

with more subtle and far reaching possibilities of national danger than any other the government has known within the whole history of its international relations, the congress has been unable to act either to safeguard the country or to vindicate the elementary rights of its citizens.

"More than 500 of the 531 members of the two houses were ready and anxious to act; the house of representatives had acted, by an overwhelming majority; but the senate was unable to act because a little group of eleven senators had determined that it should not.

"The senate has no rules by which debate can be limited, or brought to an end, no rules by which dilatory tactics of any kind can be prevented. A single member can stand in the way of action if he have but the physical endurance. The result in this case is a complete paralysis alike of the executive branch and of the government.

"This inability of the senate to act has rendered some of the most necessary legislation of the session impossible, at a time when the need for it was most pressing and most evident. The bill which would have permitted such combinations of capital and of organization in the export and import trade of the country as the circumstances of international competition have made imperative — a bill which the business judgment of the whole country approved and demanded—has failed.

"The opposition of one or two senators has made it impossible to increase the membership of the interstate commerce commission or to give it the altered organization necessary for its efficiency.

"The conservation bill, which should have released for immediate use the mineral resources which are still locked up in the public lands, now that their release is more imperatively needed than ever, and the bill which would have made the unused water power of the country immediately available for industry, have both failed, though they have been under consideration throughout the sessions of two congresses and have been twice passed by the house of representatives.

"The appropriations for the army have failed, along with the appropriations for the civil establishments of the government, the appropriations for the military academy at West Point and the general deficiency bill.

"It has proved impossible to extend the powers of the shipping board to meet the special needs of the new situation into which our commerce has been forced, or to increase the gold reserve of our national banking system to meet the unusual circumstances of the existing financial situation.

"It would not cure the difficulty to call the Sixty-fifth congress in extraordinary session. The paralysis of the senate would remain. The purpose and spirit of action are not lacking now. The congress is more definitely united in thought and purpose at this moment, I venture to say, than it has been within the memory of any man now in its membership.

"There is not only the most united patriotic purpose, but the objects members have in view are perfectly clear and definite. But the senate can not act unless its leaders can obtain unanimous consent. Its majority is powerless, helpless.

"In the midst of a crisis of extraordinary peril, when only definite and decided action can make the nation safe or shield it from war itself by the aggression of others, action is impossible.

"Although, as a matter of fact, the nation and the representatives of the nation stand back of the executive with unprecedented unanimity and spirit, the impression made abroad will, of course, be that it is not so, and that other governments may act as they please without fear that this government can do anything at all.

"We can not explain. The explanation is incredible.

"The senate of the United States is the only legislative body in the world that can not act when its majority is ready for action. A little group of willful men, representing no opinion but their own, have rendered the great government of the United States helpless and contemptible.

"The remedy? There is but one remedy. The only remedy is that the rules of the senate

shall be so altered that it can act. The country can be relied on to draw the moral. I believe that the senate can be called on to supply the means of action and save the country from disaster."

#### SENATE CHANGES RULES

A Washington dispatch, dated March 8, says: After more than 100 years under rules permitting debate limited only by the physical endurance of senators and the provisions of the constitution, the senate tonight by a vote of 76 to 3 put power in the hands of two-thirds of its members in the future to limit discussion and to say when a vote shall be taken on a pending measure.

Never while the amendment is in the senate rule book can a minority prevent a vote upon a bill before the senate if two-thirds of their colleagues will otherwise. The organized filibuster as recognized in the senate is dead.

Action came unexpectedly after six hours' debate on the new rule, drafted by a bi-partisan committee. Although both democrats and republicans had approved the change in caucus, and Senator Martin, the majority floor leader, had given notice that the senate would be kept in continuous session until a vote was taken, nearly everyone looked for a much longer discussion.

Senators LaFollette and Gronna, two of those who opposed the armed neutrality bill, and Senator Sherman, who favored it, cast the negative votes. Senators Cummins, Kenyon, Kirby, Lane, Norris, Stone, and Vardaman, who were against the armed neutrality bill, voted for the amendment. Colleagues of most of the senators absent announced that if they had been present they would have supported it.

The exact use of the rule will not become apparent until it is enforced, but it probably can not be successfully used to prevent the spectacular one-man filibusters by which senators have talked bills pending in the closing hours of a session to a legislative grave. Such filibusters probably can not be prevented unless they are foreseen, but an organized affair which must be planned two days or more ahead of a session's end can be disposed of easily.

In brief the new rule provides that on petition of 16 senators to close debate on a pending measure the senate by a two-thirds vote on the following day but one, may limit debate thereafter to one hour to each senator. It includes provisions to prevent dilatory tactics and the introduction after cloture is ordered of amendments not germane to the pending bill.

#### PRESIDENT'S PROCLAMATION CALLING AN EXTRA SESSION

A Washington dispatch, dated March 9, says: The President's Proclamation calling the extra session of congress follows:

"Whereas, Public interests require that the congress of the United States should be convened in extra session at 12 o'clock noon on the 16th day of April, 1917, to receive such communications as may be made by the executive:

"Now, therefore, I, Woodrow Wilson, president of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim and declare that an extraordinary occasion requires the congress of the United States to convene in extra session at the capitol in the city of Washington on the 16th day of April, 1917, at 12 o'clock noon, of which all persons who shall at that time be entitled to act as members thereof are hereby required to take notice.

"Given under my hand and the seal of the United States of America the 9th day of March in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventeen, and of the independence of the United States, the one hundred and forty-first."

The following statement also was issued at the White house:

Secretary Tumulty stated in connection with the President's call for an extra session of congress that the President is convinced that he has the power to arm American merchant ships and is free to exercise it at once. But so much necessary legislation is pressing for consideration that he is convinced that it is for the best interests of the country to have an early session of the Sixty-fifth congress, whose support he will also need in all matters collateral to the defense of our merchant marine.

#### PRESIDENT WILSON'S INAUGURATION

(Continued from Page Seven.)

aisle in the central doorway of the capitol was the first signal for cheers from the waiting throngs outside.

With bare head the President approached the inaugural platform and bowed to the distinguished guests about him and to the great crowds in the plaza jammed in closely to the stand. Although a brilliant sun had broken through the blanket of lowering clouds which earlier had threatened to mar the day, a chilly wind swept over the assemblage and prompted managers of the occasion to hasten the program. Long before the inaugural guests from the senate chamber had reached the platform the President had taken the oath and begun his address. He began speaking at 12:45 o'clock, and at 1:10 was seated in his carriage ready for the return at the head of the parade.

Never before was a president, or president-elect so carefully guarded as today. Both to and from the White house the executive carriage was completely surrounded by secret service men on foot and mounted troops, while files of police rode near the curbs just inside the lines of New York national guardsmen drawn up on either side of the broad avenue.

Arriving at the White house upon returning from the inaugural, the President and his official party tarried 20 minutes for refreshments before proceeding to the reviewing stand. There for more than two hours the chief executive acknowledged the salutes of participants in the pageant in his honor. In the evening with his family he watched a display of fireworks over the Washington monument grounds which brought the inaugural ceremonies to a close.

#### ADVERTISING INTENTION TO SELL LIQUOR

In the senate of the United States, January 9, 1917, Senator Charles Curtis, of Kansas, introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the committee on the judiciary:

"A bill prohibiting the issuance of special-tax stamps authorizing the sale of distilled spirits or other intoxicating liquors unless public notice by advertisement has been given, and for other purposes.

"Be it enacted by the senate and house of representatives of the United States of America in congress assembled. That no stamps denoting payment of the special tax authorizing the sale of distilled spirits or other intoxicating liquors shall be issued to any wholesale or retail liquor dealer in the United States until evidence shall have been submitted that notice by advertisement of the intent to ask for the issuance of such stamp has been published by said applicant in a newspaper of general circulation in the community in which the applicant resides and intends to do business for six consecutive insertions in a daily newspaper or three consecutive insertions in a weekly newspaper, said advertisement to contain the name and address of the applicant, the particular place at which said liquor is to be sold, the date on which the application for the issuance of such stamp will be presented, and the name and address of the official to whom said application is to be made.

"Sec. 2. That it shall be the duty of the commissioner of internal revenue to make all necessary rules and regulations for the enforcement of the provisions of this act."

#### LETTERS FROM COMMONER READERS

Geo. F. Struble, Iowa.—I am in full sympathy with Mr. Bryan's movement for the next four years, and I will do all I can to help the good cause along.

T. J. Billings, Mo.—I heartily indorse the plan announced by Mr. W. J. Bryan for the next four years. I firmly believe that two-thirds of the voters of the United States will stand behind Mr. Bryan in his righteous battle.

L. W. Bettinger, N. Y. — I appreciate The Commoner very much and particularly am interested in the fight being waged by Mr. Bryan for the sake of the common people of which I am one. The question of prohibition is close to my heart, and now that Mr. Bryan is using his great influence to divorce the democratic party from the liquor influences, my hearty cooperation will be extended