## THE AMERICAN WEST INDIES

With the exchange on January 17 of treaty ratifications between the Danish and American Governments the Danish West Indies, consisting of the islands of St. Thomas, St. John, and Santa Cruz, passed to our sovereignty. They are now the American West Indies.

American sovereignty over them prevents them from falling into the possession of a great and possibly unfriendly Power, and thus becoming a menace to the United States as Heligoland in German possession has become a menace to England.

As the islands' chief value to us is strategic, it was not inappropriate that the day after they became American the Atlantic Fleet, consisting of thirty-two battle-ships, torpedo-boat destroyers, and auxiliaries, which since January 10 had been engaged in a "war game," should carry out maneuvers off St. Thomas before proceeding to Guantanamo, Cuba, for target practice and winter drills.

The island of St. Thomas, which is the most important of the three because of its harbor of Charlotte Amalie, lies thirty-eight miles east of Porto Rico; St. John, which is the smallest, is immediately east of St. Thomas; and Santa Cruz, which is the largest, being about nineteen miles long, is some forty miles south of the others.

On the three islands live about thirty-three thousand people, nine-tenths of whom are Negroes employed on sugar-cane plantations.

When the $25,000,000 payment for the islands has been made, the American flag will appear there; until then the islands will remain under the administration of the Danish Governor-General.

## CONGRESS: THE OLD ORDER DIES HARD

At this writing the second session of the Sixty-fourth Congress has been at work six weeks. It should have been at work eight weeks. Despite an imposing programme of legislative proposals, Congress took the usual fortnight's Christmas recess. On that programme were the customary appropriation bills, the railway legislation advocated by the President when the Eight-Hour Law was passed, the National Defense, Food Control, Conservation, Immigration, Porto Rican, Prohibition, Corrupt Practices, Export Trade, and new Taxation Bills.

What has this session accomplished? The Senate has passed one measure, the Immigration Bill, now in conference, and the House, having passed a little of the appropriation legislation and spent much time on the so-called "leak" investigation, now, despite Administration warnings, passes a Public Buildings Bill. By it Congress would appropriate some $38,000,000 for the erection of public buildings, mostly post-offices.

What principles should govern such appropriations? According to the present Postmaster-General, no appropriations should be made where the postal receipts are less than $15,000, or where the population of the community is less than five thousand. If this rule had been followed, very many of the items in the bill just passed would have been eliminated. The object of these indefensible items is perfectly plain, however. They mean just so many votes to insure Congressional re-elections and for trading purposes.

Few men in the House have been bold enough to stand against this sort of thing. Representative Frear, of Wisconsin, is one, and so is Representative Garner, of Texas. The latter recently said, as reported: "Federal buildings are being erected at a cost to the Government far in excess of the actual needs of the communities where they are located. Take Uvalde, my home town, for instance. We are putting up a post-office down there at a cost of $60,000 when a $5,000 building would be entirely adequate for our needs."

Just as long as Congressmen decide that the old "grab game" shall continue, just so long it doubtless will continue, unless one of four things happens: (1) unless the President vetoes such a measure as has just passed the House; (2) unless the President is given the power, as was proposed by resolution last winter, to veto specific items in appropriation measures; (3) unless appropriations for public buildings are made only on the request of the department interested; (4) unless public opinion compels the establishment of a commission of experts to which the whole matter of recommendations for public buildings should be referred.

## CONGRESS: CONSERVATION QUESTIONS

The effect of visits of the Presidents to Congress has often been noted in the acceleration of legislation, and the most recent visits of President Wilson to Congress were, as he admitted, to accelerate legislation concerning the conservation of our natural resources. The principal bills before Congress in this department have to do with the use of water power and with the assignment of oil lands.

Any water power legislation before Congress should be amenable to certain principles: no surrender of Federal ownership of water power sites or of Federal jurisdiction over them on all Government lands and navigable rivers; the encouragement of private development by granting security of tenure through ample leases; the preservation of the public right to take over the plant at the expiration of the lease; the requirement of full development and continuous operation, and of good service at just prices.

Many months ago Representative Ferris introduced a bill which has twice passed the lower house. Existing legislation allows only a revocable permit for the use of water power on the public domain. Engineers and financiers deemed this too hazardous a tenure. The Ferris Bill met the difficulty by proposing a lease for a definite term of fifty years. The bill was praised by capitalists and conservationists alike. But the substitute reported to the Senate, known as the Myers Bill, would encourage monopoly by permitting a corporation to take as many public water power sites as it pleases; under it the corporations could even fasten themselves upon the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Moreover, the Myers Bill takes the care of the water powers in the National forests from the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture and gives it to the Department of the Interior, thus entailing duplication and needless expense.

As to water power on navigable streams, the bill which came before the House of Representatives was also much less objectionable than the bill passed by the Senate and known as the Shields Bill. Ostensibly the Shields Bill provides for a method of restoring its own property to the public at the end of fifty years. But, in order to do this, the people would have to pay the unearned increment and to take over whole lighting systems of cities and manufacturing plants. There is thus a deadlock between the view of the House and the Senate conferees concerning the water power measures.

The third bill, sponsored by Senator Phelan, of California, and not yet passed, would give some forty thousand acres of "naval reserve" oil lands, valued at more than $50,000,000, to private claimants. Many of these entrymen, it is said, are dummies for the great oil corporations. Opposition to this bill, as to the others, in the form in which all have been approved in the Senate, has come from conservationists, reinforced by the Navy Department. The fight for conservation is therefore more than ever varied and interesting, no matter how hard it may seem to be for the new order, as regards natural resources, to make itself felt in legislation.

## THE MANN LAW UPHELD

What is known not only popularly but also legally as the White Slave Traffic Act made the traffic in girls for purposes of vice an offense against the Federal Government punishable by fine or imprisonment or both. Of that there has never been any doubt. What has been questioned and is now decided by the Supreme Court is, first, whether such an Act is constitutional, and, second, whether the Act applied to those cases of immorality which were not a part of an attempt to make money out of vice.

The United States Supreme Court has decided that the Act is constitutional, and it has, moreover, decided that it applies to all cases, whether commercialized or not, in which women are enticed or persuaded or forced across State lines for immoral purposes. In other words, it is just as much a violation of the Mann Act (as this law is known from its author) for a man to

seduce or entice a girl across State lines for his own pleasure as it would be for him to do it in order to make money out of the process.

There were three cases concerning which the opinion in favor of this law was drafted. Two of the cases were a matter of wide public comment three or four years ago—the Diggs and Caminetti cases. In none of these three cases was there an element of commercialized vice. It was objected that the law was not intended to apply to such cases, and also that, if it were, it would give opportunity for blackmail, The Supreme Court, in spite of the dissent of three of its justices, has decided that the meaning of the law includes such cases as these, and that whether it affords opportunity for blackmail does not come within the function of the Court to consider, as that is a purely legislative question.

The effect of the decision will be to make it impossible for the true white slave offenders to escape from the law's clutches by covering up evidence of money transactions. As for the danger of blackmail, we do not believe that it threatens so many innocent people as to make it imperative to weaken the law to the injury of the public and to the peril of hundreds and thousands of young women whom the law, as upheld by the Supreme Court, now protects.

### WISE LIQUOR LEGISLATION PROPOSED

The Senate has passed, and there is now before the House, a bill whose purpose and provisions may be understood from the following quotation:

> No letter, postal card, circular, newspaper, pamphlet, or publication of any kind containing any advertisement of spirituous, vinous, malted, fermented, or other intoxicating liquors of any kind, or containing a solicitation of any order or orders for said liquors, or any of them, shall be deposited in or carried by the mails of the United States, or be delivered by any postmaster or letter-carrier, when addressed or directed to any person, firm, corporation, or association or other addressee, at any place or point in any State or Territory of the United States at which it is by the law in force in the State or Territory at that time unlawful to advertise or solicit orders for such liquors, or any of them, respectively.

Such a bill is in entire accord with the spirit of the Webb-Kenyon Law, the law which places the Federal Government, through its control over inter-State commerce, behind the endeavors of the prohibition States to enforce the liquor laws upon their books. This law, it will be remembered, has just been sustained by the Supreme Court.

The proposed law represents another step forward in the direction of putting the Federal Government actively behind the efforts of the States to protect themselves. If history records that the States have sometimes attempted to nullify our Federal laws, certainly the attitude of the Federal Government towards the liquor question has done much in the past to nullify the efforts of the States towards self-reform.

### WHY SUCH LEGISLATION IS NEEDED

The insistent demand for such a law as we have just described can be explained not only by the efforts of the temperance advocates, but also by the curious short-sightedness of the liquor interests. The short-sightedness of the liquor interests is well illustrated by the offensive liquor advertising recently described by Dr. Clarence True Wilson, General Secretary of the Methodist Board of Temperance, before a large gathering in Washington, D. C. About twenty years ago, said Dr. Wilson, "the drink dealers began a propaganda to secure the future of their trade by creating an appetite for drink among boys, women, and children. . . . Their advertisements, published in newspapers and appearing in letters, have been sent in a vast stream to both wet and dry territory, to minors of both sexes. Frequently they have been addressed simply to 'Occupant of the house,' and the Government has considered this a sufficient address."

Dr. Wilson proceeded to describe some of the advertisements which have passed through the mails. One was an offer of a box of cigars, a bottle of whisky, and a revolver, all for $3.48. The combination of a bottle of whisky and a revolver is not a particularly pleasing one to contemplate in the hands of a boy. This advertisement carefully explained that any orders would be held confidential and shipment made in such a package as not to indicate the contents. Another advertisement showed a delivery-man bringing in a case of beer and saying to a wife and mother, "This beer, madam, is the purest, cleanest, and most wholesome thing that comes into your house." Still another advertisement was headed, "How Mother and Baby Picked Up. A case of good beer in your home means much to the young mother, and obviously baby participates in the benefits."

Dr. Wilson showed that some of these advertisements at least had their due effect by producing a picture of a nursing-bottle filled with whisky that had been taken from a small boy. He also showed a picture of hollow toys taken from school-children. These toys had all been filled with sweet wine or whisky and had been given out by liquor dealers.

The conference addressed by Dr. Wilson passed resolutions calling upon Congress at once to enact such laws as would absolutely forbid all use of the United States mails for the transmission of liquor advertisements and liquor solicitations except when addressed to licensed liquor dealers. This is a much more drastic recommendation than has been embodied in the bill which we have already described. The importance of the public discussion of this recommendation, however, is self-evident.

The whole problem of liquor legislation deserves the attention and consideration of a Federal commission similar in function and in responsibility to the Monetary Commission which laid the foundation for our present banking law.

### ENGLISH SHELLS FOR AMERICAN GUNS

It might seem that England had her hands full in providing munitions for her own armies. It is therefore surprising to read the item of news that the Navy Department had awarded a contract to an English firm for the manufacture of large-caliber armor-piercing shells for our Government. This announcement furnishes not only a direct indication of the industrial revolution which has been taking place in England since the outbreak of the war, but also affords both a text and a lesson for our own manufacturers.

No one denies that a nation should be prepared to supply as much as possible of its own material for defense. That is one of the reasons why so many people have opposed Secretary Daniels's plan for making armor in Government plants, for if the making of war supplies is turned into a Government monopoly (to the destruction of private initiative) it becomes impossible to expand the facilities for manufacturing war supplies upon the outbreak of hostilities.

From the able and convincing defense which Secretary Daniels makes of his award of the contract to the English firm, it does not appear that in the present instance he has violated any principles of economic or military policy. It appears that the Navy Department will secure by this contract cheaper and better shells than American manufacturers are yet prepared to supply. Far from discouraging American manufacturers, this contract appears likely to stimulate them to greater effort and to promise opportunities for large economies in the future.

In putting the case for the awarding of this contract before the public, and in severely criticising some American manufacturers of shells, Secretary Daniels makes an interesting comment upon the attitude of American manufacturers in general towards the preparedness programme. Secretary Daniels says:

> In urging the necessity for our tremendous programme of naval development in Congress, I found the most serious obstacle to contend with was the feeling of many Congressmen that the whole matter of preparedness was a deliberately organized campaign on the part of manufacturers of war material to obtain enormous contracts at fabulous prices. I did not share this opinion.
>
> The splendid action on the part of some other manufacturers in foregoing the chance to obtain war profits from the material needed in the construction of our new programme has justified my belief that the manufacturers of this country, as a whole, are willing to assume their share in the programme of preparedness without abnormal profits.

Those who have followed the developments of the prepared