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PRESIDENTIAL CALCULATIONS.

SLOW LEGISLATION AND THE PROBABLE RESULT.

The "Second Choice" the Key of the Situation.

WASHINGTON, April 3, 1884.

In two respects the present year promises to be a political phenomenon. The oldest frequenters of the lobbies of congress never saw legislation in so backward and deplorable a condition, and the prediction is now freely made that for a do-nothing congress this will outstrip all its predecessors. There are about 600 bills favorably acted upon by committees, now on the house calendar, seven or eight special orders, the tariff bill, and the agricultural, Indian, sundry civil, river and harbor, and legislative, executive, executive and judicial appropriation bills untouched. Under the most favorable circumstances it will require until July 1st to pass the tariff and appropriation bills. Fully 350 bills which have passed the senate are now lying on the speaker's table in the house, awaiting reference to committee. These bills are probably the only ones that will ever be enacted. In the scramble of the last hours, they will be dragged out of their resting place and rushed through. So far this session the house has not once taken up the regular calendar, upon which there are over 200 bills. Probably it will never be touched during the present congress. Special orders and the committee of the whole will occupy the time until July.

WORK BEFORE CONGRESS.

With the four months ended day before yesterday, congress passed fifteen bills and resolutions. If four months is required to pass so small a number, how long would it take to pass the 600 now on the files? Something like ten years! Some of the old members say it is a blessing that congress cannot pass the 600 under ten years, for 80 per cent of them are jobs. But they do not state how many really necessary bills die every year and how much money is spent printing and reprinting the measures introduced. Some of these bills originated ten, twenty, thirty years ago. Congressmen have come and gone, but through defeat and death the bills have survived and biennially are introduced, referred, reported and left to perish on the files. All congresses are slow, but this is generally acknowledged to be the slowest for years, if not the slowest that ever met in Washington. At the very greatest, 6 per cent of the business before it cannot be transacted. Some of the members believe this fact will hurt the Democratic party, which being in control of the house, is now held responsible for legislation. If it has any political effect, however, others think it will be beneficial to that party. No legislation is good legislation. Except as the discussions indicate or disclose the inner sentiments of the political parties, nothing but good can come politically from inaction.

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.

Congressional inaction, however, is an infant phenomenon beside the presidential canvass. The whitest-haired statesman occupying a seat in either branch, never saw anything like it. Old Luke Poland, who was retired some years ago in consequence of gag law proclivities, but who has lived down his unpopularity, says he never saw a political contest so unexciting. The national conventions are now about two months off, and yet there is not a candidate for either party in the field. One thing only is settled—Samuel J. Tilden will not run. Of the Republicans, Blaine is still engaged on his history, Edmunds sits in the chair of the senate every day, unconcerned at the fact that the people say he cherishes an ambition, and John Sherman is said to contemplate the coming convention without the slightest interest. Logan is rapidly discovering that it is well for him to hedge before the convention meets and he is reported to be doing so, and President Arthur, who is gathering in a delegation here and there in the south, says if his candidacy should arouse the old factional feeling of 1880, he will withdraw from the fight. This is authoritively stated. Without exception, all these men "refuse to be interviewed."

PROGRESS OF BLAINE'S BOOM.

Whoever the nominee of the Republicans may be he is certain to be chosen by the people Blaine will, on the first ballot, so the best politicians here say, have Maine, New Hampshire, part of New York, three-quarters of Pennsylvania, portions of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Kansas, and all of California, Oregon and Nevada. This vote will not be sufficient to nominate him. If John Sherman is a candidate Ohio will cast its vote for him, but Blaine, if what Ohio men here say is true, will be the unanimous second choice. Vermont and Massachusetts will vote for Edmunds, Connecticut for Hawley, Illinois for Logan and Indiana for Harrison or Gresham. President Arthur, if kept in the field after being found without the delegation from his own state, will receive scattering votes from several delegations, but will have none solid, except from the south.

It will be seen from this statement that Blaine is likely to lead in the convention. The result of that will be as always, the other candidates, combining against the favorite, will control the organization, adopt the rules and decide the order of business, upon which a great deal often depends. The key to the situation therefore is in the second choice of states which have "favorite sons." If Indiana and Ohio have Blaine for second choice, his nomination is almost certain. If Blaine is nominated, Secretary Lincoln will be the vice-president.

A CURRENT CALCULATION.

Accounts from Pennsylvania show that Blaine will have but five or six of the district delegates from that state. It is admitted that of the seventy from New York he will have at least forty. The convention will consist of 820 delegates, all of whom will be elected by the people of congressional delegates except four for each state at large and two for the territories. Those who are figuring on the near and remote effects of the Blaine boom make a calculation something like this:

Maine	12	Iowa	23
Pennsylvania	57	Kansas	18
New York	40	Nebraska	0
Ohio (21 choice)	46	Colorado	6
Indiana "	30	Pacific coast	23
Michigan "	26	Wisconsin	22
Illinois "	44		
Total			361

This is 51 votes less than will nominate, but by the time Blaine reaches the total indicated it is calculated nothing will then prevent a stampede to him. "James is very close to the people," said one of his congressional friends to me the other day, "when we get into convention we rely a good deal on that to pull us through. He isn't like Edmunds, Logan and some of the others, who hold their heads so high they never see anybody, but believes in following Abraham Lincoln's advice to Uncle Dick Oglesby. 'Uncle Dick,' said the great president, 'keep close to the people; they're always right.' Edmunds, Logan, Arthur and some of those other fellows don't believe in keeping close to the people. In fact, they believe in keeping as far away from them as possible—probably because they fear being contaminated.

KEEPING CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE.

"I recollect," continued the congressman, in replying to a suggestion that probably Edmunds' remoteness from the people would not impair his usefulness in the white house, "some years ago voting on a bill in the house which permitted only fifteen passengers from China to land in San Francisco, and afterward voting for a ten year restriction bill. I recollect at that time hearing of a vote taken some years before in California upon restricting Chinese immigration, where out of 129,000 people only about 800 voted for the Chinaman, and I recollect hearing a great deal about the unanimity of your people there. We all acknowledged that Chinese exclusion would not hurt us, and I voted for all your bills on the ground that California knew what she wanted, and as her desires infringed on nobody else's, she ought to have them gratified. I believe that sentiment actually passed those bills. But, when confronted with 153,000 votes to 800, what did Edmunds, Logan, John Sherman and some of these other presidential candidates say? 'Why,' says Mr. Edmunds, 'the Californians are mistaken; they don't know what they want. I know better what is good for them. To be sure we have no Chinamen in Vermont and do not want any, but I am a great statesman and I never let the people have what they want if I can help it.' This is practically what he said, and he, with Logan, Sherman, Hoar and some of the others who yearn to get into the white house, voted against the bills. What did Jim Blaine say? 'Why,' says James, 'these people want this thing; it ain't going to hurt us, and let us pass the bill.' You see, he wanted to let the people have their way. He keeps close to the people, because they're always right, and with the New York and Pennsylvania machines out of the way, the people are going to nominate him at Chicago."

RANDALL AND THE FREE TRADERS.

From all that can be learned in Washington it is reasonably certain that Samuel J. Randall has been made the legatee of Tilden. Randall has already carried over half the Pennsylvania delegates to the national democratic convention, and the politicians of his own party in congress believe he will have more than half of the New York delegation. It appears that Henry B. Payne and Tilden himself are out of the contest. No one here doubts that both are sincere in declining presidential honors. Randall, therefore naturally succeeds to the protectionist robe; but he can never be nominated. No one is sanguine enough to even hazard an opinion that he can. The western tariff reformers, mad as they are over the defeat of the whisky bill, and madder as they probably will be over the impending tariff defeat, both of which they lay directly at Randall's door, will go into the convention with clubs to defeat him. It is probably impossible to heal the factional wounds already made in congress over the tariff. Years will be required in the absence of great and absorbing issues to reconcile the men who now quarrel over that question, because it is one that affects all their political pockets. Democrats in both houses are rapidly losing heart, and in the house especially, members of that party are inclined to give up the fight in advance.

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