

# Behind The Scenes In The Nation's Capital

By THOMAS F. LOGAN.

Washington, May 20.—Washington is a bit bothered this week by a clash of atmospheres. The pastoral side note is sounded soothingly, but penetratingly, in the amiable activities of the kind-faced sheep that graze upon the grass in the vicinity of the white house. A more insistent note of utilitarianism is struck by Postmaster General Burleson's aerial mail carriers that rise immediately behind President Wilson's official home and wing noisy flights above the executive mansion to Philadelphia and New York. Consequently, the population of the nation's capital finds itself kept continually on the jump.

During the cool hours of the early morning it is possible, while strolling past the home of the president, to gaze with tranquil approbation upon a bucolic picture and recall not lines from Gray's Elegy or Ingelow's Lincolnshire verses. If this philosophic mood continues until 11:30, however, the spirit of the strollers' dreams is rudely changed by the roar of powerful machinery overhead. And, of course, this new clamor in the skies is exceedingly bewildering to the gentle wool-producers that came to the seat of government with the definite understanding that life on the edge of the Mason and Dixon line was a dreamy clover-scented existence.

The confusion would not be quite so bad if the United States mail airplanes turned south with their loads of 24-cent stamps and drifted across the Potomac river to Richmond, Virginia, or Wilmington, North Carolina, or Tampa, Florida. The whirl of the aerial motors would reach the president's sheep, of course, but might easily be accepted by them as some new-fangled device invented by Secretary Tumulty to grind corn for their evening meal. It is an entirely different matter, however, when these new-style letter carriers hop up into the air and sail over the white house, bound for northern ports. The head of the white house sheep family has satisfied himself in the last four days that the overhead pests are not sheep hawks, but the exact nature of the nuisance is still quite vague to him.

Mr. Burleson's new speed marvels are not more bewildering to the white house sheep, however, than those aristocratic quadrupeds are to members of the house and senate. The legislative branch of the service has gone over with microscope all newspaper reports on the reasons that led to the installation of sheep on the lawn that flank the white house portals. Congress is frightfully nervous and jumpy these days, anyhow. George Creel keeps right on annoying the law-makers, no matter how often they speak sharply to him about his methods or how many times they strike his references to legislators from The Congressional Record. What the senators and representatives would like to know, and they are prepared to pay real money for the information, is whether or not President Wilson meant anything particularly significant when he approved Rear Admiral Grayson's idea of pastoralizing the territory bounded on the east by the treasury department and on the west by the war, navy and state departments.

Here is the situation in a nutshell. Mr. Wilson may have accepted Doc. Grayson's sheep idea without giving it a third, or even second, thought. It may be that old Sea-Dog Cary G. mentioned the thing casually and that the president "okhed" it absent-mindedly, or with the crafty thought that if he said, "O, very well," or something like that, that the presidential physician would go ahead and wish the sheep on the white house without arguing any more about them. If that is really what happened, congress is content. The law-makers don't mind sheep, just so the ram director general doesn't butt in when they slip through the gates to ask the president which bill he'd like to have passed first. In fact, they rather like sheep. The cunning little animals remind some of them of home districts, and plain people, and democratic simplicity, and all that sort of thing. Besides, it might have been goats, or porcupines, or wild cats, or almost any kind of animal that couldn't be depended upon to get chummy with visiting congressmen. Therefore the sheep thing goes, so far as the legislative branch of the government is concerned, un less—

Well, there you are. It's a painful thing to say, but really, just between ourselves, you know, there is a tiny bit of chance that all is not well with that Cary Grayson sheep idea. Everybody knows the quality that is associated with the very name of sheep. Here's the big problem. Was President Wilson, by any remote chance, thinking about congress when he surrounded his Washington home with sheep? It's wrong to entertain unjust suspicions, of course, but honestly now, doesn't it seem possible that he might want to study the habits of his tame and woolly proteges as a preparation for future dealings with sojourners in that big, white, domed building at the other end of Pennsylvania avenue? You see, if the head of the nation even for a moment, had thoughts of congress in mind when he told Joe Tumulty he could sign a receipt for Carl Grayson's sheep, the situation would be frightful. Congress wants to know the exact truth. Charles Rann Kennedy or any other expert on symbolism, can have the keys of the capitol or a jimmy for the win-

dows of the house and senate office buildings, if he, or they, will drop in to Washington very quietly and talk things over, man to man, with perturbed senators and representatives. As a matter of fact, there is no real evidence to prove that George Creel isn't back of the whole sheep thing. Doc Grayson may be just a blind. George is always thinking up some scheme to annoy the legislators. Only a few weeks ago a special committee of the house to establish whether or not he had insulted the southern end of the capitol building. And the investigation of the committee proved conclusively that he had. He was verbally castigated for his congressional comments and told to lay-off the law-makers in the future. The hard work of the committee was thrown away, however. Here he is, back again, with a brand new insult. He told somebody that the reason he wouldn't explore the heart of congress was because he didn't like slumming. Do you get that? And from a government official who was the chief of police in Denver before the town went dry. If George Creel thought up the white house scheme, it looks pretty bad.

There is a small element in congress that has its doubts about the white house sheep, and would stick to them against any assurances, even from Uncle Joe Cannon or Senator J. Ham Lewis. They don't wish Joe Tumulty's pets any hard luck, but they hope they will develop the pip. These Bolshevik huns around the outside of the white house fence last Wednesday ain't narrowly observed the conduct of the sheep while the first aerial mail carriers out of Washington sailed above the peaceful herd. The net results were extremely disappointing. It is apparent the sheep have seen so many new and curious sights in the national capital that a little thing like a flying machine lacks power to stampee them. When this fond hope was blasted there were melancholy head-shaking and deep sighs of regret.

As a consequence of this disappointment there is now talk of secret plottings. One vindictive enthusiast has hinted at plans to corrupt the drivers of Mr. Burleson's high-powered, cloud-splitting aerial mail wag ons. It is obvious that any attempt to bomb the flock with brick-bats as the noon flyers wing rapidly over the white house grounds would be promptly stopped by secret service air scouts. It would be possible however, to make the vicinity of the executive mansion a very unpopular grazing district if any of Mr. Burleson's pilots could be persuaded to slip overboard, at exactly 11:30 1-2 some morning, a mechanical wolf or a self-winding imitation coyote. The white house sheep have shown equal indifference to squirrels from the neighboring parks and spads from neighboring hangars. A lively counterfeiter of a certain member of the dog family, eased over the tail-board of an altitudinous mail-pouch hustler, would, it is thought, curtail the visit of the selectives under the Cary Grayson act.

In the meantime, however, the sheep and the airships continue to lie down at night almost side by side. Only a fence and a few sentries keep them from closer association. The simple life persists in at least one spot in Washington, in spite of the whirling machinery of war.

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