

Secretary Taft and The Panama Problems

There is no doubt that a few months ago the principal men in the Panama government, together with the leading merchants of the little Republic, were basing all their hopes for a betterment of conditions on the Isthmus on a change of administration at Washington.

In the short year of its existence as a nominally independent republic Panama has undergone various experiences, arising principally from its complex relations with the United States, that have somewhat dampened the first ardor of the Isthmians for self-government. The commerce of Panama has fallen off and the expected revenues of the Republic have been curtailed—all owing, the Panamanians assert, to an extreme interpretation of the Hay-Varela treaty by the agents of the Roosevelt administration on the Isthmus that if continued would threaten their national existence.

The natives complained that they were being treated to an unmerciful quantity of the "big stick," which, they feared, would be increased in severity should President Roosevelt be re-elected. This fear, however, has undergone a decided modification since election day through the expressed desire of the President to establish a better condition of affairs between the native and American governments on the Isthmus, a change to be brought about by an interpretation of the Panama treaty that will be more liberal to the Panama Republic.

The sending of Secretary Taft to the Isthmus on this mission has awakened the hopes of the Panamanians, and there are indications that the existing friction between the governments will gradually disappear under the more conciliatory policy that will probably result from the Secretary's investigations.

Compared with his Philippine mission Secretary Taft will probably find the regulation of Panama affairs anything but an easy problem. In the Philippines there is only one supreme power—that of the United States.

On the Isthmus, however, there is the native government, ever jealous of its rights as an independent republic, and there is the canal zone, running through the heart of the latter and falling under the jurisdiction of the Canal Commission, with certain ill-defined treaty provisions that some Panamanians construe as giving them, in a shadowy sense, a claim to this portion of Isthmian territory.

Ever since the incident of the steamer *Levi* in July, the government of the canal zone has maintained the right to receive and dispatch foreign vessels from the port of Ancon without the intervention of the Panama authorities. In the same month, also, by the President's order to General Davis, the latter was empowered to establish a tariff on imports at the ports of Ancon and Cristobal, the tariff to be the same as that in force in the United States.

Great was the dismay of the Panama merchants at these proposed changes, Panama and Colon would be ruined, they said, and the foreign commerce of the republic would be completely wiped out. A three-cornered diplomatic controversy was entered into by the Panama government, Minister Barrett and Governor Davis, resulting finally in a modus vivendi pending the complete settlement of the treaty questions at issue between the two governments.

Up to now the fear that the American tariff will be applied to the zone and that the claims of the Panama government in the matter will fail of recognition has operated disastrously in the commerce of the Isthmus. Merchants are complaining bitterly of the uncertainty under which they are compelled to do business and agents from foreign countries find it impossible to get orders for their goods. General Davis, in the diplomatic correspondence with Secretary of State A. S. A. in the subject, cites the cases of Switzerland and Canada and the Baltic ports of Russia in winter as evidence that a country can prosper without a foreign commerce. But these historical arguments have failed so far to quiet the alarm of either the merchants or the government of Panama, or to reconcile them to what appears to be their fate, and the solution of the problem appears to be reserved for Secretary Taft.

Another question just now assuming disagreeable proportions in the Isthmian mind is that relating to the postal service. When Ancon and Cristobal were made American customs ports the postal service of the United States was extended over them. That means that all correspondence between the United States and the canal zone is carried at the domestic rates of the former through American postoffices at Ancon and Cristobal.

The Panama and Colon postoffices, on the other hand, have the usual foreign rate of five cents a half ounce for first class matter, etc. As the Ancon and Cristobal postoffices are within easy reach, citizens of Panama and Colon are using the American postoffice. To such an extent is this being done that the Panama government, instead of deriving a revenue from its postal service, is facing the alternative of running the latter at a loss or of abandoning it altogether.

So far registered mail is not entered in the American postoffices on the canal zone, and American officials on the Isthmus say that provision for this will soon be made, and when it is the Panama postoffice will lose its last opportunity for being remunerative. As there is nothing in the treaty that can be construed as opposing the establishment of these American postoffices, the Panama government can make no protest in the matter. The Ancon and Cristobal postoffices are run for the benefit of those living in the zone, but it is natural that the Panamanians should use them in preference to their own, and their government cannot prevent them from doing so.

Another matter of friction in which the Philippine experience of Secretary Taft may stand him in good stead has to do with the affairs of the Church in the canal zone. A high Church dignity in Panama declares that the Church in

the zone has not received full justice at the hands of American officials.

The particular grievance is in regard to the Hospital del Cerro, or Hospital de la Compania Canal, as it is otherwise known, in Ancon.

Under the arrangement existing before the American occupation of the zone, this hospital, similarly with all others on the Isthmus, was in the care of Sisters of Charity. With the change in government, however, these Sisters of Charity were replaced by Protestant nurses, the former being either relieved of duty altogether or retained in subordinate positions. The same authority declares also that the chapel connected with the hospital, that has heretofore been under the supervision of the Catholic church, has been transferred to the Protestant worship. To this end the altars and other accessories of the Catholic ritual have been removed and the places taken by articles used in the Protestant service.

It is also feared by this same prolate that later the zone government, under plea of its treaty obligation to assume control of the sanitary regulations of the city of Panama, will remove the hospitals and other charity institutions now in the latter city to the canal zone. If this is done it is believed these institutions will meet the same treatment as that accorded the Hospital del Cerro, and Protestant churches that are now connected with them being replaced by Protestant nurses and ministers and the Catholic form of worship suspended.

Officials in the canal zone declare that the nurses employed in the Hospital del Cerro are selected without regard to their religious faith, their skill and professional training, in which, it is asserted, they are superior to the Sisters of Charity, being the only considerations upon which they are chosen. It is also stated that where there are Catholic inmates of the hospital they are at liberty to enjoy the ministrations of their own Church, but that with the present preponderance of Protestant patients a Protestant form of worship is more available. The official supremacy of the Catholic church under the Colombian government on the Isthmus until recently has naturally given rise to some feeling in the matter that will probably continue for a time.

In regard to the administration of justice in the canal zone there has been considerable comment and dissatisfaction. By authority of the Canal Commission, three circuit and five police courts have been instituted in the zone, Judge Kyle, of Alabama, being appointed justice of the Supreme Court. According to lawyers admitted to plead before these courts, there had been no laws governing trial cases published up to that time, also, there had been no trials by jury, although eight sentences had been given in as many criminal cases. Of this situation, brought to the attention of the public through a particular case, the leading newspaper of the Isthmus published this:

Residents of the Isthmus are most interested to know under what constitution the Isthmian Canal zone is governed. That of the United States guarantees the right of jury trial. So did the Colombian Code, and so do the laws of Panama. Then why has this right and privilege been withheld, or, rather, dispensed with, in the case of Anibal Brons, the young Costa Rican who was employed as a town clerk and tax collector by the municipality of Ancon and also was recently found short in his accounts? If a Colombian or Panama judge of the first instance had acted as jury as well as magistrate—found a true bill against an American, tried and condemned him—the Washington authorities would have been the first to criticize such a "high handed" measure and protest against it, and such censure would have been justly merited.

Here's work for our diplomatic friends of San Jose de Costa Rica. How about those inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness guaranteed to every American under the federal Magna Charta? As the canal zone administration claims that the zone is under the American flag the constitution of the United States must then prevail and fair play ought to be expected.

The principal case now on trial before the zone court is one involving the right of the zone government to make regulations in anything beyond such matters as relate to the building of the canal, sanitation and the policing of the canal zone. The jurisdiction on the Isthmus of the United States, it is held by Panama lawyers, is confined solely to the subjects. The zone government, however, has issued a decree against the sale of the Panama Lottery tickets in the zone, and in pursuance of this decree an agent of the Panama Lottery who was found selling tickets in the forbidden territory has been arrested.

The case is important to the Panama government because the Panama Lottery holds a concession granted under the former Colombian government by which the lottery could do business in the entire territory comprised under the old Department of Panama. If this concession is broken now the Panama government would be held liable for damages by the lottery company, the former having assumed all the obligations of the Department of Panama. It is estimated also that if this concession is withdrawn there would be a loss to the Panama government of \$172,000 annual revenue.

Work of the Canal Commission has so far been confined principally to the sanitation of the Isthmus. The result in this direction is highly gratifying, and will have an influence not only on the Isthmus itself, in the control and extermination of contagious diseases, but in the neighboring South and Central American ports. The latter, owing to the rigid quarantine regulations in Panama and Colon, are being compelled to exercise greater care in their own sanitary affairs, with the result that the entire region is enjoying a degree of health not known to it for years.

The Isthmus has always labored under the stigma of being one of the principal breeding places for fever in the tropics. Whether or not this accusation is just the long list of deadly epidemics that have prevailed there in the past has made it a place to be feared, and to wipe out the cause for this unsavory reputation will be a work that should make Panama and its neighbors grateful for the presence of United States authority.

Besides what has already been done the Sanitary Commission has planned a most extensive campaign against epidemic disease. It is proposed to raise the entire city of Colon and to place sewer connections in all the houses of Panama—a work that will undoubtedly bear radically good results quite commensurate with the time and cost that it will entail.

Of even greater scope and of more lasting benefit will be the extermination of the mosquito on the Isthmus. War to the death has been declared against these pests by the American "mosquito experts" now assembling in the field of battle which is successful in the fight Panama may yet enjoy the distinction of being the health resort that some of its old inhabitants lay claim to. As the death of the mosquito means the draining of the immense marsh lands that extend from ocean to ocean along the line of the canal it is probable that the latter will be well under way before this blight of the tropics admits defeat.

As the entire Panama problem is for the United States in a preliminary stage the actual work of digging the canal can hardly be said to have commenced in serious earnest. The undertaking, however, will be greatly accelerated by the present mission of Secretary Taft, and with the settlement by him of the differences existing between the Panama Republic and the United States there is very reason to expect an era of prosperous activity on the Isthmus in the near future.—New York Herald.

CONGRESS TO BEGIN WORK

WILL GRIND AWAY AFTER HIGH NOON ON MONDAY NEXT.

MATTERS THAT WILL COME UP

Many Bills Will Have to Wait for Next Session of That Body, as the Calendar is Crowded.

The Deliberations Will Be Marked by More Omissions than Actual Things Done, Partly Owing to the Brevity of Time at Command of Members.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2. — On the stroke of 12 Monday, the second session of the 58th Congress will be called to order by President Pro Tem Frye in the Senate and by Speaker Cannon in the House. When the gavel of the presiding officers summon the Senators and Representatives to duty nearly every member will be in his seat, but only routine business will be transacted. The President's message generally is received and read the first day, but the Senate is almost sure to adjourn as a tribute of respect to the late Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts and the late Senator Quay, of Pennsylvania. The message, therefore, will probably not be read until Tuesday.

After the opening day, the regular business of the session will begin and the legislative wheels will grind steadily, until March 4, 1905. The calendars of both Houses are loaded with bills of all kinds; hundreds of new bills will be introduced and committees are ready to report enough to keep Congress busy for twelve months, but in the three months Congress probably will do little more than pass the regular annual appropriation bills. The probabilities, according to the leaders who are here, are that there will be neither tariff legislation nor an extra session. Coupled with tariff legislation discussion is the subject of reciprocity. A number of proposed reciprocity treaties have been and still are reposing in the pigeon holes of the Senate. During the coming three months there may be some talk about these treaties, but the indications are they will not be seriously considered. The unfinished business in the Senate is a bill passed by the House providing for the construction of railroads

in the Philippine Islands by a guarantee of 5 per cent income upon the money invested in such roads. The bill also provides for issuing Philippine bonds for other internal improvements in the Islands and in several other particulars amends the Philippine laws passed by Congress. The bill met with a great deal of opposition during the last Congress, but Senator Lodge, who has it in charge, says he will press it from the beginning of the session, and hopes to secure its passage. The principal opposition was to the provision which guaranteed an income to the railroads, and little objection was made to other features of the bill. Another bill for the Philippines, which has been urged by Secretary Taft and the President, as well as nearly every one interested in the Philippines, provides for a material reduction of the duty on sugar and tobacco as well as other Philippine products.

Another measure which received the sanction of the House last session, but which has never been pushed in the Senate is the Statehood measure which provides for two states, doubling up the territories of Oklahoma and Indian Territory as one and Arizona and New Mexico as another. This bill, like any other which may encounter opposition in the Senate, could be easily defeated, and advocates of a separate statehood for all the territories are likely to pursue that course.

It is somewhat doubtful if a vote will be reached in the Senate in the case of Reed Smoot, of Utah. A score or more of witnesses are yet to be examined, and the defense has not even begun, so that it is evident that before a report is made to the Senate, the session will be so far spent that no serious attempt will be made to reach a vote upon Senator Smoot's title.

The last session passed a bill providing for a commission composed of five Senators and five Representatives to investigate and report a measure for restoring the merchant marine of the United States. The commission was instructed to report on the first day of the coming session, and it is expected that this will be done. There has been a great deal of anxiety manifested by men of both political parties to secure legislation of this character and if any measure can be agreed upon which will receive the support of both parties it will no doubt be speedily passed.

Some doubt exists among the members of both Houses as to whether additional Chinese exclusion legislation is necessary. It has been held that the law would expire this month, as it was founded upon a treaty which also expired. A new treaty is being negotiated and an exclusion law to meet its terms may be necessary. The people of the Pacific coast have been insisting upon more rigid exclusion than that known as the Platt law, and if the question is brought up there will be quite a lengthy debate.

Three years ago, when Congress assembled a flood of bills were presented for the protection of the President and those in line of succession. On the Senate calendar is a notice given by Senator Hoar last April, that on Tuesday, December 6, he would ask the Senate to take up and consider a bill for protection of the President.

Currency legislation will be talked about but it probably will not be enacted. Reduced representation in Southern states which have by one form or another disfranchised negroes will be a theme for discussion, but not action, during the winter. The trusts will receive attention, at least in debate, although some doubt is expressed about any effective legislation being passed.

Interstate Commerce legislation in some form or another is always pending in Congress and there may be an effort to enlarge the powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission, so as to allow it to fix rates. A bill which has agitated Congress for a number of years providing for eight hours work only, on all Government contracts, no doubt will be reported from the Senate Committee on Labor.

Senator Heyburn, of Idaho, has given notice that he will call up the pure food bill during the first week of the session. A measure which created a great deal of interest in the last session and which no doubt will cause considerable discussion if it comes up again, is a bill providing for several large camp sites in different sections of the country, for the use of the regular army and militia for drill purposes. Irrigation has become a permanent legislative topic.

It is the intention to pass a river and harbor bill at this session and the men having it in charge will make every effort to have it presented early. A number of bills for Alaska have come over from last session. It is not yet known whether farther will be any legislation relating to the Panama Canal, although it may be necessary when Secretary Taft makes a report of his personal investigation of conditions in the canal zone.

As usual, the regular appropriation bills will contain legislation that cannot get a hearing in any other way. Among other bills of public interest pending in the Senate or the House are the following: Providing for the transportation of naval and other stores in American ships; for the protection of forest reserves; for the payment of \$200,000 to ex-Queen Liluokalani; to make liquor transported by interstate traffic subject to the laws of the state where it is sold.

One day during the morning session will be devoted to counting the electoral vote cast for the President and Vice President. Knights of King Arthur. A boys' club known as the Knights of King Arthur was organized at the Congressional church last evening. The following are the officers: Meritt, Rev. W. C. Kaniser; King, P. S. Kaniser; Kay, Elmer Bashor; Seestine, Ralph Dindinger; Constable, Fred Lamport; Chamberlains, Harry Wilson, Leonard Hendricks, Herschel Van, Lee, Mevill Lamport, Paul Hendricks, Gen. Slater, Otto Frye; Cancellors, Will Krebs, Daniel Fry, Jr., and Fred Fisher.

Imported sets of Indians mounted on horses and standing six or eight inches high and costing from \$4 to \$5 per box of six, show such a close study of costumes and accoutrements as would doubtless win the approval of the ethnological experts. This care to get things accurate enough to please the most exacting child runs through the lettering on warships, trains, games and all else. But the ocean freight on toys amounts to \$150 per case of a cubic yard, and already England is importing more toys than the United States.

Stateman Classified Ads Bring Quick Results.

There was a young woman of Lima, Who said "I can kick pretty high, ma, 'Way over my head Is my record," she said; "But I don't do it when any one's by, ma." —Exchange.

FUNERAL PLEASURES. Misses Maud and Minnie Thompson, Lillian Wilson and Katy Rummel, accompanied by Harry Thompson, "Sam" Couch and Floyd Thompson, attended a funeral in Buchanan Sunday, and got plenty of grapes and chestnuts and a good old dinner, and reported just a um time. We bet they will go again. —Lebanon (Va.) News.

THE POLITICAL MACHINE. A machine gets along well enough so long as it satisfies its own voters and doesn't stir the bile of the real masters of elections, the independent voters. Its ability to "bring out the vote" is most strikingly manifested when it makes some foolish or improper nomination or adopts a fool platform. Then the public arises and smashes it.—New York Sun.

BEWARE BOY. "Beware," advised the winsome miss, "You know there's danger in a kiss. Remember Anthony, the brave, Was made by Cleopatra slave." "I know," then quoth the wooing youth, "Th' re's danger in a kiss, forsooth. But courage, dear, I do not lack." Then both laughed in a little smack. —Indianapolis Star.

Legal Blank, Statesman Job Office.

THE W. H. BURGHARDT CO.

BOOK SELLERS AND STATIONERS AND DEALERS IN PICTURES AND ART GOODS

A few holiday reminders, giving a few suggestions of what we have in stock. Books of all descriptions, for young or old, rich or poor. Gift books, in holiday dress, including: "Love Lyrics," "Love Finds the Way," "Wanted, A Matchmaker," "This is for You," "Her Infinite Vanity." All the late copyright books, books of travel and books of nature.

PICTURES This is one of our strong suits, of which we are proud. Come in and look at our little picture room.

FOUNTAIN PENS We carry ONLY the IDEAL. Nuff said.

BRASS GOODS This year, besides our line of Brass Candlesticks, we have a line of Steins and Placques.

LEATHER GOODS All kinds of bags, music rolls and card cases. All priced right, and guaranteed.

263 COMMERCIAL STREET

Don't Read This Ad

If you want something for n thing But if you are looking for

Bargains in Clothing

and

Furnishing Goods

for the Holidays, get prices at

E. KOPPE'S

Bargain Store, Y. M. C. A. Building.

NEW SHIPMENT

Of collar and cuff boxes, necktie and veil boxes, picture frames in box wood, burnt wood postal cards.

A Choice Lot

Of Dolls in Blaque, China and Cloth. Cloth Animals.

See Our Assortment

Of China and Toys before making your selection.

The Variety Store

92-94 Court St.

TO THE OLD HOME

If you are going home—to your childhood's home—this year, remember that the NORTHERN PACIFIC leads to everybody's home.

You can go by way of St. Paul to Chicago, or St. Louis, and thence reach the entire East and South. Or, you can go to Duluth, and from there use either the rail lines, or one of the superb Lake Steamers down the lakes to Detroit, Cleveland, Erie, and Buffalo—the Pan-American City.

Start right and you will probably arrive at your destination all right, and to start right, use the Northern Pacific, and preferably the "NORTH COAST LIMITED" train, in service after MAY 5th.

Any local agent will name rates.

A. D. CHARLTON Assistant General Passenger Agent, PORTLAND, OREGON.

Subscribe for the Statesman