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FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 1923

America's Need of a Merchant Marine

While the United States has a great fleet of government owned ships tied up and rusting out, the statement comes from Washington that American ships are not carrying half of America's foreign trade. The fact is, American ships can get only such foreign trade as our shipping companies solicit or have tendered to them. Much of our foreign trade is not that which we have looked up but which foreign buyers have sought because of their own necessities. They buy our products and generally send their own ships over here after the cargoes.

The Jones act, passed at the last session of congress, attempted to deal with American shipping and some had interpreted it as mandatory upon the government. However, President Harding has made a careful study of the Jones act, as it affects the operations of the United States shipping board, and he has concluded that there is nothing mandatory in the provision declaring that in the event of failure to find purchasers for the government's vessels required for the essential trade routes, the government should seek characters for the ships to carry on the maritime service for which they are suited.

The president does not interpret any such reading of the Jones act, so the plan of chartering ships to private interests for maintenance of the trade routes as a possible alternative to direct government operation has been scrapped by the shipping board and President Harding. Therefore, the announcement comes from Washington that the proposition has narrowed down to one or two courses—outright sales of trade routes to private interests; or direct operation under companies to be set up by the government.

Some sections of the Jones act are contradictory but the President finds in it no mandatory power compelling the government to sell or scrap its ships, but alternatives that enable the government to follow other courses in order to enable the government to comply with the act. That act, in its preamble, sets forth that "it is necessary" for the proper growth of foreign and domestic commerce to have "an American merchant marine of the best equipped and most suitable types of vessels sufficient to carry the greater portion of its commerce, ultimately to be owned and operated privately by citizens of the United States."

The president and the shipping board interpret that to mean that the government not only must have a fleet of vessels of sufficient size to carry the greater portion of the foreign trade but services that will take care of 50 percent or more of the actual freight moving. Since the ships of both the shipping board and of private owners are not carrying half the trade, the Jones act is construed as leaving it to the president and the board to work out a plan that "ultimately" will place the American merchant marine in the hands of private American citizens.

Since "ultimately" does not limit the government to any fixed time to go out of the shipping business, it is held that the government can operate ships or take other steps necessary to enable American vessels to carry half of America's foreign trade. That may "ultimately" be a long time off, so that is given as the reason why Chairman Lasker of the shipping board recently announced that direct government operation

would be launched on a "bigger and larger scale than ever" till the merchant marine ultimately can be placed in the hands of private operators who can be depended upon to give the country the kind of shipping service required by the Jones act.

The government can take its time about that and continue to operate till it finds a way to get the whole business into private hands. The Jones act does not say how that can be done, so the government will have to find its own way out of the maritime business, if it can. Meanwhile, it may have to operate.

House and Money Destroyed by Fire

Wilson county furnishes the remarkable example of a man who was well to do one day and penniless next day. A residence worth \$5,000, uninsured, and \$800 in cash in the house instead of in bank, went up in flames, and all now left to the man and his family is a small farm and no means for operating it this season. The man who suffered this terrible blow was Mr. Dobbin Eatmon, described as a good citizen for whom a public subscription among his neighbors and friends in the city has been made necessary by his misfortune. The Wilson Times sympathizes with this generous movement, and says:

Sheriff Glover starts a fund for Mr. Dobbin Eatmon, and Mr. Sam Leonard, welfare officer of Wilson county is also actively interested in behalf of the family, composed of Mr. Eatmon, his wife and four small children besides his oldest daughter, Edna who married Ernie Tomlinson. We are sure this appeal will strike the hearts of our people who are always generous and hearken to the cry of the distressed. Mr. Eatmon is a Wilson county man, and the whole of Wilson county will be glad to help him in his distress. His loss is heavy. His home, with its furnishings was valued at over \$5,000 and in addition to that he lost \$800 in cash. Sheriff Glover is treasurer of the fund, and all contributions of cash should be sent to him. Clothing, furniture and food should be sent to Mr. Leonard.

While Mr. Leonard was soliciting funds for the relief of Mr. Eatmon, he heard some criticism of Mr. Eatmon because he had his money at home instead of in bank where it would have been safe. In view of that criticism, Mr. Leonard explains in the Wilson Times that Mr. Eatmon keeps banking accounts in Wilson and at Bailey, and that the \$800 burned up with the house was collected by Mr. Eatmon on the day prior to the night of the fire. He was, therefore, unable to bank his money.

That explanation partly relieves the unfortunate man from blame in that respect, but it serves the purpose of emphasizing that sizeable financial transactions, as near as possible, should be done by check. Considerable sums of money on one's person or in his house invites attacks by highwaymen and burglars. However that may be, there was no insurance, and, therefore, no safeguard of for a home worth more than sixtimes the cash burned with the house. The man without insurance takes a great risk, and the Wilson man's sad experience proves it.

The Pottery Trust

In the United States district court at New York last Tuesday, members of the alleged pottery combine, on trial before Judge Van Fleet, were found guilty of violation of the Sherman anti-trust law by entering into and carrying out a conspiracy to fix prices, limit the output and control the sale of the various products of the pottery plants.

According to Colonel William Heyward, United States district attorney, and Assistant District Attorney David B. Podell, who conducted the prosecution, the defendants, quite a number of them, represent about 82 percent of the pottery industry in the United States and do a business of \$100,000,000 annually. The jury recommended most of the defendants to the mercy of the court for the reason that the archoffenders were defendants, Drugan, Chamberlain, Smith and Dougherty. What the penalty to be imposed upon the ring leaders will be is to be pronounced later by Judge Van Fleet.

This is one more case of the government's prosecuting men because they combined in order to take advantage of the tariff passed for their benefit. The tariff schedules put a high tariff on pottery products and shut out foreign competition for the benefit of the pottery industry, but the competition between the companies themselves was so great that none of them could take advantage of the tariff by increasing prices and getting what was coming to them under the protective tariff. Owing to competition between the unallied companies prices were cut to such a low level that none could get rich quick. The tariff having shut out foreign competition only, these tariff beneficiaries realized that the only other way they could prevent home competition was through a com-

binaton and price fixing board which could make uniform prices for the whole bunch. Thus they could make prices sufficiently high as to enable the manufacturers to get every cent of the tariff levied for their benefit—and then some.

Probably the pottery combine played the hog, but whether they did or not the tariff enabled them to do it. Grover Cleveland called the tariff a "breeder of trusts" and up to now nobody has been able to dispute it. It breeds trusts now, but the same government which provides that sort of law for privileged classes, prosecuted the brood which takes advantage of its biggest opportunity under protective tariff laws.

That appears to be inconsistency on the part of a government whose laws create the opportunity to form trust combines and which subsequently prosecutes those who do under the tariff law precisely what it enables them to do.

Probably, Judge Van Fleet will issue an order dissolving the pottery combination, but the pottery trust has no reason to lose heart, for other trusts heretofore "dissolved" still live and do business as usual. Nobody can recall off-hand any trust convicts who were sent to the penitentiary. Some have been fined but the trusts they organized pay their fines, as a matter of course. No grateful trust would let any of its main guys be chucked into a cell.

Conspiracies in restraint of trade logically grow out of the tariff and many of them continue to grow long after they have been "dissolved." Temptation to enter into combines, by virtue of the tariff, cannot be resisted, hence the courts will continue to have trust cases on their dockets. It is not considered any disgrace to enter into a conspiracy to take advantage of the tariff and to exploit buyers.

Will Give Ships to Ports or States

Henry Ford's magazine, the Dearborn Independent, calls attention to the fact that if a bill introduced by Senator Caraway, of Arkansas, just before congress adjourned, should ever pass, the government would make a gift of some of its ships to port cities or states which comply with the terms of the act, in the event that it should finally pass. The Caraway bill provides that any city, state or political subdivision of a state can establish steamship lines of their own and get government ships as a free gift. The senator's bill is one of several aimed at disposing of the government's idle ships and its chief object is to extend the commerce of the United States by enabling ports and states to have ships with which to do business. The Independent thus explains:

If this bill passes the next congress all any city or state desiring to engage in the steamship business need do is ask the government for the ships and any such municipalities or states will be made city or state for a ship. They need to establish a line, on certain conditions. This is certainly an opportunity that should be watched by cities and states bordering on the sea coasts that desire to build up great ports and a foreign trade.

Any municipality or state making application for ships to be allotted to its should address the application in duplicate, one copy to the committee on commerce, United States senate, Washington, D. C., and another copy to the United States shipping board. Necessarily these applications will lay over until the next session of congress takes up the measure. The government, under the provisions of this bill, is authorized to allot and charter ships to the applicant city or state for a period of five years, free of cost. After the steamship line has been operated for five years the government transfers title in the ships to the city or state operating the line, but a guaranty is to be given the government that the line will be continued for three years longer. It is thought that cities like Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Galveston, Houston, Port Arthur, New Orleans, Mobile, Pensacola, Tampa, Jacksonville, Savannah, Charleston, Wilmington, Norfolk, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Newark, Jersey City, Hoboken, perhaps New York, New Haven, Providence, Fall River, New Bedford, Boston, Portland and some of the states in which these cities are located would be interested. In view of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Canal, and the wonderful cities on the Great Lakes, it is thought some of them might take advantage of this, in case the bill becomes a law at the next session. The number of the bill is S. 4646.

President Harding has announced that unless the United States shipping board can sell the government's ships, the administration proposes to hit the highseas with its freight and passenger ships. No doubt if the government finally decides to go into the shipping business, it could easily get the co-operation of ports capable of developing commerce of their own. The Caraway bill may not pass, but if the government does decide to go into the shipping business it will have to secure new legislation from congress. The last shipping and transportation act took the government entirely out of the shipping business, so it might be an altogether practical thing for the government to

let the ports and the states try their hands at the maritime business.

Of course, we all know that no port can do business unless it can have shipping facilities and is able to concentrate commodities to provide cargoes for ships. Senator Caraway believes in his bill and it doubtless will be one of a dozen which the next session of congress will have up for consideration.

The ship and port terminal proposition in North Carolina is attracting widespread attention all over the country, as the Star mentioned a few days ago. The Nautical Gazette, New York, one of the leading maritime papers in this country, referred to "North Carolina's Shipping Plans" in an editorial in the April 14, number, and said this:

Although North Carolina has some of the finest natural harbors and fisheries in the world and her coast line is well adapted for shipping, she lacks a shipping industry. Hitherto the railroad interests have been able to block every project for the development of shipping on a large scale.

During the present legislative session Governor Morrison personally sponsored a bill which provided for an expenditure of \$2,000,000 for the purchase of ships and the establishment of terminals and ports.

The bill was strongly opposed and did not pass in its original form, but an amendment was passed by the legislature whereby a commission has been appointed to make a thorough study of the proposition.

North Carolina's movements along all the lines of progress are being closely watched, and considerably more interest is taken abroad than is known here in the state where we haven't quit being startled at the magnitude of the things proposed for North Carolina's progress. Doing things surely gets a great deal of progress and publicity for North Carolina.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LETTER BY SCHOOL GIRL To the Editor of The Star: As other sections of New Hanover county may be interested in the happenings of Myrtle Grove section I will write a few items for publication. Rev. C. N. Phillips is holding a revival meeting at the Bethany Methodist church on the belt road. We note with interest that the farmers of Myrtle Grove sound are shipping lettuce. J. W. Bryan of Myrtle Grove sound who has had a stroke of paralysis has improved until he is able to sit up. Misses Edna and Doris Brown of Myrtle Grove sound, who have been boarding in Wilmington have returned home for a short stay. As this is my first attempt to write an article for publication I will close. ALICE BROWN.

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CUTTER SEMINOLE COMES HERE TODAY

Coast Guard Vessel Will be Stationed at Wilmington on Temporary Duty, Said

The coast guard cutter Seminole will arrive in port this morning from Porto Rico waters and be stationed here on temporary duty, according to information received yesterday from Washington by the chamber of commerce.

In the telegram received from the coast guard bureau of the treasury department by Secretary Louis T. Moore, the reason for dispatching the Seminole to Wilmington was not stated, but it is assumed that the cutter will serve on this station until the cutter Modoc has undergone repairs that were necessary to the vessel after she had completed ice patrol work off the New Foundland coasts.

That the Seminole will be stationed here even for temporary duty comes as good news to many at this port, as prior to her displacement here last summer by the new cutter Modoc, the Seminole had been station at Wilmington for many years, and the officers and crew of the vessel are all personally known by many Wilmingtonians.

Capt. E. S. Addison is yet in command of the Seminole and many of the same officers that were attached

to the cutter when she left here last year are still aboard.

At the annual tournament of the Woman's National Bowling association, now in session at St. Louis, Mo., there Jack Frost Salt is better.—adv.

are 106 five-women teams, 175 doubles and 348 singles. This meet has broken all records for the number of entries.

Medium Brown Hair looks best of all after a Golden Glint Shampoo.—adv.

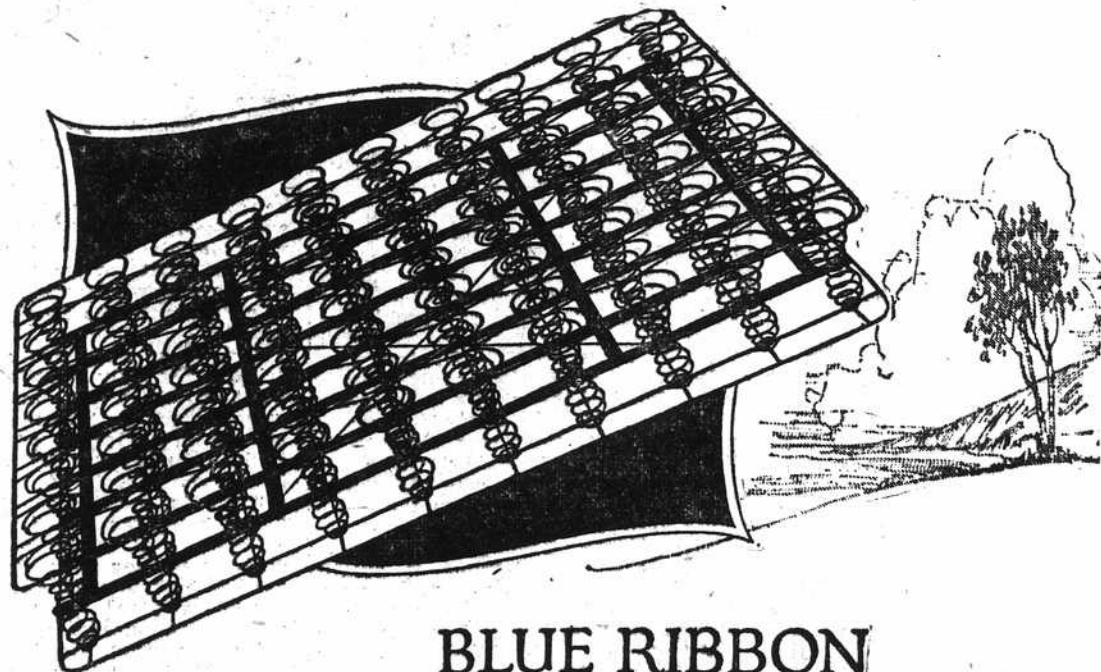
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