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INQUIRY INTO BLOCK SYSTEM

Interstate Commerce Commission at Work

THE DEVICE A FAILURE?

This is the question suggested by recent disasters on the Southern and the Baltimore and Ohio, and which will now be investigated by the commission.

(By the Associated Press.) Washington, Jan. 4.—An inquiry into the operation of the block signal system of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and of the Southern Railway was instituted today by the interstate commerce commission.

In making the inquiry the commission is acting under authority of a resolution adopted at the last session calling for a report on the working of the railroad block system, generally.

Specific instances of what appears to be a failure of the block signal device—or, as one of the commissioners expressed it, the failure of the human end of the device—to prevent accidents involving loss of not only property but life, were afforded by the recent disastrous accidents on the Southern Railway at Lawyers, Va., and on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad at Terra Cotta, D. C.

The commission determined to investigate so far as they had relation to the operation of the block signals.

Officials of both the Southern and the Baltimore & Ohio were subpoenaed before the commission to give it such information as they might possess.

After the officers of these lines have been examined, it is deemed probable to begin the commission's own investigation of other lines on which wrecks recently occurred on account of the apparent disregard of the block signals or the failure of the system to accomplish its purpose.

A SEVERE STORM IN THE SOUTHERN SEAS.

(By the Associated Press.) New York, Jan. 4.—News of a severe storm in the southern seas was brought here today by the steamer Advance, which arrived from Colon four days behind the schedule.

The Advance should have sailed from Colon December 24th but on the 23rd a heavy northerly gale set in, and the Advance and fourteen other steamers which were lying in the harbor were obliged to put out to sea to weather the storm. The gale continued for four days. At the end of that time the Advance put back to Colon, and after taking on her passengers and freight sailed for New York.

The Advance brought the bodies of E. W. Havers, who died eight months ago of typhoid fever, and W. P. Dodd, who died of heart disease recently at Christobal. Mr. Dodd's body will be sent to New Orleans.

TO UNITE METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSES.

(By the Associated Press.) Buffalo, N. Y., Jan. 4.—The commission on the unification of the publishing houses of the Methodist Episcopal Church is considering details of the plan in executive session here.

Dr. James A. Day, chancellor of Syracuse University, is quoted as saying: "We are still at work on the plans for consolidation, but the most we have done has been to hear the report of the sub-committee upon the question. Anything further that I might say as to the details of the proposed consolidation of our publishing interests might be misleading."

SUICIDE FOLLOWS ATTEMPTED MURDER.

(By the Associated Press.) Washington, Jan. 4.—An attempted murder and a suicide occurred today in a small fruit store at 1390 New York avenue. The parties to the tragedy were two Syrians, O. Filah, the owner of the store, and Antonio Adho. In a quarrel Adho shot Filah in the left side and evidently thinking he had killed him, turned the revolver upon himself and fired a shot through his right temple, dying instantly. Filah is dangerously wounded. No cause is known for the shooting as the men were alone at the time of the quarrel.

TESTIMONY ON SUNDAY'S WRECK

Number of Witnesses Heard by Coroner

AWAITING HILDERBRAND

With eagerness the people look for his interpretation of the signals. The testimony of night train dispatcher Dent makes some interesting reading—Other witnesses.

Washington, Jan. 4.—The third day of the coroner's inquest into the wreck on the Baltimore & Ohio at Terra Cotta, Sunday night last, began with the continuance of the testimony of Operator Dutrow, in charge of the block station at Silver Spring. The operators at Takoma, University and Rhode Island, avenue stations are to follow Dutrow after which the plan is to hear the story of Engineer Hilderbrand who piloted the "dead" train into the rear of the Frederick local passenger train No. 66. With the explanation of the block system and running rules of the road already made, Hilderbrand's interpretation of the signals on the fatal night is awaited with intense interest.

Hilderbrand and his conductor, Frank P. Hoffner, have been released on bond by Justice Baruard, of the Supreme Court of the District, after a hearing in habeas corpus proceedings. Hilderbrand's bond was fixed at \$7,500 and Hoffner's at \$5,000.

The other three members of the crew, Fireman McClelland, Brakeman Rutter, and Baggage-master Norris, were released without bail.

The following witnesses have been summoned to appear and were present: Charles Selden, superintendent telegraph; John G. Wilson, assistant general attorney; G. S. Potter, third vice president; F. F. Dent, train dispatcher; J. W. Kelly, Jr., trainmaster; H. S. Peddler, road foreman; F. P. Patnam, signal engineer, and Thomas Fitzgerald, general manager, all of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad; J. S. Hitchcock, a locomotive engineer of this city, and Eli C. Forrester, of Denver, Colo.

John H. Broderick, secretary to the third vice president, and R. R. Egan, secretary to the general manager of the Baltimore & Ohio, and W. J. Berland also were present as witnesses, and C. H. Wilkins, special agent, commission; Luther M. Walton, attorney, and J. J. Doutra, inspector of safety appliances, were present on behalf of the interstate commerce commission.

Commissioner Clements was the only member of the interstate commission present. Attorney Walton acted as stenographer of witnesses for the commission.

The first witness called was T. F. Dent, night train dispatcher of the Baltimore & Ohio.

Testimony of T. F. Dent. The testimony of T. F. Dent, train dispatcher of the Baltimore & Ohio brought out the statement that the movement of trains is accomplished by two wires, one of which is known as the train wire and the other the block wire. One operator has to work both these wires, Mr. Dent said that it sometimes happens that an operator cannot be reached for half an hour. Mr. Walton asked the witness:

"Have you ever called operators over the block wire and been unable to reach them?" "Well, I have. Not for a great length of time, however," Mr. Dent replied. "Mr. Dent has but one wire under his control and said that it sometimes happens that he is very busy and that operators along the line could not reach him for several minutes.

"Have you any other instance where wire men have not been prompt in answering?" asked Mr. Walton. "Mr. Dent admitted that he had some trouble at times but nothing of a serious character. He said that an operator could not answer him if he was sending a block wire message. He said that one man was reprimanded because he failed to answer the wire.

The commission's attorney sought to bring out that the Baltimore & Ohio employed lady operators at the signal stations, but Mr. Dent declared that there was only one woman on the system and that she was employed at times at Silver Spring.

Mr. Dent admitted that operators often violate rules in regard to the closing of offices. He was asked if he ever reported them and whether it was his duty to do so. He said: "I should report it."

Commissioner Clements asked Mr. Dent's views as to the result of the wreck of last Sunday night. "The block was disregarded by 2:20," he said.

(Continued on Page Five.)

GRAPE CULTURE IN THE EAST

Effort to Improve Quality of the Scuppernon

MAKE INVESTIGATIONS

National Department of Agriculture Has Man Here at the Present Time—Vineyard Will Probably Be Planted at State Test Farm—Make Fine Wine and Champagne.

Mr. E. P. Cole, special agent of the bureau of plant industry, department of agriculture, Washington, D. C., arrived in the city this morning and is making researches in the state library in regard to the scuppernon grape. The department of agriculture at Washington has had men at work looking up the history of the grape and its uses for several years past, and those having the work in charge are very much impressed with its possibilities.

In speaking of the grape this morning, Mr. Cole stated that he regarded the scuppernon grape as one of the most important amateur fruits in the Tidewater section in which it grows. If not the most important. This sounds like a very broad statement, but when one who has spent any time in the Tidewater section stops to consider, they will remember that nearly every farmer has one or more scuppernon vines on his farm, which is not true as to any other fruit.

The scuppernon grape belongs to what is known to botanists as the muscadine group, and is to be found in the Tidewater sections from the Potomac to the Rio Grande. The variety known as the scuppernon is not found in great abundance anywhere other than eastern North Carolina, where the grape is supposed to have originated. In Smith's History of Virginia is to be found a portion of one of the reports of Armandas and Barlow, who landed on Roanoke Island, and it reads:

"On the 29th day of April, in the year of our redemption 1584, we departed from England with two boats well furnished with men and victuals, and found Roanoke Island on the 4th of July, and the smell was as sweet as if we had been in the midst of some delicious garden, and grapes grew abundantly—every shrub was covered, climbing towards the top of high cedars—and we think in all the world the like is not to be found."

On Roanoke Island at the present time is to be found scuppernon and muscadine grapes in abundance, and there seems to be little doubt but that this is the variety of grapes mentioned.

If it is the intention of the department of agriculture at Washington to develop the industry, and, if possible, to improve on the grape. An effort will be made to reduce the coarseness and to get a grape that will bloom. Dr. Kilgore, chemist for the state of North Carolina, expects to go to Washington about the 10th of this month for the purpose of conferring with Mr. William A. Taylor, pomologist, in charge of field investigations, relative to the cultivation of scuppernon grapes on the state test farm at Teaching, which is not far from Wilmington. A medium soil is to be found at the test farm, and it is believed that the grapes could be grown there to great advantage. An arrangement would be made whereby the work would be under the supervision of the National Department of Agriculture.

Prof. George C. Housman is pomologist in charge of viticulture investigation, and he has charge of the entire work.

A very fine wine is made of the scuppernon grape, and it is said that a superior grade of champagne can also be made. The growing of scuppernon grapes in eastern North Carolina is becoming quite an industry, and it is proving to be a most profitable one.

Mr. Cole is searching old papers in an effort to find out as much as possible about the grape, and he will probably be here for a week or more.

HEALTH CONDITIONS AT MANILA IMPROVE.

(By the Associated Press.) Manila, Jan. 4.—Quarantine officers have announced that owing to the improvement of health conditions at this port the daily contagious disease bulletin issued for local and foreign port officers is unnecessary. It is the first time in four years that these conditions have prevailed.

WOMAN AND MAN HAVE PACIFICS JOINED HANDS?

Investigation as to the Union and Southern

SECOND TRIAL DENIED

Mrs. Myers is Accused of the Murder of Her Husband, and Hoffman is Charged With Being Her Accomplice in the Pool Deal—A Celebrated Case.

(By the Associated Press.) Kansas City, Mo., Jan. 4.—Judge John F. Phillips, of the United States district court here, today denied the application of attorneys of Mrs. Aggie Myers for a writ of habeas corpus. Mrs. Myers, now in jail at Liberty under sentence of death for the murder of her husband, and Frank Hoffman, in jail at Kansas City for complicity in the crime, will be executed on January 10 unless Governor Folk interposes.

As a last resort the attorneys for Mrs. Myers and Hoffman, will now appeal to Governor Folk to commute the sentence of the prisoners to life imprisonment.

The arguments on the application for the writ in this now famous case were made earlier in the week. The attorneys for Mrs. Myers argued that the Clay county court had no jurisdiction in the case when the trial was held basing their contention on a technicality. They sought to have the case retried.

Judge Phillips in denying the writ today said: "As much as the judge of this court might desire to see this unfortunate woman saved from the horrors of an execution, his powers are limited by established law, uncontrolled by consideration of mercy, a quality which however gracious under our constitutional system of government can be exercised in this case only by the chief executive of the state."

DEAD, HER HEAD BEATEN TO PULP

(By the Associated Press.) St. Paul, Minn., Jan. 4.—Mrs. Wilhelmina Kundy, 79 years old, who lived with her son at 216 West Fairfield avenue, was found dead in the cellar last night. Her head was beaten to a pulp. In the living room upstairs a box built into the wall had been broken open and rifled of \$500, the property of the son.

MEMBER CONVICTED SEAT GIVEN ANOTHER

(By the Associated Press.) Washington, Jan. 4.—In the house today the speaker announced the appointment of Representative Enclight of California to a place on the committee on mines and mining in place of Mr. Williamson of Oregon, who was selected a member of the fifty-ninth congress, but who has never attended any of the sessions. He called the attention of the house to the fact that Mr. Williamson had failed to qualify, and he thought it the correct practice under the circumstances, to displace one member for another.

Mr. Williamson was indicted and convicted in the land fraud prosecutions instituted by the government in Oregon. He appealed from the judgment of the trial court, and is now awaiting the action of the appellate court. He has not appeared in the capitol since his election in 1904.

TRADE OPENS WELL IN THE NEW YEAR.

(By the Associated Press.) New York, Jan. 4.—Dispatches to Dun's Review indicate that the New Year has opened under conditions fully up to sanguine expectations.

Bank clearings for the week show much irregularity, but a difference in dates this year and last will account for a part of this, the week this year including only two business days in January, whereas there were three days last year and four days two years ago. Yearly settlements always swell bank clearings during the first four or five days of January, and the volume of clearing this week is larger in the aggregate for the leading cities in the United States \$2,523,227,356, a decrease of 19.7 per cent compared with a year ago, an increase of 13.3 per cent over the corresponding week of 1904.

AN ATTACK MADE ON INSPIRATION

Bible Declared to be Full of Inaccuracies

ITS UNITY IS DENIED

Its Authors Said to Be Unknown—False Methods of Interpretation, Declares Dr. Sellock; Make it Teach Whatever You Will—New Book Lending "Higher Criticism."

(By the Associated Press.) Chicago, Jan. 4.—The Rev. Dr. Willard C. Sellock, pastor of the Universalist Church, Providence, R. I., has just written a book, "The New Appreciation of the Bible," issued yesterday by the Chicago University Press, in which he tears down many of the popular fancies of orthodox Christianity, lauds the higher criticism, and presents a new view of the Bible value.

Many of his theories are identical with those of Prof. George B. Foster of the University of Chicago, whose recent volume "The Finality of the Christian Religion" caused a stir in theological circles. "By false methods and interpretations, or the absence of all methods," his book says, "the Bible has been made to teach almost every conceivable doctrine and to support many a terrible wickedness—slavery, polygamy, and the subjection of women; and the tap root of all these erroneous teachings, darkening counsels and unwholesome sanctions has been the idea of the penitency inspiration and infallibility of the scriptures."

"When this idea shall fade out of the popular mind, being replaced by the more valid conception, some of the perversions and absurdities of religious doctrine will pass away which have clouded, and still cloud, their tens of thousands of adherents—superstitions, superstitions and cruelties which have darkened our world will disappear, and opportunity will be offered for the upspringing of a fairer, more beneficent type of religion and civilization."

Dr. Sellock declares the Bible should be considered merely as a piece of literature, as a "collection of ancient writings—not a single book but a library of sixty-six different books." Dr. Sellock states also that the Bible is full of inaccuracies, historically and scientifically; that the story of the creation is unscientific, that nearly anything can be proved by the Bible; that the real authors of the books of the new and old testaments are unknown and that Christ was not quoted until a generation after his death.

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HARRIMAN TO TESTIFY

(By the Associated Press.) E. H. Harriman is expected to be the most important witness examined in this city.

Counsel for the Union Pacific Company, however, announced that Mr. Harriman would be unable to appear before the commission on account of ill health following an operation. He said that Mr. Harriman could testify at his own house if the commission desired. He urged, however, that the taking of Mr. Harriman's testimony be postponed. Mr. Harriman was excused from attendance at this time. It will be ten days or more before he can appear, according to counsel.

The present plan is to have other witnesses testify first, laying the foundation for the question which are to be propounded to Mr. Harriman. All of the various so-called "Harriman lines" in the west and northwest, it is said, will be inquired into relative to any connection they may have with the Union and Southern Pacifics.

Many of the facts pertinent to the inquiry are said to be matters of record, and a number of the sessions probably will be given over to the investigation of such documentary evidence as the commission shall require. In this connection the officers of the various Harriman companies will be called upon to give testimony as to the compositions of the different systems as shown in the annual reports.

There is a report that as the inquiry develops, the commission may call as a witness Mr. Harraban, the newly elected president of the Illinois Central Railway. The entire scope of the investigation has not been announced, for much, it is stated, will depend upon testimony produced in the early sessions.

Mr. Lovett, of counsel for the Union Pacific, said that Mr. Harriman would be able to give his testimony in the regular form later. "The commission will sit in Chicago on Wednesday next," said Chairman Knapp. "Will Mr. Harriman be able to appear then and there?" "No, sir," came the prompt response from counsel.

"Without designating a specific date for a further inquiry on this subject," said Chairman Knapp, the commission will accept the excuse offered for the non-appearance of Mr. Harriman and as there is no desire to press matters at this time he will be excused for the present."

(Continued on Page Five.)

MEMBERS OF SENATE AND HOUSE TO MEET WEDNESDAY

Below is printed a list of the members of the general assembly to meet here next Wednesday. It is complete, with the exception of the representative for the house from Polk county. All efforts made thus far to learn the name of the republican member elected from that far western shire have been unavailing, and now it is not likely that his name will be known here until he appears to qualify next week and take the sorry seat that has been assigned him.

25 ARE REPUBLICANS

There is one Independent in the Lower House—Only Four Republican Senators—Name of Member From Polk Not Known Here—Yet, But He is a Radical.

In the list below the democratic members are not marked. The republicans are designated by the letter "R," after their names, and the one independent has the letter "I" after his name.

It will be seen that there will be four republicans in the senate and twenty-one republicans and one independent in the house.

The list, as it has been given to the state printer is to be issued for the convenience of the capitol officials, and is as follows: SENATE.

First District—Rousso W. Turner, Elizabeth City; A. F. Gudwin, Gatesville.

Second District—Harry W. Stubbs, Williamson; K. B. Etheridge, Mantoo.

Third District—C. W. Mitchell, Aulander.

Fourth District—W. E. Daniel, Weldon.

Fifth District—W. Stamps Howard, Tarboro.

Sixth District—J. L. Fleming, Greenville.

Seventh District—T. T. Thomas, Rocky Mount; J. D. Dawes, Elm City.

Eighth District—Y. T. Ormond, Kinston; J. W. Burton, Jacksonville.

Ninth District—B. F. Aycock, Prentiss.

Tenth District—Thomas Perett, Faison.

Eleventh District—George H. Bellamy, El Paso.

Twelfth District—James B. White, Whiteville.

ASK TO DECLARE BONDS FRAUDULENT.

(By the Associated Press.) Jackson, Miss., Jan. 4.—A sensational petition was filed in the Hinds County chancery court today by B. B. Martin and W. B. Griffith of Vicksburg, against the Yazoo City & Mississippi Valley Railroad Company, the Illinois Central Railroad Company and the Metropolitan Trust Company of New York. The bill seeks to have declared fraudulent all bonds issued by the Yazoo City & Mississippi Valley Company since 1884.

SAID MAN HE SHOT RUINED HIS HOME.

(By the Associated Press.) Carthage, Mo., Jan. 4.—Dr. E. D. Meredith died today of a gunshot wound inflicted Wednesday by Arthur Sanderson, Sanderson, who had been released was re-arrested on a charge of murder in the first degree. When told that Dr. Meredith was dead he said: "My God! I am sorry for that. I have been hoping and praying that he might get well."

Dr. Meredith was the Sanderson family physician. Sanderson called him to his home professionally and shot Dr. Meredith as the doctor was about to enter the door. Sanderson accused Dr. Meredith of ruining his home.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF FORT ST. PHILIP.

(By the Associated Press.) Washington, Jan. 4.—The war department has concluded to go on with the work of reconstructing Fort St. Philip, La., near the mouth of the Mississippi River.

It was declared at the war department today that there is no intention of abandoning Fort St. Philip or any of the lower river forts in the vicinity of New Orleans, and that when Fort St. Philip is entirely reconstructed it is the purpose to make it a type company post.

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