

## U.S. CONGRESS OLD MACHINE IN BAD REPAIR

Great Lawmaking Body Needs  
New Starter and Other  
Equipment.

### LONG WAIT FOR ACTION

WASHINGTON, D. C.—That Congress is an old-model machine in bad repair, and must be rebuilt and equipped with a new starter, is an opinion which is now being heard from authoritative sources. And the case against the congressional system seems to be a good one.

One of its minor flaws is exhibited right now in the fact that, after electing a new administration, we must wait four months or so before it can go into action against the many difficult problems that confront it. The old administration is naturally going to mark time, as outgoing administrations always do. Little matters like taxation, Haiti, and Mexico, it will leave to embarrass its successors of the other party.

But that is only one of a number of ways in which Congress, as a machine, works poorly because of the way it is designed. It seems to have been intended to work much as the British parliamentary system does, but to have failed. At least, that is the opinion of Woodrow Wilson, whose book on constitutional government in the United States was a standard long before he was President, and still remains so.

"The President of the United States was intended . . . to be a reformed and standardized king," he says, "and Congress was meant to be a reformed and properly regulated parliament."

But the framers of the Constitution did their work none too well in the first place, and time has changed it a good deal. Today the Congress of the United States is remarkable chiefly for its unwillingness and irresponsibility.

#### HOW THE DUCK IS PASSED.

The chief fault of it, the critics seem to agree, lies in the fact that the men who make the laws have little to do with enforcing them, and those who have to enforce them have little to say in framing them. In other words, the thing works out as an elaborate system for the passing of the buck.

This can best be understood by comparing our congressional system with the British parliamentary system, of which it seems to be a reformed and standardized body with two branches. There the similarity ends. In England the chief executive is the prime minister, who is appointed by the crown, in theory at least. He forms a Cabinet from the members of his own party in Parliament. These men are the heads of the executive branches of the Government, just as our Cabinet members are, but they also retain their seats in Parliament and are made thereto defend their measures and motives.

Furthermore, the Cabinet in England originates all important legislation. If the house of Commons refuses to support its legislative program, then the Cabinet resigns and a new prime minister forms a new Cabinet. If the Parliament, on the other hand, supports and passes the legislative program offered by the cabinet, then it is up to that same Cabinet to prove that those laws will work.

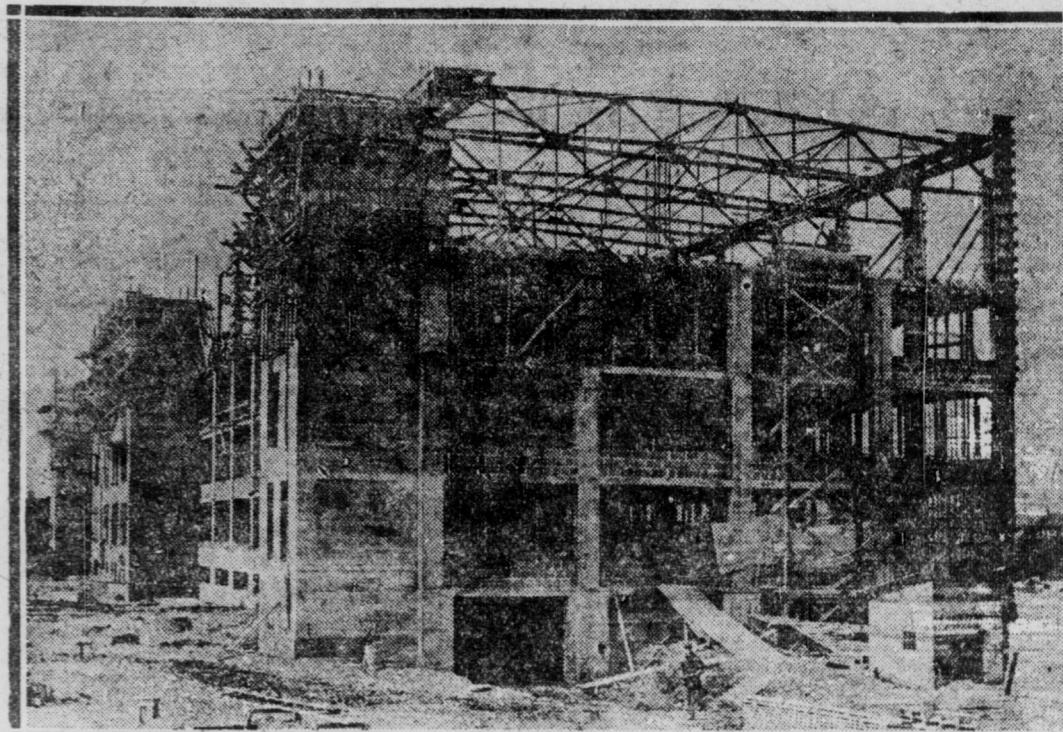
#### CABINET OFFICERS HAVE NO POWER IN LEGISLATION.

In our Congress the Cabinet members not only have no seats in Congress, but they have no originate power over legislation—or, at least, practically none. There are two chief faults of this sort as the critics see it—irresponsibility. In the first place, the President and his Cabinet officers are called upon to execute whatever laws Congress chooses to pass; there is no certainty of harmony between them. In the second place the Cabinet officers are not subjected to effective criticism. Almost any one can think of a few Cabinet officers who would have had the time holding their jobs if they had been forced to defend the administrations of their departments on the floor of the House.

The results of the system, so far as Congress is concerned, are essentially the same in that they also make for irresponsibility. The real originative source of our laws is in the committees of the House. There are a great many of these committees. Bills introduced are referred to them. They report only what bills they choose to report, and usually those are bills drawn up by the committee itself and bearing the name of the chairman. These bills are debated and fought over on the floor of the House, it is true, but the size of the House, the number who wish to be heard, and the immense amount of business to be transacted, make this debate perfectly futile. A bill introduced in the House gets a great deal more real deliberative consideration. But differences between the House and the Senate must be compromised in the conference committee, usually in great haste at the end of a session.

The result of all this is that the typical American Federal law is a child of obscure origin. Many hands have a share in its upbringing, and it is finally turned

## Big New Plant Rapidly Taking Form



The big Indianapolis plant of the Westinghouse Lamp Company, one of this city's new industries, has begun to assume a most imposing appearance, with its length of 400 feet on Michigan street and its width of eighty feet.

It is a concrete building, of the latest type of construction and design and will have a height of about eight feet, four stories and a basement.

The building is on East Michigan street, just west of the Belt railroad, and it will be used for the manufacture

of the Westinghouse Mazda lamps.

The company hopes to have the plant in operation in April or May of 1921, and it is expected that at the start about 800 or 900 persons will be employed, the majority of them to be

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