

U. S. CONTROL OF UTILITIES IN CAPITAL FINDS FAVOR

By BILL PRICE.

In entering today upon hearings to determine whether the gas and telephone companies are to be allowed to increase their rates to consumers in the District, the Utilities Commission finds that it is just beginning a work which will fall with increasing heaviness as the war progresses.

Not only do members today realize the onerous duties ahead for a long time to come, but each man is seriously considering policies that may lead to recommendations for a vital change in the handling of utility corporations here.

The public, having a particularly unpleasant taste in its mouth as a result of the requests of the telephone company for permission to radically change its service and prices, is showing a disposition to demand Government control or ownership. This is evidenced in resolutions of citizens' organizations and in the expressions of individual citizens throughout the city.

Federal Control Considered.

President Wilson and Congress have before them the great question of whether the Government shall take over the railroads of the country during the war, with the prospect that such action will be the outcome of deliberations that have been in progress for weeks. The railroads have asked for increased rates all along the line. It is known today that the suggestion of Federal control of the railway lines of the United States has furnished serious thought to the official rulers of the District as having possible application to utilities concerns in this city.

War conditions are responsible for the demands of the national railroads and they are responsible for the demands of utility corporations in this city. The people are having to bear the burdens. The most serious thought of the Utilities Commission is how great these burdens may become in future months if the local corporations are really entitled to charge increased rates. How often will hearings be necessary to readjust rates up or down, the prospects always being upward rather than downward.

The claim was made today before the Utilities Commission by the gas company that since it made application a few weeks ago for permission to increase its charge to the public the price of coal has raised 35 cents, increasing the cost of producing gas three-quarters of a cent a thousand feet. Every time wages go up, coal costs more, or oil takes a leap forward, further demands for

Not One Coal Theft On Police Blotters, Answer: No Coal?

While about every crime on the calendar from murder to obstructing traffic has been entered on the precinct blotters and headquarters books of the police department during the last week, there has not been one line as to the stealing of coal.

This is almost unknown, as in every other cold spell such entries have been numerous.

There are two explanations: First, that there isn't much coal in the District to steal; second, that what there is has assumed its true value, as the black diamond, and is secreted in the innermost recesses of cellars.

more money from the public will be made. One hearing for increased rates will hardly be over and a rate determined before another will be on hand. The courts will be cluttered with litigation.

Public Must Know Facts.

With Federal or municipal control the exact facts as to cost of operation, fair returns to stockholders and the holders and just treatment of the public would be known at all times, leaving little opportunity for simulating the people, staggering under heavier loads each day.

In the case of the telephone company, whose application for reduction of service and increased rates will come up Thursday, the public is voicing its protests in strong manner to the Utilities Commission. The company's enormous increase in expenditures have been due, in public estimation, to the demands upon it by the Federal Government. Comparatively little of the increase has gone to improved facilities for the public. At least the people of the city will claim before the commission, in fact have already claimed in communications to that body.

Having that view steadily pressed upon its attention the Utilities Commission will, it was pointed out in official circles today, consider the Government's responsibility and its probable willingness to take over operation of this utility and afterward determine what proportion must be paid by the Government and the people, together with what returns should be made to the company upon the true valuation of its properties here.

Further Demands Likely.

There is today no doubt in the minds of utility commission officials that the street railways will soon be presenting demands upon the commission and the public, attributing those necessities growing out of the extraordinary conditions that exist, again calling for hearings, decisions, and court litigation.

The outlook, it is candidly admitted, is one calling for changes in policies in handling local utilities, policies that will enable quick determination of all questions that will constantly arise until stable conditions are restored by the ending of the war, when the Utilities Commission and the utility corporations will be able to measure the possibilities of the future without doing injustice to capital or the public.

Recommendations to Congress for Federal control of local utilities, with the Government bearing a fair proportion of whatever increased rates are called for, loomed larger today than at any time in the history of the District.

SAILOR FELL ASLEEP IN U-BOAT ZONE; JAILED

BOSTON, Dec. 15.—Because Axel Janssen, a sailor, fell asleep when the ship on which he was on watch passed through the submarine zone, he has been sentenced to serve four months in jail.

Janssen was on watch on a trans-Atlantic liner, and his act in falling asleep is said to have endangered the vessel and her cargo and passengers.

2 NEEDEY FAMILIES ALREADY ASSURED OF CHEERY XMAS

Two of the "Christmas Opportunities" offered residents of Washington to make as many homes happy for the holidays have been provided for, the Associated Charities announced today.

Opportunities thirteen and fourteen have received \$896 from the treasurer of a charitable fund for six months, with a pledge of an equal amount for the following six months.

Number thirteen is a family with seven children, dependent for support upon a blind mother and father nearly blind. Number fourteen is a family where the chief breadwinner is only fifteen years old and earning only \$8 a week.

Of the total required for these fourteen opportunities, \$1,437 has been subscribed or pledged. There still remains to be raised \$579.

Contributions may be sent either to The Times or to John Joy Edson, treasurer, Associated Charities, 923 H street northwest.

OPPORTUNITY NO. 1.
Six Fatherless Children of Italy.
Amount asked for, \$520.
Previously acknowledged, \$500.
Cash, 500.
A. C. H., 100.
B., 100.
Total, \$1000.
Still needed, \$480.

OPPORTUNITY NO. 2.
Doing Her Part.
Amount asked for, \$416.
S. E. P., 200.
Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Townsend, 100.
Total, \$300.
Still needed, \$116.

OPPORTUNITY NO. 3.
Preparing to Plead His Mother's Cause.
Amount asked for, \$416.
Previously acknowledged, \$100.
C. E., 500.
Total, \$600.
Still needed, \$16.

OPPORTUNITY NO. 4.
Independence Only a Few Months Away.
Amount asked for, \$260.
F. B., 200.
Still needed, \$60.

OPPORTUNITY NO. 5.
Battling Against Chronic Illness and Poverty.
Amount asked for, \$832.
Previously acknowledged, \$600.
E. R. H., 100.
J. L. S., 300.
Total, \$1000.
Still needed, \$768.

OPPORTUNITY NO. 7.
A Soldier's Feet of Children.
Amount asked for, \$224.
Previously acknowledged, \$500.
M. C. B., 500.
Total, \$724.
Still needed, \$500.

OPPORTUNITY NO. 11.
Who Will Help John Carry His Load?
Amount asked for, \$416.
E. M. P., 200.
Still needed, \$216.

OPPORTUNITY NO. 12.
Embryo Wage Earners.
Amount asked for, 728.
I. C. F., 500.
J. L. S., 300.
B. C., 100.
Total, \$900.
Still needed, \$174.

OPPORTUNITY NO. 13.
Mother Blind, Father Almost So, and Seven Children.
Amount asked for, \$760.
Previously acknowledged, \$600.
C. E. C., 200.
C. E. C. (pledged), 300.
Total, \$1100.
Over-subscribed.

OPPORTUNITY NO. 14.
Chief Bread Winner at 15.
Amount asked for, 416.
Amount asked for, \$416.
C. E. C., 200.
C. E. C. (pledged), 200.
Total, \$400.
Over-subscribed.

BROADER POWER FOR FUEL HEADS IN EMERGENCIES

John L. Weaver, Federal Fuel Administrator for the District, is to be given power to close public halls, and even industries considered by him to be least essential to local and national welfare if such course becomes necessary to keep house-holders from freezing.

Authority to take the initiative in meeting all coal emergencies is to be given all State fuel administrators by Dr. Garfield, U. S. Fuel Administrator, as a result of widespread suffering from fuel famine in hundreds of cities and towns in the Eastern United States. Federal Fuel Administrators are to recognize the prior rights of war industries and householders in distribution of available supplies of coal.

Full Power to Field Men.

M. K. Prudden, Federal Fuel Administrator for Michigan, was the first given this authority. When he reported an acute situation in his State and asked power to go ahead and close amusement and other places not absolutely essential, he was told to go ahead. Dr. Garfield said similar authority would be given all other Federal administrators as a part of a policy of decentralization of authority from Washington, so that local officials could anticipate emergencies.

Hundreds of Washington families are without coal, but Administrator Weaver believes that the situation will be bettered through new distribution plans which will care for emergency requirements of householders and put an end to hoarding efforts. Consequently there is no present prospect of the closing of Washington theaters and other amusement places.

Reports From Country Alarm.

Alarming reports from the middle West and Eastern sections of the country are pouring in upon the Fuel Administration. Many of these told of pneumonia epidemics starting because of the coal famine. Apparently the coal shortage is most acute in Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and New York.

Fuel Administrator Garfield stated today that the railroads were cooperating to the utmost in endeavoring to move the coal offered them for delivery to the sections where the shortages are most felt, but that snowstorms have served greatly to hamper traffic. Many solid trains of coal from the Kentucky fields destined to Ohio and Michigan points are stalled at points in southern Ohio by snow drifts. The railroad motive power has been severely taxed. Because of the weather conditions, it is necessary to employ three or four locomotives in hauling a train of coal cars through the storm bound territory.

Must Serve Homes First.

Fuel Administrator Garfield stated today that the drastic orders for the diversion of commercial coal to domestic consumers would remain in force just as long as necessary to meet the needs of householders. Until now the Fuel Administration has dodged the proposal to curtail industries. Dr. Garfield stated that the interests of the people demanded that industries be cut down in their supplies of fuel, or be denied their supplies absolutely for a limited period.

PERSHING SHIFTS TROOPS TO BAFFLE GERMANS

PARIS, Dec. 18.—That the American sector along the French first-line trenches is being shifted from one point to another with a view to baffling the Germans as to its actual location is the common belief here.

It is of prime importance to Vor Hindenburg to discover, if he can, the location of the major American offensive, but General Pershing is keen on keeping this vital information from reaching the German leaders, and has adopted the plan of moving his men about.

GERMAN BREWERIES COAL-HIT.

AMSTERDAM, Dec. 18.—Many of the 12,000 breweries of Germany have been forced out of business, because of the government's drastic steps to conserve the coal supply, and it is said that the brewing industry, Germany's second most important, is threatened with suspension.

JURY DISAGREES IN OLD DOMINION-TRANSFER CASE

The jury which has been trying the damage suit of Robert S. Billops against the Washington and Old Dominion railway before Justice Thornton in Alexandria county disagreed last night, and was discharged by the court.

The case is one of a series which arose by reason of the controversy following the doing away with the transfer from the Old Dominion Company to the Capital Traction Company. A number of passengers refused to pay their fares unless given a transfer, which occasioned ejection from the cars.

The plaintiff, Mr. Billops, claimed that he was ejected unlawfully on the 16th of August, 1916, and suffered physical injury and mortification by reason of the occurrence. The company's defense was that they had no right to use a transfer under the ruling of the Interstate Commerce Commission approving a schedule doing away with transfers, and that upon refusal to pay a fare under such circumstances, they had the right to eject a passenger.

Mr. Billops was represented by Attorney E. Hilton Jackson, James Sherer and Amos Crouse, and the defendant company by Attorneys Wilton J. Lambert and C. E. Nicol.

INFERIOR GRAIN FOR SPIRITS.

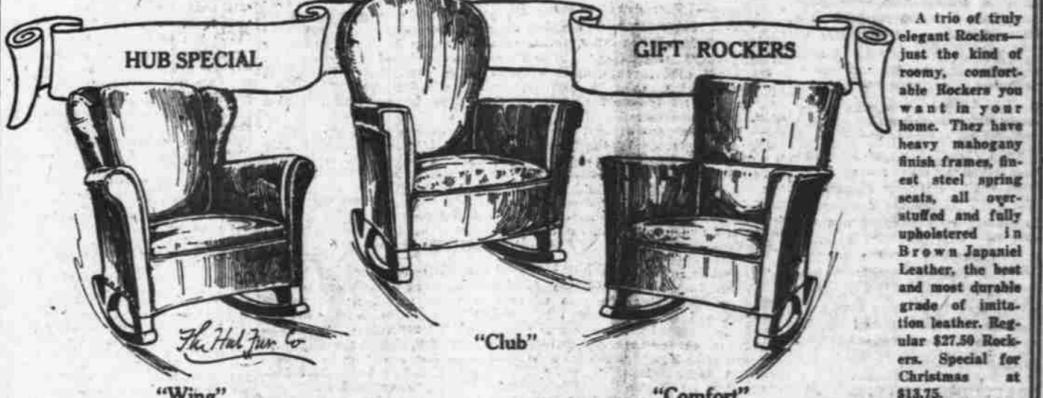
Only inferior grain can be used in producing distilled spirits in the future, unless orders promulgated by Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo.

Gift Furniture for Xmas Use Your Credit and Buy Now---Pay Next Year

WE make it possible for you to give sensibly and give generously this Xmas by offering the finest guaranteed Furniture at genuine underselling prices and on the most liberal credit terms. Get in early tomorrow and select all the gifts of furniture you want from our immense stock.

Your Liberty Bonds are better than cash here. We allow a cash credit of \$55 for a \$50 Bond—\$110 for a \$100 Bond. We will cash your Xmas Savings Club Checks.

Choice of These Three Elegant Imitation Japanese Leather "Gift" Rockers for \$13.75



HUB SPECIAL

This Fumed Oak Smokers' Stand 79c

Has two shelves, stout supports, and metal match holder and ash tray. A splendid gift for the man who smokes.

Elegant Overstuffed Parlor Suite

Including large 72-inch Settee, luxurious Armchair, and Rocker, fully upholstered in rich blue velour, fine tapestry, or genuine leather; finest steel spring construction. A splendid gift on easy terms. **\$129.75**

Come to Toyland For Wonderful Toy Values!

Jumbo 20-Act Circus

—All the animals and all the acts of a real circus—double-faced, brightly colored pictures, on heavy cardboard—for **39c**

Doll's Brass Bed

—24 inches long, strong and rigid. A wonderful gift value at **\$2.49**

Kiddo Horse

—Strongly made, mounted on four wheels, with steering handle. **\$1.49** Special at **49c**

ERECTOR

—The Toy Like Structural Steel.

Hello, Boys! Here's the Great Gilbert "Erector"

"The Toy Like Structural Steel." Thousands of these Nationally Advertised Sets SELLING for the FIRST TIME at CUT PRICES.

Every boy knows that the Gilbert ERECTOR builds the most, the strongest, and the best toy models. It's the construction toy that every boy wants for Christmas. With the ERECTOR boys can build toy steel bridges, skyscrapers, battleships, machines, and many other models, and never lose interest in them, because they're true! They're exactly like the real thing. Every piece is stamped accurately out of steel, and is correct in design and proportion.

"CUT" PRICE
No. 1 Set, regularly \$1. Makes 112 models, for **59c**

This Never-Stop Metal See-Saw

—an automatic toy that makes a great hit with the boys—at **49c**

Sandy Andy Toy

—an automatic sand dump complete, with sand and paper yard. Special at **49c**

THE STORE THAT SAVES YOU MONEY THE GREATER HUB FURNITURE CO SEVENTH & D STREETS

Doll's White Enameled Chiffonier, \$2.95

3-inch high Chiffonier with four drawers and plate mirror



Oh! John!

Take these shoes over to Klein's. Tell them to put on a pair of **KLEIN'S 'Skid-Not Rubber Heels.'**

"Don't forget the name, as no other heel will do, because they are the only kind that makes walking on wet, slippery streets safe, and they will put them on while you wait—for fifty cents."

KLEIN'S Rapid Shoe Repair Co.,
736 14th St. N. W.
BRANCHES:
1219 Pa. Ave. 104 9th St. N. W.
714 9th St. N. W.

Tomorrow Is Flashlight Day At C. SCHNEIDER'S SONS 20% DISCOUNT ON ALL FLASHLIGHTS 1207 F Street N. W.