

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED.

The message further announced that the Speaker of the House had signed the following enrolled bills, and they were thereupon signed by the President pro tempore:

H. R. 4610. An act to compensate Thomas G. Allen for injuries while employed in the General Land Office of the United States, and making an appropriation therefor;

H. R. 13274. An act to provide relief in cases of contracts connected with the prosecution of the war, and for other purposes; and

H. R. 13462. An act making appropriations for the construction, repair, and preservation of certain public works on rivers and harbors, and for other purposes.

HOUSE BILL REFERRED.

H. R. 16187. An act making appropriations to supply deficiencies in appropriations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1919, and prior fiscal years, and for other purposes, was read twice by its title and referred to the Committee on Appropriations.

PRESIDENTIAL APPROVALS.

A message from the President of the United States, by Mr. Sharkey, one of his secretaries, announced that the President had approved and signed the following acts and joint resolution: On February 27, 1919:

S. 5058. An act to authorize the counties of Morton and Burleigh, in the State of North Dakota, to construct a bridge across the Missouri River near Bismarck, N. Dak.;

S. 5192. An act for the construction of a bridge across Rock River at or near South Jackson Street, in the city of Janesville, Wis.;

S. 5316. An act granting the consent of Congress to Wenatchee-Beebe Orchard Co. to construct a bridge across the Columbia River at or within four miles northerly from the town of Chelan Falls, in the State of Washington;

S. 5478. An act granting the consent of Congress to the Fall Branch Coal Co. to construct a bridge across the Tug River;

S. 5534. An act granting the consent of Congress to Oliver Cabana, jr., Myron S. Hall, E. G. Connette, William F. MacGlashan, John H. Bradley, and M. A. Hurt to construct a bridge across Niagara River within or near the city limits of Buffalo, and for other purposes; and

S. 5580. An act granting the consent of Congress to the counties of Martin and Bertie, in the State of North Carolina, to construct a bridge across the Roanoke River at or near Williamston, N. C.

On February 28, 1919:

S. J. Res. 107. Joint resolution authorizing the erection on the public grounds in the city of Washington, D. C., of a memorial to Francis Asbury.

PROPOSED LEAGUE OF NATIONS FOR PEACE.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. President, I agree with the Senator from Wisconsin [Mr. LENROOT] in the statement that this is the most important question at this time before the country, and it is the duty of those men who represent the people to express their views upon this subject. The conditions as suggested in the proposal of the league of nations should not be imposed upon the people of this country until they have a full realization of what those conditions are and what they mean, and the men who represent their constituencies should not be criticized if, through honest criticism, they oppose the conditions of the league, because it is their duty, in my opinion, to state publicly their views. In my State I have been somewhat criticized because it has been stated that I am opposed to a league of nations.

I do not wish at this time, in the closing hours of the session, to take too much of the valuable time of the Senate in discussing this question, but in view of the fact that we shall shortly adjourn and it is doubtful whether an extra session will be soon called, which I fervently hoped might be very soon called, in order to dispose of the important questions before the country, I feel that it is my duty at this time to state very definitely my views upon this important question.

Mr. President, on November 11, 1918, the President of the United States announced to Congress in joint session the terms of the armistice accepted and signed by the German authorities and informed us that the war thereby came to an end.

On December 2, 1918, he again appeared before Congress in joint session and stated his intention of departing immediately for Europe. In the course of his address he said:

I welcome this occasion to announce my purpose to join in Paris the representatives of the Governments with which we have been associated in the war against the central empires for the purpose of discussing with them the main features of the treaty of peace.

The allied Governments have accepted the bases of peace which I outlined to the Congress on the 8th of January last, as the central empires also have, and very reasonably desire my personal counsel in their interpretation and application, and it is highly desirable that I should give it in order that the sincere desire of our Government to contribute without selfish purpose of any kind to settlements that will be of common benefit to all the nations concerned may be made fully manifest. The peace settlements which are now to be agreed upon are of transcendent importance both to us and to the rest of the world, and I know of no business or interest which should take precedence of them. We hope, I believe, for the formal conclusion of the war by treaty by the time spring has come.

Spring has almost come, the President has returned, but without any treaty of peace, and, so far as I can gather, without any clear conception as to when there will be a treaty of peace.

More than three months have elapsed since the armistice was signed. Almost daily during that period I have been importuned, as I am sure every other Senator has been importuned, to know when our boys will all be returned. If I can believe the relatives of the boys themselves, they, too, desire to return and long for their homes, now that the actual fighting has ceased and time hangs heavily upon their hands. On all sides business men are clamoring for a return to peace conditions. Why a treaty of peace has not been concluded and when a treaty of peace is likely to be concluded are questions on which I have no more light than the average citizen.

When the President announced his departure for Europe he assured us:

I shall be in close touch with you and with affairs on this side of the water and you will know all that I do. At my request the French and English Governments have absolutely removed the censorship of cable news which until within a fortnight they had maintained, and there is now no censorship whatever exercised at this end, except upon attempted trade communications with enemy countries. * * * I did so at the advice of the most experienced cable officials, and I hope that the results will justify my hope that the news of the next few months may pass with the utmost freedom and with the least possible delay from each side of the sea to the other.

Notwithstanding the promise made by the President that he would be in close touch with Congress and with affairs on this side of the water and that we would know all that he did, I am sure it is an open secret that the President never communicated any information to Congress during his absence of almost 12 weeks.

On the eve of his departure he told us, as above stated, that the allied governments accepted the bases of peace which he outlined on January 8, 1918. The first basis called for "open covenants of peace openly arrived at." Had that basis been followed and had the censorship of cable news been removed, as he assured us it would be, we could have learned through the press all that was taking place. Instead, however, of "open covenants of peace openly arrived at" we learn from the press that practically all negotiations take place in secret.

At the time of the departure of the President, December 4, 1918, I introduced the following resolution in the Senate:

Whereas the President has informed Congress that the bases of peace outlined by him on the 8th of January last have been accepted by the allied Governments and by the central empires, and that it is his duty to see that no false or mistaken interpretation is put upon them; and

Whereas the President has never stated his own interpretation of such bases and the same, particularly those relating to "A league of nations" and the "Freedom of the seas," are open to various interpretations, some of which may be in conflict with established national traditions; and

Whereas the President has announced that the various steps in the approaching negotiations abroad shall be promptly made known to the American people: Therefore be it

Resolved, That the President be, and he is hereby, respectfully requested to make publicly known his own interpretation of his proposed peace terms as presented to Congress January 8, 1918, and not attempt to impose such interpretation upon the international conference about to assemble until full opportunity is presented to the American public to become acquainted with the same, to the end that this Nation may not be committed to policies in contravention of the traditions of the United States; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be forthwith transmitted to the President.

At the time of its introduction and by way of explanation I made the following statement:

"Mr. President, in his address to Congress of December 2 the President informed us that the bases of peace outlined by him to us on the 8th of January last have been accepted by the allied Governments and by the central empires, and by way of explanation of his trip to Europe he stated that it was his duty to see that no false or mistaken interpretation is put upon them."

"In view of this explanation it requires no argument to show that various interpretations may be placed upon the bases of peace which he outlined. Some of the bases relate not merely to a settlement of the present war but to our relations in the future with all governments. Heretofore we have been guided by certain traditions. The immortal Washington, in his Fare-