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THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

LIVELY SCENES IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Discussion Incident To Report of State House Investigating Com- mittee—Other Matters.

Columbia, February 15.—The chief interest of the people of the State in the legislative session for the past several days has centered in the discussion incident to the report of the joint committee to inspect the work of the completion of the State House and the action to be taken by the general assembly with reference to that report. There were lively scenes in the lower house following the presentation of a memorial from the old commission for the completion of the State House, asking for a hearing, and during a heated discussion the lie was passed by two members.

To Enter Suit.

The two houses have agreed on a concurrent resolution ordering that appropriate legal steps be taken to recover from Frank P. Milburn, the architect, and McIlwain, Unkefer & Co., the contractors, "as much as possible of the damages the State has suffered through their misconduct and breach of contract, and such other legal redress as may seem to them to be advisable." The resolution provides for the appointment of one senator and one representative to direct said litigation, with power to employ counsel, provided that the compensation of such counsel shall not exceed 25 per cent of the amount received in said suits.

Why Special Counsel.

It was urged in the senate, where the resolution originated, that the attorney general was the proper officer to take charge of the suit, but Senator Manning, while expressing the greatest confidence in the present attorney general, mentioned the fact that he was the assistant attorney general to Mr. Bellinger, who was a member of the State House commission, and that it would be best for all concerned should other counsel be employed.

The two houses have not yet agreed on the manner of giving the commission for the completion of the State House the hearing which they demanded immediately after the report of the legislative committee was made. The house has agreed to have any statement which the commission desires to make printed and placed on the desks of the members, while the senate has adopted a resolution providing that a committee of five, two senators and three representatives, be appointed to hear the commission and to take testimony. The two houses may get together on the matter today.

The members of the old commission held a meeting in Columbia on Thursday morning and adopted a memorial to the general assembly stating that they had been done a manifest injustice by the legislative committee, "as it willingly or unwittingly or unfairly condemns our acts and the work approved by us without giving us an opportunity to be heard and even refusing to allow us a hearing. Many of the allegations of error and incompetency are easily explained. Certain conclusions could not and would not have been drawn had available evidence been heard. Above all, we feel that an impression, that must necessarily result from the tenor and terms of the report, would not exist if we were allowed the opportunity to be heard." Wherefore, the commission prayed that they be given a hearing and that their evidence and reply to the report of the committee become a permanent record of the general assembly.

The memorial was presented in the house by Mr. Aull and in the senate by Senator Talbird, who also presented resolutions providing for a joint committee to hear the commission

and to take their evidence. These resolutions, as already stated, have been adopted by the senate, while the house has adopted a substitute providing for the printing of such statement as the commission may desire to make.

The Lie Passed.

The presentation of the memorial in the house led to a lively sensation. The lie was passed by members and for a while there were lively scenes.

When the memorial had been read Mr. J. O. Patterson, member of the investigating committee, declared it to be a duty to himself and to South Carolina for him to make a statement. The General Assembly is conversant with the matters which led up to the appointment of the investigating commission, the members of which realize the gravity of the trust placed upon them. They had done their duty honestly, fearlessly and conscientiously. The commission had all been friends of his and it had been an unpleasant duty. The investigating commission had not been charged with the duty of extolling or blaming the members of the building commission. He referred to the cards in the State of Wednesday, in which Mr. Bellinger and Mr. Gaston complained that they had not been treated with proper consideration. The complaint is that the State House commission had not been invited before the building commission. Why should the members of the latter commission be summoned when they themselves could not agree? In reference to the statement of Mr. Bellinger that he had been denied the privilege of coming before the commission, Mr. Patterson declared it was a case of misunderstanding, which he regretted as he and Mr. Bellinger had been personal friends for a score of years. On the night of January 7 Mr. Bellinger had threatened that, in case the joint commission should attack the building commission, he would take the matter to the Legislature. Mr. Patterson declared that he regretted very much that a casual conversation should have been misunderstood, as he had told Mr. Bellinger that should the report be in the nature of an attack he would insist upon the members of the building commission being given a hearing. There was no formal demand, and the statement he made to Mr. Bellinger was conditional. The joint committee had thought it a waste of time and money to bring here the members of the building commission. The investigating commission had employed a Government architect and had inspected the building carefully. He regretted that the building commission had felt aggrieved. They are honorable men, and if their confidence in those whom they employed was misplaced, it is a misfortune to the State of South Carolina.

Mr. Williams made a straightforward statement that the terms of the memorial do not contain a true statement of facts. The joint commission had never refused to give audience to any member of the building commission. The architect brought here to inspect the work had been given no suggestions. The investigating commission had not reflected upon the building commission. It had simply stated the facts as they had been found.

Mr. Rawlinson declared that it had not been the purpose of the commission to reflect upon the building commission. The latter had not asked to come before the joint committee. The architect and contractor had been asked to appear and had not done so.

Mr. Aull declared that the building committee had been very severely criticised, and, as an act of justice, they should be heard.

Mr. D. D. McCall, Jr., of Marlboro, declared that never in his life had he been given more pleasure in endorsing a public action than he has in endorsing the action of the investigating commission. He thought its work should stand. Its members are honorable men.

Mr. W. J. Johnson, a member of the State House building committee, de-

clared that it had not been his intention to speak upon this question, for the language which he would like to apply to the report would not be parliamentary.

Mr. Williams and Mr. Rawlinson plied Mr. Johnson with questions to find out if the latter had been denied the privilege of coming before the commission. The moment was exciting, when Mr. Rawlinson began to approach Mr. Johnson, but the Speaker rapped the members to order.

Mr. Johnson declared this report of a committee, which sat behind closed doors, to have been a damnable insult to the State of South Carolina.

In reply to Mr. Patterson, he said that there had been no division in the building committee, except for one dissenting member, who had been permitted to be with the investigating commission. "Why not the other eight? They are honorable gentlemen, all of them, and any statement to the contrary is an infamous lie."

Mr. Williams: "Do you mean to apply that to the members of the joint committee?"

Mr. Johnson: "What I have said I have said."

Mr. Williams: "Do you mean to apply that to me? It is very easy for you to say."

Mr. Johnson: "If the cap fits, wear it. Just wear it."

Mr. Gaston made the point of order that the discussion was all out of order.

Mr. Mauldin, in the chair, ruled that the memorial is a matter for discussion.

Mr. Johnson, continuing, said that the joint committee was no more fit to pass upon the Government architect's work than the building commission was to pass upon the work on the State House. Mr. Johnson continued by saying that the damnable suggestions in the report were absolute falsehoods.

Mr. Williams, rising very calmly from his seat as Mr. Johnson concluded, and pointing his finger at Mr. Johnson, said, with deliberation: "There was nothing in that report to charge members of the commission with collusion to rob and steal, and whoever says so is a liar."

Mr. Johnson sprang up and made some inaudible remark, which caused the sergeant-at-arms to come between himself and Mr. Williams.

Mr. Aull at this point introduced a concurrent resolution to have a committee appointed to take the testimony of the members of the building commission.

Mr. Williams introduced a resolution to have testimony taken by the same committee.

Mr. Gaston thought it unwise to act upon these resolutions when the House was in excitement. He wanted the memorial and resolutions referred to one of the standing committees of the House. This motion was adopted by the House, and the matter was disposed of.

After the debate was over Mr. Williams stated: "I desire, Mr. Speaker, to apologize to this House, not to any individual, for the language which I have used."

Mr. Johnson subsequently apologized to the House for the use of unparliamentary language.

The Immigration Bill.

The house on Thursday after spending nearly the whole day discussing it, recommitting the bill to establish a department of immigration. The bill had already passed the third reading in the house. Mr. Lide moved to recommit, because he did not see the justification of establishing a new State office. The bill provided for the spending of more money. Mr. Bomar favored the bill. There was no expenditure of a little money that promised better results. Mr. Banks opposed the bill. After a great deal more discussion the bill was recommitment by a vote of 55 to 49. On Saturday the committee to whom the bill was recommitment submitted an unfavorable report, which points to the failure of the measure at this ses-

sion.

Newberry's Levy.

The various county levies have been fixed, the state levy being five mills, as usual, and the constitutional three-mill levy for schools was imposed. Newberry's levy for ordinary county tax was fixed at three mills, making the total eleven mills, but on a showing from Supervisor Schumpert and Clerk Hunter and others it will be reduced to two and one-half mills, making the total ten and one-half.

The house has sent the general appropriation bill to the senate and has passed the two supply bills. The general appropriation bill was passed by the house practically as recommended by the ways and means committee, the disposition seeming to be to let the appropriations remain at what they have been. There were various unsuccessful attempts to cut down the appropriations for the State colleges.

The Dispensary Again.

The senate has discussed at length and has passed and sent to the house the Brice bill allowing counties to set out dispensaries with an amendment that those counties which vote against the dispensary shall not receive any of the profits accruing to the schools from the dispensary fund and that a tax of one-half a mill shall be levied in those counties which have no dispensary for the purpose of carrying out the law.

Ten Circuits Bill.

The senate has been discussing the bill for the creation of additional judicial circuits. Several such measures, as is known, has already been killed in the house, and it is now too late to accomplish anything at this session, but a resolution has been passed that it is the sense of the senate that some relief be had in this matter and that additional circuits are necessary. There are two bills in the senate providing for new circuits, and as was the case in the house, it seems impossible for the senate to agree on any one measure.

The senate has killed the bill requiring the stopping of bicycles or automobiles on the approach of vehicles drawn by horses.

CANNON FIRING.

Ten Thousand Chinese Regulars Mass On Manchurian Frontier For Service on Border.

Chefoo, Feb. 14.—A steamer arriving here from Port Arthur reports that heavy firing was heard in the straits of Pechili at midnight.

Chinese Regulars on Border.

Tientsin, Saturday, Feb. 13.—Ten thousand Chinese regulars have been ordered to leave Paotingfu for service on the Chili-Manchurian border.

Big Loss to Japanese.

Nagasaki, Feb. 14.—Six Norwegian steamers chartered by a Russian naval contractor have been captured. The vessels are the Lena, Activ, Seirstad, Argo and Hermes. They carried coal cargoes. The Hermes arrived here today under convoy of a cruiser. It is rumored that 1,800 Japanese soldiers have been killed, presumably by the sinking of a transport. Disturbances are reported proceeding in Seoul.

Askold Sank in Thirty Fathoms.

Chefoo, Feb. 14.—Passengers who have arrived at Port Arthur say the Russian cruiser Askold was damaged in Tuesday's battle in the roads outside of Port Arthur, but was kept afloat until Saturday, when it sank in thirty fathoms.

Other Captures Made.

Seoul, Tuesday, Feb. 9.—The Japanese fleet which entered Chemulpho last night escorting transports captured one Russian volunteer warship and two steamers in the open sea.

Japanese Have Closed Harbor of Port Arthur.

London, Feb. 15.—The Tokio correspondent of the Times, cabling under date of February 14, says: "It is said the Japanese squadron

IN TERRIBLE

EARNESTNESS.

RUSHING UPON AND KILLING JAPS.

Mikado Landed 600 at Talienwan—400 of Them Sabred by Russian Troopers.

London, Feb. 15.—The Daily Mail's Port Arthur correspondent under date of February 12, says:

Official advices state that the Japanese landed 600 soldiers near Aalianwan with disastrous results, 410 being sabred by Cossacks. The remainder escaped to their ships. It is further stated that the Japanese landed at Dove Bay, where thirty of them were killed and the remainder retreated.

From Chefoo it is reported that 12,000 Japanese troops landed at Dove Bay last Wednesday morning and that they were met by Russians who engaged them in a hand-to-hand fight. The reports say the Japanese were driven back. It is also reported that Japanese troops have been landed 40 miles further west.

Mysterious Squadron.

Tokio, Feb. 14.—The Vladivostok squadron has not been reported today. It is unknown whether the squadron returned to Vladivostok or effected a passage into the Pacific. An unverified report says a foreign warship was seen off Maizura naval station. The Japanese are not specially concerned over the naval situation as they feel confident that they will soon dominate the sea.

There is no fear of the Russian intercepting the Kasaga and the Niasin or effecting a junction with the Port Arthur squadron. The Russians possess no naval bases except those at Port Arthur and Vladivostok, and the latter may freeze up and bar the retreat of the squadron.

Despite Russian assurances minimizing the damage sustained by Admiral Togo's attack last Tuesday at Port Arthur, the Japanese are certain that the Port Arthur fleet was severely crippled.

Admiral Togo's fleet was not severely damaged and was capable of fighting another battle immediately afterward. The battleship Fuji was the most serious damaged. Withdrawals for repairs from the Japanese fleet will not materially reduce its fighting strength.

Lieutenant Commander Yamanaya, a gallant and promising officer, was the most prominent of those killed on the Japanese side at Port Arthur.

has sealed Port Arthur."

London, Feb. 15.—There were a number of belated telegrams reaching London from the Far East last night, but they added little or nothing to what is already known regarding the situation there. The mystery surrounding the fate of the Vladivostok squadron is still unsolved.

The Daily Mail, the Daily Telegraph and other papers publish dispatches from Tokio, Nagasaki and Shanghai reporting the destruction of three Russian cruisers by mines or torpedoes in the Tsugaru strait off Aomori, Japan. The Daily Mail, which at first described the news as official, in a later telegram, says the report still lacks absolute confirmation. In the absence of confirmation, the reports are not generally credited.

It is reported from Tientsin that all foreigners and civilians have been ordered to leave Port Arthur. It is also reported that the Siberian railroad has been wrecked in six places, covering a distance of 70 miles.

The correspondent at Tientsin of the Standard, cabling under date of Feb. 11, says the British, American, French, German and Italian ministers have jointly notified the Russian and Japanese authorities that no hostilities will be allowed on Chinese soil other than that of Manchuria.