

The River Press.

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GOVERNOR TOOLE'S MESSAGE.

The message delivered to the ninth legislative assembly by Governor Toole is the subject of criticism by some of his political opponents, who complain that it lacks detailed instructions to Montana lawmakers as to what the state executive believes should constitute the work of the session. As the political campaign is a thing of the past and Governor Toole represents the choice of a majority of Montana voters, his official acts should be viewed from a non-partisan standpoint.

It will be admitted by honest republicans that the platform pledges upon which their party candidates were recently elected were suggested by the evident popularity of the reforms urged by Governor Toole two years ago. Most of the citizens of Montana who take an active interest in the affairs of this commonwealth are familiar with the views expressed by Governor Toole at that time, and which he has reiterated in public speeches of more recent date. Members of the legislature are assumed to be conversant with the governor's position in these matters, and to have given them careful consideration prior to entering upon their official duties, and it was not necessary for the state executive to make a grand stand play by delivering an extended speech upon subjects about which his views are so well known.

In referring to the desirability of reform legislation promised in the platforms of both political parties, Governor Toole congratulates Montana lawmakers upon the unanimous endorsement of the several propositions. Having been recognized as needed and meritorious legislation, the proposed reforms receive brief mention only in the governor's remarks. It is for the members of the legislature to devise and enact measures that will effect the purpose desired.

One of the features of the governor's message deals with the financial resources of the state government, and conveys the information that, while the constitution permits an indebtedness of \$100,000 to be incurred, there has been a deficit of considerably more than that amount. In dealing with this problem, republican members of the legislature will remember that their state platform promised reduced expenses in the administration of public affairs, and a decrease in the tax burden.

There are some things in the platform upon which majority members of the legislature were elected, that do not receive any mention in the governor's message. It is believed, however, that they will not be forgotten by representatives of the political party which made these pledges, and that the promised legislation will be undertaken.

REGULATING RAILROAD RATES.

Just now congress is up against a question which promises to be very much a live one until it is settled and settled right. It involves the control by the Inter-State Commerce Commission or by congress of railroad freight rates so far as fixing reasonable charges for service is concerned. The public press of the east through their special correspondents at Washington and the associated press, have been telling their readers that a battle royal is to take place in the national capital this winter between powerful interests on two sides of this question. There are to be high priced railroad attorneys galore who will represent the great company interests which are opposed to any new legislation which will tend to add to the powers of the Inter-State Commerce Commission in controlling rates or interfering in their business. There are also wealthy stock interests and other business combinations only less important as capitalists than the railroad companies that are quite as much determined to obtain legislation that will result in a practical control of railroad freight rates. There is the Inter-State Commerce Commission itself, which in repeated annual reports to congress has stated its absolute inability under supreme court decisions to do much of anything in the way of regulating railway affairs, even to admitting that they cannot stop the giving of secret rebates to favored customers by the railroad companies.

Such noted and notable men as Gov. LaFollette, of Wisconsin, Gov. Van Sant, of Minnesota, and Gov. Cummins, of Iowa, all republicans in name at least, are pressing a bill in congress, known as the Cooper bill, with the design of controlling railroad rates. Many democratic members of each house of congress will act with them. There is much talk in Washington to the effect that President Roosevelt is in sympathy with the move, or at least cannot be relied on to veto such a measure if it passes. It certainly looks as though there might be something doing during the

present winter in that line in Washington.

Montana will be interested in a lesser way in the same question this winter, when the legislature meets at Helena. Both political parties in this state have pledged themselves to favor a state railroad commission. We expect a bill of some sort is sure to go through and certainly ought to go through, but the people of the state will do well not to get their expectations up very high when it comes to figuring out in advance the practical usefulness of a state railway commission. It can, and doubtless will, accomplish some good results for the state, but court decisions have been such that its powers have been greatly limited. On local business it can fix a maximum charge, provided that rate can be shown in court to admit of a "reasonable" profit to the road, something that is often times a pretty hard thing for the commission to establish against the strenuous opposition and claims of a railroad company which does its own bookkeeping on a system not solely without an eye to just such contingencies.

When it comes to inter-state commerce, however, conceded to be solely under the control of congress, there is a much wider field for results. It will pay the person interested in the question of freight rate regulation, outside of the regulating done by the companies themselves, to keep his eye on the proceedings at Washington this winter. Possibly nothing will be done at all by congress, but it certainly has the power to do very much more than it is possible for the state of Montana to do in regulating freight rates and saving the people of Montana from exorbitant charges such as they now suffer from in many instances that will easily come to the mind of the average observer.—Bozeman Chronicle.

THE IRRIGATION PROBLEM.

Although there have been no contracts let for government irrigating projects in Montana, the people of this state are patiently awaiting developments which will probably materialize in due course. It has been announced by competent authorities that Montana has a larger area of land that can be irrigated, and a greater water supply available for that purpose, than any other state in the so-called arid region, and this fortunate combination of circumstances will ultimately result in the construction of government irrigation works upon a gigantic scale.

In some of the states entitled to share in the benefits of the reclamation act, there are murmurs of discontent over the slow progress made in starting actual work upon irrigation projects. The strongest protest comes from North Dakota, where it is alleged there has been very little done in the matter of preliminary surveys, and some of the politicians of that state are objecting to the plans providing for construction work in other parts of the country. In reply to critics who complain about the slow progress being made in these matters, a recent Washington dispatch says:

In some quarters impatience is expressed at the time consumed by the reclamation service to determine the feasibility of various irrigation projects and in the formulation of designs and plans and other preliminaries antecedent to construction. Such criticism is necessarily founded upon a total misunderstanding of the magnitude and complexities of the matter involved. An English engineer of long experience in India, who recently traveled through the west, examining the works of the reclamation service, expressed very emphatically his astonishment at the promptness with which construction was undertaken after the passage of the act, and expressed a conviction that it could not have been undertaken so soon had it not been for the large fund of information which had been collected by the geological survey previous to the passage of the act.

At the present writing the reclamation act has been on the statute books exactly two years and a half. In this time between thirty and forty large irrigation projects have been examined, twelve have been recommended for approval, and contracts for construction have been either advertised or let on six projects, as follows:

Truckee-Carson project in Nevada. Construction commenced in March, 1904.

Salt river project, Arizona. Construction commenced November, 1904.

Uncompagnre project, Colorado. Construction commenced November, 1904.

Minidoka project, Idaho. Construction commenced in December, 1904.

Hondo project, New Mexico. Construction commenced in December, 1904.

North Platte project, Nebraska. Proposals advertised to be opened January 9, 1905.

The five projects under construction will require an expenditure of \$10,400,000 to complete them. Each one of these has been outlined in general, and much data regarding the water supply, surveys or other facts, had been gathered during the years when such work was carried on by the geo-

logical survey under authority from congress, extending from 1888 to the date of the passage of the reclamation act.

The Healthiest Cities.

The mortality table compiled by the census bureau show that about seven-tenths out of every 1,000 of the population of the United States die each year. If these figures are correct, then the United States is one of the healthiest countries on the globe, being excelled in this respect only by Denmark, Sweden and Norway. The most healthful part of the United States seems to lie in the Central West and in the northern regions of the Mississippi valley and its tributaries.

The significance of the death rates in the larger cities, as compiled by the census statisticians, is to a considerable extent destroyed on account of two interfering facts. The negroes in the south and itinerant consumptives in the west both are victims of a high mortality, which gives an excessive increase to the death rates of the places where they reside. For example, according to the census, Pueblo is the most unhealthy place in the United States. But nobody believes that death lurks in the pure and invigorating atmosphere of Pueblo. Its death rate of thirty-two per 1,000 is due to the mortality among stricken consumptives who go there in search of health. In an equal degree the high death rate among negroes affects appearances in most all southern cities.

It may be said that, other things being equal, the healthful cities are usually situated near a copious supply of water. St. Joseph, South Omaha, St. Paul, Cedar Rapids and Minneapolis, which all have very low death rates, afford conspicuous examples of this fact. The Missouri and the Mississippi rivers are especially free from taint and deadly germs. In spite of the large inland territory they drain and the innumerable communities situated along their banks, their waters remain exceptionally pure, from source to mouth.

To Identify Canadian Coyotes.

Dauphin County Review.

Urge a change of the present bounty law, the Helena Independent uses the argument that an inspector could be appointed to discriminate between coyote pelts brought from Canada and those taken from animals killed within the borders of the United States. Old trappers, however, regard the Independent's statement as superlatively ridiculous. They say the domestic and Canadian mutt-loving coyotes may sometimes be discriminated from one another by the absence of "hairs" in the foreign animal's howl, but they fail to see how a discrimination can be made in the animals' pelts, unless the Canadian government makes it mandatory for those from the further north to tarry around with them a tincture likeness of King Edward.

A Land of Girl Slaves.

China is undoubtedly the greatest slave country in the world. Of a population of 400,000,000, over one-fourth are slaves. Every family of means keeps its girl slaves. The girls are mostly purchased to do household work, it being cheaper to buy them than to hire.

Alleged Land Frauds in Montana.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3.—To provide an additional safeguard against public land frauds, the general land office is seeking as far as possible to have its special agents investigate every land entry case before it passes to patent. This policy, which already is in full practice, has borne good results, and patents have been withheld wherever the slightest ground for suspicion has been found. The public land service was not long ago divided into nine inspection districts, with an agent in charge of each. In connection with the recent land fraud developments, some interest attaches to the investigation of alleged fraudulent desert land entries on Montana, on which special agents have been engaged.

Senator Gibson, of that state, many months ago, sent two letters to the commissioner of the general land office, forwarding complaints of citizens that there were frauds in this class of entries. The matter was taken up, and desert land entries since then have been rigidly investigated. The complaints were that the lands entered were not taken in good faith, were not being irrigated and were not entered for cultivation purposes as required by law. It was stated at the general land office that the complaints were more general than specific, but that cases of this sort have been under investigation in Montana and elsewhere for some months.

Missouri's Republican Senator.

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo., Jan. 3.—Thomas K. Niedringhaus, chairman of the republican state central committee, tonight was nominated by the caucus of republican legislators for United States senator to succeed Francis M. Cockrell. The nomination insures his election.

WILL LEAVE PORT ARTHUR.

The Russian Garrison Goes to Japan As Prisoners of War.

TOKIO, Jan. 3.—General Stoessel has cabled the emperor of Russia asking permission for the officers to give their parole. The capitulation terms insist that the Russian rank and file of the garrison of Port Arthur will come to Japan as prisoners of war. The Japanese took possession of a number of the forts of Port Arthur today. The Russian officers and officials will be permitted to return to Russia under parole, the officers retaining their side arms.

General Stoessel is being sharply criticised for destroying the Russian warships, attempting to choke the entrance to the harbor of Port Arthur, and dispatching the torpedo boat destroyers to Chee Foo subsequent to his offer to surrender the fortress.

CHE FOO, Jan. 3.—Some interesting statistics concerning the defense of Port Arthur were brought here by the flotilla of Russian torpedo boat destroyers which carried numerous chests containing complete records of General Stoessel's army.

Originally the army numbered 35,000. Eleven thousand have been killed, 16,000 are wounded or sick, while 8,000 remained in the forts, of whom, however, 2,000 were unable to fight.

It is learned that when General Stoessel wrote to General Nogi regarding the surrender of the fortress, he said:

"I have 8,000 men in the forts and 8,000 of these are able to fight. If you do not accept my proposal, these men will die fighting, but it will cost you three times their number to kill them."

During the siege 65 per cent. of the garrison were put out of action. This remarkable fact was due to wounded men returning to the front. Cases have been reported where men have gone to the hospitals seven times, always returning to the front. The number of officers killed was proportionately greater than in any battle known in history.

The Russians estimate that the taking of the fortress has cost Japan \$100,000,000.

Senator Mitchell Accepted Bribe.

POBELAND, Ore., Jan. 3.—S. A. D. Pater, recently convicted in this city, with Horace G. McKinley, Daniel T. Tarpley and Mrs. Emma Watson of conspiracy to defraud the government out of public lands, made a statement to The Telegram today in contradiction to statements issued by United States Senator John H. Mitchell, indicted by a grand jury on evidence similar to that presented at the criminal trial of the conspirators mentioned above. Pater's statement follows:

"I gave Senator Mitchell \$2,000 to get those patents through and I will say that I never regretted telling anything so much in my life as the fact that Mitchell took the money. I laid two \$1,000 bills on the table. Mitchell said that it was too much. I was desperate and desired to get the patents through, and told him to take it and do what he could to influence the commissioner (Congressman Hermann) to take the claims up and get the patents issued. I knew that as a United States senator Mitchell would have a lot of influence with the land office, and I was willing to pay that amount to have the patents issued."

Can Evade Prohibition Law.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3.—The supreme court of the United States today reversed the decision of the supreme court of Iowa in two cases involving the construction of the Iowa prohibitory liquor law, the opinion in each case being handed down by Justice White. Both cases involved the action of state officers who seized and destroyed packages of liquor brought into the state C. O. D. by express companies.

The supreme court of Iowa sustained this proceeding, but the judgment was today reversed on the ground that it is a contravention of the interstate commerce clause of the federal constitution. Justice White added that if such a practice were carried to its legitimate conclusion, and the various states given authority to control C. O. D. shipments of merchandise from one state to another, much of the interstate business of the country would be placed at the mercy of the states.

Marital Law Is Expensive.

DENVER, Jan. 3.—State Treasurer Whitney Newton in his annual report to the governor gives the total amount of certificates of indebtedness issued in payment of military expenses as \$776,464, and recommends that the legislature authorize an issue of \$800,000 "issue bonds," payable in 25 years and to draw not to exceed 3 per cent. interest annually.

New York Has Big Debt.

NEW YORK, Jan. 3.—A gross funded indebtedness almost half as great as the total national debt and a yearly average growth and expansion so immense that every effort to keep

abreast of it taxes the municipal resources, is shown in the annual message of Mayor George B. McClellan to the board of aldermen. In all the great departments the necessity for immediate extension is shown. The present system of water supply is inadequate and a plan to expend immediately \$90,000,000 in acquiring water sheds and building aqueducts and mains is approved.

Inventor of the Gold Brick.

NEW YORK, Jan. 3.—A report has reached this city that Thomas O'Brien, the notorious confidence man and alleged inventor of "the gold brick" swindle, is dead in the French penal settlement at Cayenne, where he had been serving a life sentence for the murder of his partner, "Kid" Waddell, in Paris in 1897.

O'Brien's career was a remarkable one. He was born 53 years ago in Chicago, and aided by an attractive personality, managed to make an enviable record. Many bold swindles running into the thousands were credited to his name.

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