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The Unready Senate

THE House of Representatives in the Seventieth Congress was ready to begin the transaction of essential business the minute after it was organized—and organization was effected without friction. The Senate, after assembling and passing routine resolutions, without definite organization, was ready merely to begin debating a mass of vexatious preliminaries to the transaction of business.

The comparative efficiency of the two houses, apparently, has not changed since the last Congress, or since the last but one. For several years past the Senate has tended more and more to become an acrimonious debating society, while the House has become steadily more businesslike. The work of the last session of the Sixty-ninth Congress furnished a startling revelation of this state of affairs.

The Senate is always hindered by cumbersome rules, lending themselves to obstructionist tactics. This time it is further hindered by lack of a working majority.

Workable rules and a dependable majority are elements in the greater efficiency of the House, but the will to work is the main thing.

Smith, Vare, and the Senate

FRANK L. SMITH and William S. Vare—and a majority which is a mere fiction, figment, and figure of speech.

Those are the reasons for the failure of the Senate of the Seventieth Congress to organize on the first day of the session. Without Smith and Vare there is no Republican majority, and the Republicans are by no means sure that they want a majority attained by honoring the credentials of these two men.

So, after such brief formalities as the swearing in of new members and the election of a chaplain (there is hope for the Senate in that it is not certain that it can get on without prayers), Senator

Curtis, leader of the Republican (by courtesy) majority, moved adjournment until the next day, and stipulated in the motion that nothing except the hearing of the President's Message—not even the formalities of organization—should be undertaken until after determination of the question of whether or not Smith and Vare are entitled to seats in the Senate.

Senator Norris, Republican, but wearing the mantle so loosely that it falls about his ankles at times, had introduced two resolutions—one declaring that Mr. Smith's election and nomination were so tainted with fraud as to invalidate even his credentials, the other declaring the same and a bit more of Vare. Many vials of wrath, carbonated with words, were ready to be uncorked. If the President of the United States were to be given the opportunity of having his Message read, some such move as that made by Senator Curtis was necessary. Senator Robinson, leader of the Democratic (by self-abnegation) minority, announced that there was no objection from his side. And so the Senate took the wise action of recessing without organizing.

Until almost the last minute, it had been assumed that, since the Democrats did not want to do it, the Republicans would organize the Senate. But their recalcitrants had demanded assurances of Senator Curtis which he could not give—assurances that a farm relief bill and a bill to curb the issuance of injunctions in labor disputes would be reported out of committee. He did assure them that he would do all in his power to bring those bills to a vote, but they then demanded that he pledge the Republican members of the committees that would have the bills in charge, and that he protested his inability to do.

So, it being not quite sure that the Democrats would forego the opportunity of organizing the Senate with the recalcitrant Republicans sitting silent, the Senate did nothing—which, as some would say, is its natural gait.

Meanwhile, one of the most significant questions with which the Senate has had to deal awaits determination. It is the question whether or not a man coming to the door of the Senate with credentials on their face regular can be denied a seat—whether a State can be, for any space of time, denied representation in the Senate of the United States by the man for whom the majority of ballots were cast.

Before this issue of The Outlook reaches its readers the Senate doubtless will have answered that question.

The answer that is given to the question of excluding Smith and Vare may determine many things in the conduct of the affairs of this Nation in the future.

For Better Conditions in the Philippines

A GREAT change seems to have come over the tone of the talk by Philippine politicians. In particular this change is noticeable in the recent remarks of Manuel Quezon, President of the Philippine Senate. With Senator Osmena, he has been in the United States on a mission to urge a plan that might be called a compromise between the old demand for immediate independence and the present status of the islands.

Evidently it has at last penetrated the minds of some Philippine politicians that what the Philippines most urgently need is, not more politics, but more business. At present there are no commercial or industrial leaders among the Filipinos themselves. The politicians have found that you cannot carry on a country on words alone. They have been disappointed that American capital has not rushed to the islands to place itself under the whimsical regulation of men who know nothing about business or finance. Mr. Quezon practically said as much in his recent speech in New York. Of course, the last thing that these Philippine politicians want is to have the

United States cut the islands wholly adrift. They would like to have the United States keep a benevolent guardianship over the islands and American capitalists make investments there. Now they are realizing that they cannot have either American capital or American protection without some degree of American authority.

What Messrs. Quezon and Osmena are now supporting is a proposal known as the Guevara plan. This is not a suggested form of Government for the islands, but a suggested means of considering the whole Philippine problem and formulating a plan to solve it. The author of this proposal is the resident Philippine Commissioner Pedro Guevara. He suggested it at the Williamstown Institute of Politics last summer. We gave some account of it in *The Outlook* at the time. As summarized by the author this plan is as follows:

The Congress in the United States and the Philippine Legislature should be authorized by a joint or concurrent resolution to appoint committees to meet jointly for the discussion of the facts and merits underlying the Philippine problem, with a view to recommending a satisfactory solution. The President of the United States must likewise appoint four members, two of them residents in the Philippines.

The main purpose of this proposal seems to be to take the Philippine question out of party politics in both the Philippines and the United States. Various political changes have been suggested for the Philippine Government—among them a dominion form of government something like that of Canada. But it is clear that the main need of the Philippines is, not a new political formula, but a better economic condition. As Secretary Davis, of the War Department, says in his annual report just issued, "There has been a stressing of the political capacity of the people, at the expense of the development of productive capacity."

A self-governing people must also be self-supporting.

Synthetic Rubber Again

HAS synthetic rubber at last arrived? The German dye or chemical trust announces that it has. We Americans, who use more rubber than all the rest of the world put together, want to know whether this is true. Those who keep track of such things recall that the same

announcement has been made about once a year for two decades and that, despite it, we still find ourselves buying the rubber nature made. Yet some day a successful process probably is going to be hit upon.

Synthesizing rubber has been accom-



Keystone

Senator Vare, of Pennsylvania, whose right to a seat in the Senate is disputed

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pished for many years. The real difficulty is to make rubber that is just as good as the product of the Brazilian rubber tree and to make it for less or at equal cost. And this has never before been done. In 1912 the Germans began making synthetic rubber, but it was not good enough for soft-rubber products, only for hard; and when the war came Germany went rubberless despite her science.

Rubber chemists, of whom there is a whole corps hammering continually on this problem alone, have been learning new things about rubber of late. One interesting thing just discovered is that it is crystalline—something we find hard to square with our ideas of crystals and of rubber. By a comparatively recent application of X-rays—the X-ray diffraction analysis of molecular structure in crystals described some time ago in these columns—Professor Katz, of the University of Amsterdam, has clearly shown that the tiny globules in rubber are mutually hooked together somewhat like mountain climbers on a rope, and are equally helpful to one another. This

is the real secret of rubber's elasticity. All synthetic rubber has had the right chemical composition, but the mountain climbers in it were not roped together correctly; hence it was not very elastic.

What the Germans now claim to have done is to obtain their raw materials as by-products of the new Bergius process of liquefaction of coal, recently described in *The Outlook*, and to have learned how to rope the molecules together for good elastic team-work.

Rubber from coal is a dream—yes, a dream that delights the chemist.

Other Rubber Hopes

WHAT of other rubber developments that have been more or less in the news of late? What of Henry Firestone's Liberian plantations? What of the plans to grow rubber in the Amazon basin? What of Mr. Edison's experiments in Florida? What of *guayule* (gwy-oo-lay), a kind of shrub rubber to be grown in the semi-desert regions of the Southwest?

Mr. Firestone's plan is progressing; he proposed to grow in Africa the same tree that was long ago transplanted from Brazil to the Malaya plantations—the *Hevea*, our chief source of rubber. Mr. Edison is experimenting with several of the rubber-producing plants known to all rubber experts; the best showing has been made by a plant of the milkweed family from Madagascar, but only by machine harvesting could this home culture succeed in competition with thirty-cent Malayan labor. And *guayule* is already being cultivated on several hundred Californian acres; it is rubber, but not "the" rubber (*Hevea*), and is not as good, although it is good.

Any one of these plans may push to the front, or the newly announced synthetic process may win. At present this is anybody's guess.

Which will win the race—the planter, the botanist, or the chemist?

What About American Shipping?

A FORECAST of debate and perhaps legislation in the new Congress is seen in recent news reports. Thus the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers in a resolution declare that both American commercial efficiency and National defense are facing grave dangers. Senator Reed, of Missouri, be-