

TOLLS REPEAL BILL PASSES

Measure with the Simmons-Norris Amendment Wins, 50 to 35.

BODY QUIET WHEN VOTE TAKEN

Two Members Nearly Come to Blows Earlier in the Evening, Showing the Deep Feeling Aroused.

WASHINGTON, June 12.—Repeal of Panama canal toll exemption for American coastwise shipping passed the senate last night by a vote of 50 to 35. The measure now goes back to the house, which is expected to accept the Simmons-Norris amendment specifically reserving all rights the United States may have under the Hay-Pauncefote treaty.

The passage of the bill after a bitter struggle that has lasted for several months was regarded tonight as another victory for President Wilson.

Although thirteen republicans came to the aid of the democrats who voted for the bill on final passage, the president initiated the movement in his party for repeal and it was behind him that many of the democrats who voted "aye" lined up on the last test.

There has been no certain promise from

the White House that the president will sign the bill with its qualifying amendments, but the president has been so declared that he will veto it and party leaders in the senate were practically certain that its approval as amended by the house will lead to the last favorable action by the president.

Eleven democrats led by Senator O'Gorman fought consistently to the end and even an hour before the last vote was taken they did not abandon their efforts to amend the bill to meet their view of the manner in which American rights in the canal and American rights to exempt coastwise shipping from toll payments should be guarded. Although all sorts of amendments were voted down by majorities that never fell below twelve and one occasion went as high as fifty-five, the minority democrats kept up the fight to the end.

Vote Taken Quietly. The senate was weary with its long grind of debate and by the time Vice President Marshall put the question for the passage of the bill the oratory had died down, the chamber was quiet and the vote taken with but little excitement.

Earlier in the evening there was an outbreak among democrats which showed more plainly than anything which has come before the deep feeling that has been aroused by this bill.

Senators Vardaman of Mississippi and West of Georgia, came near to blows, creating a scene such as had not been witnessed on the floor in many years.

The bill probably will be sent over to the house tomorrow and can be taken up at once if house leaders desire. With the senate amendment it is a subject for conference if leaders on the house side insist upon one, but it can be finally disposed of immediately as far as congress is concerned if the house accepts the senate amendment and agrees to the bill as sent them from the senate side.

A conference would delay final approval by congress, but it is not expected that the measure would be kept in conference more than a few days. The evident temper of the senate to defeat the bill unless amended is expected to have weight with the house and the democrats anxious to put an end to the matter as soon as possible, are expected to demand early action.

Vote on Bill. The vote in favor of the bill follows:

- Democrats—Bankhead, Bryan, Chilton, Clarke (Ark.), Culberson, Fletcher, Gore, Hitchcock, Hughes, James, Johnson, Kern, Lea, Lewis, Martin, Myers, Overman, Owen, Republicans—Brandegee, Burton, Colt, Crawford, Gronna, Kenyon, McCumber, Total 50.

The vote against the bill:

- Democrats—Ashurst, Chamberlain, Reed, Vardaman, Martin, Newlands, O'Gorman, Republicans—La Follette, Lippitt, Page, Perkins, Smith (Mich.), Smoot, Sutherland, Townsend, Cummins, Warren, Weeks, Works—23.

HISTORY OF TOLLS PROBLEM

Exemption Measure Introduced Two Years Ago.

WASHINGTON, June 12.—The question of making the Panama canal free to American vessels was brought to the front when the house on May 23, 1912, incorporated in the act providing for the establishment of civil government in the canal zone, a provision authorizing the president to charge tolls to vessels using the canal, with a proviso exempting American coastwise vessels from such charges.

President Taft, in a message to congress had urged the exemption. The bill had been reported to the house providing tolls for all vessels, but the exemption provision was adopted as an amendment. This amendment was in the bill as it went to the senate.

Before the bill passed the senate, Great Britain, on July 11, 1912, filed a formal protest against the proposed exemption. The note transmitted to the State department contended:

"The British government thinks that to allow American vessels to pass through the canal without the payment of tolls would be to violate the Hay-Pauncefote treaty whether the tolls are not collected, or whether it collected they are refunded. As to coastwise trade, the British government thinks it would be difficult to frame a provision which would not do injustice to their interests."

Text of Treaty Agreement. The Hay-Pauncefote treaty superseded the Clayton-Bulwer treaty under which Great Britain and the United States were jointly to build the canal. The Hay-Pauncefote agreement, after providing rules for the regulation of the canal, based on the rules governing the Suez canal traffic, set forth:

"The canal shall be free and open to the vessels of commerce and of war of all nations observing these rules on terms of entire equality, so that there shall be no discrimination in respect of the conditions or charges of traffic or otherwise. Such conditions or charges of traffic shall be just and equitable."

The British note of protest started a lengthy diplomatic correspondence on the subject. Great Britain throughout claimed that the United States could not, under the terms of the treaty, make toll exemption of any vessels, whether its own or of other nations. Secretary Knox, who conducted the correspondence for the United States, in several lengthy notes contended that the exemption of American coastwise shipping was in no way a discrimination against other traffic using the canal.

President Urges Repeal. Throughout the first year of President Wilson's administration there was a constant agitation for the repeal of the ex-

emption clause. The president let it be known that he favored the repeal and on March 5, 1914, he delivered an address to congress in joint session, earnestly urging the repeal. The exemption, he said, was a "mistaken economic policy" and was "in plain contravention of the treaty."

"The large thing to do," said the president, "is the only thing we can afford to do; a voluntary withdrawal from a position everywhere questioned and misunderstood. We ought to reverse our action without raising the question whether we were right or wrong and so once more deserve our reputation for generosity and the redemption of every obligation without quibble or hesitation. I ask this of you in support of the foreign policy of the administration. I shall not know how to deal with other matters of even greater delicacy and nearer consequence if you do not grant it to me in ungrudging measure."

Speaker Clark, Majority Leader Underwood and other democratic leaders in the house, opposed the president's demand for the repeal, but after a vigorous legislative struggle the house, on March 31, passed the Sims repeal bill. The measure then went to the senate.

In the senate the fight was prolonged and brought the leading debaters of that body to the front. Party lines were largely eliminated. Senator Root and Senator Lodge were prominent among the republicans who supported President Wilson's position in debate and with their votes; the fight against repeal was led from the democratic ranks, with Senators O'Gorman and Chamberlain leading the opposition to the president.

Bill Passed in 1912.

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Hay-Pauncefote Treaty.

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He asserted that the exemption was in the nature of a subsidy, paid, not by imposing the tolls for certain American vessels upon other ships passing through the canal, but by the American taxpayers themselves in paying for the maintenance of the canal.

"The avoidance of possible friction," said the note, "has been one of the main objects of those methods of arbitration of which the United States has been for so long a foremost and consistent advocate."

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