DID FULTON INVENT THE STEAMBOAT? This is a note for high school students. The history texts in our day gave Fulton credit for inventing the steamboat and some bestowed a bit of credit on John Fitch as the inventor. Now comes an incident to disturb this contention. This month the Maryland State Historical Society is erecting a marker over near Middle Neck Maryland with this inscription: "James Rumsey, the inventor of the steamboat was born in 1743, two miles north of this point in Middle Neck." It would seem from a reexamination of available data that Rumsey was given credit for invention of the steamboat by no less a person than George Washington in 1794, fully a year before John Fitch submitted his first steamboat plan and at least eight years before Fulton's first plans. Incidentally Rumsey and Fulton were friends and both had gone to London to perfect their respective inventions. While in London, Rumsey died of an apoplectic stroke on the very eve of the demonstration of his largest steamboat, known as the Columbian Maid.

WE ARE GOING FLIGHTY. We've come far since the days when Octave Chanute, pioneer inventor who lies buried in Springfield Cemetery in Peoria, Illinois, first experimented with gliders and other ways of subduing the air so that man might fly. As Tennyson remarked, "The old order changeth, yielding place to the new." The pony express yielded to the stagecoach, the stagecoach to the railroad train, and the train in some degree to the airplane. But look at what has happened in the last six years. Miles flown in the air increased from 37 million in 1930 to 72 million in 1936. Pounds of express carried by plane increased from 468,000 in 1930 to 9 million in 1936. Pounds of mail increased from 64 million to 17 million. Passengers increased from 417,505 to 1,140,000. Passenger miles flown increased from 104 million to 480 million. Cost of a pound of commodities by air express from New York to San Francisco decreased in the last six years from $2.60 to $1.00. Passengers fares from New York to San Francisco have been lowered from $229.50 to $160.00 in the last six years.

FAR AND A QUARTER MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF WEATHER. Mark Twain once remarked that "That's quite right also the celebrated humorist probably did not have in mind that we have a several million dollars worth every year. The Weather Bureau in the Department of Agriculture is a far flung business. It maintains a considerable printing plant where it prints weather maps daily and sends them to 1700 stations. It sends weekly reports to more than 5000 stations. It sends out forecasts by telephone, telegraph and radio. But before it can send out weather data, storm warnings, frost warnings, flood warnings, etc., it must first gather the data. This data it obtains from ships at sea, from foreign countries, from many first-order weather stations with trained personnel, and from thousands of volunteer stations manned by people who receive no pay. On the basis of this data, it makes general forecasts, sends out hurricane and storm warnings, advises shippers and fruit growers on frost, measures rainfall and warns people of possible floods, sends out reports on the effect of weather on crops, sends out forest fire warnings, makes daily surveys in the upper air and sends out frequent reports each day to airports and stations along the 13,000 miles of airways. It is but another of man's scientific efforts to outwit Nature and costs the Federal Government millions annually.
LITTLE BROWN BROTHERS. Back in the days from 1910 to 1915, one of the favorite topics of High School debating societies was phrased like this: Resolved, That the Philippine Islands should be granted their immediate and unconditional independence. That's a quarter of a century ago. In that time, things have been happening. Leader of the proponents for independence in the Islands was one Manuel Luis Quezon. He was born in the islands in 1878, was admitted to the bar in 1903, and shortly thereafter became a major on the staff of the bandit rebel leader Aguinaldo. Later he became prosecuting attorney for one of the larger islands, then provincial governor, then floor leader of the Nationalist Party in the Philippine Assembly. In 1909, he was elected Resident Commissioner from the Philippines to the U.S. Congress and held that office for seven years. It was while serving in Congress here that his native people had a real representative. And he learned as well, the Yankee way of doing things. After seven years in our Congress, he returned to the Philippines and became President of the Philippine Senate and in that position he carried on his propaganda work for independence. To show his astuteness, when Congress passed a bill levying an excise tax of 3¢ per pound on imported Philippine palm and coconut oil as protection for dairy farmers against the increasing use of oleomargarine in which such oils are used, Quezon and other managed to get the amount of the tax related to the Treasury of the Philippine Islands. When the President de-valued the dollar to 59¢, the Philippines had a considerable amount of their gold reserve on deposit in this country. Quezon was irate. He called the Social Security Board. He called the President of the old country. Quezon insisted that devaluation cost his government about 23 million dollars and insisted that the Philippine Treasury should be re-imbusred to that amount. The bill was enacted into law but Congress has thus far refused to appropriate the money so that until now, it remains a mere authorization. But in 1936, Congress enacted the Tydings-McDuffie Bill under which the Philippines shall have their independence in 10 years (1946) Quezon was overjoyed. He had the Philippine Senate ratify the proposal, and then engaged General Douglas MacArthur, former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army (and still drawing pay from this government) to become Commander of the Philippine Army under a plan to build up a conscript army of one million men in the islands. All this is definitely under way. Last week, clever Mr. Quezon came to Washington for a conference with the President and also to be wined and dined and feted by dignataries and notables including Senators and Representatives. Immediately thereafter he left for New York. There he left the cut. out. of the bag - immediate Philippine Independence. To wait until 1946 for the U.S. to remove all restrictions was too long, too slow, and interfered with the stability and economic progress of the islands. He wants independence NOW. And already, speculation is rife as to whether Tokyo has anything to do with Senor Quezon's precipitate actions. But in the islands, they are now alarmed about Senor Quezon's tendencies toward dictatorship. His first act was to push a conscription bill thro the Philippine legislature, making every male person over 21 years of age register and subjecting all males between the ages of 21 and 50 to military service. While subject to such service, they are also subject to court martial for any acts of non-conformity or sedition. This will circumvent civil processes and make Senor Quezon an absolute dictator as soon as full independence is achieved. We know what may happen in the Pacific. Japan is not far away and Quezon is clever.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? On March 12, Congress began debating the so-called McReynolds Neutrality Bill. It comes from the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of which Sam D. McReynolds is the Chairman. To him came this telegram dated March 11th: "feel that McReynolds so-called neutrality bill is actually not a neutrality bill but pre-Pacifist and not in keeping with American traditions. Urge its defeat." The telegram was signed by the Social Security Board Union, made up of government employees in the Social Security Board with a civil service status. Mr. McReynolds was irate. He called the Civil Service Commission. He thundered and roared. He denounced government employees in the shadow of the Capitol who undertook to "denounce legislation in which they are not concerned," and that "everyone of them ought be fired." We pose this question for the especial benefit of Congressman McReynolds of Tennessee: Do you think that a citizen happens to be an employee of the government preclude him from the right to express himself on matters of interest to the whole country, upon matters of legislation, upon question of national policy with which he as a citizen does not agree?