

PRESIDENT SIGNS BILL FOR OPENING UP GRAZING LAND

Wilson Approves Ferris Measure for 640-Acre Homesteads in Western and Alaska Grain Country.

OVER SIX HUNDRED MILLION Will Make Homes for Thousands of People, Says Ferris of Oklahoma.

LAW DOUBLES LAND UNIT Washington, Dec. 29.—President Wilson late today signed the Ferris bill opening up 640-acre homesteads for stock raising and grazing purposes. It is accounted of great importance to the western states. The bill passed the house a year ago, the senate on the closing day of the last session of congress and final agreement was reached between conferees last week. Representative Ferris of Oklahoma, its author, said tonight that a considerable part of the 300,000,000 acres of public lands in the west and the 375,000,000 acres in Alaska could be utilized for stock raising under the act. Thus he said, thousands of homeless citizens would be able to gain homes. The law raises the homestead unit from a maximum of 320 acres to 640 on arid, semi-arid, non-irrigable and non-timbered public lands. Improvements of \$125 per acre must be made by the homesteader. The bill was strongly endorsed by the interior department, which informed congress that it would result in having the number of cattle in the west "greater than during the most prosperous days of the cattle kings."

Railroad Employees Are to Decide What Action to Be Taken

New York, Dec. 29.—The 400,000 railroad employees affiliated with the four trainmen's brotherhoods will decide the next step which will be taken by their authorized committee which has been handling their side of the controversy over the operation of the Adamson law, it was announced here today by the brotherhood chiefs. The brotherhood leaders, after an unannounced conference, this afternoon gave out a statement, indicating their fear that the pending litigation, together with possible future legal steps on the part of the railroads, would delay indefinitely the investigation by President Wilson's special committee, headed by George W. Goethals. The statement of the brotherhood chiefs concluded: "The entire situation is to be placed before the members by special circular."

Charges United States Military Policy a Blunder

Cincinnati, O., Dec. 29.—Frederick L. Huidekoper, founder of the Army League of the United States, in an address before the American Political Science Association here today charged that "almost without exception historians and writers of American school books have suppressed with studied care the disasters which we have so often suffered and the blunders we have committed, owing to a total absence of a proper military policy." Mr. Huidekoper, who was addressing the conference on naval and military administration in the United States, held under the auspices of the science association, prefaced his remarks by saying: "The United States never had a military policy or anything approaching one, unless an unlimited capacity for blundering, in military matters may be called a policy."

The Weather

Table with weather forecast for Omaha, including temperature, wind, and precipitation data for the current day and comparative local records.

NEUTRALS DECLARE FOR PEACE PLANS

Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark in Line with Note of the President.

SPEDY ACTION IS URGED

Washington, Dec. 29.—The joint peace note from Norway, Sweden and Denmark arrived here today and will be made public later. Another peace note from one of the Scandinavian countries was received at the State department. Further than to say that it was not an answer to President Wilson's note, Secretary Lansing refused to discuss it. The Norwegian note, with which those from Denmark and Sweden are identical, follows: "It is with the most lively interest that the Norwegian government has learned of the proposals which the president of the United States has just made with the purpose of facilitating measures looking toward the establishment of a durable peace, while at the same time seeking to avoid any interference which could cause pain to belligerents' feelings. The Norwegian government would consider itself failing in its duties toward its own people and toward all humanity if it did not express its deepest sympathy with all efforts which could contribute to put an end to the ever-increasing suffering and the moral and material losses. It has every hope that the initiative of President Wilson will arrive at a result worthy of the high purpose which inspired it." Note Handed to Morris. Stockholm (Via London), Dec. 29.—K. A. Wallenberg, foreign minister of Sweden, today handed to Ira Nelson Morris, the American minister, the Scandinavian countries' peace note to the belligerents for transmission to Washington. When Mr. Morris delivered President Wilson's note to Mr. Wallenberg on December 21 the foreign minister evinced profound interest in the desire for peace, and the note handed to Mr. Morris reflects this as the feeling prevailing throughout Scandinavia. Swiss Explains Part. Bologna, Dec. 29.—(Via Paris.)—President Schulthess of Switzerland has explained the part played by his country in the recent steps in favor of peace in an interview with Signor Quaiici, editor of the Resto Del Carlino. President Schulthess is quoted as saying: "Switzerland had nothing whatever to do with President Wilson's note. The federal council got into communication with the American government in order to learn if the latter intended to do anything in favor of peace and simply received a copy of the note at the same time as the belligerents. The council has decided to support the note, inspired by an ardent desire to see a termination rapidly put to the suffering caused by this terrible war, of which the Swiss people has daily evidence in the shape of interned invalids and civilians from places ordered evacuated. I do not know what will be the fate of the neutral proposals, and in any case Switzerland has no intention of interfering with the affairs of the belligerents. But it considers it its duty to make known to them that it is ready to hel, exchange views, in the event of its seeming desirable. The president said that he was astonished at the rumors of fears of the violation of Swiss neutrality. "I cannot conceive," he said, "that any of the belligerents harbor the idea of passing through our country. It would not be to their advantage. In addition to the great difficulty of terrain, they would be confronted with the vigorous resistance of the Swiss army and the whole people. My country knows only one form of neutrality, and that is absolute neutrality. Let there be no mistake. In the presence of external danger, no matter from what side it comes, Switzerland will be united, notwithstanding differences in race and language. Scandinavians Favor Peace. London, Dec. 29.—The Scandinavian governments have sent a joint note to belligerents supporting the peace note of President Wilson. A Renter dispatch from Copenhagen says the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian governments have instructed their legations to address to the governments of the belligerent countries notes in which the Scandinavian governments, adhering to the note of President Wilson concerning measures to be adopted for facilitating a durable peace, assert they would consider themselves as failing in their duty toward their respective peoples and toward humanity as a whole if they did not express their most profound sympathy with every effort which may contribute toward putting an end to the sufferings and losses, moral and material, which are ever growing in consequence of the war. The three governments cherish the hope that the initiative taken by President Wilson will lead to a result worthy of the generous spirit which prompted this action.

Conservative to Build New Home in Year 1918

A new building is to be erected at Eighteenth and Farnam streets on the site of the present Davidge block in the year 1918, by the Conservative Savings and Loan association, for its future home. The Conservative bought the Davidge block of Dr. Harold Gifford last year, and announced at the time that the site would eventually be used as the location for a handsome building to be the home of the Conservative, which is at present located at 1614 Harney street. In the semi-annual statement of the association, just issued, it is announced that the new structure is to be built in 1918. "Until the great war ends," reads a part of the report, "it does not seem wise to make any change in the interest rate to borrowers. We believe that it would be more just and fair to all concerned to maintain our present rate of interest until it can be permanently reduced."

LAWYER TO LEAD, POINTING WAY TO MEN AND NATIONS

John N. Dryden, Nebraska Bar Association Head, Says Task Should Be Chiefest Factor in Reconstruction

WHAT OF THE DEBT? Problems of Reconstruction Task Up World's Statesmen.

WHICH IDEA IS TO LIVE? Contending that as a result of the European war and internal strife the public mind of the country is in utter chaos, John N. Dryden of Kearney, president of the Nebraska State Bar association, speaking before the seventeenth annual meeting at the Hotel Fontenelle, declared that the United States is at a parting of the ways. Mr. Dryden, who opened the two days' convention with an address on the subject, "The American Lawyer and His Present Task," touched upon such timely and outstanding topics as the European war, the Mexican trouble and domestic difficulties. He gave as his opinion that this country is the most competent leader in a new international purpose and that the legal profession should be the chiefest factor in the reconstruction which is to be—unless government by law shall perish from the earth. The state bar association head remarked that if our generation does not devise some better plan for the settlement of international controversies than liquid fire, poisonous gases and single shells which destroyed a thousand men, it will be a confession of intellectual and moral bankruptcy. Germany Most Competent. Mr. Dryden paid a glowing compliment to the Teutons, terming them the exponents of what he characterized the "newest nationalism." He said that we have heard much of the new nationalism, but if we seek the newest nationalism, we must look to Germany. Reduced to its simplest terms, Mr. Dryden asserted that it means in the competition of nations, Germany alone is fit to survive, adding that it proves its rise by achievement without parallel in the evolution of the race. "Germany of today, is the supremest product of mere intellectualism," Mr. Dryden said. "Illiteracy is the lowest by far on the planet—one-sixteenth of 1 per cent. The result of it all is imperial Germany in every way competent, its emperor, the ablest and most influential man in Europe; it is the apotheosis of militarism. "I have selected Germany, not for the purpose of criticism, or invidious comparison, but because it represents a distinct type of national development, and we are at the parting of the ways and must choose the right path or the left. Dwelling upon the agitation for preparedness, Mr. Dryden pointed out that as yet no one has made it quite clear as to our need. "The president," said Mr. Dryden, "shortly after his present war began declared himself after the most conservative fashion in that regard. A year later he said the greatest should be equal to the greatest, and quite recently he has made the significant statement that the time of neutrality is past. Chaos of Public Mind. "Meanwhile an expert insists that our navy should be twice as powerful as that of any other nation. These, and a multitude of counter opinions, indicate the utter chaos of the public mind, but there is agreement that we desire peace at all honorable hazard. "Preparedness can never be more than relative," he added. "Absolute preparedness means the supremacy of brute force. If our nation is sincere and in earnest, and we are to have what is rather vaguely understood as adequate military preparedness, a single illustration ought to indicate in some sense its value as an American policy. I have called attention to the demand from some quarters for a navy twice as powerful as that of any other nation. It is conceivable that we might have reached that standard of equipment, but in the meantime Great Britain has launched eight new dreadnaughts in a single day, more powerful than any heretofore conceived, and this one incident would compel the building by us of sixteen additional war craft, preferably of a more powerful pattern. England is Arrogant. "England is much pleased with us now, for obvious reasons. But she is arrogant, unreasonable, selfish and the mistress of the seas. She has vast territory to our north, populated by devoted and patriotic sons. In addition to competitive naval armament we should, for peaceful purposes and to induce a friendly regard on the part of our mother country, build and equip a line of forts across the continent with bristling cannon pointing toward our Canadian neighbors on the north. This would doubtless have an altogether soothing effect. "A year ago we were congratulating ourselves that in the matter of preparedness we had within our borders a superman in the domain of electrical science, and that the genius of Mr. Edison would produce some mechanism so deadly in an altogether ominous fashion, that in comparison, the Krupp and the submarine and the dreadnaught would be regarded as the toys of children. Prior to August, 1914, such a conception would have been unworthy of the American character. "We do not need a great army nor a powerful navy, and should set our faces like a flint against any propa-

Death the Sentry: "1917 and All Is Well!"



MUST ISSUE BONDS TO MEET DEFICIT

President Wilson Tentatively Agrees on Plan to Cover Part of Debts.

WORK OUT OTHER PLANS

Washington, Dec. 29.—President Wilson has tentatively agreed with administration leaders in congress on a bond issue to meet part of the treasury deficit which confronts the government for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1918, estimated at about \$180,000,000. With Secretary McAdoo the president is working on other plans for raising additional revenue. The president has pointed out that he believes a bond issue should be used only to meet temporary and emergency expenditures. Many of these have been caused by the Mexican situation. The treasury already has authority by previous acts of congress to issue Panama bonds and about \$240,000,000 of these are available. They would bear 3 per cent. Plans for raising the other revenue are understood to concern the income tax, an inheritance tax and special taxes on internal revenue and imports. The deficit figures differ according to congressional and administrative viewpoints. Secretary McAdoo estimated in his annual report the actual deficit in the working balance of the treasury June 30, 1918, at \$185,583,000, which accounts for appropriations unexpended combined with the left-over balance. The congressional appropriations committee basing their estimates upon the actual appropriations without regard to whether the executive departments spend all or part of the appropriations figure \$133,269,654 as the deficit. The outstanding interest-bearing debt of the United States June 30, last, as reported to congress by Secretary McAdoo, amounted to \$971,562,590. Exclusive of postal savings bonds, one-year treasury notes and conversion bonds, this is made up of \$118,489,900 4 per cents, \$63,945,460 3 per cents (due in 1918), \$636,259,500 2 per cents (due in 1930), \$84,331,980 Panama bonds, bearing 2 per cent, and \$50,000,000 Panama 3 per cents, similar to those to be issued.

BATTLE OF SOMME NOW IN SUSPENSE

Von Mackensen Driving Russians Before Him, Says Report of the Germans.

FIGHTING IN ROUMANIA

(Associated Press Summary.) Striking back at the French in the Verdun region, but on the bank of the Meuse, opposite the scene of the recent French successes, the Germans made a strong effort last night to penetrate the French lines between Hill 304 and Deadman hill, the dominating eminences northwest of the fortress. According to Paris, the attack was broken up, the Germans succeeding in gaining a footing in only one trench, south of Deadman hill. The activities around Verdun have been virtually the only breaks in the monotony of winter trench warfare along the Franco-Belgian front. The battle of the Somme admittedly is in a state of suspense, because of the bad state of the ground and unfavorable atmospheric conditions, according to British authority. Von Mackensen Keeps Up Thrust. From Roumania, where the real activity of the war centers, Field Marshal von Mackensen is keeping up his thrust for the line of the Sereth, in Moldavia, driving the Russians before him in none too good order, the German reports intimate. Latest accounts placed the left of Von Mackensen's line beyond Rinnik Sarat, near the Buzeu-Fokshani line, while his right apparently is drawing close to Braila at the Danube end of the trunk line from Buzeu. Braila, important as a granary and provisioning depot, itself is meanwhile reported under fire from across the Danube, where the Bulgarians with German and Turkish assistance are vigorously assaulting the Matchin bridgehead. Hope to Drive Out Russians. The apparent hope is to clear Dobrudja completely of Russians and effect a permanent junction with the Teutonic forces in Wallachia at a point where the lower Danube will be closed completely to Russian uses and the way opened north of the river for a possible advance into Bessarabia, just beyond which lies Odessa. Violent fighting took place between Russian troops and forces of the central powers yesterday in central Roumania. In the region of Amara, according to the Russian official statement issued today, a Teuton force of 35,000 men strong launched an attack on the Russian lines. The battle continued until evening, when the engagements slackened. In the sector of Rinnik-Sarat and Holdu all the attacks of the invaders were repulsed by the Russians.

LAWSON MUST PUT UP OR SHUT UP

Invited to Washington to Tell What He Knows of Advance Tip on the Peace Note.

TO REGULATE WALL STREET

Washington, Dec. 29.—The controversy which has followed Congressman Wood's resolution for investigation of whether any member of President Wilson's official family profited in the stock market because of inside information on the president's peace notes, got into semi-official form today when Chairman Henry of the house rules committee telegraphed Thomas W. Lawson, Boston, to come to Washington and substantiate his published statements that he knew of the so-called leak and his prediction that there would be another. "Put up or shut up," said Chairman Henry's telegram. "Cease slandering and libeling congress and public officials or make good your charges." Mr. Henry announced that he would reintroduce his bill next Tuesday to regulate the New York Stock exchange. "If Mr. Lawson states the truth about Wall street and an alleged leak," he said, "it conclusively shows that the bill introduced by me in the Sixty-third congress to regulate the New York Stock exchange should be speedily passed and should even be made more drastic. "This short session should find a way to protect the American people against such crimes as the one just perpetrated by Wall street, if Mr. Lawson is anywhere near the truth."

Bransky of Standard Oil Gives Gasoline Users Scary

Chicago, Dec. 29.—A note of alarm concerning the gasoline supply of the country was sounded at the convention of the Society of Agricultural Engineers here today by Dr. Oscar E. Bransky of the Standard Oil company. Bransky said that production was not keeping pace with consumption and that exhaustion of the supply was drawing nearer. The tension was considerably relieved, however, when it was calculated that the estimated remaining supply of crude oil, visible and invisible, 7,629,000,000 barrels in all, would last for eighteen years at the 1916 rate of consumption of 55,000,000 barrels. Dr. Bransky asserted that next year there would be 3,000,000 automobiles in operation in the United States, or 750,000 more than this year. He estimated that eastern oil fields are 75 per cent exhausted; midcontinental fields, 50 per cent; Texas fields, 80 per cent and the California fields 35 per cent.

Progressive Party Out of Business in New York

New York, Dec. 29.—Owing to the failure of the progressives in New York state to poll the necessary votes in the recent elections to entitle their ticket to a place on the ballot, the party lost official recognition in this state and the doors of the progressive headquarters here, state and national, have been closed. At the offices of George W. Perkins, chairman of the executive committee of the progressive national committee, the only statement of an explanatory nature forthcoming was that "there is no longer a progressive organization in this state."

ALLIES COMPLETE REPLY TO GERMAN PEACE PROPOSAL

Delivery of Document to Be Made in Paris Probably on Wednesday and Then Sent to Germany.

IS NOT SHORT AND SHARP

London Feels Optimistic Over Plans Proposed to Bring War to an End.

RIBOT AT THE CONFERENCE

London, Dec. 29.—As a result of the conferences which have been in progress for several days the entente reply to the German note is now completed. It could go forward today, or tomorrow, except for the necessary formality of transmitting it to all the allies before final delivery. This means that the delivery will be made early in, or on the middle of, next week, perhaps Wednesday. The delivery will be made at Paris, after which the communication will be forwarded to Germany through American channels. The reply is a very long document, much more lengthy than the German note. This point has been one of the matters of discussion during the conferences, the objection having been raised that it is too long and should be short and sharp. But there were so many points for elucidation and such a complete difference of conception of the objects and purposes for which the two sides went to war that it was found desirable to extend the note to considerable length. The presence here of Alexandre Ribot, the French finance minister, permitted the French ministry to be represented during the conferences. Unusual optimism is shown here as a result of the final form which the reply has taken, which is believed to be such that it will meet with satisfaction at Washington. The reply to the American note will follow within a few days after the delivery of the reply to Germany. Spectator's Peace Plan. London, Dec. 29.—The Spectator devotes the greater part of tomorrow's issue to answering President Wilson's question as to what are the peace terms of the entente allies. Briefly summarized, the principal demands as outlined by the Spectator follow: "The peace terms are to start from the status quo before the war, thus including the evacuation of the whole of northern France, Belgium, Serbia, Roumania, Russia and Montenegro. "Alsace-Lorraine is to be restored to France. The Danish portion of Schleswig-Holstein is to go to Denmark and Posen, Polish Prussia and Austrian Poland are to be added to the new subkingdom of Poland, which the car has pledged to create. "The slavs of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Croatia, etc., are to be created into a new kingdom. "Bohemia to be an independent state. "The Roumanian section of Transylvania to be added to Roumania. "The whole Austrian Tyrol, plus Trieste, Istria and the other portions of Austria which are Italian in blood or feeling, to be added to Italy. "Turkey to yield Constantinople and the straits to Russia. "The Armenians to be put under Russian tutelage. "The Arabs to be freed, while Syria, Asia Minor and Mesopotamia are to be created into a new kingdom." (Continued on Page Two, Column Four.)

County Attorneys Want Law to Punish State Bootleggers

A law designed to provide funds for obtaining evidence against bootleggers when the prohibition amendment goes into effect will be drafted by a committee appointed by the County Attorneys' Association, which held its annual meeting at the Hotel Fontenelle yesterday afternoon in connection with the convention of the Nebraska State Bar Association. County Attorney Messmore of Gage county is chairman of the committee. Problems confronting county attorneys were discussed by the members of the organization, which adjourned to meet again January 10 at Lincoln, when the legislature is in session, to present several recommendations to the state solons. County Attorney George A. Magney of Douglas county, retiring president of the organization, presided at yesterday's meeting, which was attended by about forty county attorneys. Officers for the ensuing year were elected as follows: Frank Peterson of Lincoln, county attorney of Lancaster county, president; A. V. Thomas of David City, county attorney of Butler county, secretary and treasurer.

A great many people will have more time to read the big Sunday Section of The Bee on Sunday and Monday of next week, as there will be no editions of The Bee on New Year's day.

Get your ad in early. Call Tyler 1000 TODAY

No Bee Issue New Year's Day

The Bee will observe the New Year's day holiday, along with the other Omaha dailies, by omitting publication for that day. Our usual exhaustive statistical review of Omaha's industrial progress and other activities will be printed in our Sunday issue. As the edition will be strictly limited because of the white paper shortage, you will please order in advance all extra copies which you may want to send out-of-town friends.

Annual Review Sunday Get Your Ads in Early

Omaha Loan Association Decalres Five and Half Melon

At the semi-annual meeting of the board of directors of the Omaha Loan and Building association, held Thursday, the secretary's report showed an increase in the assets of the association for the year of \$1,458,807.88. A dividend of 5 1/2 per cent per annum was declared for the six months ending December 31, which, together with the 6 per cent dividend declared on July 1, makes a total dividend of 5 3/4 per cent for the year, amounting to \$421,084.42. In addition to the dividend, there was \$22,641.75 added to the reserve fund and undivided profits.