

The River Press.

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WOULD REVISE LAND LAWS.

If the recommendations of the president are favored by congress, there will soon be several changes in the land laws. A disinterested view of the situation compels the admission that existing laws, or the methods of administering them, have resulted in the acquisition of large areas of land under circumstances contrary to those contemplated by such laws, and it will be acknowledged that new legislation upon this subject is desirable and necessary. In a message sent to congress a few days ago, the president discusses the situation in part to this effect:

The developments of the past year emphasize with increasing force the need of vigorous and immediate action to recast the public land laws and adapt them to the actual situation. The timber and stone act has demonstrated conclusively that its effect is to turn over the public timber lands to great corporations. It has done enormous harm, it is no longer needed, and it should be repealed.

The desert land act results so frequently in fraud and comparatively seldom in making homes on the land that it demands a radical amendment. The provision which permits assignment before patent should be repealed, and the entryman should be required to live for not less than two years at home on the land before patent issues.

The commutation clause of the homestead act serves, in a majority of cases, to defeat the purpose of the homestead act itself, which is to facilitate settlement and create homes. Actual—not constructive—living at home on the land for three years should be required before commutation, unless it should appear wiser to repeal the commutation clause altogether.

These matters are more fully discussed in the report of the public lands commission, to which I again call your attention.

I am gravely concerned at the extremely unsatisfactory condition of the public land laws and at the prevalence of fraud under their present provisions. For much of this fraud the present laws are chiefly responsible. There is but one way by which the fraudulent acquisition of these lands can be definitely stopped, and therefore I have directed the secretary of the interior to allow no patent to be issued to public lands under any law until by an examination on the ground actually a compliance with that law has been found to exist. For this purpose an increase of special agents in the land office is urgently required, otherwise bona fide would-be settlers will be put to grave inconvenience or else the fraud will in large part go on. Further, the secretary of the interior should be enabled to employ enough mining experts to examine the validity of all mineral land claims, and to undertake the supervision and control of the use of the mineral lands still belonging to the United States.

Many of the existing laws affecting rights of way and privileges on public lands and reservations are illogical and unfair. Some work injustice by granting valuable rights in perpetuity without returns. Others tend to protect the grantee in his possession of permanent improvements made at large expense. In fairness to the government, to the holders of rights and privileges on the public lands, and the people whom the latter serve, I urge the revision and enactment of these laws in one comprehensive act, providing that the regulations and the charge now in force in many cases may be extended to all, to the end that unregulated monopolistic control of great natural resources may not be acquired or misused for private ends.

THE RAILROAD POWER.

All the chief railroad lines in the country are congested with the immeasurable mass of business heaped upon them. There are more than 225,000 miles of tracks and yet the cry is for more roads and more rolling stock.

Considering this a statistician figures out that by 1930, twenty-five years from now, the present population of 85,000,000 will be increased to 145,000,000, or a gain of 60,000,000, and that freights for railroads will be increased in like proportion. This will make it necessary to double track all present lines and to add new roads aggregating thousands of miles more.

Of course blighted harvests, a postlillie or a great and prolonged war would change this, but so far as present indications are a guide, that advance will have to be made. That will mean that the railroad interest will be the leading one of the country, says Goodwin's Weekly. Will the roads be controlled by a few men who will dominate the country? Will they be reduced to their real sphere of common carriers? Will the government interpose, purchase them and run them on government account? It is a most grave question. The

power now in the hands of one man, Mr. Harriman, is more than that of any inferior sovereign of the world. His capacity to raise money is not equaled by more than half a dozen of the world's sovereigns. At the back of these magnates are the brightest array of lawyers in the land and hundreds of thousands of the most capable skilled and unskilled laborers. What might they not do? On the other hand suppose the government owned the roads and had that army under its control and some man on horseback should get to be president of the United States, who might decide that he wanted sovereign power, what then? The railroad is a new force in the world. Its dealings are in millions; the whole country leans upon it for transportation of freights and passengers; its forces have to be disciplined, in some respects as much as an army is disciplined. What could not a few magnates behind those forces do? What could not an ambitious and unscrupulous administration do?

Fidelity To Public Duty.

Butte Inter Mountain.

A house bill providing that senators and representatives shall have \$13.75 a day deducted from their pay each time they are absent on private business, unless ill, will create discussion in congress. Something should be done, to curtail the rather shameful desertion of members. Today's dispatches, speaking of the Christmas exodus, indicate that only a handful sits in either house. Some members do not attend, through an entire season. New York practically was without representation in the upper house last session, and though slices cut from their salaries would embarrass neither Platt nor Depew, it would effect reform with others. Contrary to general conception, the average member is not wealthy. Another procedure crying for abolition is that of damning an unpopular member by rising and strolling out, when he begins to speak. Unless called out by duty or illness, the rules should require attendance. If a man represents a constituency or a partisanship, that constituency or partisanship is entitled to a hearing, in either house, on any question. Congress has come to regard its public duties too little.

Texas Cuts Pullman Rates.

AUSTIN, Tex., Dec. 25.—The Texas railroad commission has issued an order declaring Pullman cars common carriers and providing that all such operated in Texas shall be under their immediate and constant supervision, providing a reduction of 20 per cent. in the rates on the same and specifying that the Pullman company shall consult the commission regarding the number of cars operated as to increase or decrease in number, file its operating books, etc., with the commission and report all these operations to the commission the same as railroads are required to do.

A Champion Bigamist.

BUFFALO, N. Y., Dec. 25.—The greatest bigamist in the world, a man who is accused of having more than 100 wives, and who has confessed to marrying 32 women and robbing most of them of all their savings, is in custody here tonight, it is believed. He has been sought for all over the world.

The prisoner is supposed to be the notorious George A. Witzhoff, who has married twice as many women as infamous Johann Hoch, who was executed in Chicago for murdering some of his victims. The man is known as Charles John Anderson, a name under which Witzhoff married some of his victims, and his accuser, Mrs. Adell Wagar of this city, has repeatedly identified pictures of Witzhoff as those of the man who married her and robbed her of thousands of dollars before deserting her four years ago.

It is now planned to notify the police of every city in the United States where Witzhoff made his bigamous marriages, and to have as many of the wives come to Buffalo as possible to try to identify the prisoner.

Strenuous Year For Railroads.

CHICAGO, Dec. 26.—The year 1906 will be long remembered as one of trials and tribulations of railways and officials that had broken the laws. Partaking of the zeal displayed by President Roosevelt and his administration in moving against law breakers and further stimulated to action by the direct orders of Attorney General Moody, and even from the president himself, the various federal district attorneys during the year have prosecuted more legal proceedings against railroads and their officials than ever before within an equal period in the history of the country.

Most of these suits were brought under the Elkins law against giving or receiving rebates, and in most instances they were instituted not only against the railways and their officials who gave the rebates, but also against the individuals or corporations that solicited or accepted them. In most cases prosecutions were successful, the fines assessed aggregating many hundreds of thousands of dollars. Two men were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment under the federal conspiracy law.

ANECDOTES OF SHAFTER

How a Joke Was Played on the Santiago Chieftain.

EXAMPLE OF HIS PERSEVERANCE

Tried Five Times to Kick a Football Which Finally Conquered Him. True Prediction Made By His Father When He Started For the Civil War—How He Won Nickname of "Pecos Bill."

The late Major General William Rufus Shafter, the Santiago chieftain, thoroughly enjoyed a good story and did not object to telling one even if the joke was on himself. He had a faithful servant whose name was George.

One day the general, contemplating a trip to Santa Barbara, Cal., sent George to the ticket office to buy a sleeping berth. To make sure that the old man would make no mistake the general called after him in an emphatic manner:

"George, tell them I want a section and a lower."

An hour later George returned, and the general asked:

"Did you get it?"

"Yes, sir," answered George.

"What did you get?" asked Shafter.

"A section and a little over."

"Great Lord, George!" exclaimed the general. "You don't mean to tell me that you went down to that ticket office and asked for a section and a little over, do you?"

"Yes, sir," said George.

"A section and a little over?" repeated the general. "Hang it, George, you don't think I'm that big, do you?"

"I know I am a big man, but heretofore I've always found one section in a sleeping car roomy enough to stow away in."

General Shafter, who was tall and slender in youth, gained much flesh while living in the far west, and before the Spanish-American war he weighed over 300 pounds. The story is told of him that one day when he was on the Pacific coast he was sitting in his parlor, overlooking the parade ground. Some soldiers were playing football on the campus. One of them, a muscular man, sent the football flying through the parlor window. The soldiers were frightened, and visions of the guard-house loomed before them. The general presently appeared at his door with the football under his arm. Tossing it into the air, he made a desperate kick at the sphere. The ball dropped harmless at his feet and the general's body spun around twice. He tried it again, and again missed. Five times he kicked and missed, and in the fifth experiment he lost his balance and tumbled head over heels down the steps to the ground. The soldiers quickly went to his assistance. The general was not hurt, but the football conquered him and he surrendered.

Captain George H. Henderson of Lapeer, who served in the civil war with General Shafter, at that time a lieutenant of a company of the Seventh Michigan volunteer infantry, when asked if he knew General Shafter replied: "Know him! Of course I did. He was a lieutenant in the Seventh the same time I was, and we were chums together. He was a mighty good officer and a mighty good fellow. He once told me a funny story about his father. Bill worked with his father on the farm in Kalamazoo county, and I guess the old man did not exactly like to have him go to the war. The citizens turned out to see the boys take the train at Galesburg, and Mr. Shafter was among them. 'Goodby, Bill,' said he as the train was starting. 'I expect to hear soon that you got shot in the seat of your trousers.'"

"Well, pretty soon Bill got to be adjutant, and in one of the first fights he was wheeling his horse around and a rifle ball just grazed his saddle and went into his flesh. Oh, he swore like a pirate. You could have heard him half a mile off. Then, after he got cooled down a little, he said to some of those near him, 'What will my father say now?'"

"I'll tell you how I came to receive that designation," said General Shafter to a group of friends one night after having been addressed as "Pecos Bill." "It was out in that arid part of the southwest country where water is a real luxury. We had been traveling for several days without water, and finally a captain of one of our companies, with tears in his eyes, said: 'Colonel, we are lost, and begged that we turn back. We'll go straight ahead,' I replied. 'The Pecos river lies over there somewhere, and I intend going on until we meet it if we have to circumnavigate the globe to do it.'"

"We reached the river that night. The water was muddy, but it was water. We simply had to go ahead. If we had turned back, we'd have starved to death."

Mrs. Mary McKittick, General Shafter's only daughter, passionately loved her father. On his return from Santiago she traveled over half of the continent to meet and welcome him. A concourse of people had assembled to witness the affecting meeting between the conquering hero and his daughter after those long history making months of separation. And what were her first touching words of greeting? She gave a little start at sight of the general's form, by no means attenuated, but less some sixty pounds, lost in Cuba, and said:

"Oh, you're just as thin as a rail!"

The tension was relaxed, and the crowd smiled.

MILLIONS FOR MINES.

LITTLE ROCKIES DISTRICT ATTRACTS ATTENTION OF CAPITALISTS.

Ruby Gulch Properties Bonded to Big Syndicate For \$7,500,000.

A transaction that means the development of the Little Rockies mining district into one of the most important gold camps in the United States, is reported from Helena in a dispatch which says the Ruby Gulch properties have been bonded for the handsome figure of \$7,500,000. That is one of the biggest deals in Montana mining history, and will lead to future prospecting and opening of claims that are believed to contain millions of the precious metal. These operations will place Chouteau county among the leading gold producing sections of the country.

The dispatch announcing the completion of this important mining deal is to this effect:

Former State Senator Benjamin D. Phillips of this city, has closed a deal whereby the mines of the Ruby Gulch Mining company at Zortman, in the Little Rockies, have been bonded to a New York syndicate for \$7,500,000. The syndicate is to make the first payment of \$1,000,000 in May, and is given four months from that time to pay the balance of \$6,500,000. This is the biggest mining deal which has been made in Montana since Heinze sold to the Amalgamated and, outside of the Butte district, is the biggest mining deal which has ever been made in Montana. The syndicate is composed of George Kenyon, of New York, C. W. Whitley, formerly manager of the East Helena smelter of the American Smelting and Refining company, and associates. Mr. Whitley is supposed to represent the American Smelting and Refining company.

Two years ago last September the mine was purchased for \$500,000 by its present owners, who are B. D. Phillips, half interest; Charles Whitecomb, of Zortman, not quite a third interest; B. M. Phillips, son of B. D. Phillips and F. R. Peters. The latter owns 15,000 shares. The company issued 100,000 shares.

Before the present owners took possession, the mine was little known. One or two strikes have been made, but the two big parallel veins averaging from 60 to 150 feet in width had not been developed until last spring. A new road was being graded across the claims of the company and when the surface dirt was removed, the big vein was exposed at the grass roots. Since then thousands of dollars have been taken out. The ore is low grade, averaging from \$8 to \$10 a ton, but it is handled for \$1 a ton, leaving a handsome profit to the owners. It is a cyanide proposition and the ore is very soft. There is a 300-ton cyanide mill on the group and at present 200 tons a day are being treated. A force of 60 men is employed. In the group of the Ruby Gulch Mining company are 60 claims, but to date the veins have only been traced on about eight of the group. The syndicate is not to take possession until the group has been paid for and the mine and mill will be run by the present owners regardless of the \$7,500,000 deal which is pending.

Proposed Tariff Revision.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 25.—These proposals regarding tariff revision have been laid before the president by the republican members of the house of representatives: That there be no extra session of the 60th congress to revise the tariff; that the republican party pledge itself in its next national platform to revise the tariff at a special session immediately following the inauguration of the president on March 4, 1909; that to facilitate that revising a tariff commission be authorized by the 60th congress.

President Roosevelt has not reached any decision as to this plan. He is seeking counsel of friends in both tariff camps, and will make known his intention later.

Thus far the "standpatters" have high hopes that they will be able to bring the president to their way of thinking. High tariff men all over the country are urging the president to "stand pat" with them, while the element in favor of tariff revision is very urgent that the president shall call a special meeting of the next congress to meet not later than April, and to continue at work until the tariff has been "revised by its friends."

As matters now stand, the "standpatters" have a trifle the better of it. They held many conferences, and decided that if tariff revision was not to be avoided on the eve of the presidential election, there must be practically unanimous action by republicans in the house.

Christmas Dinners For Poor.

NEW YORK, Dec. 25.—New York contributed today to the most bounteous Christmas it has had in several years. Ideal weather, clear, cold and sunshiny, marked the day.

Thirty-seven thousand of the city's poor shared in the distribution of Christmas dinners by the Salvation Army, Timothy D. Sullivan and the Bowery Mission. The people were

admitted to the great hall in crowds of 200 and each presented with a basket of food. The usual Christmas dinner at the palace was abandoned, as Commander Booth was convinced that the recipients of the gifts preferred to take them to their own homes and prepare their dinners after their own fashion. This made it possible to add 1,000 bags to the amount usually distributed.

In the afternoon occurred the annual Christmas tree and distribution of many toys to the children. Commander Booth said that the poor had suffered more this year than last, as the price of foods and rents had been advanced. In many of the institutions there were vaudeville entertainments and music for the inmates.

Rockefeller's Enormous Income.

NEW YORK, Dec. 25.—From authority that should be absolute, John D. Rockefeller's annual income was told yesterday, for the first time, authentically. It will be \$90,000,000 when the year 1906 closes.

Henry H. Rogers and John D. Archbold were talking with a prominent financier when the subject came up of how fast the oil king's millions were piling on one another. Said Mr. Rogers:

"I know for a fact that Mr. Rockefeller's income this year will be sixty millions." Mr. Archbold assented. These two men are closer to John D. Rockefeller's finances than any other two in the world.

Mr. Rockefeller's income every day of the year is therefore \$164,383.52. Every hour of 24, waking or sleeping, playing golf or skating, sitting in church or superintending the new house at Pocantico, John D. Rockefeller is sure that \$6,840.98 is accumulating for him. This is \$114 a minute. His fortune accumulates at the rate of \$1.90 every time the clock ticks.

A Santa Claus Special.

KNOXVILLE, Tenn., Dec. 25.—S. K. McHarg, who recently sold his Virginia & Southwestern railroad to the Southern, handsomely remembered all his employees and officials. He ran a "Santa Claus special" over the entire length of the road, "Santa Claus" being the conductor.

To every employe who had been in the company's service for one year "Santa Claus" gave one month's salary as a Christmas present. Other tokens were presented to the remaining employes.

To the heads of the road Mr. McHarg presented one year's salary each. The gifts to subordinate employes alone aggregated more than \$50,000.

Order to Show Cause.

In the district court of the Twelfth judicial district of the state of Montana, in and for the county of Chouteau.

In the matter of the estate of Thomas Lannon, deceased.

Louis D. Sharp, the administrator with the will annexed of the estate of Thomas Lannon, deceased, having filed his petition herein praying for an order of sale of all the real estate of said decedent, for the purposes therein set forth. It is therefore ordered by the said court that all persons interested in the estate of said deceased appear before the said court on Saturday, the 26th day of January, 1907, at 10 o'clock in the forenoon of said day, at the court room of said court, at the court house in Fort Benton, county of Chouteau, to show cause why an order should not be granted to the said administrator with the will annexed to sell all of the real estate of the said deceased, Thomas Lannon; and that a copy of this order be published at least four successive weeks in the River Press, a newspaper printed and published in said county; and that a copy of this order be mailed by registered mail to F. J. Lannon, 354 Randolph street, St. Paul, Minnesota.

JOHN W. TATTAN, Judge.

Dated December 23, 1906.

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