

Taft and "Taft" Meet at Dinner

President-elect Joins Club of Ohio "Knockers."

FUN AND FROLIC REIGN

Counterpart of the Next Chief Executive Makes Hit.

Bogus Mr. Taft Tells Gathering that He Will Do All the Talking, and Real Mr. Taft Is "Squelched."

Cincinnati, Feb. 19.—William H. Taft became a Knocker "at sight" here in Cincinnati to-night, but in doing so he had more fun than a small boy would have in watching a cage of monkeys.

The Knockers, be it known, are an organization of Cincinnati's most prominent business men, ruled over by an anonymous individual who modestly signs himself "The Invisible Knox."

At the same time, Mr. Taft appreciated that the Knockers, friends of his boyhood days, were in their own peculiar way saying good-by to him as a private citizen for at least four years.

He got up and started to talk, but another "Mr. Big Bill Taft," who sat at a table opposite with Uncle Sam and Miss Columbia, arose in all the majesty of his 300 pounds and inquired with some heat just where the real Mr. Taft got on.

The bogus Mr. Taft would have it known that if there was to be any speech-making he was the person who would do it. He would brook no attempt by any "interloper."

Nine veteran knockers, one of them made up to represent a typical American business man, led the way to the dining room with Mr. Taft. As Judge Taft entered the dining room, he was confronted by "Mister Taft," his likeness, dressed in evening clothes which matched the real Taft's down even to the white waistcoat and pearl cuff buttons.

One glance at the "impostor" and the President-elect let out a laugh that must have startled the cab horses in the street. "Mister Taft" followed with one almost as hearty, and then turning to Uncle Sam and Miss Columbia, he led the way into the dining room behind the "Smitties" brass band.

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WEATHER FORECAST.

For the District of Columbia—Colder and generally fair to-day; to-morrow fair, slightly warmer; moderate westerly winds, becoming variable.

DIES OF STRANGE DISEASE.

Dr. H. T. Nock Victim of Yellow Atrophy of the Liver. New York, Feb. 19.—Dr. H. Tilford Nock, whose home was in the South, died this morning at the King's County Hospital, in Brooklyn, to which institution he had recently been taken from the Kingston Avenue Hospital, where he had been serving as an interne for some time.

NATIONS OF WORLD INVITED TO CONFER

Scope of Conference on Natural Resources Broadened.

PRESIDENT TAKES INITIATIVE

Delegates from United States, Mexico, and Canada Hold Second-day Session—Meeting is Behind Closed Doors, to Assure Free Discussion. General Inquiry Is Desirable.

Acting upon the request of the delegates of Mexico and Canada who are attending the conservation conference in Washington, by primarily on his own initiative in the matter, President Roosevelt made it known yesterday that he expects to invite all the civilized nations of the world to participate in a great conference for the conservation of natural resources at The Hague next autumn.

The invitation to foreign nations to participate in the proposed conference at The Hague will be sent out at once through the State Department, and the form of the invitation was drawn up by Secretary of State Bacon, in consultation with President Roosevelt and Clifford Pinchot, the President's friend, and head of the United States Forest Service.

It was announced yesterday afternoon that the State Department some weeks ago "sounded" some of the leading foreign nations in regard to the President's suggestion, and that the response was so cordial as to leave no doubt of the feasibility of the project.

Some of the European nations are represented as having "urged" the President to go on with his plan, for arousing world-wide interest in the conservation of natural resources, the prevention of waste, and the present conservation of the things that nature has given to all nations.

Nations Favor Plan. The nations who entered so cordially into the spirit of the enterprise are not named at this time, but it is certain that Great Britain is one of them, and probably France and Germany are among those from which more or less enthusiastic responses have been received.

Ostensibly, the action originated, however, in the recommendation lately made to the President by the Canadian and Mexican commissioners who are attending the conference and co-operation in regard to the conservation of natural resources, and he believes that the United States can learn a good deal from what has been done already by some of the nations of Europe. He makes it known, however, that the matter of the tariff, which might easily be considered by some persons as related to any international movement for conservation, will not be one of the subjects for discussion at the proposed Hague conference.

The President last year recommended that the tariff on wood pulp be removed on the ostensible ground that the free admission of this material into the United States would mean the saving of our national store of wood pulp. It has been suggested by some persons that the corollary of this proposition is that the forests of Canada and other countries would suffer this plan under the depletion which it is proposed to avoid in the United States, and that this is hardly consistent with the idea of international co-operation in conservation of natural resources.

The President said in his speech at the White House to the Canadian and Mexican delegates, however, that international co-operation was wanted, because no nation should seek to build itself up at the expense of another.

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FAMOUS FOR HIS DIVORCES.

Englishman Who Changed Name to Suit Wife, Dies in Paris. Paris, Feb. 19.—Charles Thomas Ayeres, formerly known as Kettlewell, died here to-day of apoplexy. Ayeres, or Kettlewell, was an Englishman, and reputed to be very wealthy. His widow was a Miss Balleterne, of New York, and she was his fifth wife.

Before she married him she made him change his name to Ayeres, it is alleged, saying: "As we are to live in Paris most of the time there is really no use of my calling myself Mrs. Kettlewell. People would ask: 'Which of the five is she?' That would not be at all amusing." Last October Mrs. Ayeres sued for a divorce.

Kettlewell was famous in Paris for a dinner he gave while one of his wives was suing for a divorce. He invited to the dinner Emelienne d'Alencour, Liane de Porgy, Laboulaye Kaya, the Russian dancer, Maud Jackson, and other stage beauties. He engaged a celebrated band and paid a high price for it, on condition that it should play all night, and it did for a long time after the banquet had been deserted.

To-day at Sloan's. Household and office furniture, ornaments, china, glass, coats, pillows, etc., will be sold at Sloan's, 196 G St., to-day at 10 a. m. Fine carriages, etc., at 12 m. No reserve prices. Dealers and private buyers invited.

Frank Libbey & Co., N. Y. ave. and 6th st.

MAJ. BALL ASKS WOOD TO ANSWER

Street Cleaning Superintendent Severely Arraigned.

HEARING IS DEMANDED

Ousted Assistant Will Go to High Quarter for Justice.

Commissioner West Says that Order of Dismissal Will Not Be Rescinded—Attorney Burton Asks Some Leading Questions in Written Protest Against Treatment Accorded to Ball—Muddle Increased.

Maj. Newell Ball, who has been summarily dismissed, without a hearing, from his position as assistant superintendent of the street-cleaning department, does not propose to acquiesce in this treatment or rest under the charge of incompetence, but proposes to appeal to higher quarters.

He is not fighting for the job, but is demanding justice and fair treatment. His case has already received some personal attention at the Capitol, and may be taken to the White House. There is no little sympathy with Maj. Ball at the District Building.

The order for his dismissal was issued on Thursday, and will take effect to-day. He had previously been requested to tender his resignation, to be effective February 28, but through his attorney, H. Ralph Burton, requested that the charges against him be formulated, and that he be allowed to answer them. A hearing was denied him, and thereupon the order was rescinded, although a ten-day interim remained—was canceled, and he was dismissed.

Charges Against Wood. According to Maj. Ball's understanding, he was charged with incompetency by the new superintendent of street cleaning, J. M. Wood. Now he has raised the question of the competency of Superintendent Wood, and will demand an investigation on that score. He is prepared to prove, he says, that a former superintendent officially filed charges against Mr. Wood, and urged insisted upon his dismissal. Furthermore, he declares that these charges were taken from the files of the department immediately preceding Mr. Wood's promotion to the superintendency, and have not been returned.

Protesting against the treatment accorded Maj. Ball, his attorney, Mr. Burton, in a letter sent to the Board of District Commissioners yesterday, said: "There is deep injustice in dismissing him upon the recommendation of a man who, himself, was charged by one of his predecessors with incompetency and unfitness for work in the street-cleaning department."

Asks About the Record. "Is it not true that about four years ago, when Mr. Wood was an inspector of machinery work in the street-cleaning department, he was recommended for dismissal by his superior officer for incompetency and various other reasons?"

"Is it not true that this recommendation was put in the form of a letter dated April 23, 1905, from Mr. Harrison Sutherland, then superintendent of the street-cleaning department, to Commissioner West?"

"Is it not true that under date of April 25, 1905, a report was made by Mr. Sutherland to Commissioner West, setting forth in detail the reasons which he considered Mr. Wood incompetent?"

"Is it not true that on October 28, 1905, several days previous to the appointment of Mr. Wood, street-cleaning jacket No. 1229 was taken from the files of the street-cleaning department by F. E. Eddington on an order from Mr. Ralph Pratt, secretary to Commissioner West?"

"Were these papers called to the attention of all the Commissioners previous to the appointment of Mr. Wood?"

"Have these papers ever been returned to their proper place in the files?"

Request for Hearing Renewed. "I respectfully and earnestly protest against the action taken by your honorable board in issuing an order dispensing with the services of Mr. Ball on and after the 28th instant, and renew my request for a hearing. Unless fairness and justice be accorded Mr. Ball in this matter I shall feel it incumbent upon me to take steps in another direction in order that he may not suffer in public estimation."

It was rumored last evening that the order for Maj. Ball's dismissal had been or would be rescinded, and that, after all, he would be permitted to resign, but Commissioner West stated emphatically that the order would stand.

Commissioner Macfarland said that the case came under Commissioner West and was wholly in his hands. It will be recalled that the former Engineer Commissioner, Maj. Morrow, refused to approve the appointment of Superintendent Wood.

Whether the board will give heed to charges made by a dismissed official against the head of the street-cleaning department remains to be seen, but there is a probability that Maj. Ball's demand for fair treatment will be re-enforced from influential quarters.

Will Appeal to President. "The regular course will be to lay the charges before the Board of District Commissioners," said Maj. Ball. "I hope they will be given proper attention. If not, the matter will be brought to the attention of the President and influential Senators."

Superintendent Wood has submitted the following recommendations to the Commissioners: "That so much of the order of February 19 as referred to Robert E. Doyle, C. S. Shaw, and J. B. Spalding be canceled; \$125 to Baltimore and Return. Saturdays and Sundays via Pennsylvania Railroad. Tickets good returning until Sunday night. All regular trains except the "Congressional Limited."

Special prices for inaugural stands.

Taft Buys Big Horse

Blood Bay Gelding Is Ideal Weight Carrier, Saddle Bred.

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BIG REDUCTIONS IN PRICE OF STEEL

Possible Trust's Move May Result in Trade War.

RIVALRY ARE AGGRESSIVE

Independents Force Action by Vigorous Underbidding.

Conciliatory from the Start—Filled with Rumors of Radical Reductions Before Judge Gary's Statement is Received—Prospective Tariff Changes Responsible for the Radical Action Taken.

New York, Feb. 19.—Judge E. H. Gary, chairman of the United States Steel Corporation, issued a statement to-day, in which he said: "The leading manufacturers of iron and steel have determined, for the present at least, to sell at such modified prices as may be necessary in order to retain their share of the business."

The Steel Corporation was organized in 1901, largely as a result of the price war of 1900, in which the price of steel billets went down from \$33 per ton to \$17 within six months, and rails from \$35 to \$28. Ever since its organization the corporation has been the great steadying influence on the prices, and this announcement that it will hereafter depart from observing any schedule is taken to imply that another price war threatens the trade.

The issuance of the statement followed a conference of Thursday with a number of the leading independents. It is understood that the situation was thoroughly canvassed, but that no agreement was reached on either side. The independents, it is understood, refused to be bound by the present scale, and the corporation, in view of the fact that there is an enormous tonnage shortly expected to come into the market from the Pressed Steel Car Company, as well as from other manufacturing sources, for the time being, is compelled to take the stand it did.

Underbid by Independents. The attitude of the United States Steel Corporation, it is said, has been conciliatory from the start, but the aggressiveness of some of the independents who have been underbidding right along and reaching out, in addition, for the customers of its big rival, has forced the corporation into abandoning the one-price policy, which, its officers say, it has always steadfastly maintained.

However, the independents profess to have no fear that the rate-cutting will be to their advantage. An officer of one of the United States Steel Corporation's biggest rivals said that if the cut went deeper than \$3.50 a ton it would surprise him. "It can't go much lower," he said, "for we all are making steel at a loss, and the feeling between the big companies is still too cordial to warrant any assumption of vindictive cutting."

This independent did not expect that the trade would remain long without the standard of prices which has hitherto been set by the United States Steel Corporation. The present demoralization of the market he regarded as being transitory, and largely due to the uncertainty attending the revision of the tariff.

"The consumers," he explained, "anticipated a big cut in steel following a radical reduction of the tariff. On that assumption they are holding off the market until, in order to do any business at all, it became necessary to make some concessions."

Temporary Adjustment. The declaration of the United States Steel Company as to its future policy he interpreted, therefore, as a similar temporary adjustment to a passing condition.

The street to-day was full of rumors of radical reductions made in advance of Judge Gary's statement. A report that the Carnegie Steel Company had cut steel bars \$4 a ton was followed by a report from Chicago that structural steel was cut \$3 a ton, and from Pittsburgh that tubes were quoted from \$18 to \$12 a ton lower.

The shares of Steel common sold on the stock exchange to-day were 129.00. It opened at 49¢ and closed at 45¢. The net change being 1/4 and 1/2 off. Steel preferred led a point, closing at 112.

WOMAN GORED BY BULL

Would Have Been Killed but for Tramp's Aid. York, Pa., Feb. 19.—Margaret Leppo was badly gored by a bull to-day, and probably would have been killed had not a tramp driven the animal away with a club. Mrs. Leppo was on the Berlin road when the bull charged her, goring her face and body and fracturing her cheek bone.

As she lay on the ground, semi-conscious, the bull was about to make another charge when the tramp appeared. Mrs. Leppo was carried into a house by the tramp, who disappeared without telling his name.

TOWN TOPICS SUED AGAIN.

Samuel Dempster Asks \$100,000 Damages From Paper. Pittsburg, Feb. 19.—Interesting testimony was given to-day in the depositions of Pittsburg witnesses taken before United States Commissioner William D. Lindsay, at the Federal Building, for the trial of a suit for \$100,000 brought by Samuel Dempster, son of Alexander Dempster, of this city, against Col. William D. Mann, of New York, and his well-known periodical, Town Topics.

The suit is based on an article in Town Topics of March 28, 1907, referring to Mr. Dempster and his sister-in-law, Mrs. William Dempster. The article intimated that through stories told by Samuel Dempster to his father, the sister-in-law, Mrs. Dempster, had been seduced by her husband's death.

The suit was brought in the United States Circuit Court for the Southern District of New York.

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\$50,000 FOR TYPHOID CURE.

Mexican Academy of Medicine Offers Large Cash Prizes. Mexico City, Feb. 19.—The Mexican Academy of Medicine has offered \$50,000 in prizes for scientists who will discover a means of preventing typhoid fever, one of the worst diseases which the cities of Mexico have to contend with.

Twenty thousand dollars will go to the discoverer of a specific that will cure the disease, a like amount to the person discovering a serum that will kill the germs in the blood, and \$10,000 will be distributed among those who give the most aid to the winners of the first two prizes.

TO ISSUE NEW BONDS.

Southern Railway Will Complete Contemplated Improvements. New York, Feb. 19.—The Southern Railway is expected to announce an issue of \$7,000,000 in development and general 4 per cent bonds shortly.

The bonds will be issued to meet the \$16,000,000 of 5 per cent notes of the company now outstanding, which mature April 1, and to finance improvements which are contemplated.

FLEET REVIEW OFF HORSESHOE TAIL

Great Armada Will File Past President's Yacht.

WILL ANCHOR IN THE ROADS

Programme for Demonstration in Welcoming Globe-encircling Fleet Is Announced—Thousands Are Now Flocking to Virginia to See Homecoming of the Peace Squadron.

Old Point Comfort, Va., Feb. 19.—Final details for the review and demonstration, both at the Tail of the Horseshoe and later in Hampton Roads, have been completed, so far as the official programme is concerned. It is announced to-day that the Navy Department will exercise control over the waters of the roadstead from early Monday morning until further notice—Commander George, of the Dixie, has been designated harbor-master, and will be in command of a fleet of patrol boats.

From Old Point Comfort westward three miles toward Lambert Point a patrol will be maintained by the navy, and all merchant marine will be restricted to the main channel leading to Norfolk. The entire anchorage area to the east of the channel will be reserved for the twenty-six men-of-war, and no approach will be permitted by any craft whatever until the President's yacht, the Mayflower, sails at 5 o'clock Monday afternoon from Washington.

To Restrict Holiday Boats. This step is taken to remove the possibility of collisions or other disasters. It is estimated that fully 100 craft of all types will witness the demonstration. Every available vessel in these waters is chartered for excursion parties, and scores of vessels from Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and New York will swell the fleet of merchant marine.

Not since the two naval reviews which marked the early period of the Jamestown Exposition have so many vessels crowded into the roadstead. This demonstration will exceed even those reviews. More American men-of-war will be here than were here then, more excursion steamers from other cities will participate in the welcome, and even greater precautions will be taken for the safety of life and property.

Spectators to Follow Fleet. When, at 11 o'clock in the morning, the four divisions of Admiral Sperry's fleet and the convoying squadrons pass before the Mayflower, most of the craft will steam down the bay to witness the spectacle. These will fall in line in the wake of the war ships, and will form a second marine parade as the assembled fleets file into the roadstead. Each war ship will maintain a distance of 400 yards from the one ahead of it, and each division will be separated by an 800-yard stretch of water. The flagship Connecticut will, of course, lead the column, to receive the welcoming greetings of the thousands of people on water and land.

She will drop anchor immediately off Old Point, and as each member of the world-admired armada steams by to its position its flag will be dipped to the admiral in command. At 1:30 o'clock the berths will be occupied, and then the Mayflower will sail to position just to the eastward of the fleet flagship, where the President will receive Admiral Sperry and his commanding officers at 2:30 p. m.

The President will board the Connecticut, the Louisiana, the Georgia, and the Wisconsin, and will deliver a short address to the officers and men of each division flagship.

Accommodations at Premium. Already every available room at Old Point and Hampton have been engaged for the homecoming review of the fleet. The advance guard of the visitors arrived here this morning aboard the liners from the Eastern cities, and those who had no reservations on the Peninsula were forced to go either to Norfolk or Newport Tidewater. Virginia will take a holiday. Schools will close, stores will not open, and business will come to a standstill, while the people of the communities around the roads turn out to do honor to their guests. The American seaman will not fail to understand that their countrymen here take a pride in their unparalleled achievement.

No fleet of fighting craft which ever sailed on a peaceful mission has ever received a more hearty and cordial welcome home than that which will be accorded the squadron under Sperry.

YANKTON IS HOME. The Yankton, the first of the "Around the world fleet," to reach home, arrived at the Washington Navy Yard yesterday afternoon looking as fit and trim as the day she steamed out of Hampton Roads for the now historic girdle of the globe.

The Yankton came to Washington in response to a wireless summons from the Navy Department. She will be used to convey officials and distinguished guests to Hampton Roads next Monday to view the incoming of the big fleet.

The ship has acted as a messenger boy for the fleet since its departure from home waters, and was sent to Messina after the recent earthquake.

Special prices for the small buyer.

SWIFT JUSTICE FOR GIRL'S SLAYER

Negro Gets Death Sentence Day After Crime.

COOLLY ADMITS CRIME

Attacked Girl and Cut Her Throat with Stolen Knife.

New Record Is Established by Virginia Court, When Negro Assailant Is Captured, Tried, and Sentenced Within Twenty-four Hours After Committing Crime—No Trouble Is Feared for Murderer of Miss Dobbs.

Special to The Washington Herald. Fincastle, Va., Feb. 20.—A record was established by Virginia justice to-day. A negro attacked and killed a girl yesterday afternoon. He was caught last night, a special session of court was held to-day, and the negro was tried and sentenced to hang, his capture, trial, and sentence occurring within twenty-four hours after his crime.

Aurelius Christian, the nineteen-year-old negro who yesterday criminally attacked and killed Miss Mary Dobbs, the fourteen-year-old daughter of a well-known farmer near Glen Wilton, was brought to-day from Clifton Forge to Fincastle, the county seat of Botetourt county, and tried at a special sitting of court by Circuit Judge J. K. Anderson, who accompanied the officers and their prisoner.

Makes Two Confessions. Christian was indicted by the grand jury and Judge Anderson appointed three lawyers to defend him. The lawyers talked with the negro, and he confessed. He then confessed to the court. No jury was summoned, the judge accepting the confession and sentencing the negro to hang March 2. Three witnesses gave evidence to establish the crime.

According to Christian's story, he had been chased away from the iron furnaces at Glen Wilton for stealing a pocket knife. He went into the woods near the village and when Miss Dobbs passed the spot where he was in hiding on her way to a store, he attacked her. After assaulting her he cut her throat and stabbed her three times with the knife he stole from a man at the furnace. He said he killed the girl to keep her from telling of the assault.

Expresses No Regret. Christian showed no sign of fear and related his story in court with remarkable coolness and deliberation, expressing no regret that he would be killed by his crime.

To-night Christian is locked in the Fincastle jail. He probably will be removed to Richmond within the next few days. There is no excitement here and no trouble is looked for.

The infuriated citizens of Clifton Forge agreed not to molest the negro "at that place nor to interfere with the train on which he was carried to Fincastle." The jail here is crowded, and it is expected the negro will be removed to-morrow.