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THE SENIORITY SYSTEM

SENATOR PENROSE'S death left a vacancy in the chairmanship of one of the most powerful committees in the United States Senate, the Committee on Finance. The Chairman of this Committee has also always been a powerful political figure and has distinctly influenced our tariff and tax legislation. The filling of this place is of special importance just now in view of pending fiscal measures.

The new Chairman is Senator McCumber, of North Dakota, a man of ability, the ranking member on the Republican, the majority, side. But he is not the greatest authority on questions of finance. If the chairmanship were to go to the best-equipped man, some one else might be the new Chairman.

But seniority tradition stands in the way. Because of seniority in ten important Senate committees, four chairmanships are held by men whose ability is clearly outdistanced by that of other men in these respective committees. The same condition persists in the House, and even more strikingly.

There is this to be said in favor of the seniority system. It saves an immense amount of log-rolling which otherwise would inevitably occur in order that a man might gain some coveted place.

Nevertheless there is a growing feeling in both Senate and House that some more efficient system must be devised, not only to expedite committee proceedings and make them more businesslike, but, in the last analysis, to give greater justice to the American public. There is small satisfaction for our citizens in seeing measures of vital importance to the country, as is the case at present in both Senate and House, in the hands of committees presided over by second-rate men.

THE WOUNDED SOLDIERS COME FIRST

THERE is a difference of opinion as to the purpose and effect of the suggested transferral of many hundreds of Public Health Service Reserve doctors to the civilian or Civil Service list. Inquiry at Washington by *The Outlook's* representative fails to establish the fact that such an order has been issued. The proposal is strongly opposed by almost everybody concerned—by the Army and Navy Departments, the Veteran Bureau, the Public Health Service, and most strenuously by the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It seems to have been discussed purely as a matter of economy. The result, in the view of the opponents, would be to break

faith with twelve hundred Reserve Corps doctors. The friends of the wounded soldiers believe, whether rightly or not, that there would be inferior medical service in the hospitals.

A correspondent in Washington in whom we have confidence writes: "While the Health Service has not been ideal in all respects, it has been very valuable to the Veteran Bureau—and to the suffering wounded men of the war—to have available its facilities and its corps of Reserve officers. Not only would the efficiency of caring for the soldiers be crippled, but the condition would be worse—it would materially upset and disarrange all the present plans which have been worked out only under the greatest of difficulties."

We repeat here what we said less than a month ago, that the one thing the country will not stand for is neglect of the wounded soldier; it will never accept a plea of economy in money as an excuse for lack of the very best medical care, suitable hospitals, and cleanliness. Large sums of money have been appropriated for this purpose; if those sums have been misspent, inquiry and punishment should follow. However that may be, the clear duty of Congress and the departments is to do their very utmost to help the wounded soldier regain his strength and working powers so far as possible, and, at all events, and always, to make him comfortable and contented.

OUR ALASKAN FORESTS

IN Alaska our National Forests contain some 20,000,000 acres and over 75,000,000,000 feet of timber of quality suitable for general consumption. From these forests come about nine-tenths of all the timber used in the building, mine, and fish industries of the Territory. Just now, however, public interest is centered upon the discovery that these National Forests include some 100,000,000 cords of pulp wood, used in the manufacture of paper.

It is no wonder that public attention should be directed towards Alaska with regard to this matter, for the price of newsprint has doubled since 1916, and, what is more, we are able in this country to supply only one-third of the raw material from which paper is made.

If forest devastation continues at the present rate, the price of pulp and newsprint will become prohibitive and the curtailment of all paper products, including newspapers and magazines, will rapidly change from a threatened to an actual calamity. So prophesies a bulletin entitled "Suppression of the Press," issued by the New York State College of Forestry, at Syracuse. What is to be done? The bulletin answers; we must have "less waste and more production;

less burning of forests and reckless lumbering; more care and reforestation; better utilization, and a thorough understanding of the importance of forests to the health and prosperity of the people." This is particularly applicable if future supplies of newsprint are to be assured. Local shortages have already apparently caused many rural papers to go out of existence, a serious blow to small communities, even though the larger centers are still supplied with news paper at exorbitant prices.

The income-producing business of the National Forests during the past fiscal year resulted in receipts of nearly \$4,500,000. At a time when the forests of Alaska have been profitably used (as is shown by the fact that two sales of pulp timber, aggregating 700,000,000 feet, have recently been made and that there are many pending applications), but within the limit necessary to keep the land productive, an onslaught is made upon the Forests by those who would co-ordinate them with other Alaskan governmental departments under one politically appointed commission. As Colonel Greeley, United States Forester, fitly says in his annual report, "there is no more reason why a separate and different system should be set up for dealing with the public forests of Alaska than there is for setting up such a system in each State."

AN ERROR FOR WHICH WE SINCERELY APOLOGIZE

Boston, Massachusetts, Dec. 28, 1921.

The Outlook,
381 Fourth Ave.,
New York City.
Gentlemen:

Your editorial of December 28, 1921, relative to Mayor-elect Curley contains a certain inaccuracy which should never have appeared in a magazine of your caliber.

The facts are that Hearst's Boston "American" most violently opposed the election of James M. Curley, probably more so even than the Boston "Herald," and used their editorial page nightly for that purpose.

You certainly owe the citizens of Boston as well as those of the rest of the country an apology for such an inaccurate statement.

Yours truly,

W. H. KERR.

WE find that a Boston correspondent who sent us news of the election stated that "Curley was supported by but one Boston paper." Apparently in a moment of editorial aberration we jumped to the conclusion that this paper must necessarily be the Boston "American." Having the political career of James M. Curley in mind, it was a natural, even if an unpardonable, error to assume that he had Mr. Hearst's support. We apologize both to Mayor Curley and to Mr. Hearst.

MR. WHITLOCK'S RETIREMENT

BOTH Belgians and Americans must have received somewhat of a shock at the news of the approaching retirement of Brand Whitlock, our Ambassador at Brussels. He has been there so long, so prominently, and so efficiently that when he walks down the street all the men doff their hats and all the women and even the children bow to him. Why not? Who is there in Brussels who has not heard that Mr. Whitlock saved the city from the fate of Louvain? And who in Belgium has not heard of his successful protests to Germany against proposed outrageous exactions? No wonder that there are in Belgium post-cards showing Mr. Whitlock's likeness, that medals bearing his profile have been struck, that photographs and other portraits of him are on sale in many Belgian cities.

Mr. Whitlock has been in Belgium as our representative from 1913 to the present time. During the war he also represented the interests of England, France, and Germany there. He was in constant communication with the German authorities in Belgium, and his recently published volumes show how accurately he studied the German character and psychology. His six years' work as newspaper reporter and correspondent contributed towards this success as well as to that of his Mayoralty of Toledo, an office to which he was elected for four successive terms, declining a fifth. He returns home in the truest sense an international figure.

To succeed such a representative would daunt any diplomat but one of notable ability and experience. Such a man is Henry Prather Fletcher. A Pennsylvanian, a lawyer, and a Rough Rider, his diplomatic career reveals successive steps of deserved promotion. His service began with second-secretaryships at Havana and Peking; these were followed by secretaryships at Lisbon and Peking, with a Ministry and then an Ambassadorship at Santiago, and with an Ambassadorship at the City of Mexico. During the Harding Administration Mr. Fletcher has been Under-Secretary of State.

A POSSIBLE PICTURE FAMINE

THE pictures that appear in the pages of weekly and monthly publications are made, by reproduction from photographs or drawings, in photo-engraving plants, and these largely center in New York City, as with other branches of the publishing business. A dispute between employers and employees in these establishments has resulted in a cessation of work, and if this continues, there may be a dearth of illustration in current publications.



BRAND WHITLOCK

In New York City the organization of the employees, the Photo-Engravers' Union, has been one of the strongest of the labor unions. Prior to the passage last year of a legislative measure which restricted its activities, it had to a considerable degree dominated the engraving establishments, practically deciding prices and restricting competition, and even rating the employers as mere *entrepreneurs* in the following significant phrase:

Whenever, in the judgment of the Executive Committee, any firm or combination of firms are selling or disposing of the services of our members at a price which may react in any manner to the detriment of our members and the photo-engraving craft, it shall be authorized and it shall be their duty to have such practices stopped.

In the pursuance of this policy a committee of the union might even demand to examine the books of a concern that was suspected of cutting rates or making discounts to secure business, and then order a change in the business methods of such a concern. A forty-four-hour week was instituted, with minimum wages of \$50 and actual average wages of \$59 a week. In spite of this system of rigid control by the union, however, last year the prices for photo-engraving, in sympathy with the almost universal tendency, underwent a marked decline. Consequently, on the first of the year the employers' association were forced to the decision that they must either re-establish a forty-eight hour week or reduce wages, if business at a profit was to be continued. Then followed what is called by the employees a lockout and by the employers a strike.

The situation as we go to press remains at a deadlock, with 1,500 men idle in New York City and with similar trouble threatening or actually existing in other places, including Philadelphia and Chicago. If in this issue or following issues The Outlook's readers miss its accustomed abundance of illustration, the explanation will be found in

the above-described situation. We hope, however, that the disputants will "get together" without undue delay, and end a contest that, as with all similar ones, could have been avoided by conciliatory methods.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND THE KANSAS PLAN

Nor long ago The Outlook, in a discussion of the Kansas Industrial Court plan and the law on which it is founded, said:

If this method of dealing with industrial disputes that affect primary products like coal and food and public utilities like railways is sound and stands the test of a United States Supreme Court decision, here may at last be seen that combination of arbitration and authority so long desired by many writers and thinkers. Ultimately there must be authority to settle such disputes or the trend to Government ownership and Socialism will grow.

An echo from this expression has reached us. It consists of an editorial published in the "Beacon," of Wichita, Kansas. The value of the editorial is enhanced by the immediate knowledge this Kansas paper has of the work of the Industrial Court. After quoting with approval the editorial comment in The Outlook, the Wichita "Beacon" points out that "the Kansas Industrial Court is cast upon the lines of a commission rather than a body of solely judicial functions." Working and living conditions found after due inquiry and attempts at conciliation and without formal court action are within the purview of the Industrial Court. Above all, the humanitarian phase is important. Thus—

In its function of fixing a minimum wage it must necessarily treat with the humanitarian phase. In a recent decision of the Court it was stated that it was not sufficient that a workman should have a living wage. He must have a fair wage, which means a wage sufficient to pay the living expenses of himself and family, supply them with education and comforts, and provide a reasonable savings account for old age. The Court is continually running up against cases where it is necessary to invoke the humanitarian spirit. It is continually acting as a conciliator and a means of settling disputes out of court. One of its rules is that whenever the employer and employees get together on an agreement, the Court automatically drops out, and every encouragement is given to the settling of cases without court action. For this reason some of the most important settlements are those which are made without public knowledge—unofficially and informally, by the exercise of tact and the mediatory powers which are lodged and implied.

We agree with the writer of this interesting editorial that it is upon such