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## WASHINGTON NEWS

The national association of railway commissioners has adopted resolutions approving the recent action of the convention of governors of various states at Spring Lake, N. J., in authorizing the presentation to the supreme court of the United States of a brief supporting the right of states to regulate freight rates within their borders.

A Washington correspondent to California Outlook says: The Oregon direct legislation case, which was appealed by the telephone company, will be argued before the supreme court of the United States in this session, and a decision is expected soon. The appeal is based on the issue whether the constitutional amendment of Oregon, allowing the people to initiate laws and to pass on laws framed by the legislature, is contrary to the provision of the United States constitution that guarantees to every state in the union a republican form of government. The courts of Oregon, including the supreme court of that state, have decided in favor of the initiative, and the supreme courts of many other states have given similar decisions. As direct legislation prevails now in ten states, and is in use in several hundred cities, if the United States court should rule against it, there would be a serious upsetting all along the line. Affairs in many California cities would be thrown in great confusion. The feeling against practical democracy or the rule of the people is very strong among politicians in the eastern states, and many legal authorities have argued against it. But if the supreme court should find against it, the effect will be most unfortunate on western public sentiment.

The United States supreme court has taken under consideration the so-called "hard coal case" after a two day argument by counsel for the government and for the principal railroads and coal-owning companies in the anthracite coal regions of Pennsylvania, charged with violating the Sherman anti-trust law. The main argument for the defendants was that it would be ideal to have the anthracite railroads and coal companies independent, but that close relationship between them was necessary because the railroads had to have tonnage assurance to recompense them for the expense of building into that region.

James H. Torrey, for the defense, asked why the government had taken no action against independent operators who sold coal under 65 per cent contracts to coal companies, whose stocks were owned by the Pennsylvania Railway company and by the New York, Ontario & Western Railroad company.

"If these coal companies are free to make contracts while the others are to be debarred," said he, "it is conceivable that the result of this proceeding may be to increase largely the coal companies of the Pennsylvania, New York, Ontario & Western and to shift the control of the anthracite market to persons other than the principal defendants and who may be presumed to be actuated by like motives."

The closing argument for the government was made by J. C. McReynolds, special assistant to the attorney general. He outlined the relief desired and answering Mr. Torrey, he said the Pennsylvania railroad and the New York, Ontario & West-

ern railroad were not made defendants in the suit, as neither had been represented at the conferences of the railroads where the "objectionable 65 per cent contracts" were agreed upon. He added that neither was a stockholder in the Temple Iron company, by which the government claims the Philadelphia & Reading, The Lehigh Valley, the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western, the Central Railroad of New Jersey, the Erie and the New York, Susquehanna & Western railroad companies, all entering the anthracite region, are held together in an illegal combination.

The national association of railway commissioners met at Washington and refused to adopt a resolution favoring legislation abolishing the express companies of the country by compelling the railways to take over the express business.

A general inquiry into the control by railway companies of the docking, wharfage and pier facilities at various ports of the Gulf of Mexico, Mississippi and Atlantic coast points, including Galveston, New Orleans, Mobile, Memphis, and Philadelphia, has been instituted by the interstate commerce commission.

A dispatch to the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch says: A discrepancy of over \$3,288,271 between the material on hand and that called for by the books of the Washington navy yard, was shown by the inventory of that yard just completed, according to an announcement by Secretary of the Navy Meyer. This is the first inventory of record made at this yard within the last twenty-five years.

The discrepancy is attributed to loose bookkeeping methods, which Secretary Meyer set out some time ago to correct.

The Washington yard was the last to have the new accounting system established, the Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Portsmouth, N. H., Puget Sound, Mare Island, Charleston, S. C., Cavite and Olongapo yards preceding Washington.

The navy department officials stated explicitly that there was no indication whatever that moral turpitude was involved in the discrepancy, and that it undoubtedly was due to the antiquated bookkeeping methods.

After serving in the federal prison at Leavenworth, Kan., for 20 months, John R. Walsh, the former Chicago banker, was paroled by President Taft into the custody of his son. Walsh had been sentenced to a five-year term.

It is reported that the Japanese ambassador to Germany, Viscount Chinda will be transferred in February to Washington to succeed Viscount Uchida, who has returned to Tokio.

The Washington correspondent to the Chicago Record Herald sends his paper the following: Plans are being made for one of the greatest "harmony dinners" in democratic history at the meeting of the democratic national committee here in January to fix the place and date for the national convention.

It is proposed to have the meeting on Jackson day, Jan. 8, and to invite all the democratic governors, all those who have been mentioned in connection with the party's president-

(Continued on Page 15.)

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