlement of the strike hinges on the recognition of the union and this the coal operators positively refuse.

Major Charles F. Kilbourne, U. S. A., paymaster of the department of Dakota, died on a train while on his way to his home in Columbus, O., December 1. Major Kilbourne graduated from West Point in 1866 and was 59 years old. He was treasurer of the Philippine islands while they were under military government in 1898-99.

From Honolulu, under date of November 30, comes news of exposures of grafting and recklessness in the use of the public funds, over \$50,000 having already been wasted in excessive overcharges, etc. Indictments have been returned against many members of the late legislature.

Bishop Abel Leonard, head of the Episcopal church in Utah and Nevada, died at Salt Lake City on December 3, at the age of 55 years. The bishop has for many years been prominently connected with the church, having been stationed in the Utah and Nevada district since 1888.

The historic Academy of Music, the largest theatre in Brooklyn, N. Y., was destroyed by fire on November 30. The loss is estimated at \$300,000, with no insurance on the building. The building was erected in 1860 and many notable gatherings have been held within it.

The German reichstag was opened at Berlin on December 3, Chancellor Von Buelow acting as the emperor's representative. Emperor William was unable to open the session as is his custom, owing to the difficulty with his throat.