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TOPICS OF THE WEEK

President Back On the Job—Secretary of State Off of His—Lansing Bounced for Alleged Usurpation of Presidential Authority.

Washington is literally dumbfounded by the President's dismissal of his Secretary of State. It is not the fact of Mr. Lansing's retirement that surprises—his position has been regarded as essentially untenable since his return from Paris last summer—it is the ground upon which the President bases his drastic action.

If Mr. Lansing had been released upon an intimation that his well-known views upon the peace treaty and the Mexican problem were embarrassing to the administration, it never would have occurred to anyone to question the propriety of the action; but when he is usurped and driven out of office as a usurper of presidential functions, because of his having called and presided over conferences of the cabinet during the disabling sickness of the President, he assuredly will receive a large measure of public sympathy as the victim of a grievous injustice.

The President's indignation is not easily comprehended. He was sick, and it now conclusively appears that for months he was totally disabled. The business of the government had to go on, and the unfortunate situation was that the questions which from time to time compelled decision and action were of the most momentous character. They involved the peace of the nation and of the world. They involved the whole fabric of American industry and the very lives of millions of our people. In the coal strike alone, problems were presented such as few administrators have been confronted with. It was impossible to await the slow processes of the President's convalescence. A hard winter was on, and the people were in imminent danger of freezing and starving. Something had to be done.

There were three ways in which the supreme executive authority of the government could function, only three.

1. The Vice President could step into the breach and take charge, on the ground that the provision of the constitution authorizing him to discharge the duties of the Presidential office had come into force through the obvious disability of the President.

2. The thing could run at haphazard, without common counsel or concerted action—with every department chief a law unto himself and free to antagonize every other department in matters of common concern. (And it is proper to remark in this connection that there is almost an infinity of such matters.)

3. The various departments heads could assemble in informal conferences and advise upon their several problems. To the end that conflicts might be avoided, that vital decisions should be taken only after full discussions in conference, and that, pending the reinstatement of the provisionally suspended executive authority, the essential unity of administration might be achieved through the action of the cabinet as an executive council.

The third alternative was chosen; and since that method of dealing with the unprecedented situation has so outraged the President's feelings, it is fair to assume that the second method is the one that he would have advised, since it is not to be imagined that he would have preferred the first.

Many common folk, for lack of the superlative virtue and oracular wisdom of the President, are liable to think that Mr. Wilson might well have shown a little more charity for the error of his cabinet in taking counsel together, instead of making their decisions separately, seeing that the underlying motive was to shield him in his helplessness and to spare him the humiliation of being superseded as an incompetent.

The President says it was "unconstitutional," but he fails to cite book or verse, article or section. If it was, it looks like he has laid hold of the wrong hog's-ear. The Attorney General is supposed to be the chief advisor of the executive department on questions of constitutional law. Having himself participated in the anathematized conferences, it is a fair inference that he never suspected their unconstitutionality.

As a good many people see it, there is only one aspect of unconstitutionality in this whole unfortunate affair, and that is in the nullification of the provision of the constitution that develops the duties of the presidential office upon the Vice President in case

of the inability of the President to discharge the powers and duties of the said office. But the President passes over this clear violation of the constitution, to condemn that one of which he was the chief beneficiary.

The harsher critics of the President may be expected to discover in this brutal humiliation of Secretary Lansing fresh evidence of an alleged autocratic disposition; while others, more charitably inclined, will deplore the incident as a revelation of the persistence of the infirmity that so long has disqualified him for the discharge of the powers and duties of his high office.

There is not a little remark in congressional circles as to the difficulty of the position of the other cabinet members, notably the Attorney General, all of whom appear to share fully in the guilt that has brought down upon Mr. Lansing the awful wrath of their chief. Whoever may be willing to save his official scalp by pleading the baby act, Mr. Palmer certainly cannot afford to do so. It is his business to interpret the constitution for all the executive departments, and to suffer himself misled by the wily Lansing on a point of constitutional law so familiar to the layman President, is to prove his utter unfitness as the legal guardian of the administration.

(This assumes, of course, that the President's legal position is sound—which of course, it "ain't".)

But for all that, the other cabinet members, who were participes Criminis with the Secretary of State, are in an awkward fix. Secretary Lane makes free to declare that he considers himself "just as much responsible" as Secretary Lansing for the calling of cabinet meetings during the President's illness. He says Mr. Lansing called him on the telephone and obtained his approval of the idea before calling the first meeting, and "presumably secured the approval of other cabinet members also."

But Secretary Lane's resignation already has been accepted, to take effect March 1.

To the same effect is the following statement by Secretary Redfield, also lately resigned:

"I accept my share of responsibility for what was done. To my knowledge, there was never the faintest suggestion in word or spirit that the cabinet members were trying to do anything except help President Wilson during his illness, as far as we were able."

But "mum" is the word, so far, with the other cabinet members. The impression seems to be that they will sit tight while Goat Lansing is driven into the wilderness as the bearer of the sins of all.

Dealing with this phase of the matter, the Minneapolis Tribune asks, "What would a lot of real American schoolboys do if the 'schoolmaster' should flog one of them for something in which they all had a hand?"

There are but few dissenting voices in the overwhelming condemnation of the President's course by the newspaper press of the United States.

"How Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth It Is To Have a Thankless Child!"

When Uncle Sam belatedly discovered that his business of one sort and another required a canal across the Isthmus of Panama and set about his arrangements to build it, he found himself squarely blocked by the stubborn refusal of Columbia, on whose territory the canal had to be located, to concede the necessary right of way. But that, fortunately, was before the 14-point millennium of squatter sovereignty, so your Uncle Samuel turned his hand first to a little stunt in revolution and secession, by which the Isthmus was ripped loose from Columbia and a two-by-four imitation republic was erected for the purpose of granting the required canal rights. And to make the maneuver good, the little slip of territory, with its handful of "greaser" inhabitants, had to be kept going as a separate nationality.

So, we have the Republic of Panama, associate of the entente allies in the World War, signatory of the Treaty of Versailles, member of the League of Nations, and so on. But our present concern is not with the Old World relationships of the opera bouffe aggregation. This is strictly a family affair—between parent and child, as it were.

For the security of life and property, for the preservation of peace and order, for safeguarding the rights of minorities, and for other high ser-

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SHERIFF VAN ZACHARY OF YADKIN IS KILLED

Shot To Death By Robey Baity It Is Alleged, While Raiding Blockade Distillery. Men Arrested.

Elkin, Feb. 14.—Information was received here from parties at Yadkinville this morning that Sheriff Van Zachary, of Yadkin County, was killed last night at 11 o'clock at a blockade distillery near Courtney in Yadkin county.

Sheriff Zachary accompanied by Tom Caudle, as a result of information given him, went to a blockade distillery and it is alleged found Robey Baity and Cleve O'Neal operating a distillery. Sheriff Zachary and Mr. Caudle went to the distillery and Sheriff Zachary attempted to arrest Baity and O'Neal, and according to Mr. Caudle's statement, when the sheriff placed his hands on these two parties and told them that they were under arrest, Baity shot Sheriff Zachary with a pistol at close range. Sheriff Zachary is supposed to have died in a short time, and Baity and O'Neal made their escape.

A reward of \$500 has been offered by the county of Yadkin for the arrest of Baity.

It is said that Baity was in France during the war and that the following is a description of the man: He weighs about 170 to 180 pounds, is about 23 years of age and has dark eyes.

The people of Yadkin county are very much wrought up over this cold-blooded murder, as Sheriff Zachary had been very active in his efforts to stamp out blockading in his county.

Mr. Zachary was about 55 years of age and was serving his second term as sheriff of Yadkin county. Surviving are his wife and one son who has been attending Bingham's Military school at Asheville.

Winston-Salem, Feb. 14.—Sheriff Van Zachary, of Yadkin county, was shot through the heart and killed about 11 o'clock last night at a blockade distillery, eight miles from Yadkinville, the county seat. Three men were at the plant and all of them were arrested early this morning and brought to the Forsyth jail this afternoon for safe keeping, the Yadkin jail not being considered secure enough for bad men. Rev. T. A. Caudle, a Baptist minister, of Yadkin county, accompanied the sheriff to the moonshine plant and he declares that Robey Baity, aged about 23, is the party who did the shooting.

The other men at the plant were Cleve O'Neal and James Brown. According to the statement related to the coroner, by the Baptist divine, Baity was standing close to Sheriff Zachary when the former fired the fatal shot, the powder burns igniting the officer's overcoat and the blaze was extinguished by Mr. Caudle.

Yadkinville, Feb. 15.—The funeral of Mr. J. E. Zachary, who was killed while making a raid on a blockade still Friday night, was held at the Presbyterian church here this afternoon at 2 o'clock.

The services were conducted by the Masonic and Junior orders, of which Mr. Zachary was an honored member. The services were in charge of Mr. M. P. Myersam and Dr. C. A. Harding.

A large crowd attended the funeral services, practically every section of the county being represented, including a number of people from Elkin and other nearby towns.

The services at the grave were very impressive and the grave was covered with flowers. Interment was in Yadkinville cemetery.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS MAN IS ELECTED IN THIRD MISSOURI

Excelsior Springs, Mo., Feb. 14.—The election of Captain J. L. Milligan, Democratic candidate and league of nations advocate, over John E. Frost, Republicans, and league opponents, as representative in Congress for the third district, was conceded at 9:30 o'clock tonight by W. L. Coles, chairman of the Republican state committee.

Captain Milligan's majority, Chairman Cole said, will be between 1,700 and 1,800.

The election was to choose a successor in Congress to Secretary of Commerce Joshua Alexander, and the league of nations was the dominant issue in the campaign.

Dr. Register Dead.
Charlotte, Feb. 18.—Dr. E. C. Register, one of the best known physicians of the south, is dead.

STOCKHOLDERS OF NEW INDUSTRY TO MEET TUESDAY

On Saturday, February 14th, a few of our citizens met with Messrs. A. V. Foote and C. J. Cate at the Wilkes Commercial Club rooms in the interest of starting a steam laundry in North Wilkesboro, and adding a new and much needed industry. A complete outfit of steam laundry machinery is now available at one-half original cost and this fact, together with the growing demand of housewives for some convenient method of solving the weekly wash question, is the reason why immediate action should be taken.

The object is to establish a community laundry and have the work done at a price within reason and still derive a substantial margin to pay dividends on the stock. So far about \$7,000 of stock has been subscribed and it is expected that the remainder of the \$10,000 needed will have been subscribed by Tuesday, the 24th, upon which date a meeting of the coming stockholders will be held at the Club rooms at 4 o'clock to decide upon the organization. There are to be no large stockholders, and it is hoped that a majority of the families will finally subscribe so that all will feel interested in making our new industry a success. Every coming stockholder should be present at the meeting Tuesday afternoon at 4 o'clock.

COMMERCIAL CLUB NOTES.

An important road meeting will be held at the Wilkes Commercial Club rooms on Saturday, Feb. 28th. Representatives are expected from the counties of Ashe, Alleghany and Caldwell to push the work in the interest of good roads connecting the several county seats. Every person in the Wilkesboro's, interested in their business welfare and therefore in good roads should attend this meeting. It is expected to be held at 10 o'clock a. m., but in order to take care of the delegation from Ashe and adjoining counties it may be necessary to put the meeting off until a later hour. The next issue of the local paper will indicate the hour of meeting if any changes are made. As delegates are surely coming from Jefferson and Ashe, we should have a large and representative delegation of citizens to meet them.

The connecting roads to the north are very important to the business life of the Wilkesboro's and the connecting roads in that direction should be built without delay especially in view of the fact they can be built largely with State and Federal aid. It is the county's part to take active interest in these projects and act quickly.

H. C. LANDON, Sec.

A letter has been received from Mr. W. R. Bauguess, of Jefferson, who says he will bring a big delegation from Jefferson on Saturday, Feb. 21st, in the interest of a good road between the county seats. At the request of the Jefferson delegation the meeting hour is placed at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. If necessary the meeting can be continued into a night session. Let everybody turn out and welcome our neighbors to the north of us.

DEPUTY COLLECTOR CRANOR TO HELP MAKE TAX RETURNS

Deputy Collector C. M. Cranor announces that he will be at the following places on the dates named below for the purpose of assisting in making out income tax returns for the year 1919:

Jefferson, Ashe County, Feb. 23rd, 24th, 25th, and 26th.

Wilkesboro, Feb. 27th and 28th.

Sparta, Alleghany County, March 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th.

North Wilkesboro, March 5th and 6th.

Ronda, March 8th and 9th.

From March 10th until March 15th he will be in Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro. Farmers who are subject to income tax can obtain blanks by writing Collector Cranor whose office is in Wilkesboro. A single man whose income exceeds \$1000 per year, or a married man whose annual income exceeds \$2000, are subject to this tax, and those neglecting to report same place themselves liable to a penalty.

COLONIAL STATE BANK OF NEWPORT NEWS IS CLOSED

Newport News, Va., Feb. 12.—The Colonial State bank of this city, with deposits of \$1,500,000, closed its doors this morning and was placed in the hands of a receiver by the state corporation commission in Richmond.

RED CROSS RELIEF WORK DURING THE INFLUENZA.

Fortunately, the city of North Wilkesboro has had but very little influenza and that of the very lightest type. A Red Cross nurse came to North Wilkesboro on Friday in response to a wire that had been sent about ten days previous when there was apparent necessity for a Red Cross nurse here. A hurried conference took place to determine the present necessity of a Red-Cross nurse in Wilkes County. After telephoning to Pores Knob where there had been several cases of influenza and to other points in the county and after canvassing the whole city, it was not found necessary to retain the nurse here. This conference took place about 10 o'clock Saturday morning. At about 12:30 o'clock, John R. Jones received a letter from Mr. G. W. Sebastian, indicating that the influenza situation in his territory near Haymeadow was very serious and that about 20 families were about out of business and unable to help themselves. The letter was a very strong appeal for help. Mr. Jones handed the letter to the chairman of the Red Cross to read and as that situation showed the immediate necessity of a nurse in that locality and the immediate need of supplies, the order releasing the nurse was cancelled and she was hurriedly sent to Haymeadow district by automobile with instructions to spare no expense in the relief of the suffering families in that section. Rev. J. D. C. Wilson also happened to be in that district about the same time and the nurse was aided by him in canvassing the situation and he returned Monday morning and reported to the chairman that certain supplies and food were needed, especially medical supplies. These supplies were purchased immediately and sent to the suffering families the next day. On Monday report was made to the secretary that these families were in need of food supplies and the chairman of the Red Cross Chapter directed Mr. G. W. Sebastian to furnish food for the suffering families and charge same to the Red Cross and the bill would be promptly paid.

A relief nurse was also furnished a number of days at Mountain View and arrangements for suffering families at Fairplains are being made today. This indicates that the influenza is more prevalent in the country than in the town, but it also shows that there is no "red tape" in the Red Cross method of taking care of families in distress, and this is more to call the attention of Wilkes county to the fact that the Red Cross organization should be maintained if it is possible to do so, and that it does do real work.

The people who thought that the Red Cross work ended when the war was over were mistaken and this is written in order to interest the people in the country that the Red Cross is for them and has been more useful to the people in the country than it has to the towns. I want to urge the former officers of the various Auxiliaries to re-organize them and see if the Red Cross organization cannot be kept up and maintained successfully.

H. C. LANDON, Publicity Chairman.

VETERAN RAILROAD MAN DIES AS RESULT OF HARD FALL

Stepping from a coach of his train as it moved slowly into the Greensboro station yesterday morning shortly after 4 o'clock Capt. Orville W. Loving, veteran railroad man and one of the most popular conductors on the main line of the Southern, either slipped or caught his foot and fell, was dragged along the crossties between the concrete walk and the rails for some distance and sustained injuries from which he died at St. Leo's hospital several hours later.—Greensboro Daily News, Feb. 12th.

WANT MAXWELL APPOINTED ON INTERSTATE COMMISSION

Charlotte, Feb. 13.—A telegram sent President Wilson tonight by the Charlotte shippers and manufacturers association and chamber of commerce urged the appointments of Allen J. Maxwell of the state corporation commission, to membership on the Interstate Commerce commission.

The telegram recommended Maxwell as a very able man, and expressed the belief that his appointment would be acceptable to the southeastern shipping territory of which North Carolina is a part.

SECRETARY LANSING RESIGNS AT INSTANCE OF PRESIDENT

Secretary Had Desired To Resign For Months But Was Reluctant To Do So—Accused of Usurpation

Washington, Feb. 13.—Robert Lansing ended his career as secretary of state today after President Wilson had accused him of usurping the powers of President by calling meetings of the cabinet during Mr. Wilson's illness.

Mr. Lansing denied that he had sought or intended to usurp the Presidential authority. He added, however, that he believed then and still believes that the cabinet conferences were "for the best interests of the republic"; that they were "proper and necessary" because of the President's condition and that he would have been derelict in his duty if he had failed to act as he did.

The record stands, Mr. Lansing tendered his resignation and Mr. Wilson accepted. The resignation was offered, however, only after the President, under date of February 7, had written asking if it were true that Mr. Lansing had called cabinet meetings and stating that if such were the case he felt it necessary to say that "under our constitutional law and practice, as developed hitherto, no one but the President has the right to summon the heads of the executive departments into conference."

Mr. Lansing answered two days later—last Monday—saying he had called the cabinet conferences because he and others of the President's official family, "felt that, in view of the fact that we were denied communication with you, it was wise for us to confer informally together on * * * matters as to which action could not be postponed until your medical advisers permitted you to pass upon them."

The secretary concluded by saying that if the President believed he had failed in his "loyalty" to him and if Mr. Wilson no longer had confidence in him he was ready to "relieve you of any embarrassment by placing my resignation in your hands."

The President replied last Wednesday that he was "much disappointed" by Mr. Lansing's letter regarding "the so-called cabinet meetings." He said he found nothing in the secretary's letter "which justifies your assumption of presidential authority in such a matter," and added that he "must frankly take advantage of your kind suggestion" to resign.

"I must say," continued the President, "that it would relieve me of embarrassment, Mr. Secretary, the embarrassment of feeling your reluctance and divergence of judgment, if you would give up your present office and afford me an opportunity to select some one else whose mind would more willingly go along with mine."

ASSESSMENT OF REAL ESTATE TO BE FINISHED THIS MONTH

Supervisor Frank D. Hackett, who has charge of the assessment of real and personal property in the county, announces that the assessment of real estate has been completed with the exception of Antioch and Wilkesboro townships. Messrs. W. M. R. Church and J. E. Howell, of the reassessment board are engaged in listing all real estate in Antioch township this week and some work is being done in Wilkesboro township. Supervisor Hackett states that all real estate will probably be listed this month and that he hopes to be well along in listing personal property before the expiration of the month of March.

INFORMER FEE RESTORED FOR REPORTING STILLS

The United States government, in the internal revenue department, has restored the informer's fee for reporting blockade distilleries. This fee, which was removed about a year ago, is \$10. If parties operating the distillery are convicted by the assistance of the informer an additional \$40 will be paid the informer. Reports should be sent to the nearest Federal prohibition agent.

RAILROAD STRIKE NOT LIKELY IF PRESIDENT'S PLAN WORKS

Detroit, Feb. 14.—The strike of 300,000 members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees for next Tuesday, was tonight indefinitely postponed by A. E. Barker, international president of the union, in accordance with the request of President Wilson that action be delayed until after the general conference of railway union committees on Monday, February 23.