

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE \$8.00 A YEAR.

TAMPA SWEEP BY FLAMES

EIGHTEEN CITY BLOCKS BURN. Three Hundred and Eight Buildings Destroyed, Embracing Five Cigar Factories, with a Total Loss Estimated at \$4,500,000. Fire Department Unable to Stop the Fire Which Finally Burns Itself Out. Half of the People Homeless. Homes Were Out of Work and the Problem of Finding Homes for the Homeless Remains to be Solved. The Fire Becomes Serious—Insurance is Estimated at Not More Than Half the Total Loss.

Tampa, Fla., March 1.—The entire extreme northeastern section of the city proper was destroyed by fire, which raged until interrupted by rain at 9 a. m. 4 1/2 p. m. to-day. The area burned, covered 35 acres or eighteen and one-half city blocks and three hundred and eight buildings were destroyed; with a total loss estimated at \$4,500,000.

The burned section included four large and one smaller cigar factories, numerous restaurants, saloons, boarding houses and over 200 dwellings occupied by cigarmakers. The factories burned were, M. Stachelberg & Co., loss \$1,000,000; M. Perez & Co., loss \$500,000; Gonzalez, Fisher & Co., branch of Stachelberg, loss \$400,000; Fernandez & Bro., loss \$25,000.

CIGAR FACTORIES SUFFER. All factories carried large stocks of tobacco and cigars. The area swept by fire embraced all that portion of the city between 12th and Michigan avenues and Sixteenth and Twentieth streets. It originated in the boarding house of Antonio Diaz, 174 Twelfth avenue, and fanned by a strong wind, spread out, fan-shaped, defying the efforts of the entire city fire department which was crippled by very weak water pressure, owing to the smallness of the mains in that section. Occupants of over two hundred dwelling houses, thrown into a panic, rushed out, attempting to save but little of their belongings. One fatality is reported, a Cuban woman in a delicate condition, who dropped dead from the shock, her body being rescued from the burning house with difficulty. In the big cigar factories it was possible only to save the most valuable of records, books, etc., and the valuable stocks of leaf tobacco and manufactured cigars, ready for shipment, were left to the mercy of the flames.

FIRE CHIEF OVERCOME. Fire Chief Savage was overcome by heat and smoke early in the fire, but recovered later. Citizens volunteered assistance to the hard working firemen, but the spread of the flames was so rapid that little effectual work could be done.

Among buildings, other than factories destroyed, were the hotels and cafes of Perez and Castro and Maximiliano Casas, six saloons, 12 restaurants and 10 boarding houses. The car barns of the Tampa Electric Company, containing 20 cars, were endangered, and owing to the destruction of freight cars, service was stopped. The big Seldenberg branch factory of the Havana-American Cigar Company was also reached by the flames, but was saved and St. Joseph's Catholic convent and adjacent property escaped. The fire finally burned itself out at the extreme northeastern corner of the city.

Fully half of the people rendered homeless were out of work, owing to the dull business in the factories, and also practically out of funds and their shelter became an immediate problem. CONVENT OPEN TO SUFFERERS. St. Joseph's convent was opened to them by order of the Jesuit Fathers and many found lodgings there. While the convent administration stated in homes throughout the city. Besides these, thousands of men will be out of work owing to the burning of the factories. The insurance is estimated at not more than half of the loss. Telegrams were sent to Lakeland, Bartow and other nearby towns for fire apparatus, but later countermanded.

In the Stachelberg factories was destroyed a solid silver case in which cigars of the firm were displayed at the world's fairs and expositions, valued alone at \$25,000.

At the home of Miguel Rodriguez, a cigarmaker, the corpse of a child in a coffin awaiting funeral services was cremated. The State militia was placed on guard to-night in the burned district to prevent depredations. Edgar J. Stachelberg, manager of the Stachelberg firm, said that other quarters would be secured and operations resumed within a week.

TWO FIRES IN NEW YORK. Car Barns of New York City Railway Company and a Paint Factory Destroyed. New York, March 1.—Two fires that brought out all the fire apparatus in the upper section of the city and which raged in lively fashion from midnight till dawn to-day, burned down car barns of the New York City Railway Company in Second Avenue, in Harlem and the paint factory of George W. Grote & Co., only a few blocks distant. There were 740 surface cars burned in the destruction of the barns and the loss to the company is estimated at \$3,500,000. The loss on the paint factory is given as \$126,000. It was the railway people's second serious fire within a year, the former blaze having destroyed the Madison avenue car barns.

TAFT AT SPRINGFIELD.

Rotund Secretary of War Preaches to 2,000 Under Auspices of Y. M. C. A.—Talks Chiefly on His Pet Theme.

Springfield, Mass., March 1.—Secretary of War William H. Taft addressed an audience of more than 2,000 persons in the Y. M. C. A. Theatre this afternoon. He spoke under the auspices of the Y. M. C. A. and took the work of the Y. M. C. A. as his subject, paying particular attention to the international aspect of that work and emphasizing the aid which the association has been to the government in the Philippines since the Panama canal zone. Secretary Taft was in this city only a few hours, coming from New York and departing early this evening for Millbury. Just prior to his departure he was entertained at luncheon by a few citizens in the Noyasset Club.

Secretary Taft devoted considerable attention to the civilizing agencies at work in the Philippines and to the methods employed in carrying out the delicate task of acquiring the friar lands without causing friction. "The trouble was removed," he said, "but the friar lands may be able to furnish the Philippines with a short cut that in a generation they may be given the independence they deserve."

Secretary Visits His Aunt. Millbury, Mass., March 1.—Secretary of War William H. Taft visited his aunt, Miss Delia C. Torrey, where he will spend the night. Miss Torrey occupies the old home-estate which was formerly the residence of Samuel D. Torrey, Secretary Taft's grandfather, and where Mrs. Louisa Taft, the mother of the Secretary, passed her last days.

CRUISER CHESTER FAST. New Scout Ship Makes Over 26 Knots—Her Engines of the English Turbine Type—Exceeds 40 Miles in American Navy.

Portland, Me., March 1.—With an average of 26.33 knots per hour to her credit, the scout cruiser Chester returned here to-day from her four-hour endurance run at top speed over the coast between Cape Elizabeth and Thatchers island. Her maximum speed for any fifteen minutes during that time was 28.5 knots. Her average is 2.55 knots in excess of the contract requirement and one and one-half knots better than had been prophesied by her builders. These figures, which are correct and official, indicate that her speed is completely uniform throughout the entire trial.

Particular interest attaches to the performance of the Chester because she is a new type of vessel, and because her motive power differs from that of the Dreadnaught and Salamander sister ships. The Birmingham is to begin her trial on March 11th and the Salem will probably be tried out in April. The engines of the Chester are of the English turbine type, while those of the Salem are known as American turbines and have the same reciprocating engines. The design of the three scout cruisers is the same, and the same contract speed is demanded of each—24 knots an hour.

The Chester was launched on June 20th, 1907, at Bath, and cost \$1,585,000. She is designed, not as a fighting ship, but as a fast scout and her performance to-day indicates that, barring torpedo craft, she is the fastest vessel in the American navy. The Chester is 425 feet long, 47 feet beam and 12 feet draft. Her displacement is 3,750 tons and her indicated horsepower is 16,000.

IMPORTANT MEETING CALLED. Democrats Who Are Opposed to State Prohibition to Gather at Salisbury Friday, at the Call of Representative Morton—No Whiskey People Invited.

Salisbury, March 1.—Salisbury is on the eve of expectation with regard to the meeting to be held here next Friday. There seems to be a mistaken idea that the call of Representative Morton is for a mass meeting of all those who are opposed to the bill passed by the special session in January. Such, however, is not the case. It will be purely a private meeting of prominent Democrats who think that the vital principles of self-government and local option should be endangered if the people should ratify the action of the Legislature in May. No Republicans are being invited, neither have the whiskey people. The meeting will be held solely by Democrats who are holding their breath as to the result of the representative Morton and the Hon. C. B. Watson will take prominent parts in the deliberations and the results thereof are eagerly looked forward to.

MUST BORROW A BIG SUM

TO BREAK ALL PAST RECORDS

South Carolina Will Have to Borrow Half a Million Dollars, it is Believed, to Meet Current Expenses—Heavy Appropriation by Legislature Necessary—Plain Statement Was Made by Comptroller General—A Health Officer Advised For Pure Food Laws to Be Enforced—Yeggenmen Still Doing Business in the Palmetto State—Governor Pardons Murderer "as an Act of Mercy."

The board of directors of the Erie Railroad Company on the 28th day of August, 1907, declared a dividend of 2 per cent upon its preferred stock, payable October 1st, 1907, and a dividend of 1 per cent upon its second preferred stock, payable November 1st, 1907. It further determined to issue interest-bearing dividend warrants evidencing the right of the stockholders to the dividends so declared, subject to the approval of the public service commission.

Before the appropriation bill came from the ways and means committee, the following very plain statement from the Comptroller General was on the desks of the members: "The estimated expenses of the State government for 1908 are \$1,422,232.30. It appears that if the appropriations do not exceed the estimated expenses it will require of the taxes of 1908 \$881,846, and as no part of these taxes will be available before November 1st, it is apparent that the State must borrow \$375,000 to pay expenses before the taxes of 1908 are available. The State's revenue for 1908 from taxes estimated and based upon the present assessment of \$257,438,030 at a rate of 4 3/4 mills on the dollar, would realize \$1,270,350. To this add from indirect and other sources \$173,700 and we have a total estimated revenue of \$1,444,050. If the estimated expenditures, \$1,422,232, are not exceeded, a State levy of 4 3/4 mills will pay all expenses and leave a surplus of \$21,798."

The Comptroller General's estimate for the new year included such extra appropriations as construction of high schools, \$7,500 due on the purchase of the police barracks for the Citadel, \$25,000 for increase in Confederate pensions, \$15,000 for State house grounds, \$25,000 for election expenses and other additional items amounting to \$30,000.

Under the new act giving the State board of health 10,000 to enforce the pure food laws the chief officer at Charleston, Dr. F. L. Parker, at Charleston, State analyst, whose duty it is also to inspect municipal water supplies. It is the intention of the board to have a number of foods now on the market inspected at once. Under the new act giving the board the appointment of a State health officer at a salary of \$2,500 the board has decided to advertise three weeks for applicants for the place. It seems likely now that the appointment will be tendered to Dr. Fred Williams, who has done such good work as secretary of the board.

YEGGMEN YET AT WORK. Yeggenmen are still at work in this State, despite the vigorous work that has been carried on all over the State by postoffice inspectors. At Blenheim, a small town in Marlboro county, Friday night robbers entered the store of J. J. Hood and cracked his big iron safe with dynamite, getting off with \$80 in cash and leaving no clue. The robbers secured their tools from a nearby blacksmith shop, and it is supposed that they gained entrance to the store by means of a skeleton key. The robbery was not discovered till next morning, when the clerk who opened the store found the safe completely wrecked.

Governor Ansel has granted a pardon, "as an act of mercy," to Arthur Holloway, who was given a life sentence from Edgefield two years ago for murder, the jury convicting him with recommendation to mercy. The Governor granted the pardon on the representation of Attorney Sheppard & Sheppard that the man is a young man, in excellent health, and in a very good condition from tuberculosis. Governor Heyward declined to pardon him. After Governor Heyward's action Holloway was transferred from the State penitentiary to the Edgefield chain-gang.

Seven Terrorists Pay the Penalty. St. Petersburg, March 1.—The seven terrorists who were condemned to death by a court-martial for complicity in a plot against the lives of Grand Duke Nicholas and Minister of Justice, and whose sentence was confirmed yesterday by General Hasenkampf, chief of the general staff, were hanged at daybreak Sunday at Liwy Nos, opposite Kronstadt. Among those who suffered death were Calvino, the supposed Italian, who had in his possession when arrested a passport issued to the real Calvino, the St. Petersburg correspondent of two Italian papers, and three women, two of whom were 18 and 19 years of age, respectively.

SCRIP DIVIDENDS NOT GOOD.

New York Public Service Commission Decides That the Erie Railroad Cannot Be Granted Authority to Issue Dividends in that Manner—Chairman Stevens Felt His Opinion in Writing.

Albany, N. Y., March 1.—The public service commission has decided that scrip dividends cannot be authorized under the public service commission's law and has denied the application of the Erie Railroad Company for authority from the commission to issue such dividends upon its first and second preferred stock.

The board of directors of the Erie Railroad Company on the 28th day of August, 1907, declared a dividend of 2 per cent upon its preferred stock, payable October 1st, 1907, and a dividend of 1 per cent upon its second preferred stock, payable November 1st, 1907. It further determined to issue interest-bearing dividend warrants evidencing the right of the stockholders to the dividends so declared, subject to the approval of the public service commission. In his opinion, says: "Assuming the dividends declared would have been paid prior to the first day of July, 1907, the inquiry is as to the proper construction of Section 55 of the public service commission's law which provides for the manner of stock dividends and other evidences of indebtedness payable at periods of more than twelve months, which provides that a railroad corporation organized or existing under or by virtue of the laws of the State of New York, may issue stocks, scrip or other evidences of indebtedness at such periods of more than twelve months after the date thereof, when necessary for (1) the acquisition of property, (2) the construction, completion, extension or improvement of its facilities, or (3) for the improvement or maintenance of its service or (4) for the discharge of lawful refunding of its obligations, provided and not otherwise, that there shall have been secured from the proper commission an order authorizing such issue and the amount thereof, and stating that in the opinion of the commission the use of the capital to be secured by such issue, or other evidences of indebtedness, is reasonably required for the said purposes of the corporation."

"When any one of the conditions of the statute cannot be compiled within a year, or when an order authorizing authority to issue an order authorizing the desired issue."

THE WEEK IN CONGRESS.

No Immediate Prospect of a Vote on the Aldrich Bill—House to Give Much of Its Time to Appropriation Bills.

Washington, March 1.—Supply measures will continue the chief subjects under consideration in Congress this week. Having postponed last week the time for asking the Senate to fix a date for a vote on its emergency currency bill, Senator Aldrich is now in a hurry to bring the measure to a vote before the second week in March. The delay is due not so much to the Democrats who oppose the measure as to Republican members who are desirous to speak on the bill and as they require time for preparation postponement of the final vote becomes necessary.

It is expected that the legislative, executive and judicial appropriation bill will be reported early in the week and will be taken for consideration by the Senate. The House will continue to give the major portion of its time to the consideration of appropriation bills. The pension resolution authorizing investigation of labor conditions in the Southern States will receive attention to-morrow.

MURDERER CERTAIN OF HIS JOB

Liquid Poison, Gas and Some Weapons Used to Effectually Dispose of His Victim.

Lowell, Mass., March 1.—Joseph Gailloux, 71 years old, a plumber, was found dead in the shop of his employer to-day with his head and face covered with cuts and bruises, his mouth burned as though an attempt had been made to pour liquid poison into his mouth. The body was found with gas escaping from an open jet.

A former roommate, Napoleon Rivet, 26 years old, has been arrested upon suspicion. Rivet denies all knowledge of the murder, and has no motive for the crime has thus far been discovered.

It was learned that up to last Friday night Gailloux and Napoleon Rivet roomed together, but that nothing had been seen of Rivet there since that time. It was further learned that two years ago Gailloux turned over a \$1,000 life insurance policy to Rivet. The latter is held pending further investigation.

Torpedo Flotilla Arrives at Callao.

Callao, March 1.—The American flotilla which left Telchahuano on February 25th arrived here to-day. The commander of the flotilla, Lieutenant H. I. Cone, declared that throughout the voyage the weather was fine and conditions such that good time to the Peruvian port was possible. The destroyers arrived in splendid condition, not a hitch having occurred since they passed. It is expected that the flotilla will remain here until March 9th, sailing on that date for Panama.

THE CHARGES ARE FALSE

JUDGE ADAMS VERY EMPHATIC

He Telegraphs the Secretary of the Interior at Washington Asking For an Investigation of the Charges Set Forth by Representative Stephens—The Lawyers Were Entitled to Much More Than They Received—Adams' Friends Indignant, Saying Charges Are Revived to Hurt Him Politically—Ex-Judge W. P. Bynum Makes a Statement in Defense of Mr. Adams, Who Opposes Him Politically.

The publication in this morning's Observer of grave charges reflecting upon the official and personal integrity of Judge Spencer B. Adams, Republican State chairman, attracted much attention here, where Judge Adams has made his home for a number of years and is held in high esteem by the people generally. These charges were first heard soon after Judge Adams retired from the post of Chief Justice of the Choctaw-Chickasaw Citizenship Court, but it was understood that the rumors were put into circulation by interested parties. A month ago The Observer correspondent was told that the matter had been brought to life again in the halls of Congress. Judge Adams' friends are indignant that the charges should have been revived at this time, and say it is only an attempt to destroy him and defeat his re-election as chairman of the Republican State Committee. It is stated that, if there is any foundation for the accusation, it would have been shown long ago. Judge Adams has requested the Secretary of the Interior to order a full investigation of the matter at once.

When interviewed by The Observer correspondent this afternoon, Judge Adams said: "There is absolutely no foundation in the charge, and I have to-day telegraphed the Secretary of the Interior urging him to make a full and speedy investigation. After hearing the evidence and giving careful consideration to the statement and brief of the Choctaw-Chickasaw Citizenship Court fixed the compensation of the attorneys for the Indians much below the figure prominent and disinterested lawyers said they were entitled to receive, and at a figure about one-half the amount they were entitled to receive. No complaint was made except by attorneys for the Indians, who felt aggrieved that they did not receive the amount they were entitled to under their contract."

"This man Stephens who made the charges has for years been charging the Secretary of the Interior with a fraudulent consideration of these court claimants, many of them white men with a drop of Indian blood in their veins, who went into the Indian Territory and got their names on the roll by fraud and perjury, as the records will disclose. It appears that these fraudulent court claimants are now complaining through Mr. Stephens. It seems from the Congressional Record that Mr. Stephens is seeking to have these fraudulent court claimants re-instated on the roll, and under leave to print, publishes in The Congressional Record the statement and brief of the attorneys of these claimants, in which statement and brief is found this slanderous charge upon the court."

JUDGE BYNUM'S STATEMENT.

Ex-Judge W. P. Bynum, Jr., who has not been recognized as training with the Adams wing of the Republican party in North Carolina, gave The Observer correspondent the following statement: "I have examined the record and testimony in the case in which the fees of the attorneys in question were fixed by the act of Congress, the Choctaw-Chickasaw Citizenship Court was required to fix the compensation of the attorneys for the Indians. Those attorneys had written contracts with the Indians by which they were to receive 9 per cent of the amount recovered, which would have given them \$1,425,500. (The attorneys received \$750,000.) Before fixing the compensation, the court heard much testimony, examining a number of prominent and influential attorneys, among them Chief Justice Joseph H. Hill of Arkansas, a native of Charlotte, all of whom testified that the attorneys were entitled to much more than they received. J. Henry Shepherd, believed to be among those investigating the charges, testified that the attorneys were entitled to receive \$2,500,000. It is his opinion that they were found absolutely unfounded; this effort to injure him at this particular time will react powerfully upon those who instigated the charges."

It should be remembered in this connection that Judge Bynum was accused in 1897 of preventing the election of Judge Adams as Republican State chairman, and that he is to-day an avowed supporter of Speaker Cannon for the presidential nomination.

ROCHESTER POLICE DISPERSE ANARCHIST MEETING.

Rochester, N. Y., March 1.—Because they were suspected of having anarchistic tendencies and of fomenting disorder, about 60 Italians, who had arranged for a meeting in commemoration of the death of Giuseppe Bruno, burned to death as a heretic in Rome in 1600, were dispersed by the police here this afternoon. An Italian lawyer from New York, Matteo Torred, who was to address the meeting, made some protest against the action of the police, but the meeting dispersed without disorder.

ALL DEPARTMENTS BUSY.

Champion Fibre Company at Canton Shipping Four Days—Main Street to Be Macadamized—Was Severely Cut by Chopper Bar. Special to The Observer.

Canton, March 1.—The Champion Fibre Company is now shipping pulp each day. It will be several weeks, however, before the construction work is finished and the mill running to its full capacity. Frank Smathers was severely cut at the ankle by a chopper bar. It seems that some one had placed the bar against the wall of the building in which he was employed by the Champion Fibre Company, and it fell as he was passing.

The buildings on Main street from the depot to the top of the grade have been ordered to be macadamized, and the town authorities are preparing to macadamize the street and put down cement sidewalks. An iron bridge is being placed over Beaver Dam creek opposite Fibreville.

Dr. A. F. Willis has returned from New York, where he has been attending a course of lectures at the Post-Graduate College. Dr. T. E. Armstrong, formerly of South Boston, Va., has opened an office over the Acme Pharmacy. A family has arrived and will occupy the Henon residence.

GRAFT TRIAL'S FINAL WEEK.

Lawyers For State and Accused in Pennsylvania State Capitol Cases Will Submit Respective Contentions to Judge Kunkel.

Harrisburg, Pa., March 1.—The Capitol graft trial will begin its sixth and probably concluding week to-morrow when the lawyers for the defense will submit their points of law to Judge Kunkel. The members and will be followed by arguments on the points in case Judge Kunkel desires.

The opening speech will be delivered by Deputy Attorney General Cunningham on the part of the people. The other addresses will probably occupy the court until Friday, as there has been no time-limit placed upon the addresses.

It is understood that there will be two speeches in behalf of Shumaker and one each for Mathews and Snyder, while two will be made for Sanders. James Scanlan will sum up for the Commonwealth and Attorney General Todd will conclude. The law points are being prepared this evening and are understood to be very voluminous.

WOULD HONOR EVANS.

Naval Officers Have Plan on Foot to Honor Commission of Vice Admiral For Gallant Old Sea-DOG.

Washington, March 1.—In a quiet way naval officers in Washington are endeavoring to arrange a most agreeable surprise for Admiral Evans who commands the battleship under the command of the Golden Gate and completes the Pacific cruise. It is proposed to greet the Rear Admiral with a commission as vice admiral of the American navy. Of course, the success of this undertaking depends upon Congress, but the President has done his part in making a proper recommendation to that body for the re-establishment of that naval grade and it is not counted that Congress can be induced to act upon the recommendation in season to ensure the issue of Admiral Evans' commission before the completion of the present cruise so that he may bear the title of vice admiral for the few months that will intervene between his arrival at San Francisco and his retirement from active service.

TEN THOUSAND PERSONS GAZE ON THE BODY OF REV. LEO HELMICH AT PATTERSON—FUNERAL THIS MORNING.

Patterson, N. J., March 1.—Ten thousand persons to-day looked upon the body of Father Leo Helmich, C. S. C. F. M. at St. Bonaventures monastery, in which the murdered priest was for years the pastor. The body lay in state from noon until 10 o'clock to-night and during the nine hours an unbroken procession of mourners passed the bier. So great was the throng that a detail of fifty police was required to maintain the order of the funeral. The funeral will be held to-morrow morning.

GUATEMALA RAILROAD OPENED.

Special Minister Who Represented United States Let in Steady Progress on Panama Canal. New York, March 1.—Major General G. W. Davis, special minister to Guatemala, said President Roosevelt to represent the United States at the opening of the Guatemala Northern Railway, returned to-day on the steamship Finance from Cristobal. General Davis said that the Guatemala railway was built by American capital and American engineering talent. The railroad crossed the country from east to west, he said, and was regarded as a successful project.

RAILROADS WILL COMPLY TO OPERATE NINE-HOUR LAW.

New Order of Affairs Will Mean the Employment of Thousands of Additional Operators to Close of a Large Number of Small Stations, and General Inconvenience to the Traveling and Shipping Public—The Present Straitened Circumstances of the Roads Due to Existing Situation Which Developed Last September—The Outlook Rather Blue Now, But the Industrial Depressions, in the Opinion of Railroad Men, Will Not Last Long.

Washington, March 1.—American railroads have made arrangements to comply with the provisions of the "nine-hour law." The operation of the law will mean the employment by railroad companies of several thousand additional operators and the closing of a large number of small stations on the 4th of March. The discontinuance of railway service at many points, it is realized, will induce at least temporary inconvenience to the traveling and shipping public, but, in order to reduce operating expenses which now seems necessary, the operating officials of the railroads believe that this is the only way they possibly can meet the situation with which they are confronted.

ASTONISHING STATEMENTS.

During the hearing of applications for an extension of the nine-hour law by the inter-State commerce commission some astonishing statements were made by the operating officials of important railroads. Many of them, owing to a reduction in their revenues and to their inability to command the cash necessary to meet their pay rolls, have been forced, during the past four months, almost to the point of asking for receivers. In the opinion of railway officials expressed at the hearing under oath and in private conversation this condition does not seem to have been due to the enforcement of railway laws or to the incapacity of railway management. Most of the railroad officials attribute the difficulty to the unfortunate banking situation which developed last September. The railroads did not feel the stringency in money until about the last of November. In fact, the month of October was one of the best in the history of the business of American railroading.

One railway official, making the statement that in the country to-day there were 300,000 idle freight cars, and one line which no instance was declared to be hauling empty cars backward and forward because it had not yard room or sidings to accommodate them.

NOTE OF CONFIDENCE.

Not a single official of a single railway line who appeared before the commission, however, expressed the belief that the present industrial depression would be lasting. In the testimony of nearly every witness before the commission there was a note of confidence because all of them practically believed that the stringency in the money market from which the country was suffering is not due to fundamental causes, but to point out that the crops last year were good; that prices were excellent; that industrial enterprises throughout the country were flourishing; that the inability of the country to command ready cash and the hoarding of money by panic-stricken individuals which produced so suddenly the remarkable depression from which all have suffered. They practically admitted the existence of confidence that the return of prosperity will be almost as sudden as was the coming of adversity and in their arguments as to the enforcement of the nine-hour law they pointed out to the commission that in the future of prosperity might seriously embarrass them in complying with the law, because it would render it difficult to command the services of competent operators and highly trained men to meet the needs of prosperous conditions.

OPPOSES FULTON BILL.

Inter-State Commerce Commission Declares It Would Establish Rules of Doubtful Fairness—Would Also Increase Commission's Burden.

Washington, March 1.—Responding to a call from the inter-State commerce committee of the Senate, the inter-State commerce commission has written a letter taking a position in opposition to Senator Fulton's bill prohibiting railroads companies from advancing rates in the face of a protest made by a shipper until the commission shall find that the reasonableness of the increase. "The bill is a piece of a single shipper the effect of preventing the advance of any rate until the reasonableness of that advance was established or determined by the commission," says the letter. "It would establish a hard and fast rule of doubtful fairness to the railroad and questionable advantage to the public. Under existing conditions we are of the opinion that it would be unwise to adopt the arbitrary limitation which this bill proposes whatever may be found desirable or necessary in this regard in the future."

The commission also finds an objection to the bill in a possibility of increased burdens upon the commission. Upon this point the committee every proposed advance had to be investigated by the commission and officially sanctioned before it could take effect. The number of cases to be considered is probably to be so great as to render their prompt disposition almost impossible. In instances of justifiable increases the necessary delay is probably a probable volume of cases would work injustice to the carriers. Until conditions become more stable and the relative provisions of the act are more completely observed in railway tariffs and practices, we entertain the belief that wider latitude of discretion on the part of carriers than this measure allows should be permitted.

The commission also suggests as a possible effect of the bill the prevention of voluntary reduction of rates. "If," they say, "the rate cannot be increased without the approval of the commission after affirmative showing by the carrier it might have the effect of preventing the voluntary reduction of rates. Many railroads have voluntarily reduced their rates in order to meet the needs of the public. Under existing conditions the rate cannot be increased without the approval of the commission after affirmative showing by the carrier it might have the effect of preventing the voluntary reduction of rates. Many railroads have voluntarily reduced their rates in order to meet the needs of the public. Under existing conditions the rate cannot be increased without the approval of the commission after affirmative showing by the carrier it might have the effect of preventing the voluntary reduction of rates. 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