

## LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Washington, D. C., Jan. 21.—The Brownsville affair which resulted in the discharge of three negro companies of the Twenty-fifth infantry in the army of the United States, has excited the blacks of this city and immediate section more than anything that has happened since the former slaves were set free. People who seldom visit the capitol building have not the remotest idea of the efforts made by colored men and women to secure set seats in the senate galleries to listen to the debates that have been provoked by the Foraker resolution. Of course, the gallery accommodations are limited, and not one in a hundred of the negro men and women who apply for admission are fortunate enough to even poke their noses inside of the doors. When the galleries are packed with all the people they can hold the doorkeepers are compelled to tell the eager ones outside that they will have to wait their turn. For hours men and women of all races and nationalities since the discussion commenced would stand in line hoping that the fortunate ones inside might get tired and determine to come outside; but the debates have been so interesting to the public that precious few would give up their seats as long as the question was before the upper branch of congress.

This controversy has demonstrated beyond any doubt that a heap of politics is behind the whole matter. As certain as the sun rises and sets the friends of Senator Foraker are going to press his claims next year for the republican nomination for the presidency. It should be borne in mind also that the backers of Secretary Taft are losing no opportunity to keep him constantly before the public for the same nomination. Every careful observer of political events is well aware of the fact that it is in this era decidedly out of fashion to send very many negro delegates to the convention of the "grand old party." The common belief is that at the next national convention of the republican party there will probably not be ten negro delegates in the body. The northern and western states have sent very few in the past. The negroes who secured such recognition in former years came from the south. In recent years, however, the "lily white" movement has practically barred the black brethren even of the south from going to the conventions and receiving good, cash money for the tickets distributed, to say nothing of the larger sums received from republican bosses if they would vote for the candidate the powerful combinations had agreed upon.

But even if there will be comparatively few negro delegates in the convention of next year there is a very heavy negro vote in many of the states of the north and west, and which would not stand solidly by the republican party if the black men did not blindly support the party they have an idea was solely responsible for their emancipation from slavery. The negro vote is especially strong in the state of Ohio. Senator Foraker knows it. So does Secretary Taft. The latter, according to the prevailing opinion here, has been placed at a great disadvantage since this rumpus commenced. Beyond any question the supporters of Judge Taft from all the reports which reach Washington are going to lock horns with Senators Foraker and Dick in an effort to secure the Ohio delegation for him next year. In this correspondence some months ago the point blank statement was made that Judge Taft would not accept the proffered position on the supreme court as the successor of Mr. Justice Brown, of Michigan, and which is now filled by former Attorney General Moody, of Massachusetts. Political opponents of Secretary Taft are busy this very moment in declaring that he was then "playing possum;" that he did not want to be an associate justice, but was waiting for the retirement of the chief justice, and then President Roosevelt would be only too happy to name him as the head of the great tribunal that was presided over by Marshall, Taney and others.

While President Roosevelt was in Panama Secretary Taft, as is well known, modified the order of his chief in discharging with dishonor the three negro companies. The negroes in this city, in New York, in Boston and many other centers of population in the north and west, were unusually active in holding meetings to severely condemn the president for his action. The man they had idolized they suddenly turned against. For the moment Secretary Taft was the one to whom they turned with the fondest expectations. But the president by cable messages was informed of the situation. Then there was a switch around. Mr. President said he knew what he was doing when he dismissed those negro companies, he

had the power to act, and he did not intend to take a back track. In short, to use the expression of the late Senator Mark Hanna, the head of the nation served notice on congress and on the negroes in particular that he intended to "stand pat."

Since the discussions of the Brownsville tragedy have been going on it is noteworthy that more negroes have had cards of admission to the private or select galleries of the senate than were ever accorded them before. This may be on account of the great interest they have taken in the question, or it may mean that there is an object in giving them this pointed recognition. The negroes constitute nearly one-third of the population of the District of Columbia. Among them are many of fine character and attainments, but as Justice of the Peace Terrell—a negro himself—said of the Washington black element in a speech delivered in New York year before last, no less than 25,000 are without visible means of support. In other words, this respectable black man who commenced life in a hotel as a bell boy, and eventually became a member of the legal profession, said that they live practically on what the female workers are enabled to extract from the larders of the homes in which they are employed.

Probably never in the history of the congress of the United States has a majority party in the house of representatives filibustered against itself. As the Hon. Champ Clark, of Missouri, has often remarked this session, the republicans are afraid of themselves. Representative Mann, of Chicago, appears to be the favored individual selected by the speaker to prevent consideration of bills which "Uncle Joe" thinks should not be passed. Mr. Mann has almost worn himself to a frazzle in keeping watch for the presiding officer of the lower branch of congress. His duties will be more arduous as the session draws to a close. He has a number of measures on the calendar of the house that have been given preference, and if the speaker thinks this or that proposition should be butted out of the way all he has to do is to signal the Chicago member and he will apply the brakes. Mr. Mann evidently seems to enjoy the job, and no one is more constantly in attendance upon the sessions of the house than he.

In the old days the minority members did the filibustering. Or at least they did most of it. These tactics were used vigorously by the late Samuel J. Randall of Pennsylvania—notably when he defeated by dilatory motions away in the seventies the original "force" bill which was aimed at the south in order to whack the democratic party. And the democrats filibustered most energetically during the Forty-seventh congress when General Keifer, of Ohio, was speaker. The common cry of the republicans then was that it was wicked and nonsensical for the democrats to engage in such business.

The truth of the matter is that the republican leaders realize to the fullest extent that they have a wild crowd to deal with, and as a great contest is to be waged next year they do not want it said that they have spent too much of the money of the taxpayers of the country. At the same time they are doing things which are rankly unjust. For instance these leaders of the majority have absolutely muzzled the committee on war claims. At great expense the government has a court of claims. This tribunal was organized for the purpose of having honest claims against the government carefully and properly considered so that people might get what is due them. It is generally conceded that the five judges do their work well and impartially. They send the just claims to congress with a recommendation that the money ought to be paid. Hundreds and hundreds of them have been favorably recommended, and the house committee unanimously joined in framing what is called an "omnibus" bill to be put through at this session. But "Uncle Joe" and his lieutenants want to smash the measure. They realize that Uncle Sam is carrying a big load in having to build the Panama canal, in supporting a big navy, in maintaining a large army because of the insular possessions, and ever so many other things that worry the rulers of legislation.

The ship subsidy question continues to agitate the republican managers of legislation. The terrible pressure that was brought upon Speaker Cannon has apparently brought him around to the support of a modified proposition which seeks to do more for lines running to South America and carrying mails than for the companies operating in the European countries. This does not suit the fellows who own the "greyhounds" which

ply the waters of the Atlantic. It is not satisfactory, either, to the New England concerns. Senator Gallinger is understood to feel quite grumpy over the latest turn of events. He put the bill through the senate last session. That is a bill that pleased the New Englanders immensely. They thought they would get many millions a year out of Uncle Sam to help them in their private enterprises. Senator Frye is also grieving over the turn of events. He has been working on the scheme for twenty years or more. Indeed, Senator Frye might aptly be called its "daddy." Mr. Frye, however, kept in the background this time and allowed Dr. Gallinger to do the heavy work.

With but few exceptions the democrats in the house are unalterably opposed to granting any sort of ship subsidy. They are going to oppose stoutly the proposition. And at this writing the indications are they will have a lot of help from the republicans of the central west and the northwest. Mr. J. J. Hill, the railroad magnate, and who also owns a line of steamers that go to the Orient, is reported to be down on the plan that has been hatched out by Congressman Littauer, of New York. The subsidy advocates are moving cautiously. Just now they do not know whether it is best to force the issue in the next week or ten days, or wait until after the big river and harbor bill is passed. A serious complication has arisen. Some of the subsidy supporters think that if they wait they can make trades which may enable them to carry out their program. Others want the issue forced right off. The latter class seem to fear that Speaker Cannon may cool down and not give them recognition towards the fag end of the session, and their contention is that it is better to strike while the iron is hot. Then again they are very much afraid of Mr. Burton of Ohio. That keen and skilled legislator has been making no end of trouble for his political brethren in the house. Mr. Burton, though, is being diligently labored with. The men trying to pacify him have called his attention to the fact that the headquarters of the combination asking for ship subsidies are located in his own home city of Cleveland, and that he ought not to antagonize them. Mr. Burton is violently opposed to a big navy, and his attitude in that respect is another thorn in the sides of the men who dominate things in congress. He is entirely too independent to suit the notion of the combination in the habit of ramming through legislation which suits them, and of killing measures which they do not approve.

Logrolling is going on with a view of passing the Philippine tariff bill so long tied up in the senate committee, although it easily passed the house at the last session of congress. It is too soon to predict with any degree of accuracy what the final result will be. The failure to do anything with this measure is most embarrassing to the administration, for the Filipinos have been promised time and again that there would be legislation to enable them to increase their trade with the United States. The republicans are entirely responsible for the situation. If the majority of the senate wished to act one way or the other all that is necessary would be for some one to make a motion to relieve the committee from further consideration and call the bill up and put it upon its passage. Any attempt of that sort would raise a howl from the beet sugar crowd, and then would come a fight so bitter that the majority in the upper branch of congress would not forget it in many a long year.

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## AND NOW THE CANAL

Having given us full information concerning the mosquitoes, the cottages, the amusements, the steam shovels, the personnel of the employes, the drinking water, the schools, the boarding houses, the food and other things of that nature, perhaps the president will take time to tell us about the comparatively unimportant matter that took us into Panama—the canal.

## THE WOOD OF DREAMS

Here in the Wood of Dreams, be still, be still!  
I weary of your passion and your sighing,  
For I would hear the silent, joyous laugh  
That mocks all anxious men afraid of dying.

There is a knowledge hid among the trees;  
Philosophy amid the grasses glistens;  
I think I hear, "There's no such thing as death"—  
Be silent—silent! All my spirit listens.  
—Scribner's Magazine.