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The Removal of Incompetent Clerks.

A general tightening of Congressional control over the expenditures of the several departments is proposed by the House Committee on Appropriations. That body has discovered definitively what has long been generally believed—that the heads of the departmental service have not infrequently circumvented the restrictions of appropriation acts by the use of contingent and emergency allowances in ways not contemplated by the committees; that the departmental printing allowances are larger than need be; and that a portion of the clerks in the executive service are inefficient.

The steps proposed to correct the two abuses first named are clear and businesslike. An enormous saving in the cost of departmental printing ought to be accomplished under the terms of the President's recent order, based upon the recommendations of the Keep Commission. Sharp prohibitions against the diversion of funds allowed for one purpose to use for another purpose are to be included in the present legislative appropriation act, if the House committee has its way. As for the clerks, the committee has acted upon the broad assumption that old age and inefficiency are one, and that it will lift the standard of the whole service by legislating the old clerks out of their places by means of graded reductions in pay.

Thus the whole problem of adjusting the internal administration of the departments to the merit system as well as the original employment of clerks is brought nearer to a focus. Congressmen generally do not expect the committee recommendations to carry. But they will surely be much discussed, and in the course of the discussion the whole matter of retiring superannuated clerks and clerks otherwise incapacitated, of enforcing removals for inefficiency, and rewarding competent services and exceptional personal judgment will, it is to be hoped, be fairly considered.

The measure proposed by the committee, with all deference to the judgment of those who have voted to report it, falls in two important respects—it must inevitably not reach a great number of incompetent clerks who are under sixty-five years of age; and it must inevitably punish a great number of competent clerks who are more than sixty-five years of age.

In the departments, as elsewhere, advancing years may fairly be presumed to weaken the faculties of many men. How many, no one seems to know. The estimate of Civil Service Commissioner Cooley is that the clerks over seventy years of age are ten per cent less efficient than the same number of clerks who are younger. That of the committee is that the loss in efficiency is twenty-five per cent.

Accepting the larger figure, it surely does not follow that this falling is general; that every man over seventy years has lost ground. On the contrary, the present showing of the departments of Congress, and of every non-governmental business, is that in special cases men grow distinctly more valuable as they advance in years, as undeniably as others lose their grip. How, otherwise, is the composition of the Senate to be explained, with twenty-six members more than sixty-five years old? Or the presence in the Cabinet of Messrs. Hitchcock and Wilson, both more than seventy? Or the unanimous vote of the House Republicans to re-elect Mr. Cannon Speaker at sixty-nine?

That so broad a provision must, in all certainty, work injustice would probably be admitted by every member of the House committee. That the service must suffer accordingly—through the loss of valuable men and the removal of all reward for experience and faithfulness—would probably be admitted also. It is the judgment of the members of the committee, however, and more than one bureau chief, that the loss from that source would not, and could not, equal the loss the departments now sustain through the retention in office of clerks who have outlived their usefulness.

Probably that is true. But it is no justification of the project to dismiss all clerks when they become seventy years of age, even if it is true. Good administration requires the dismissal of the clerks who are incompetent, whatever their age. By that means "the loss the departments now sustain through the retention in office of clerks who have outlived their usefulness," as well as the loss they sustain through the retention in office of clerks who are of little value, whatever their age, would both be obviated and no counterbalance of loss be created.

Why is this dismissal of clerks not effective now? The law is broad enough without the amendment proposed by the House Committee on Appropriations. All that is needed is that the heads of the several bureaus shall act. In the Pension Office Commissioner Warner has found warrant for the reduction of incompetents, some old and some young. A similar course is planned in at least one other branch of the service. Why has it not been adopted throughout the service?

- The answer is twofold: 1. That many bureau chiefs have been unwilling to act. 2. That practically the whole body of Congressmen have been unwilling the bureau chiefs should act.

After a man has given the working years of his life to the departments, and there is open to him no means of retirement with pay, it is not surprising that heads of bureaus should hesitate to discharge him. That situation could be remedied by some sort of a retirement scheme, and the sooner one is authorized the better. The alternative is action like that recently had by Commissioner Warner—reductions and dismissals according to the capability of each clerk. That requires courage and it works hardship. But, even from the point of view of hardship, it is vastly to be preferred to the deadline proposed by the committee; and it is good administration.

The second reason has been set forth to the committee by Secretary Taft in these words:

The truth about this is, that you had better acknowledge at once that sitting up here as a Congressional committee you think people ought to be discharged; but when you come to visit me, if the clerk who ought to be discharged happens to be from your district, you appeal to the head of the department and advance the strongest argument possible for some arrangement to be made by which that particular clerk can be retained.

Not an ax, therefore, but strength of character is the thing to use in improving the personnel of the departments. And if enough strength of character is brought to bear it will produce these results:

A willingness on the part of members of Congress that those of whom they demand profitable administration shall be allowed to consider their subordinates in the light of efficiency, and nothing else.

Such a change in the law as will provide a means of retiring faithful clerks in the departments as they are retired in nearly every other business.

The establishment of a system of promotions, which shall mean promotions in responsibility and task, as well as in salary, and depend upon the competent performance of duty and nothing else.

These things seem a long way off now. It may be they are a long way off. But they are the only trustworthy means of increasing the efficiency of the departments. It is certain no business house would undertake to do so through the action proposed by the House Committee on Appropriations.

MRS. J. D. ROCKEFELLER, JR., REPORTED SERIOUSLY ILL

NEW YORK, March 9.—Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., is ill at her home, 13 West Fifty-fourth street. Her condition is such that her father, Senator Aldrich of Rhode Island, has come on here from Washington, so as to be near his daughter.

While Mrs. Rockefeller's illness is not thought to be alarming, every precaution is being taken to prevent a serious turn. No information about her could be obtained at the Rockefeller home early today.

BIG BANQUET AT MANILA TO GOVERNOR J. H. SMITH

MANILA, March 9.—Three hundred Americans and a large number of Filipinos gave a banquet for Gen. James H. Smith, who will assume the governorship of the Philippines.

WARM UP! Oh, bluebird, who came overboard, We trust you were fully feathered. And that the late severity Successfully you weathered; And likewise that you'll make good on— In spite of those who scoff it—The reputation you've had long Of spring's first, unaccommodated prophet. —Indianapolis News.

IN THE CIRCLE OF SOCIETY

MR. SIBLEY WILL ENTERTAIN TONIGHT

Vice President and Mrs. Fairbanks Guests.

HOT SPRINGS ARE POPULAR

Many Society People of Washington Are Running Down for Few Days of Rest.

Among the several notable dinner parties arranged for tonight will be that in honor of the Vice President and Mrs. Fairbanks at the home of Representatives and Mrs. Sibley, on Franklin square.

Baron and Baroness Rosen will also entertain a dinner party tonight, and Mrs. Garret A. Hobart has one of her notable dinner parties invited to the New Willard for the evening.

Mrs. Fairbanks will return today from the Virginia Hot Springs, where she has spent the last week.

Mrs. Elkins and Miss Elkins will leave Washington tomorrow for the Hot Springs, and Mrs. Newberry will join the exodus to that place next Wednesday.

Miss Cannon will give a luncheon Friday of next week, and there is a probability that she may make the exodus of society women to the Virginia Hot Springs. It has been her custom to go there each spring for several years.

Sir Chenung Liang-Cheng, the Chinese Minister, went to New York yesterday to be present in that city when Prince Tsai Tse arrived at the Grand Central station from Buffalo. The minister will meet the imperial Chinese high commission now in session in New York.

Baron and Baroness Rusche, of the Germany embassy, are in Florida.

Baron Rosen called at the State Department yesterday with M. Bakmeteff, new Russian ambassador to Japan, whom he introduced to Secretary Root. M. Bakmeteff was connected with the Russian legation in 1872.

Mrs. George B. McClellan, sr., who is being constantly entertained here, has concluded her visit to Mrs. Austin Stickney, and will occupy an apartment at the Graton during the rest of her visit to Washington. Later, Mrs. McClellan will go to New York for a visit to her son and daughter-in-law, and in May will sail for Europe, where she will pass the summer.

Miss Helen Monroe Elliott and Harry F. Whiting, of New York, whose engagement was announced several months ago, will be married in this city April 13. Her sister, Miss Mary Hunter Elliott, and Frederick L. Bucklew, will be married April 28.

Representative and Mrs. A. J. Barchfeld of Pennsylvania entertained at the Wyoming last night at progressive euchre. Among those present were Representative and Mrs. Waldo, Baroness von Olenoff, Mrs. H. W. Blair, Representative and Mrs. McNary, Representative and Mrs. Dale, Representative and Mrs. Webborn, Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Metzger, Miss Lilly, Dr. Hurtt, and W. H. H. Wasson.

Mrs. B. F. Fisher, of Philadelphia, formerly of Georgetown, is visiting her son, Benjamin Franklin Fisher, at 1459 Girard street northwest.

The Brazilian ambassador, M. Nabuco, and the Portuguese minister, Viscount d'Alte, will leave Washington April 15 for a trip to California and Canada. They will be the guests of Col. Richard Shannon in his private car. They will visit Chicago, Kansas City, the Grand Canyon, and from California will travel through Canada, stopping at Montreal, Quebec, Winnipeg and other prominent cities, and will return here in May.

The speakers at the dinner to be given by the trustees and alumni of the George Washington University, on March 11, are former Attorney General W. W. MacVeagh, Dr. Andrew D. White and Ambassador Jusserand of France.

Major and Mrs. Burr of Washington Barracks entertained at a small dinner last evening, their guests including Captain and Mrs. Wright, Capt. and Mrs. Dennis Nolan, Major and Mrs. Chauncey Baker, Major Goethals and Captain Barden.

The Persian minister, Gen. Mortezak Khan, is planning to spend two or three months in Europe, when he will visit Paris, Brussels, Ostend and London.

Much interest is manifested here in society over the engagement of Mrs. Annie Langhorne Shaw, the Virginia belle, and William Waldorf Astor, Jr., of New York and England. People likewise had their attention yesterday drawn to the fact that Mrs. Shaw is one of the cronies of Mrs. "Jack" Astor, with whom she spent last season in London.

Mrs. Meyer Nordlinger, of Q street, has discontinued her Thursdays at home for the season.

Mrs. Salvador Richards has returned from a trip to Richmond, Va.

Miss Gertrude Linsler, of New York city, who has been the guest of Miss Helen Luchs for the last two weeks, has returned to her home.

Mrs. Abe Richold, of New York city, is the guest of Mrs. L. Richold, of Eighteenth street.

Mrs. Gilbert Straus, of Baltimore, spent a couple of days here with Mrs. Louis Eisenman, of Sixteenth street.

Mrs. Isaac Strouse, of Baltimore, spent a few days here with her sister, Mrs. H. King.

Mrs. Lee Kerngood, of Baltimore, is the guest of her mother, Mrs. A. Herman, of Cincinnati street.

David Rice, of New York city, spent a few days here this week.

Richard Gross, of New York city, spent a few days here on his way South.



MRS. GEORGE E. GILBERT, An Attractive Kentucky Woman, Who Figures in the Congressional Set at the Riggs House.

GUESTS AT DINNERS LATER PLAY BRIDGE

Whist Followed Several of Last Evening's Many Small, Informal Entertainments at Table—Society Folk Taking Advantage of Lent to Travel.

Several dinner parties were given last evening, almost all of them being small and informal and many of them followed by bridge whist.

The Assistant Secretary of the Navy and Mrs. Newberry, Paymaster and Mrs. Merriman and Representative and Mrs. Lawrence were all dinner hosts.

Miss Mabel Merriam has returned to Washington from New Orleans, where she went to attend the Mardi Gras.

Mr. and Mrs. Colt, the latter the daughter of Admiral and Mrs. Converse, are at the New Willard.

The naval attaché of the Russian em-

ROCKEFELLER'S GATES STOLEN BY VANDALS

Subpoena Servers Suspected of Having Made Off With Giant Doors Erected to Keep Out Hackmen and Sightseers.

NEW YORK, March 9.—What should happen to men mean enough to steal the gates of the Rockefeller front gate?

Mr. Rockefeller, when he was last known to be at his Lakewood drive, was annoyed by hackmen, who drove around the place with parties of sightseers. He determined to put up gates heavy timber were erected at the entrance to Ride avenue and at two entrances on Ocean avenue, and the work was completed a few weeks ago.

Now some base catiff has walked off with the Ride avenue gate. No one not a veritable Samson could have accomplished this feat alone, for the gate was nearly as heavy as one of those at Gaza. Subpoena servers are suspected.

A titled member of one of the most distinguished families in Italy, former librarian at the Vatican, has abandoned the appellation of Marquis of Iroso to become plain E. V. Pesca, an American citizen.

"I realized that this was the place to work and make my living in," he said today. "America is the greatest country in the world for a man who will work hard, honestly and earnestly. You have deprived your Italian citizenship, have you not?" he was asked. "Yes," he replied, "but I have given them a prouder title. They are now American citizens, and there is no finer title in the world."

FALLIERES CANNOT FIND CANDIDATE FOR PREMIER

PARIS, March 9.—M. Poincaré, who has held the positions of finance minister and minister of public instruction in previous French cabinets, was summoned to the Elysee Palace today by President Fallieres. On leaving the palace M. Poincaré said President Fallieres had merely asked his opinion in regard to the organization of a new ministry.

KING CARLOS NEARLY HIT BY MAD BULL AT FIGHT

LISBON, March 9.—An angry bull charged the royal suite, missing the carriage of King Carlos, but overturning and killing a horse.

THE PERSONAL SIDE AT THE CAPITOL

Blue Grass State Blossoms Into Poem and Frose in Defense of Some of Its Time-Honored Institutions.

"Kentucky, oh, Kentucky, how I love thee with thy daisies and thy flowers bright— Where the fair figures of bright-eyed Southern maids; Where the winds are sweetly slinging 'mid the flowers newly born, Where the corn is full of kernels and the Colonels full of corn."

Senator Bailey's allusion to the moonshiners of the mountainous region of Kentucky in his light on the Heyburn pure food bill some days ago has aroused the poetical sentiments of those who are endeavoring to have some merriment at the expense of the delegation from the Blue Grass State.

The above couplet has just made its appearance at the Capitol under the title, "Our Blue Grass Delegation." It is accompanied by what the author claims to be an exposition of true Kentucky life.

The author in part says: "Man that is born in the mountains of Kentucky is of feud days and full of virus. He fisheth, fiddeth and fighteth all the days of his life.

"He smunneth water as a mad dog, and drinketh much good whiskey. When he desireth to be well, he planteth a neighbor, and lo, he reapeth twenty-fold.

"He riseth even from the table to seek the scalp of his grandseal's enemy, and bringeth home in his carcass the ammunition of his neighbor's wife's cousin's father-in-law, who avenged the dead.

"Yes, verily, his life is uncertain, and he knoweth not the hour when he may be jerked hence.

"He goeth forth on a journey half-shod, and cometh back on a snitter full of shot.

"He riseth in the night to let the cat out and let his dogs bark, and he goes days to pick the buckshot out of him.

"He goeth forth in joy and gladness, and cometh home in scraps or fragments.

"A cyclone bloweth him into the bosom of his neighbor's wife, and his neighbor's wife's husband bloweth him into Abraham's bosom before he hath time to explain.

"He emptieth a demjohne into himself, and a shotgun into his enemy, and his enemy's son lieth in wait for him on election day; and lo, the coroner bloweth up a forty-acre field to bury the remains of his enemies."

Palmer of Pennsylvania.

Representative Palmer of Pennsylvania is courteous to a degree, but he is also exceedingly business-like, and "he takes no foolshness."

When a member of the National German-American Alliance was addressing the Committee on Judiciary, of which Mr. Palmer is a member, he showed his goodness for business-like proceedings, and he did it in an emphatic manner.

The gentleman speaking had branched off from discussing the feasibility of the bill under consideration and in his ardor, addressed himself to several ladies and gentlemen who were in the room as avowed prohibitionists. The speaker proceeded to tell them why they would never be victorious in their fight for prohibition.

The staid and solemn committee might as well have been in Jericho for all that he cared.

Judge Jenkins, chairman of the committee, smiled amusedly. Mr. Clayton of Alabama gaped ponderously.

"Look here, brose out Mr. Palmer sharply. 'If you have any objections to the bill, I wish you'd state them. The prohibitionists can do very well without your advice.'

The effect was electrical. The speaker sat down as if he had been shot.

Livingston a Ladies' Man.

Representative Livingston is a Southerner, hailing from the sunny clime of

Georgia. Also, he has established for himself a reputation as a friend of all ladies in trouble.

Recently a member of the House was looking for him.

"Where is Livingston?" he asked impatiently.

"If he isn't in the appropriations room or on the floor of the House," replied another member, "you'll find him in the ladies' reception room in Statuary Hall. He's there much of his time."

It must be said that Mr. Livingston's path is not always strewn with roses.

Sometimes the ladies are old, and sometimes they are ugly. Then there can always be a surfeit of attentions. Close observers claim that there are three lines about Mr. Livingston's eyes. Being a friend to those in distress is a costly business at the Capitol of the United States. It increases in work and trouble in a sort of geometrical progression.

Walker Now Wiser.

John H. Walker, clerk of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, is the recipient of many congratulations these days. At first they worried him considerably, as he did not clearly understand their purpose. People would call and also write to extend their heartfelt and best wishes for his continued prosperity and good luck.

He wondered and wondered at the cause of so much pow-wow being made about him. He inquired of the other clerks and the messengers of the committee if they could understand it. They also expressed ignorance and were evidently as much at sea as he was.

Finally the cat got out. It came as a second shock. Mr. Walker had been touted as a Congressman. He didn't know how or when the promotion was made, or to what body of Congress he was a member.

Yesterday, however, he was advised. Press reports emanating from the White House got his official title mixed. Instead of saying he was clerk to Senator Gallinger, it said Congressman from New Hampshire.

Blackburn's Brother "Blitzableiter."

Senator Blackburn is ever ready to say a practical joke upon the unwary. Many opportunists present themselves for the pleasure of the genial Kentuckian in this line and he delights in gratifying his desire.

The other day a friend of a staunch constituent of the Senator called to see him. He had some years ago met Mr. Blackburn, and, of course, did not feel any hesitancy in approaching the "colonel" in the corridor just outside the Marble room.

"How'd you do, Senator?" he said, upon approaching. "My name is— He did not get further. The Senator, interrupting, said:

"You apparently have made a mistake. You want to see Senator Blackburn?"

"Yes," answered back the caller. "You are Senator Blackburn, are you not?"

"No, I am his brother. You will find the Senator in his committee room. He was there when I left, a moment ago," answered Mr. Blackburn.

The caller turned and walked away according to the directions given. The Senator exhibited a good-natured smile, looked at the fellow as he was turning around a corner, and then remarked:

"That fellow will never know the difference, and the captain (meaning his brother) to the Senator him that he really is the Senator."

QUESTIONS AGITATING CONGRESSMEN TODAY

During the consideration in the Senate of the bill for settlement of the affairs of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians, various charges were made concerning alleged ulterior interests in the disposal of the great areas of coal lands owned by these Indians, and other matters of only less importance. As a result of these charges, a resolution was introduced by Senator Clark of Wyoming, looking to an investigation of general conditions in the Territory, with reference to these charges and to other matters, by a committee on Contingent Expenses. The bill, meanwhile, has passed, the question of disposing of the coal lands having been cut out of it and passed on for future settlement. As passed, however, the measure is vastly different from the form in which it earlier passed the House, and it is expected that before the House gets done with consideration of the Senate amendments, there will be an animated and interesting discussion.

The charges concerning the efforts of the Rock Island system to get into control of these lands have not been put in very definite shape thus far. It is certain that a most remarkable concern has been displayed in the whole question by people who are not usually deeply interested in the welfare of Poor Lo.

Members of the House Merchant Marine Committee who are opposed to the sub subsidy bill declare that a most remarkable campaign of influence is being carried on, in the effort to get the bill reported substantially as the Senate passed it. As has been shown heretofore, the House committee was undoubtedly made up with the view to keeping the bill from getting a report. The majority is supposed to be two against it.

Speaker Cannon, according to report, has been under a great pressure of influence. This has been employed especially to induce him to have Mr. Watson of Indiana, the House whip, change front and join in for a favorable report. Watson has been listed as one of the men placed on the committee for the express purpose of killing it. But General Grosvenor and others of the advocates of the measure have by no means given up hopes of it. They are working like beavers, and if they do not succeed in getting a report it will be no fault of their intentions.

"To the people of the United States really want to keep the Philippines!" is the inquiry often heard in Congressional circles nowadays. Senator Hale has been quoted as declaring that he doesn't think they do; that on the other hand,

SHOE MACHINERY MONOPLY MAY HAVE COMPETITORS

BOSTON, March 9.—A deal which may revolutionize the shoe machinery manufacturing industry is said to be about put through, with Lynn as headquarters.

Thomas G. Plant and other large capitalists are alleged to be behind the project.

The scheme is the formation of a great corporation to fight the United Shoe Machinery Company, which is said to be the only one in the world that manufactures all the different kinds of shoe machinery.

PATRICK H. BURKE DIES AT GARFIELD

Patrick H. Burke, proprietor of a liquor store at Twenty-fourth and H streets northwest, died yesterday afternoon at Garfield Hospital, as the result of a severe illness. Arrangements for the funeral will not be made until the arrival of a brother from Hot Springs, Ark.