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Washington News

Congress met in special session, Monday, April 7th. The senate is constituted as follows: Democrats, 51; republicans, 44; progressives, 1. Democratic majority over other parties combined, 6. The house will be constituted politically as follows: Democrats, 291; republicans, 125; progressives, 18. Elected as republican but refusing to attend republican party caucus, 1. Democratic majority over other parties, 147. House membership, which was 394 at the close of the last congress, will be 435.

The Washington correspondent for the Philadelphia Public Ledger says: In order to accommodate the additional membership of the house benches such as those in the British house of commons have been substituted in the chamber for the mahogany desks and swivel chairs. There is bench accommodations for 440. A vice president of the democratic faith presides over the deliberations of the senate for the first time in 16 years. The senate has a democratic majority for the first time in 18 years. For the first time in 20 years a third political party nominated a candidate for speaker of the house. The progressives elected Representative Victor Murdock, of Kansas, as their candidate for speaker. The house organized by the election of a speaker and other officers. Representative Champ Clark, democrat, of Missouri, was re-elected speaker. Representative James R. Mann, of Illinois was the republican candidate.

J. P. Buchanan was elected to congress from the Texas district represented heretofore by Postmaster General Burleson.

Thomas F. Dawson, who has been appointed executive clerk of the United States senate was for twenty years on the staff of the Associated Press.

Representative Henry of Texas has introduced a bill providing that the government shall lease and furnish the buildings used by American ambassadors and ministers.

Representative Farris of Oklahoma, introduced a bill to revoke Mr. Taft's order of October 15, 1912, in which he placed 35,000 postoffices under civil service.

Bennett Clark, son of Speaker Clark, has been appointed parliamentary clerk of the house to succeed Charles R. Crisp of Georgia, who is now a representative in congress. Bennett Clark is twenty-three years of age.

An Associated Press dispatch says: Senate democrats agreed upon a policy designed to prevent control of senate affairs by a few members and to distribute powers lodged in committee chairmen. Resolutions accepted by the caucus give to the majority members of any committee the right to call a meeting and designate members of conference committees and subcommittees. Democratic senators expressed the opinion in the caucus that the new policies would prevent the burying of legislation in a committee through the action of a chairman who might be opposed to it. A further change, advocated by Senator Lea, giving committees the power to elect their own chairmen, will be taken up later at a party conference.

An Associated Press dispatch says: A comprehensive plan for the leasing of embassies and legations abroad and their ultimate purchase was proposed by Senator Bacon in a bill introduced and referred to the foreign relations committee. For the leasing of an official residence of the ambassador to Great Britain, France, Germany and Russia the bill would authorize the appropriation annually of \$20,000 each and the appropriation of \$10,000 each for furnishing the same. Lesser amounts are proposed for the smaller capitals.

Senator Norris of Nebraska, has introduced a bill to place the postmaster general under the civil service, taking him out of the president's cabinet.

Following is an Associated Press dispatch: President Wilson expressed the hope that the pending legislation in California, by which aliens ineligible to American citizenship would be prohibited from owning land, would not prove objectionable to Japan. He realizes that Japan is inclined to view such legislation as a contradiction of the spirit of her treaty with the United States, and while officially unable to interfere in the situation he expressed confidence that the California legislature, cognizant of possible international difficulties, would enact a law that would prove acceptable to Japan.

The president talked informally about the question in his semi-weekly conference with the newspaper men, indicating the delicate points involved. While the present treaty with Japan stipulates that citizens of each country, while traveling in the other, shall have a right to own houses and factories and shops and to lease land, it says nothing about the right to own land. On the other hand, though the old laws of Japan against foreign ownership of land have been abrogated, the imperial edict necessary to put into force newly enacted laws has not been issued so that American citizens can not own land in Japan.

While the administration does not construe the treaty as giving Japanese specifically the right to own land, it feels that the agreement does guarantee that Japanese shall be treated on the basis of most favored nations' citizens under the same clause that is contained in American treaty with other governments.

The president stated that while these points had been discussed, the difficulties really proceeded from the domestic constitutional arrangements in the United States. He declared that while nobody for a moment could challenge the constitutional right of California to pass such land laws as she pleased, insofar as the federal government had gone beyond its powers of domestic authority in making a treaty, just so far was it liable to damages, but that it really was helpless in the situation.

The president explained that the Japanese ambassador had acted in a most proper and delightful manner, treating the United States as a friend to Japan, who would wish to see the best relations prevail. The Japanese ambassador understood the principle of state's rights as applied in the United States, but asked that the federal government look into the legislation to see if anything could be done to make it acceptable to his country.

Mr. Wilson declared that with this spirit the federal government had endeavored informally to use its good offices to secure an amicable adjustment of the question.

Reassuring word that the California legislature would so frame its laws as to save the federal government from any diplomatic embarrassment have come indirectly to the national capital and the administration does not believe it is likely to be confronted with any serious situation.

The Washington correspondent for the Associated Press says: Attorney General McReynolds disapproved the new plan for the dissolution of the Union Pacific-Southern Pacific merger recently submitted to him by Robert S. Lovett, chairman of the Union Pacific board. The Union Pacific nevertheless will submit the plans to the United States court at St. Louis, Mr. Lovett has advised the attorney general.

The proposed plan now goes to the court with the opposition of the attorney general on the ground that it does not meet the decree of the supreme court dissolving merger. The plan proposes that the Union Pacific place its \$162,000,000 worth of Southern Pacific stock in the hands of a trustee for a limited time, receiving "beneficiary certificates" for it. The stock would be disfranchised.