

News Review of Current Events the World Over

House Passes Bill Legalizing 3.2 Per Cent Beer—President Hoover Plans Debt Commission and Asks Roosevelt's Co-Operation.

By EDWARD W. PICKARD

CHAIRMAN COLLIER'S bill legalizing the manufacture and sale of beer was put through the house by a vote of 230 to 165 after all attempts to amend it had been defeated. The beer is to have an alcoholic content of 3.2 per cent by weight or 4 per cent by volume and is to be sold over the bar or in eating places, the understanding being that it is not intoxicating in fact and therefore should not be restricted. Excise tax placed on the beer is \$5 for a 31-gallon barrel. A brewers' permit tax of \$1,000 was voted. The old revenue taxes of \$50 for wholesalers in beer and \$25 for retailers were re-enacted.

The bill prohibits the shipment of beer, ale, or porter from wet states into dry states whose laws forbid such shipments and sales. The penalty for such violations is set at a maximum of \$1,000 or six months' confinement in jail.

During a day of strenuous debate the wets fought off all attempts of the dries to defeat or nullify the measure and were themselves held in line by the able management of Representative Henry T. Rainey of Illinois, the majority leader. To him and Chairman Collier most of the credit for the victory was given by Speaker Garner. The classification of the vote was as follows: 133 Democrats, 96 Republicans and one Farmer-Laborite voted for the bill, and 64 Democrats and 101 Republicans against it.

The Collier bill, it was evident, faces a fight in the senate, but leaders of the upper house were confident some sort of beer bill would be passed by that body, probably within 30 days.

ENTRAPMENT by federal officers in prohibition law violation cases was condemned by the United States Supreme court in a ruling on a case brought up from North Carolina. The majority opinion, read by the chief justice, reversed the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, which had upheld the trial judge in refusing to allow the defense of entrapment to go to the jury. The case was remanded for retrial.

"It is clear," the majority opinion said, "that the evidence was sufficient to warrant a finding that the act for which defendant was prosecuted was instigated by the prohibition agent, that it was the creature of his purpose, that defendant had no previous disposition to commit it, but was an industrious, law abiding citizen, and that the agent lured defendant, otherwise innocent, to its commission by repeated and persistent solicitation, in which he succeeded by taking advantage of the sentiment aroused by reminiscences of their experiences as companions in arms in the World War."

"Such a gross abuse of authority given for the purpose of detecting and punishing crime, and not for the making of criminals, deserves the severest condemnation, but the question whether it precludes prosecution or affords a ground of defense, and, if so, upon what theory, has given rise to conflicting opinions."

ONCE more President Hoover tried to obtain the co-operation of his successor in the handling of the war debt problem, and once more he failed. The Chief Executive in a special message to congress said he proposed to go ahead with his plans for some sort of reconsideration of the debts owed by those nations that have not defaulted, and that he intended to name a commission which would handle that matter and also take part in the Owen D. Young general economic conference and the conference on disarmament, holding that the three questions were inextricably connected. The commission, he said, could discuss with the debtor nations trade and other concessions and reduction of armaments in exchange for the scaling down of the debts. Mr. Hoover said he would ask Mr. Roosevelt to help in the selection of the members of the commission and otherwise co-operate, for he realized no settlement could possibly be concluded until long after his own term had ended.

Governor Roosevelt called Owen D. Young into conference, and after talking for two hours with that eminent banker and reparations expert he answered the President by telegraph, saying that he was opposed to the creation of a war debt commission and also to linking the debts with either the armament conference or the coming general economic conference. He reiterated his previous statement to the effect that the government should treat separately with each debtor nation and that this could best be done through diplomatic channels. Democrats as well as Republicans

in congress praised the President's message, some declaring it was the best state paper he had written. But the Democrats seemed to agree with Mr. Roosevelt that the latter should not take a hand in the debt matter until he become President. Mr. Hoover evidently is not to receive any active support from the Democrats in congress in carrying out his three-fold plan, but he is determined to go ahead with it and do whatever he can in the short time remaining before he goes out of office.

DISPATCHES from Paris said that Great Britain would informally advise France to drop her idea of submitting to arbitration the question of payment of the \$20,000,000 December interest that was due the United States. The British, however, were represented as being in favor of the French plan for a general conference or general negotiations on the debt question. Joseph Paul-Boncour had succeeded in formulating a new French government, not differing widely from that of Herriot, and it is his idea that negotiations with America can be kept open, though he hopes for the accomplishment of nothing vital until after Roosevelt is inaugurated. The American embassy in Paris was prompt in establishing contact with the new cabinet on the debt question. Its counselor, Theodore Marriner, was received by M. Cot, undersecretary of state in the foreign ministry, who probably will have considerable power on foreign questions and is very close to Paul-Boncour.

Both the British and the French statesmen are interested mainly in what the next American administration and the next congress will do about the debts and they refuse to get excited over present developments in this country.

GREECE, through Minister Simopoulos in Washington, notified the State department that it is holding ready the \$440,000 interest due on the \$12,000,000 refugee loan of 1923, but will not hand over the money until the question of whether the loan was a war loan or a commercial loan has been decided by arbitration.

Greece proposes that the United States choose the method of arbitration, but suggests the Permanent Court of Justice at The Hague. Minister Simopoulos was instructed to tell the American government that all political parties in Greece solidly maintain that the loan was a "war loan," although it was negotiated in 1923.

JAPAN so far has successfully bluffed the League of Nations out of taking any action in the Manchurian dispute, and if the British and French representatives have their way, nothing will be done to irritate the island empire. The special committee of 19 of the assembly has dropped all active negotiations until January 16, nominally because of the Christmas holidays, but actually because the Japanese have flatly rejected the proposal for conciliation of the quarrel by a committee on which the United States and Russia would be represented. This was insisted upon by China and the small nations of the league, though there is no reason for believing that the United States wishes to participate. The Japanese also refused to put in question the authenticity of the new state of Manchukuo.

When the league takes up the matter again it will be faced with the choice of invoking articles 15 and 16 of the covenant, involving sanctions, or admitting that the covenant doesn't work in a case like this. The latter is the view of Sir John Simon, British foreign secretary, but he has recently invoked article 15 against Persia in the dispute between that country and the Anglo-Persian oil interests. The big powers in the league seem determined not to offend Japan, and China is furious, charging that the Japanese have so schemed it that they will be able to gain a complete victory in Manchuria before any conciliation negotiations can be started.

GOVERNOR ROOSEVELT was dividing his time between cleaning up his work as chief executive of New York in preparation for leaving that post on January 1, and interviewing various distinguished members of his party, presumably concerning cabinet appointments. Among his callers were Arthur Mullen, national committeeman from Nebraska, and William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor. It was understood that Mr. Green was promoting the selection of Daniel J. Tobin of Boston for the labor portfolio. Tobin was active on behalf of Mr. Roosevelt in the campaign. Another person mentioned for this cabinet position is Miss Frances Perkins, the able industrial commissioner of New York during the Roosevelt regime.

NEGOTIATIONS that had lasted ten days and appeared hopeless ended suddenly in Chicago in a settlement of the wage controversy between the railroad managers and their union employees. A compromise proposal of the railroad managers to renew for nine months the so-called Willard agreement, under which the workers now have 10 per cent deducted from their pay checks, was accepted with alacrity by the 1,250 delegates representing the 21 standard railroad unions in the negotiations. When the Willard agreement expires October 31 next the basic scale is restored.

EDWARD O'NEAL, president of the American Farm Bureau federation, announced in Washington that about 150 members of congress had about a bi-partisan farm bloc to support demands for agricultural relief in the short session. Their program, he said, includes measures for the expansion of currency, for lowering the price of the dollar, stopping farm mortgage foreclosures and giving economic equality to agriculture and labor.

Vigorous opposition to the farm organizations' relief bill, with its proposal for a tax on the processing of wheat, cotton, tobacco and hogs, was voiced before the house agricultural committee by representatives of the packing industry. Under the bill the receipts from such a tax would be distributed by commodities to farmers who had cut production.

Frank A. Hunter, head of the Hunter Packing company of East St. Louis, Ill., declared such a tax would cost the packers \$300,000,000.

George E. Putnam, economist of Swift & Co. of Chicago, asserted that the packing industry could not absorb such a tax, that the consumers would not, and, therefore, would have to be passed back to the farmer, with the result that instead of helping agriculture the "relief plan" would work great damage.

BELIEVE it or not, the national government is now handing over almost one-half of its annual revenues to the veterans' administration to be paid out in benefits or other disbursement to, or in behalf of, war veterans and their dependents. William M. Bullitt, former solicitor general of the United States, so told the joint committee of congress that is investigating veterans' legislation, and he added that the peak of the huge expenditures was not yet reached.

Payments to Spanish war veterans now exceed the total cost of that war, while payments to or on behalf of World War veterans, Mr. Bullitt said, have reached the point where they are about one-half the cost of that war and this does not include about \$2,000,000,000, in adjusted compensation, the payment of which is a standing obligation of the government.

"The Economy league," Mr. Bullitt testified, "insists that the government's expenses be cut \$450,000,000 a year in the veterans administration alone. This can be done by eliminating \$109,000,000 paid to veterans of the Spanish-American war who have never suffered any injury or disability as a result of such service. Secondly, we ask the elimination of \$340,000,000 paid on account of veterans of the World War."

ON CHRISTMAS eve Arturo Alessandri assumed Presidential authority in Chile, and promised his country that his government would

guide it safely through its economic and political troubles. He called to his assistance the Conservatives and quasi-Socialists, barring only Col. Maranduke Grove and his red associates. Alessandri also made every effort to secure the support of Javier Figueroa, former chief justice and premier under the outgoing government, who played a leading part in the overthrow of the dictatorship.

Alessandri's right-hand man will be Gustavo Ross, who spent many years in exile in France with the President-Elect. Ross is a financier and has been offered the post of finance minister. He is now on his way back from London, where he negotiated a secret pact with the Rothschild bankers. This is believed to offer the consolidation of \$150,000,000 of British debts at a lower interest rate and with a moratorium of five years' duration.

Ross is hated by the Socialists and not trusted by the army and navy cliques, but he is the new President's closest friend and undoubtedly will have great influence on the government's policies. He is opposed to the Cosach nitrate combine and some persons fear he will bring the government into early collision with the American administration of the industry.

THERE seems little doubt that the crushing of the abortive attempt of the radicals of Argentina to overthrow the government saved that country from a veritable reign of terror. When former President Irigoyen and his associates were arrested the police seized documents that show the city of Buenos Aires was to be turned over to released criminals and terrorists who were to be permitted to loot and kill without hindrance. Quantities of bombs and hand grenades were found, and papers that revealed a plan to provide 30 or 40 bombs for each participant in the uprising. Irigoyen was offered free passage to Europe but preferred to be sent to the island of Martin Garcia.

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ODD BELIEFS ABOUT FIRST DAY OF YEAR



TO OPEN a bank account at New Year's was considered lucky in Old England, the custom growing probably from the belief of many centuries that whatever you do on the first day of the year will be an indication of what will happen during the months to follow. So deep seated was this superstition in the minds of men that even after the festival was declared a general holiday, many clung to the old-time belief, and to insure work for the coming year would set the pace by spending at least an hour or two in some useful pursuit.

The first day of the year has been more generally observed than any other holiday, and over a longer period, as well, its observance dating back to the Druids in England and to ancient Babylon when it was made an occasion for a celebration lasting from ten to twelve days. With every nation this holiday has been considered a time for the expression of good will and the renewing of old friendships. The effort to demonstrate the kindly spirit led to the custom of making gifts, often very expensive jewelry and large sums of money. But it was not necessary to remember one's friends in that lavish way for custom made it possible also to express good wishes in a fitting and very humble manner.

Almost every nation has welcomed the New Year with some form of ceremony, not, however, on the same date or in the same way. The Druids celebrated the New Year on the shortest day of the year, the time, in their belief, when the sun, which journeyed away from earth during the cold months, turned homeward bringing with it sunshine, light, warmth and good cheer. The superstitions that cluster around the day began away back in the time of these sun worshippers when the priests led the people to the forests of the gods for small sprigs of mistletoe which would bring them health and prosperity for the year. So important was the event the people marched in processions to the groves, led by the priests, selected for the sacred duty of cutting the mistletoe, being armed with sickles of gold. And just as primitive man made his plans for the beginning of a New Year the Mexican, Japanese, Chinese,

Persian, Turk, in fact, every nation on the globe followed in his footsteps, each celebrating according to his own ideas and customs.

Omens of good and bad luck have always been associated with the New Year, all founded more or less upon the belief that supreme power was vested in an unseen deity who could bring good luck if properly appeased or mete out punishments. The Romans named their New Year in honor of Janus, the two-faced god, who had the power to look back over the past, and also in a prophetic way could look into the future. He was represented with a key in his hand symbolizing his power to open doors, and gateways, and this holiday was one of great gaiety lasting several days. The festival was not observed in midwinter, but in the spring, when the Roman year began, and had only ten months. Later when two months were added to the calendar, January and February were placed at the beginning of the year. The New Year was celebrated on the first of January.

Among the old superstitions are many quaint customs that have been observed for centuries and have come down almost to this day and age. Among them are the following:

To bring good luck one must wear something new on the first day of the year, according to old English custom. In some parts of England and Scotland it is supposed to be unlucky to leave a house until some outsider has first entered it.

There is also an old superstition concerning the weather told in an old legend as follows:

"If New Year night wind bloweth south,
It betokeneth warmth and growth;
If west, much milk, and fish in the sea;
If north, much cold and storms there'll be;
If east, the trees will bear much fruit,
If northeast, see it, man and brute."

It was considered unlucky also for one to make a present on New Year's until one had first been received. An old saw pertaining to this custom is as follows:

Take out and take in,
Bad luck is sure to begin,
But take in and take out,
Good luck will come about.



How Times Have Changed—

THE custom of celebrating the advent of the New Year is sunk in antiquity. Let us glance down the centuries toward some of the first stunts in which the populace indulged and see if we aren't inclined to draw a breath of relief as we exclaim, "How times have changed!"

Long, long ago, before the dawn of civilized stomachs, it was a good old pagan custom for the people to celebrate the New Year by gathering in the open where they circled around two wild boars that tore each other to bits. The meat of the dead animals was then divided between the people to feast upon, the best pieces being reserved for those highest in authority. It's a far cry from the midnight supper of today with its carefully chosen hors d'oeuvres to stimulate the flagging appetites of guests whose stomachs revolt at the sight of spilled blood.

In old Scotland a more savory diet was enjoyed on New Year's eve when people thronged through the streets between twelve and one o'clock at night bearing steaming kettles of spiced ale, known in that day as the wassail bowl. As they passed each other on the way to visit neighbors, they stopped to give and take sips, so that their spirits were mounting high when they arrived, to be generously fed on buns and cheese. This pleasant custom persisted for many years

until it was abused by the wild youth of the land who took advantage of the occasion for the commission of lawless acts.

At one time the New Year was celebrated by the giving of presents just as Christmas is today. Gloves were a popular contribution to a lady's wardrobe because of their rarity. If the gentleman was hesitant in selecting the gloves in person, it was perfectly proper for him to give money for their purchase, which was known as "glove money."

When pins were first invented, about the beginning of the Sixteenth century, they were an even more acceptable gift in feminine circles. They were rough hand-made pins, but were considered rare pieces of workmanship compared with the skewers of bone and wood then in use. If money was given for their purchase, it was known as "pin-money," a phrase which has clung to the language, and connotes money used for any extras, pins or other.

In early America the New Year was celebrated with the simplicity that was part of the times. With no steam cars, motor cars or telephones, people had to depend on stage coaches and ox teams for transportation. It was said that it was of no use to sit up and watch the old year out as the "clocks did so vary that they knew very little of the crossing." So the settlers celebrated by making multitudinous calls the next day, jingling merry sleigh bells and shaking off snow on the door step. Refreshments consisted of great slices of cake, doughnuts, coffee and cider. The custom of making wholesale New Year's calls persisted for many years. Only a short time ago it was still the fashion for families to hold open house.

The Chinese are said to celebrate New Year's in the most unusual fashion of all. They actually feel compelled to pay off their debts before they can be at peace with the world. Of all the customs of various nations, this is perhaps the one most worthy of emulation.—Indianapolis News.

Old New Year's and the New New Year's

MASSACHUSETTS made New Year's a holiday long after the American custom of New Year's calls, which justified its observance, had gone the way of the polka and the hoop skirt. There is nothing American about the carnival-like merry-making which nowadays welcomes the new year. Or can it be that even this is a metamorphosis of the watchnight meeting of 40 years or more ago? To deacons and elders, to all anxious heads of families, it used to seem fitting to spend the last three hours of the year in singing lugubrious hymns and giving thanks that they had been singled out for preservation when so many had been removed by an equally discerning Providence.

But to the young the watchnight meeting was always a dreary service, only to be endured in view of the joys of the morrow. And when the life and color were taken out of the observance of New Year's itself, there seemed little sense in ushering in a day of gloom with a still gloomier New Year's eve. So they left the watch-night meeting to those who found no more pleasure in their days, and for themselves introduced the practice now generally prevalent of indulging in a last fling in preparation for the morrow's disagreeable business of turning over a new leaf. They have revived the old pagan ceremony, ex-

cept that no miniature skeletons are passed round at the feast to remind them that they are mortal. Nothing in this modern New Year's eve abandon, however, commends it as a substitute for the old and gracious custom of paying and receiving calls, a custom whose desuetude was hastened by the prodigious growth of the large cities in the 25 years following the Civil War.

As people's acquaintances increased numerically their circle widened geographically. Horse-drawn vehicles were still the indispensable ways of getting about. A gentleman who in 1829 could call upon 100 or more ladies and find room in himself for an equal number of cups of coffee or glasses of sherry, was compelled, in 1879, to reduce his calling list by half; he could not get all the way round, even if his brains and his legs held out. As it became apparent that either the custom or its observers must shortly perish from the earth, the custom languished and died. Such of the old observers as survive spend the day sadly. There is nothing they can do to make them repentant. There is no pleasure in making good resolutions which you can't break if you try.—Boston Herald.

A TOAST

What though the waves of yesterday
Return upon our beach,
And come again and slip away
Forever out of reach
Let's reignite the torch of days
And hail the new born year—
Old Father Time's young progeny
Is worth a rousing cheer!
—A. C. CLAPP, in Chicago Daily News.

New Year's Note
As a rule there's nothing new about a New Year's party except the New Year.—Woman's Home Companion.