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THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 1923.

The Governor's Constructive Message.

Before a joint meeting of the general assembly Tuesday, Governor Cameron Morrison delivered a speech in the nature of his excellency's biennial message. Few messages from a state executive ever contained more constructive and wholesome recommendations. Probably, the governor's recommendation to the legislators to provide sinking funds for the redemption of state bond issues is the most vital of his numerous suggestions, since that is the only practical means by which state finances can be stabilized and the state's borrowing power can be maintained upon a business-like basis. The fact is, there should be no bond issue by state, county or municipal authorities, without the provisions for their redemption upon maturity. The necessity for refunding bond issues when they fall due indicates that no sinking fund has been set aside to take up such bonds when they become due and payable. Refunding a state debt is equivalent to a borrower's giving his note to take up another note. All public financial transactions should be based upon sound business principles.

Hardly less vital was the proposal of the governor to provide the funds necessary to carry out the state's progressive scheme for education. He also urged an additional bond issue of \$15,000,000 to carry forward North Carolina's state highway building enterprise, for which the total expenditure will aggregate a grand total of \$65,000,000. At the same time, Governor Morrison urged the general assembly to refer to the people a constitutional amendment limiting the power of the state to contract indebtedness. The limit he suggests is six per cent of the taxable value within the state.

New constructive undertakings recommended as state enterprises is the establishment of a state port commission, provided for in a bill carrying an appropriation of \$2,000,000 to be used by the commission in the construction of state ocean gateway terminals and for the further purpose of lessing or purchasing ships to be operated by the state, if the commission deems such a state maritime business feasible. The governor himself believes that the transportation and freight rate problems of the whole of North Carolina warrant state port terminals, and so far as state operation of ocean carriers is concerned he is convinced that the state will not only have additional transportation facilities but can bring about freight rate relief for North Carolina's industrial, agricultural and material progress. These port terminal and ship operation measures are the only practical steps the state can take in relieving the state from freight rate discrimination is the governor's conclusion.

The general assembly is to consider bills providing for what the governor suggests as to state port terminals and ship operation, together with appointment of a commission under the bill, will bring out these matters in detail, so that there is time enough to consider such a measure in a way that judgement can be formed concerning the proposals. There is no doubt, however, that the time is opportune for state attentions to port development is the correct thing in principle. It has become a necessity, but it depends upon the wisdom with which the legislature proceeds in this important direction. Recently the governor has given

his serious attention to the decline of the fish and oyster resources of the state, and he recommends legislation to rehabilitate that industry along the extensive coast line of North Carolina. He suggests an appropriation of \$300,000 to be used by the fish commission in rehabilitating the fish and game interests of the state. He suggests the planting of a million bushels of oysters each year for three years, and he urges an appropriation of \$100,000 for opening the ocean inlets where progress of migratory fish is impeded in the waters of the coast. Part of the scheme for restoration of the once great fish industry of the state is the establishment of fish hatcheries. It was recently estimated that the state's annual production of sea food had dwindled to \$2,000,000, but while that may be an under estimate the state's fishing industry could easily be made to produce at least \$20,000,000 a year.

The governor's message is one for the serious consideration of the general assembly and the people, and there can be no doubt that some of his recommendations can be followed up in a way to make them powerful factors in the development of the state. We shall see how enlightened the legislature can prove itself to be in its measures for interpreting the governor's suggestions into ways for making a greater North Carolina.

The European Spectacle.

In a decided spectacular way, France has set a rather dubious precedent for nations to collect their dues for each other. Whether France is right or wrong in her coercive venture in the Ruhr region of Germany, Americans are only a great group of "observers." Any conclusions we may reach about it, pro or con, has no bearing on a purely European case, because, having disassociated ourselves from the entente allies and having relapsed into a state of isolation, we have neither national or international jurisdiction in the case. Our final state is one of "aloofness," and the last of our Rhineland army of occupation has been ordered to take their departure from German territory. At last our freedom and independence of all the entanglements of foreign alliances and associations will be complete when the last American doughboy evacuates the Coblenz sector on the Rhine.

France has moved her cohorts into the Ruhr valley and the legal aspect of the case hinge on the Versailles peace treaty and the reparations commission set up under the treaty to see to the enforcement of reparations. The treaty is the law and constitution made and provided for the German default which has brought reprisal by France. The reparations commission is the court which passed on the case, and its group of judges consists of the representatives of Great Britain, France, Italy and Belgium. The case against Germany is that, with France as complainant, Germany willfully, intentionally and deliberately violated the Versailles treaty in that she intentionally defaulted in the delivery to France of stated amounts and quantities of coal, wood, timber, poles, crossties and other forest products as part of her reparations obligations for the repatriation of the devastated area of France. At its sitting last Tuesday, the commission rendered its decision in accordance with this provision of the reparations caluse of the Versailles pact:

"The measures which the Allied and Associated Powers shall have the right to take, in case of voluntary default by Germany, and which Germany agrees not to regard as acts of war, may include economic and financial prohibitions and reprisals and in general such other measures as the respective Governments may determine to be necessary in the circumstances."

The decision of the reparations commission was, therefore, well based, according to process decreed in the peace treaty. Enforcement of the commission's decision was the next thing in order, so France, having remained in a state of military preparedness, has thrown her forces into Germany to stand guard over France's civic collectors sent there to seize customs, coal and forest products to the amount due by defaulting Germany.

Great Britain, for her part, dissented from all this proceeding, though the majority of the reparations commission duly rendered the decision which France hopes the world will accept as the basis of the international legality of the French reprisal, concerning which the Star's dispatches furnish the momentous details this morning. The long and short of it is that France's act of reprisal is authorized under the findings rendered by the reparations commission, in due form, at its meeting in Paris on Tuesday.

From the standpoint of international legality, America had not part or parcel in all this European proceeding, since our country rejected the Versailles peace treaty, despite the wisdom of Woodrow Wilson, spurned his statesmanship, and made a separate peace with Germany. Never-

theless, the freedom of speech warrants Americans to express views about the startling event of the week. While it is admitted that France, more aggrieved than any other nation, has acted under due process, practically all Americans are convinced that France's coercive collection scheme is uneconomic and unwise. It would be accomplished at enormous cost and it will add more burden on and create more economic and financial chaos in Germany.

Being entirely outside the jurisdiction involved in this international proceeding, purely European, the Washington government is a mere spectator without the "involvement." It is true that the Washington administration broadcasted a few "feelers," which rather informal and indefinite overtures have gone unnoticed by France and the two entente nations aiding and abetting French enforcement of reparations.

The World Alarmed About Cotton.

England is so alarmed over the outlook for cotton that capitalists have subscribed a vast amount of money to back the government in extending the Egyptian railway system into the Soudan where a large cotton growing area can be developed. The cost will be immense, and, even at best, it is said the production prospects are for an increased production of only 110,000 bales a year. British manufacturers resent all efforts in the United States to curtail the cotton acreage, but they seem to overlook that it is the cotton boll weevil which has cut down the American crop to the danger point.

Alarm is felt by both European and American manufacturers over the recent statement showing that the cotton crop of the whole world for 1922 was less than 16,000,000 bales, leaving a world deficit of at least 12,000,000. Brazil is greatly increasing her cotton growing industry but a recent statement shows that she is building cotton mills fast enough to consume all her own cotton. China has increased her cotton crop but its quality in staple is so short that it has to be mixed with American cotton to make it available for spinners.

The world needs our cotton, and with us the problem is to eliminate the boll weevil. It is estimated that the cotton acreage this year will be 1,000,000 acres less than last year, but it is too early to make acreage estimates. Recent government reports on the prospects for securing calcium arsenate with which to poison the weevil, were alarming, showing that the arsenate supply, in the whole world was only 7,000 tons, whereas the country's needs called for not less than 12,000 tons. Dr. Miller Reese Hutchinson, an American chemist, claims that he can guarantee cotton growers 25,000 tons of arsenate if it is needed. He claims that by July 1 that many tons of arsenate can be made available, but the government experts doubt it. He also claims that arsenate can be supplied by them at a cost of only 15 cents a pound.

Dr. Hutchinson is the cotton hope of the country if he can make good on his claim. He makes no explanation why one but he goes on to reassure what he says. He adds that next year he can supply 100,000 tons, if need be, and 250,000 tons the next year if there is a demand for it. The question, however, is about this year's supply of arsenate, and on that depends what this year's cotton acreage will be. It has been demonstrated that by means of some of the poisoning methods, wonderful cotton growing records have been made during the past season.

American Troops Ordered Home.

Although the United States senate has passed a resolution expressing the view that the American troops, which have been doing duty with the occupational forces of the allies in Germany, should be brought home, the sudden decision of the Harding administration to withdraw our soldiers from any further service on foreign soil is one of the sensations of the day. After a conference with President Harding and the war and navy heads, Secretary Hughes yesterday issued an order for the immediate repatriation of our forces doing patrol duty at the Coblenz bridgehead on the Rhine.

The transport St. Mihiel was ordered to proceed from New York to Antwerp Friday to transport our soldiers home, and they are expected to be on their way from Europe within the next ten days. Our forces consist of 1,000 men, but a few officers and men will be temporarily left at Coblenz to dispose of certain property used in maintaining our watch on the Rhine. Secretary Hughes gave as the reason for this sudden decision of the government that "the time has come for the withdrawal of the American forces on the Rhine."

Since the government at Washington has acted so promptly after the senate passed Senator Reed's resolution of recall on last Saturday after-

noon, the decision will be construed to mean a protest by America against France's military incursion into Germany to collect overdue reparations without waiting propositions for wiser measures of procedure against Germany because of her default in meeting her reparations obligations. Secretary of War Weeks is reported as saying that this recall order goes to our forces in Germany for the reason it is intended as a protest against French seizure of the Ruhr valley, a step which is likely to prove disastrous to the world as well as France. We shall know more surely, however, whether the recall of American troops is deliberately intended as a rebuke to France.

For two years it has been the policy of this administration to abandon all military occupation in Germany, following the separate peace which the government made with that country. Originally 15,000 American troops were left with the occupational forces of the allies in German territory, but the government some time ago recalled 14,000 of our soldiers. Both the people and the press of this country have insisted for a couple of years that American troops really had no business in Germany after we had made a treaty of peace with that country; but it was chiefly due to German request that a small contingent was left at Coblenz.

Just how France will take this withdrawal of troops from the Rhine will be an interesting phase of the event. Many Americans have favored recall of our troops an opportune time, but during the past few days it has been urged by many that it would bring about an awkward situation were our soldiers recalled when France is undertaking her military action against Germany.

CONTEMPORARY VIEWS.

IN THE DARK

Saturday afternoon the Senate by a bipartisan vote resolved that it was the sense of that body that "the President of the United States shall order the immediate withdrawal of all troops of the United States now stationed in Germany." To this we believe it is the duty of the Administration to reply, or to intimate by proper action, that it is the sense of the President of the United States that the immediate withdrawal of our troops at this juncture would be mischievous in its results and a stultification of all utterances made in behalf of the Administration in the course of the last fortnight.

Last Saturday's resolution declared that "in giving this expression of its opinion the Senate disavows any unfriendly or partisan attitude towards any nation or nations of Europe." To this the President might well reply that the Senate's formal disavowal means nothing, but that the Senate's action can only mean one thing—condemnation of the French attitude at the defunct Paris conference and of the French policy of forcible sanctions now on the eve of being put into force.

The Administration in self-defence is bound to point out that the Senate is within its rights in pronouncing any judgement it pleases on the movement of European events in general and on the course of French policy in particular; but that the Senate is pronouncing such judgement upon an insufficient knowledge of the facts. Approval of the Senate resolution by the President would mean that we regard with displeasure a development in the European situation which we have done nothing to avert.

There is just one reason that would justify President Harding in subscribing to the Senate's recommendation of a withdrawal from the Rhine. And that would be the fact that the Administration has exerted itself to bring its good offices into play, that it has exerted itself to avert the threatened French march into the Ruhr, and that its advances have been rejected or that its efforts have, for some other reason, failed.

If the Administration in a position to make such a statement? All we know is that if Mr. Harding accepts the Senate's recommendation he dis-



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avows the bliss put forward in his behalf just a week earlier on the floor of the Senate. A week ago Saturday Borah withdrew his proposal for an economic conference upon assurances from Senator Watson and Senator Lodge and Senator McCormick that the Administration was already engaged in conversations or feelers tending in the same direction as the Borah amendment. "I am not entirely ignorant of the fact," said Senator Watson, "that these feelers have been put out just as the President in his letter states."

What became of those feelers? Did France and Belgium and Italy turn a cold shoulder to our suggestion for a get-together conference? If so, a knowledge of that fact would go far towards justifying the Senate's action of day before yesterday. But if our advances have not been rejected, how, in consistency with the history of the last five years or with the duty of this country or with the growing sentiment for participation in a European settlement, can the Administration justify such a complete reversal in the course of seven days?

There is no getting away from the meaning that public opinion in this country and abroad will read into the Senate resolution. It will mean that we wash our hands of the reparations problem and that we do so in disgust with French policy. But the justification for such procedure on our part has not been vouchsafed, to the American public. A week ago Secretary Hughes intimated that we might take the role of arbiter if we were asked to. Today we talk of withdrawing a week ago Secretary Hughes declared that "there is not the slightest desire that France shall lose any part of her just claims; and that on the other hand, we do not wish to see a prostrate Germany." Today the Senate is on record as hostile to France and as reconciled to the prospect of a prostrate Germany.

A week ago we seemed to be moving forward towards an American policy of constructive helpfulness. Today we are lurching forward in the dark—and in the wrong direction.—New York Evening Post.

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