

MODERNIZING UNCLE SAM'S BUSINESS SYSTEMS

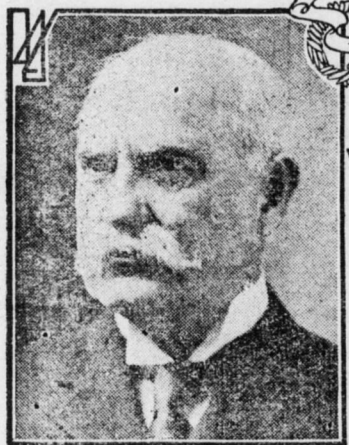


CHARLES D. NORTON WHO WILL BE IN CHARGE OF UNCLE SAM'S BUSINESS REORGANIZATION

ALTHOUGH the ensuing season will be in one sense what is known as an off-year in governmental activities, owing to the fact that there will be a "short session" instead of a "long session" of congress, there will be inaugurated several projects of far-reaching importance. Probably the most important of these new departures will be the scheme for modernizing Uncle Sam's business systems as represented in the routine of the departments at Washington and their "branch offices" scattered all over the country. This



TYPICAL "MAILING ROOM" IN A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT. ONE OF THE CLASS OF GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS WHERE GREAT ECONOMIES ARE EXPECTED



SEN. ALDRICH. HE SAYS THE GOVERNMENT COULD SAVE \$500,000,000 A YEAR ON ITS METHOD OF DOING BUSINESS

is the undertaking which is one of the pet projects of President Taft and to carry it out congress has appropriated the sum of \$100,000.

Every since he entered the White House President Taft has been imbued with the conviction that the machinery of government could be operated at much less expense than has been the case for years past. Among practical business men the Federal government's wasteful and costly method of carrying on its business has for years been at once a joke and a reproach and Senator Aldrich of Rhode Island voiced the general opinion when he recently declared that he could administer the affairs of the biggest business institution on the continent and by the introduction of modern methods and policies save fully \$300,000,000 a year over the present cost.

The recent legislation by congress was designed merely to enable the president to start the ball rolling for reform in the conduct of the Federal business. With \$100,000 set aside to inaugurate the work, the president is authorized to employ accountants and

experts from official and private life and to inquire into every phase of the methods of transacting the public business of the government in the several executive departments and other governmental establishments. It is expected that many of the recommendations for reforms which will be made by these business physicians can be carried out promptly with no other authority than the order of the president, but where congressional action is necessary there is assurance that it will be forthcoming.

The president has placed this entire overhauling of the governmental business systems in the hands of his very capable new secretary, Mr. Charles D. Norton, who had quite an interval of experience as assistant secretary of the treasury before coming to his present post and who while in that department inaugurated the "house cleaning" of the treasury's business systems which became in effect the forerunner of the broad rejuvenation that is now to sweep the entire Federal establishment. Mr. Norton has invited the leading experts in the country, including such authorities on the subject as Maj. Charles Hine, the reorganization experts of the Harriman lines, to submit written programs for governmental business reorganization and from these propositions he will select plans, to be carried out. It is the supposition that Mr. Norton's private business experience as the proprietor of one of the largest general insurance agencies in the country for years before he entered the government service will stand him in good stead in selecting improved business

systems for the government. While Mr. Norton will have the general direction of the new project he will have the assistance of a board of directors, as it were—a commission composed of one executive officer from each department and independent bureau at Washington and this commission will co-operate with the experts in bringing about the big reform. The present movement, it may be added, is not designed so much to enable the cutting off of a clerk here and there—although doubtless many clerks will be retired as a result of its economies—as to formulate an entirely new structure of business methods.

Several of the government departments have started on overhauling of their business systems without waiting for the general reconstruction and what has been accomplished thus in piecemeal fashion gives a forecast of what may be expected later. In the U. S. land office, for instance, book-keeping methods have been so simplified that a single volume now holds the records that formerly required twenty-one different books. In one office 16 standard printed forms now do the work that formerly necessitated 83 different documents and in the postoffice department \$175,000 a year is being saved in twine bills by means of a new tying device. Incidentally it may be noted that some of the most radical economies that are expected as a result of Uncle Sam's latest move are looked for in the mailing rooms of the departments where tons of government documents are wrapped, addressed and mailed each day.

WASHINGTON GOSSIP

Cruise of World for Naval Cadets



WASHINGTON.—The fighting ships are going on another cruise, partly for the sake of the cruise and partly to advertise the navy and attract young men to it. Sixteen of the battleships will turn their prows away from the home land and steam off into the Atlantic, bound on a tour of the European ports.

For months the publicity experts of the navy department have been plotting the voyage for the purpose of getting young men to recruit. Not all of them will be chosen to go, but they all have an equal chance and those who do not go this time will go the next time, for it is the purpose to have these cruises every year to make the service more attractive to young Americans and cause them to enlist in such numbers as are required for the proper manning of the fighting ships.

When this cruise was first announced, several months ago, the navy department issued advertising matter to draw recruits. One of its most effective documents was a circular letter, prepared at Washington, but sent out from the various recruiting stations. It was written in a heart-to-

heart style. The cruise meant, according to the letter-writer, "that thousands of young Americans will have a chance to see the world and get paid for it. Do people who save for months or years to go abroad ever regret it? I want to ask you this important question: Are you willing to travel if you are well paid for it, or would you rather stay at home and read about it?"

Naturally, when it is put up to him in that fetching fashion, the young man concludes that he would a good deal rather travel and get paid for it, and he hies to the nearest recruiting station and enlists. Long cruises cost a lot of money, but they bring in young men and the navy must have young men even if they do come high.

Another heart-to-heart letter is addressed to the young man who is tired of his job. "Perhaps you are unhappy in your present job," writes the recruiting officer. "Perhaps it doesn't pay you enough. Perhaps there is no future to it. Perhaps your present work will never satisfy your burning ambition to win great success. Well, now if you want to change your job, I'd like to have a talk with you and tell you all about a bluejacket's life in the navy."

If the young man isn't tired of his job that letter is calculated to make him tired of it, and the navy gets another man. Other appeals are made, but the cruise talks are what bring the best results.

Put Under Bonds to Keep the Peace



MEXICO is a striking illustration of the way modern business puts nations under bonds to keep the peace. A naturally turbulent Latin-American republic, mainly Indian in blood, pays coupons on its government bonds to citizens of 21 nations. That is the number of countries represented last year. In 1907, coupons on Mexican government bonds were redeemed for citizens of 16 nations.

Every country so interested, through its citizens, in the stability and honesty of the Mexican republic, is an influence on the side of peace and order in Mexico. In a very real sense the Mexican nation has given bonds to keep the peace by selling government securities to foreigners living under many flags.

Less directly, but still in ways that count heavily the sales of private property to foreign investors are also equivalent to giving bonds to keep the peace. In the last quarter of a century American capital to the amount of not less than \$1,000,000,000, according to excellent authorities, has been invested in Mexican mines, planta-

tions, railroads and other Mexican property. European money has poured into Mexico in a similar stream.

Of course, no Mexican government ever guaranteed the security or the profitability of such investments. No government of any great power would undertake to collect from the Mexican people, as a nation, money to make good the losses sustained by Americans making unwise investments in Mexico. It is not a question of such compulsion.

But every power which has many subjects who have staked money upon the stability of the Mexican republic, the justice and solidity of the Mexican government, and the general sanity and regard for business obligations of the Mexican nation, will exert more or less pressure upon Mexico if that country should ever default as a nation or encourage its citizens to refuse to pay their just debts. In the aggregate these forces brought to bear upon Mexico can be trusted to have a deep and wide influence there.

Such international business bonds of peace are constantly becoming more important in many parts of the world. Every year the financial and commercial ties which knit the nations together increase in strength. Always the tendency of the times is toward the creation of closer international relations and a surer sense of common interest in the preservation of peace.

Bank Failures Due to Lax Examiners



CLOSE upon the heels of the radical shake-up in the ranks of the United States bank examiners, by which 20 men were shifted to new fields, Controller of Currency Murray announces that he will make a personal investigation of conditions in all examination districts. In deciding upon this course of action the controller says:

"In almost every case of a national bank failure since I have been controller the insolvency could have been averted had the national bank examiner determined the true condition and reported his findings in time for me to force a correction in the administration of the bank's affairs."

After citing that examiners of failed

banks had offered excuses that they had been unable to learn in advance of a bank's true condition, that officers and directors of banks would not correct conditions brought to their attention, or any one of another dozen reasons, Mr. Murray in his statement says:

"Many of the examiners state in their reports of examinations, forwarded to the controller's office, that it is a hardship not only on the examiner but upon many of the members of the directory of country banks, to ask the various boards to meet with the examiner during the progress or at the close of the examination.

"This investigation by the controller and his chief of the division of reports is also an investigation into the methods employed by every national bank examiner, and upon seeing them make an examination of several banks and afterward holding a meeting of the directors, he will be able to determine who of his examining force, if any, are inefficient."

Want to Shorten 'Long Green' Notes



THE length and breadth of the paper money issued by the government are not fixed by statute, but by habit the notes are 3.04 inches long and 7.28 inches wide. The treasury department renews the plan more than once proposed before to reduce these dimensions. The size talked about is 2.5 inches by six inches, which has for some time been used with favor in the Philippines. Our people are familiar with the notes as they are and still have been fitted to them. But traders and bankers handled the fractional currency of war times with ease and that paper was smaller than that the treasury is now considering.

The cost of the change would be in providing an entire new series of

plates and that would be much greater than the renewal of such as wear out. On the other hand the experts reckon that a saving of \$612,003 a year may be made by the reduction in size. The secretary will ask congress to conform the bank bills to the new dimensions at government charge for new plates.

The work of so modifying the paper currency would require 18 months, so that no sudden appearance of the smaller notes can be expected. While engravers and printers might be busy, the scheme would pass into an old story.

The department hesitates to go forward in the matter without public approval and invites criticism and suggestion. The clipping off of more than half an inch in width and 1.28 inch in length saves so much in paper and permits five notes instead of four to be printed on a sheet. The guess how much longer the smaller note will last than the present paper can be verified only by trial.

Belfast's Great Shipyard

IN MANY respects Messrs Harland & Wolff's shipyard, Queen's Island, Belfast, is the most remarkable concern of the kind in the world. For many years past they have taken the lead in the construction of the largest ships afloat; they have cut two of the finest liners on the seas in twin, and added considerable to their dimensions; and they have built half a vessel, the stern half, and had it towed safely from Belfast to Southampton, where it was built into the other half. At present on the stocks of their North yard two mammoth White Star boats of 45,000 tons each are fast approaching the launching stage. This line's entire fleet has been built by Messrs. Harland & Wolff.

From the available record it appears that the first Belfast built ship was a wooden schooner of 150 tons, the builder being a local Presbyterian clergyman. This was in 1836, but it was not until 1859 any serious attempt was made in the shipbuilding line so far as Belfast was concerned. In that year Messrs. Thomas Barnes & Co., in addition to starting the Belfast iron works, erected a small slip on the now famous Queen's Island, which has long since lost its insular position though still retaining the name which was given it after the late Queen Victoria's visit in 1849, previous to which it was known as Dargan's Island. The ironworks proved a failure, owing to the heavy expenses incurred in bringing the coal and iron stone to Belfast, but the small shipyard thrived exceedingly under the supervision of Messrs. Robert Hickson & Co., who acquired it from its founders.

Mr. Edward J. Harland, an Englishman, was manager for Messrs. Hickson, and in 1859 he purchased the concern from Messrs. Hickson, as well as a small yard adjoining, belonging to the Belfast Shipbuilding company, whose wooden vessels only were built.

Two years later Mr. Harland was joined in partnership with Mr. Gustavus Wilhelm Wolff, a wealthy German, and in 1874 Messrs. Walter H. Wilson (deceased) and William James Pierre (now Lord Pierre), pupils of the firm, were also made partners in the concern, which was subsequently floated as a limited liability company.

The business of the firm from the very outset continued to increase by leaps and bounds. In the year 1884, exactly 15 years after Mr. Harland acquired the controlling interest in the concern, there were launched from the Queen's Island yard 42 vessels, aggregating 165,625 tons burden. In the three years ending 1890 their total was 31 vessels, of 126,175 tons. On three occasions since they have achieved the record 12 months world's output, the figures being: In 1907, 82,240 tons; in 1908, 110,000 tons, and in 1909, 106,528 tons.

But perhaps one of the longest of several very tough tasks undertaken by the firm of Harland & Wolff was the lengthening of the Castle line Royal Mail steamer Scot (now the Oceana, of the Dutch Red Star fleet). It was in 1896 that the Scot, a Greenock-built steamer of some seven or eight thousand tons, was sent to Belfast to have 50 feet added to her length amidship. Messrs. Harland & Wolff undertook the job. The vessel was cut in halves, and with the aid of powerful jacks the two ends were pulled the required distance apart. Each end was several thousand tons dead weight, yet the work was accomplished without hitch or accident of any kind to the complete satisfaction of the owners. Towards the end of the same year the Hamburg-American liner Augusta Victoria was similarly lengthened by 60 feet.

Still more remarkable, probably, was the building of the bow portion of the rejuvenated White Star liner Suevic, when that vessel was taken piecemeal off the rocks at the entrance to the English channel some four or five

years ago. The stern portion only was saved and brought round to Southampton, where it remained until Messrs. Harland & Wolff built the bow end, 260 feet long, in the south yard, subsequently, with the aid of three Liverpool tugs, bringing the weird looking half ship right down the Irish channel, round the Land's end, and up to Southampton.

The repairs to the China, of the P. and O. line, and the Paris, of the American line, were also remarkable undertakings, as was also that of the St. Louis for the latter company. The China.

It was in 1870 the first Oceanic was built on the Queen's Island for the White Star company. It was a vessel considerably under 1,000 tons. The second Oceanic, launched in 1892, has 18 times the tonnage almost, while even up till the present day no one outside the management of the firm, with the exception of the heads of the White Star company, knows the exact dimensions of the two giant boats now being built for this great ocean carrying firm, so well has the secret been guarded. That they will be between 820 and 840 feet in length, and of about 45,000 registered tonnage, is the extent of knowledge of the outside public regarding these monsters.

The firm can in no sense be regarded as builders of speed, elegance and comfort for ocean voyagers being their especial motto. None of the boats built by them is intended to exceed 21 knots or 21½ knots, which, it is understood, will be the rate of traveling of the coming White Star leviathans, the motive power of which will be on the combination principle of reciprocating turbine engines. At the present moment between 11,000 and 12,000 employees are in constant employment, working at high pressure night and day shift, and receiving wages to the tune of over £27,000 per week, while the area of the concern is about 120 acres.

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