



Trouble between the United States and the little Central American state of Venezuela is possible as the result of a quarrel between rival asphalt companies, who have conflicting claims to the great Bermudez asphalt lake located on the shores of the Orinoco river. Both of the asphalt concerns are United States corporations, one of them being the National Asphalt company, commonly known as the asphalt trust. It is even charged that the trust has had a hand in encouraging the rebellion in Venezuela which is now in progress. The leader of the rebellion is Celestino Peraza, who until recently was the secretary of the present president of the republic, General Castro. General Castro himself came into power as the result of a successful rebellion which resulted in the overthrow of the government headed by President Andrade. Since Castro took control of the government in the latter part of 1899 he has successfully suppressed at least two rebellions, so that he knows what he has to deal with.

#### Leader of the Trouble.

Celestino Peraza, the leader of the present rebellion, began his outbreak in the country along the Orinoco river in the last days of December, 1900. A force of 2,500 men was immediately sent against him by President Castro, and several small engagements have taken place between the rival forces. Now it appears the rebels are running low on powder and munitions of war in general. As a result they are said to be about to seize the arms and other property belonging to the New York and Bermudez Asphalt company at the Bermudez pitch lake, while the regular government, under President Castro, has seized a couple of steamers belonging to a steamboat company owned in the United States. In order to protect the property of citizens of this country from being confiscated in this way the United States warship Scorpion has been ordered to leave the harbor of La Guayra and run up the Orinoco river, and it is reported that the government at Washington stands ready to send the north Atlantic squadron with a force of marines down from Pensacola, Fla., to Venezuela if the situation does not improve.

**Venezuela's Chief Seaport.**  
La Guayra is the chief seaport of Venezuela and the gateway to Caracas, the capital of the republic. At La Guayra the mountains overhanging the water, rising to a height of 8,000 feet. They are visible at sea seventy miles away. Caracas is distant only ten miles, but it is reached by one of the most tortuous pieces of railroad building in the world. The journey by rail from the seaport to the capital covers a distance of seventy miles. The climate of Caracas is mild and pleasant, which explains why large cities of tropical America are usually situated some distance from the coast. Caracas is 3,000 feet above the sea level, and the temperature averages 71 degrees above zero all the year round.

**Looks Like Absurd Prospect.**  
Some idea of the absurdity of a serious war between the United States and

Venezuela may be gathered from the statement that the Central American country, which has an area five times as large as that of the state of Michigan, has a total population of only 2,320,000, somewhat less than that of Michigan, of which number nearly one-fourth are uncivilized Indians. The regular army of Venezuela consists of 3,600 men, with a militia which in time of civil war has put as many as 60,000 men into the field. So far as a navy is concerned, Venezuela has only three small steamers and two sailing vessels, with three or four small river gunboats. Furthermore, it has been only four years since the United States intervened on behalf of Venezuela in its dispute over the question of boundary with Great Britain and secured the appointment of an arbitration commission, by the decision of which several hundred square miles of valuable territory, including some rich gold mines and the country to the south of the mouth of the Orinoco river, were saved to the smaller state.

#### The Bone of Contention.

The asphalt lake, for the possession of which the rival American companies are fighting, lies between a range of mountains and the shore of one of the outlets of the northern delta of the Orinoco river, near the bay of Paria. The lake is a mile and a half in length by a mile in width and comprises more than 1,000 acres of swampy land. Most of the surface of the so-called lake is covered with a rank growth of grasses and shrubs rising to a height of eight or ten feet and interspersed with tall palm trees. The pitch or asphaltum does not lie in an unbroken surface, as on the Trinidad lakes, but bubbles up, as if from springs. The pitch, however, underlies most of the surface included in the lake and has a depth varying from two to ten feet. In the center of the lake is a patch of about seven acres which is free from vegetation and in which the pitch is so soft that it cannot be walked on. The whole surface of the lake is so low that during the spring floods it is entirely covered by water. The pitch is dug out of the lake by native labor and carted to a convenient place near a seaport, where it is refined. The raw asphalt is put into huge kettles and slowly heated from above until the whole mass is brought to a liquid condition. The process of heating drives off the water and gas with which the raw



A VENEZUELAN MAN-OF-WAR.

pitch is filled, while the heavy impurities sink to the bottom of the kettle. The pure asphaltum can then be poured off.

Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Fitzgerald of Danville, Va., have deeded their place on the north bank of the Dan river, worth \$20,000, to the Danville Orphanage as a permanent home.

The late Chief Justice Faircloth of North Carolina bequeathed \$20,000 to the Baptist Female University of Raleigh.



A VIEW OF THE HARBOR OF LA GUAYRA.

## Asphalt in History.

Asphalt has been known from pre-historic times. Some forms of it were used as building material in ancient Babylon, and others were used in the preparation of mummies. During the middle ages it dropped almost from sight. In 1712 a Swiss physician discovered large beds of it in the Alps and succeeded in reviving the use of it as building material. It is said that the value of asphalt for paving purposes was discovered by accident

while the crude asphalt was being hauled from the deposits where it was dug. Pieces of the asphalt dropped from the carts and were gradually ground into the roadbed by the feet of the men and horses. It was noticed that such roads soon presented a hard and resisting surface, and the idea of using asphalt on other roads was developed. It was not largely used, however, until 1832, and within the last 25 years it has made its greatest progress

## THE FREE-TRADERS.

THEY DIE HARD—THEIR LATEST EFFORT TO LIVE.

Beaten on Land, They Turn Their Guns on Protection on the Sea—Would Drive American Commerce from the Oceans.

The prosperity which has built up the industries of the United States during the past few years, or to be exact, since the Dingley Free Trade friends without a leg to stand on. It was largely due to the operations of this law, which has kept our mills running and our wage earners employed at greater wages than were ever before known in the history of the country, that secured for the party of protection the splendid endorsement which it received at the recent presidential election.

#### Free Trader Dies Hard.

But the Free Trader dies hard. The house has fallen upon him, but there is still a little life in his quivering form. He is certain—at least he claims to be certain—that Free Trade is all that the shipping industry needs to make it immensely prosperous and place it away ahead of the same industry in any other country. They forget that they made the same claims for every other industry, with the additional claims that Protection such as it could get under the Dingley bill or any similar bill would be the death of it. Every intelligent reader knows what has happened to our industries and to the general business of the country during the past four years, and any reiteration of the facts would be a waste of time.

#### Against American Ships.

As we have said, however, the Free Trader dies hard. Literally, he refuses to give up the ship. Driven from every other post, which he formerly held with so much confidence, we now find him standing on the deck of the American ship and declaring with the same old confidence that nothing but Free Trade will save her. A single ounce of Protection, he argues, will send her to the bottom. If the serious minded Free Trader were not a menace to the prosperity of the whole people, including himself, he would be a comical figure in this busy world. He flies in the face of facts as Don Quixote flew into the destroying arms of the windmill.

#### Free Trader Cannot Reason.

It seems a fruitless task to reason with these marine Free Traders, and yet we would like to inquire what explanation they have for the prosperity of our coastwise ships, under a virtual policy of Protection, if the opposite policy of Free Trade is the only thing that will save and make prosperous the ships in the overseas trade? Likewise we would be glad to know if it is their wise and unerring judgment that the opening up of our coast trade to foreign ships will be a particularly good thing for the American ships now engaged in this trade. That would be a Trade theory applied to shipping.

#### Some of Their Terms.

Two or three of these marine Free Traders, in the warmth of their argumentation, or fermentation, refer to the Shipping bill as a "steal," a "gigantic raid on the treasury," etc. These are unpleasant and unbecoming terms to apply to a policy of legislation which, if it is adopted, will affect favorably every prominent industry which goes to make up the wealth of the country. There is a very truthful axiom that "all industries are united in shipping." To be explicit, as many as three hundred different articles of manufacture go into the building and fitting of a ship. About 80 per cent of the cost of the ship is paid to the labor that built her. In the light of these facts will our Free Trade friends have the hardihood to contend that any governmental aid extended to promote the building and operation of ships—the upbuilding of the American mercantile marine—will not benefit the whole people?—New York Marine Journal.

#### REPUBLICAN "OPPRESSION"

No one can have forgotten the sorrows of the Porto Ricans or the alleged iniquities of the Porto Rico tariff of which we heard so much a few weeks ago. It was provided in the bill that the 15 per cent of Dingley tariff rates levied should be abolished as soon as the legislature of Porto Rico should provide other means of raising revenue. That body is now in session and there is a strong protest in it to any change. The representatives of the Porto Ricans say that no other method of taxation would furnish the funds for the island's needs with so little hardship to the people, and they are inclined to let the tariff alone. So perishes another instance of Republican "oppression."—Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

#### PARALLEL DOCTRINE.

The doctrine of protective tariff and the doctrine of the ship subsidy are parallels. He who has accepted the former as worthy of enactment into national law and sustained it as a builder up of home manufacture can find no inconsistency with his views in the subsidy bill. The idea of it is wholly protective, as the McKinley and Dingley laws were and are protective, notwithstanding the anti-craft yelping of the "robber baron" chorus. It is very plain that American ships sailing under the Stars and Stripes, paying the high American scale of wages, are in a hole when competing with the rest of the world, and the ship subsidy is but

the national helping hand to lift them out of that hole. Now, then, the fellow who sees nothing in it but a graft for a few who have the "pull" can never be expected to see any good in any bill of the kind, and as the arguments for and against the protective tariff are passed, it will be worse than a twice told tale to rehash them in defense of the ship subsidy bill. Capital has been induced to enter the fields of manufacture and remain there till in many cases able to stand and walk without support or protection. Now the purpose of the subsidy bill is to show capital the business sense in entering the sea and competing with the rest of the world, whose immense handicap is to be nullified to a degree by the ship subsidy.—Dayton (O.) Journal.

#### FRANCHISE FOR NEGROES.

The existing qualifications for suffrage in Georgia are one year's residence in the state and six months in the county and proof of payment of all taxes lawfully assessed since 1877. The last requirement has the effect of excluding thousands of colored voters in Georgia by a method which is not repugnant to any federal laws, but it is from some points of view unsatisfactory to the white electors for the reason that it practically disfranchises a considerable number of impetuous white inhabitant citizens. At the close of the civil war a registration of all the electors of Georgia was authorized, and it showed the number of colored citizens at that period to be 95,000 and white citizens 56,300. Since then by the removal of disabilities resting on white voters their number has been largely increased, and in the presidential election of 1892 the total number of voters was 200,000, the actual number of male citizens of voting age at that period being about 350,000, of whom 200,000 were white and 150,000 colored. The practical effect of the tax provision of the Georgia election law is to exclude 150,000 citizens from the franchise, of whom considerably more than two-thirds are colored. Although this provision has assured white supremacy, it is unsatisfactory to many of the indigent white voters, who find that in such neighboring states as Mississippi and South Carolina, no such discrimination has been found necessary. When the legislature met in October last Gov. Canfield submitted in his message the following recommendation on the subject of elective franchise: "In the interest of good government and in the interest of the negro race I recommend that an amendment to the constitution be submitted to the people, providing for a qualified suffrage basis on an educational or a property qualification or both. A man who has by integrity and frugality acquired a little home and is a taxpayer has been allowed to vote, whether he can read and write or not; but he who has for the last thirty years had the opportunity of free schools and cannot read and write and who has had an equal chance for the acquisition of property and yet has through indolence or profligacy or vice failed to become a taxpayer, contributing something to the support of his state, should have no voice in making its laws." The Georgia method of restricting the suffrage is regardless of the grandfather clause, under which other southern states have been able to exclude illiterate black voters, while permitting illiterate white voters to exercise all their political rights, provided their fathers were qualified to vote in 1867 or earlier. The present provision as to suffrage in Georgia is a part of the statute law of that state, and the constitutional amendment which is proposed has, primarily, for its purpose to make this discrimination against the colored voters of the state permanent.—New York Sun.

**GOOD SIGN FOR THE SOUTH.**  
There are a good many indications that there is a strong undercurrent of sentiment in the south in favor of governmental aid for the American ship. This will, no doubt, be brought out very strongly at the National Maritime congress soon to be held in Georgia. In the meantime such messages as this from the south show which way the wind blows:  
The Southern Industrial Convention passed the following resolution and directed it be sent to be read to the United States senate: "Be it resolved, That the upbuilding of our American merchant marine is very important to the further development of southern industry, and therefore we recommend to our national congress the early passage of a ship subsidy bill for all American vessels which shall be equitably based upon the tonnage actually carried, besides compensation for carrying the mails."  
Our esteemed southern exchanges do not lead public opinion, but like newspapers of other sections, try to follow it closely. A few resolutions like the above will do much in the way of shedding the proper light along the pathway of southern journalism. We respectfully recommend to industrial and commercial bodies to hold aloft this beacon whenever possible, in order that our valued contemporaries may have a light unto their feet.—New York Marine Journal.

"What is the administration's Philippine policy, anyhow?"—Charlotte Daily Observer.  
It is not the Bryanite anyhow policy, but the policy of protecting the Filipinos from Aguinaldo's brigand Tagals, who would sack cities and villages, murder peaceable citizens and rob defenseless inhabitants. And as sure as you are born McKinley will yet free the Filipinos from their own ruthless land pirates.

At their meeting last Monday the presidential electors of Nebraska cast their votes for William McKinley for president and for Theodore Roosevelt for vice president.

The competition for the post of messenger to carry the vote to Washington enlisted almost as many candidates as the senatorial contest. The messenger would have the honor of delivering the returns that reflect the most significant victory of the whole presidential campaign.

Abandoned Farms Taken Up.  
The "abandoned" farms of Massachusetts are fast being taken up. Three years ago there were 330 thus classed in the state. A recent enumeration shows there are now but 135.

## State Capital Observations.

Expressions Emulative for the Good of Republican Supremacy.

LINCOLN, Jan. 21.

Well, the first week of the big battle for the two United States senatorships has passed and still victory resteth not with any of the aspirants, more's the pity.

Unless appearances are deceptive and everybody is misled the situation has settled down to a deadlock that may last possible all winter.

Repeated attempts have been made to secure a caucus, but for some reason each attempt has failed.

One of the surprises of the balloting has been the strength exhibited by Senator Currie of Custer county, who polled eighteen votes on the first joint ballot, 20 on the second and 22 on the third. From this it is evident that Mr. Currie will be a very important factor in the fight.

Up to date there is little change in the voting, but rumors are rife of an outbreak among the supporters of some of the candidates. The expected explosion may come at any time. Its anticipation is sufficient to attract a large crowd daily.

As the senatorial struggle hangs on and the strife daily becomes more bitter, the rank and file are looking on with anxious eyes and hoping that nothing will arise that will have a bad effect on the party in the state. They are not tied up with the candidates, nor have they any special grudge against any of the gentlemen who desire to go to Washington as United States senators. Their greatest desire is to see a happy solution of the muddle and one which will leave no bad blood existing after it is all over.

Out of all the measures introduced relating to kidnapping and fixing a penalty for kidnappers nothing radical need be expected. The various bills introduced fix punishment ranging all the way from one year in the penitentiary to a death sentence, but the more severe treatment is not likely to find favor. Referring to the subject one of the most prominent members of the senate said:

"All this talk about making kidnapping a capital offense is, in my opinion, entirely out of place. To restore capital punishment for any crime less than murder in the first degree would be a distinct step backward. The tendency everywhere is just the other way. Instead of increasing the number of crimes punishable by death the movement is to abolish the death penalty altogether. I have no sympathy with kidnapping or kidnappers, but believe they should be promptly and effectively dealt with by means of a good, stiff penitentiary sentence, but with a death penalty attached it would be impossible to convict them before a jury if they were apprehended. Even the optional death penalty, to be determined by a jury, would not accord with modern ideas. I expect to see some legislation enacted on kidnapping, but the death penalty will, in my judgment, be cut out."

W. H. Barger of Hebron was in the city several days last week in attendance on the state board of agriculture. As a member of a committee appointed to push a bill through the legislature to prevent the destruction of game birds that are of great benefit to the farmer, Mr. Barger called on members of the legislature. He is strongly opposed to the indiscriminate killing of birds. With several state societies and all the state and national sportsmen's organizations behind this bill it is believed that it stands a good show of becoming a law. It should become a law. When one considers that \$30,000 worth of game is shipped out of the state yearly it ought to urge him to call a halt on the indiscriminate killing of game in the state, and support a measure calculated to preserve for home enjoyment the fin, fur and feathered game of the state.

The combined appropriation in these two bills is from \$10,000 to \$25,000 less than has been given by the legislature at former sessions and if this saving can be made good to the end of the session the credit will be with the legislature. Whether the amount will be sufficient is not yet known. The reduction was made mostly in the amount for incidental expenses. Formerly from \$40,000 to \$55,000 was appropriated, whereas this session has started with an appropriation of \$30,000.

The following are the amounts: For the years 1897 and 1899, \$30,000 for salaries and \$40,000 for incidental expenses; for 1893, \$85,000 for salaries and \$55,000 for incidental expenses; for 1895, \$85,000 for salaries and \$40,000 for incidental expenses.

Governor Dietrich appointed H. E. Stewart of Omaha to the position of superintendent of the state institute for the deaf and dumb in that city. Mr. Stewart served several terms as a teacher in the Omaha institute and is now engaged in a similar capacity in the Iowa state deaf and dumb school at Council Bluffs, although he maintains his residence in the Nebraska metropolis. He was highly recommended to Governor Dietrich, among his endorsers being Former Superintendent Gillespie.

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The apportionment bills that have already been introduced by various members of their own accord as the product either of their own figuring or of some mathematical constituent all strike terror to the representatives in various districts that are being shifted around like pawns on a chess-board. The apportionment committees will have to take these bills and work them out anew into some apportionment bill, when it comes up for final action, will have to be brought before the caucus and made a caucus measure.

"A great many people want to know," said Chairman Lindsay of the republican state committee, "when the bill favored by the committee will be forthcoming, and have taken it as a matter of course that the committee or its officers will prepare an apportionment bill. I do not believe this is one of the duties of the committee, and if we did prepare one it would have no more claim for the support of the republican members than any of them. I believe, however, that the matter is so important that it should be delegated to a committee of representative men familiar with all parts of the state and with the political complexion in various counties. They might be members of the legislature or might be outsiders called in to assist with advice, but they should proceed only after the most careful investigation and consultation with the interests of every section. The trouble with most of the bills prepared by the individual member is, that while they strike it all right in the immediate localities, they fly wide of the mark in more distant parts of the state. The next apportionment will have to hold good for at least three legislatures to come and it is of great importance to the people generally."

There is nothing but praise heard for the state senate's action in the Douglas county contests in seating the two fusion senators whose seats were contested. It shows that it is possible for a republican legislature to act without political bias, which is more than the fusionists did four years ago with the same opportunity. There were evidences of fraud, but it was a question whether that fraud was sufficient to have changed the result.

The former secretary of the state banking board and chairman of the democratic state committee has accepted a position as cashier in a well known national bank at Lincoln, although as a good Bryanite he has been denouncing national banks right along. The national bank is a bad thing when a popocrat is in office, but becomes a good thing when it offers him a lucrative position.

Nebraska is once more to the fore with the fine achievement of Consul Church Howe at Sheffield, in allaying a disturbance raised by the exporters there against the consular office. With his inherent natural diplomacy Consul Howe has stilled the troubled waters and restored serenity all around. All Uncle Sam need do when confronted with turbulent conditions abroad is to draw on Nebraska for more consuls.

The state senate will probably have an opportunity during the coming week to confirm several gubernatorial appointments. The populist governors assumed to make their appointments without regard to the confirmation of the senate, holding back the commissions until after the legislature had adjourned. There was no good reason why the constitution should have been suspended for the benefit of populist officeholders.

The Pigman-Ream contest was before the house committee on privileges and elections the latter part of last week, an attempt being made to reopen it. The committee took no action, as it had already decided not to unseat Ream or to go into a recount. The committee's action is interpreted to mean that the case is definitely settled.

Governor Dietrich on January 17 signed two appropriation bills, one setting aside \$55,000 for salaries of members, officers and employes, and one appropriating \$30,000 to pay incidental expenses of the legislature.

The legislators lost no time in passing those bills which appropriated money to pay them their salaries. Bills of this character never have to have a passport to get through the lines.

Governor Dietrich has appointed Dave Shannahan of Omaha grain inspector for that city. The station at Omaha is a fairly good paying office and several applicants were after the position.

#### New Way to Ship Bananas.

An American in Jamaica has built a plant for evaporating bananas. The thoroughly ripe fruit is placed in a heated oven for not more than forty-eight hours, during which time the sugar crystallizes. It takes six pounds of fresh bananas to make one pound evaporated. The process prevents decay and cuts down freight charges.

#### Train Robbery Recalled.

The overland train was robbed by Jack Brady and others of \$50,000 on the Yolo side, near Sacramento, Oct. 11, 1894. Part of the stolen money was found by a tramp who was taken in charge by officers Aug. 23, 1895.

#### Abandoned Farms Taken Up.

The "abandoned" farms of Massachusetts are fast being taken up. Three years ago there were 330 thus classed in the state. A recent enumeration shows there are now but 135.