

NOTES FROM THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Washington, D. C., Jan. 22.—The insurgent republicans of the house missed a great opportunity to smite the sugar trust and at the same time do wonders, from their standpoint, for the beet sugar industry, which they proclaimed from the house-tops would be ruined if the Philippine tariff bill should become a law. They did not even have the nerve, the spunk, or whatever you may call it, to stand up for their own proposition made apparently in good faith to the democrats and which could easily have been carried out. The poor insurgents have, therefore, come out of the conflict with anything but a creditable record. Their failure to keep a secret agreement that was made on the floor will surely haunt most of them in the approaching campaign if it be true that the beet sugar interests really fear Filipino competition as much as many of the orators insist is the case. Before the Philippine bill was taken up for discussion it was generally conceded that the only possible way to defeat it was for the insurgents and the democrats to unite. Such a combination was undoubtedly strong enough to overpower the organization and administer a blow that would have dazed and infuriated Speaker Cannon and his assistant managers and kept them in bad humor for the balance of the session.

At first there did not seem the remotest possibility that the insurgents and the democrats could come to any agreement. The democratic position was for absolute free trade with the islands, on the theory that if the Philippines are recognized as United States territory no duty should be levied on sugar, tobacco, rice or any other products. In other words, the islands should be placed on a footing similar to that of Porto Rico. The democrats, of course, knew in advance that the republicans would vote down by an overwhelming majority this proposition. The next best thing, in the opinion of the democrats, was to accept the 25 per cent duties in the organization bill, being the nearest road to ultimate free trade. A few of the democrats from southern states in which sugar and rice are produced were out of line with their party associates on both of these propositions. They held out for the highest possible duties on the commodities named, and were taunted by their associates with being as much alarmed as the beet sugar insurgents on the opposite side of the hall.

On the day that the bill was taken up for discussion under the five minute rule and was open for amendment several of the insurgent republicans early in the proceedings went over to the democratic leaders for a conference. The movement was voluntary on their part. They had known for a week or more that it was the intention of Hon. Champ Clark, of Missouri, to offer at the proper time an amendment cutting in half, at least, the differential on refined sugars imported into this country. It had been frequently suggested to the insurgents that if they would band together solidly and throw their strength in favor of such an amendment the democrats would be only too glad to join them in the movement. But not until the very last day that the bill was before the house could these insurgents, so-called, be made to realize the power that was within their reach. It dawned upon them suddenly, and they were apparently tickled over the situation. Why, actually the suggestion was advanced that the effect would be all the more stunning to let the amendment be offered by one of the prominent men in the insurgent ranks. Mr. Clark cheerfully consented to step aside, only too willing that the friends of beet sugar might have the chance to make themselves solid with their constituencies, but they would also have it go out to the country that the sugar trust had received a staggering blow for once in the popular branch of congress. Every democrat stood ready to vote for the amendment. There was not even a protest from the Louisiana delegation—certainly the most "touchy" gentlemen in the house if any attempt is made to change laws that may directly or indirectly injure the raw product.

William Alden Smith, of Michigan, performed on behalf of the insurgents. His speeches were fiery and entertaining. The gallery auditors enjoyed the performance greatly. The talk kept getting hotter and hotter. Leader Payne of the

organization forces was not civil to Mr. Smith. On the contrary he was insulting in the extreme in many of his replies. That pleased the insurgents who kept running over to the democratic side to report how mad the beet sugar apostles were becoming.

Further along in the proceedings one of the most prominent democrats went over to the republican side of the hall and wanted to know why the insurgents did not offer the proposed amendment relating to the differential.

"Oh, it's not quite time yet," was the reply. "Just wait a little longer. Our fellows are becoming madder and madder. They will soon reach the boiling point, we'll then spring the amendment, and it will be put through with a rush if you democrats will stand nobly by your guns."

Actually some of the insurgents predicted it would be what they called a "killing." Well, the "killing" did not materialize. The truth of the matter is the insurgents weakened. They showed the white feather in every sense of the word. Their failure to meet the situation after the bold and defiant attitude assumed earlier in the day was both perplexing and disgusting to the democrats. Many of these same insurgents have, in campaigns that are past and gone, denounced the sugar trust in the most savage terms. It will doubtless be their song again this year, but it will pay the democratic candidates for congress throughout all the west to have handy the record of the proceedings of the house of representatives for the 16th day of January, 1906. Whenever a republican mounts a platform and gets in a dig at the sugar trust it will be instructive to the voters to have their memories freshened. They will like to hear once more that it finally devolved upon Mr. Clark, of Missouri, to offer the amendment relating to the differential on refined sugars. That the full intent of the Missourian's efforts may be clearly understood Mr. Clark's brief explanation follows:

"The total differential on refined sugars imported into this country amounts to \$5.30 a ton. This amendment cuts off \$2.50 of that differential and leaves \$2.80. If I had followed my own inclination I would have offered an amendment to cut it all off; but yielding to the judgment of some of my friends I have offered the amendment which takes off \$2.50 of that differential.

"They say, and therefore I say, expressing their opinion, that taking half of it off no possible injury can be done to the producer of raw sugar in the United States, and still gives the American market to the American manufacturer. But it does reduce the price of refined sugar to the American consumer, and, so that you can not have any doubt about it, I will tell how. Last year we imported and consumed 2,967,160 tons. The reduction that this amendment gives would amount to \$6,917,905 a year—that is, it cuts off that much annually of the enormous and unjust profits of the sugar trust and gives it to the 83,000,000 American consumers of refined sugar.

"Now, gentlemen, not only on the democratic side, but the republican side—and I would not say anything to hurt your feelings, because I like you all—time and time again on that side of the house and in republican stump speeches and in republican editorials we have heard the American sugar trust denounced in the severest terms that a man can pronounce in the English language. Now, you have an opportunity of proving your faith by our works, and if you vote against this amendment, forever and eternally hereafter hold your peace about the extortion of the sugar trust."

The insurgents almost to a man "skodaddled." Their big talk amounted to nothing. Evidently their utterances on the floor were intended merely as "grand-stand" plays with a view of making the people in the beet sugar districts believe that they had almost wallowed in blood for the sole benefit of that great and growing industry. Had they stood by their own proposition made to the democrats and perfectly acceptable to the latter Leader Payne, at the conclusion of the roll call, would undoubtedly have moved a reconsideration. Filibustering would have been precipitated such as has not been witnessed on the floor of the house in many years. The republican organization rather than injure or offend the gigantic sugar trust would have resorted to any expediency. The bill would have been withdrawn at

the most convenient opportunity, and no further attempt made in this congress to interfere with the existing duty upon Philippine sugar, tobacco or rice. Now the whole question comes up again in the senate. The measure will doubtless pass that body. It is too soon to say whether or not there will be an extended discussion. Henry T. Oxnard and his friends are lively fighters. They seem never to give up until apparently all hope is gone.

The democrats are growing more hopeful as the session advances that their prospects of controlling the next house of representatives are brighter than they have anticipated. The general feeling, too, is that a revision of the Dingley tariff will be one of the great issues in the coming campaign. The republican organization know this to be a fact, but they will not admit there is any public demand for even the slightest readjustment of the existing schedules.

The next performance on the part of house republican insurgents will come off when the joint statehood bill is brought before that body. A new alignment of forces seems to be going on at this writing. By that is meant that quite a number who cut loose from the regular organization on the Philippine matter will return to the reservation. Others who cared nothing for the beet sugar industry talk now as if their sense of fair play will not permit them to support any measure that proposes to make one state of the present territories of Arizona and New Mexico. But just what will be accomplished by the administration in whipping the "kickers" into line cannot be accurately predicted at this time. The administration people are undoubtedly firm in their demand that the Hamilton idea shall prevail. The republican members of the house rules committee are equally firm in insisting that the bill when brought up shall not be open to amendment. It is to be passed as reported if they are able to control the situation. A great many of the republicans never before known to rebel think this is an unwarranted proceeding. Men from down east even take this position. Out west the feeling is intense in some states, if the attitude of certain insurgents is a correct indication of the situation. The house democrats will solidly oppose the joint statehood idea. If they are eventually beaten in that body the contest will be carried to the senate. Over there gag rules do not prevail. Nor is any limit placed upon debate.

These are busy days for the genial, rotund secretary of war. In addition to his arduous duties at the department Judge Taft is dancing attendance upon congress. He is asked to appear before committees to explain this or that matter oftener than any member of the Roosevelt cabinet. The investigation by the senate committee of affairs relating to the Panama canal will entail upon Secretary Taft additional labor hardly counted upon by him this winter. The president, however, is primarily responsible for this inquiry. If he had known that his special message in which he resented in such sharp language the criticisms by certain writers of the administration policy down on the isthmus, would have brought about this investigation, he might have paused before sending it in.

Secretary Taft tells me that it is his purpose to furnish the committee with all the information possible concerning the work of constructing the canal. He is also fair enough to concede that the democrats, in their demand for the investigation, have not manifested the slightest disposition to embarrass the administration, or to in any way impede the progress of affairs down on the isthmus.

Secretary Taft says that not many days ago Senator Tillman dropped into his office at the department. The secretary has but recently commenced to wear eye-glasses. After greeting the South Carolina Judge Taft pointed to his glasses and exclaimed:

"Ah, see what you have brought me to, Senator Tillman! Before you commenced to stir me up over the Panama canal I had no need for these. Unless you let up on me I may soon be wrinkled and gray."

"If those glasses," answered Senator Tillman, "will enable you to always see the constitution in your actions as secretary of war I will feel that I have performed one good act for our country." ALFRED J. STOFER.