

CURRENT TOPICS

THE AMERICAN Economist, organ of the Protective Tariff League, is a badly scared publication. "It is customary," says the Economist, "to fall back on the senate as a sure safeguard against assaults upon the protective system. No matter what may happen in the house; no matter if the control of the house should pass from the republicans to the democrats—and there is grave danger that this very thing may happen this very year—there stands the senate, a safe, solid, impregnable wall of defense. Its republican majority can not be overcome. That is the argument. But is it a sound argument? Many changes in the senate will be found on and after March 4, 1911, when the Sixty-second congress comes into existence. Who can tell what those changes are to be? It is necessary to bear in mind that there is a new factor to reckon with—the insurgent factor—and that the senate is to be made up of three political parties as far as protection is concerned, and not two parties, as heretofore."

THEN THE Economist prints a table said to have been prepared by conservative members of congress which table indicates that in the next congress the senate will have forty-three republicans, thirty-four democrats and five doubtful. This explanation follows: "In the above calculations it is possible, but not probable, that Delaware, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska and North Dakota may elect republicans, while Michigan, Montana, New Jersey, New York and Ohio may each lose a republican senator. At best it is not an easy matter to figure out a majority of 'regular' republicans after March 4, 1911. Again, in 1913, the 'regular' republicans will likely lose Kansas, South Dakota and Colorado, with no gain in sight."

COMMENTING UPON the above showing, the American Protective Tariff League says: "With a senate so constituted, the rock of safety against harmful agitation of the tariff dissolves into sand. We do not vouch for the accuracy of this estimate and forecast. It may not come true. It certainly will not come true if the loyal protectionists exert themselves to prevent it. But they will have to exert themselves if it is to be prevented. They will have to stop talking about schedules that they fear are too high, and stop saying that they are willing to see every schedule, excepting their own, reduced. It will not do to say that the tariff ought to be taken from all food articles, for if they do say this the farmers are sure to have something unpleasant to say about the tariff on manufactures. It will not do to take sides against the cotton schedule, or the woolen schedule, or the lumber schedule, or the hosiery schedule, for in such case the friends of these schedules will be in no humor to support the particular schedules which the objectors are most interested in. They will have to quit this disintegrating process, and remember that while a bundle of sticks is hard to break, it can very easily be broken if you take one stick at a time. They will have to take off their coats and devote a good deal of attention to politics. They will have to declare war against any and all enemies of protection, whatever their station in life, whatever party name they call themselves by. They will have to get busy and stay busy, this year, next year, and the year after that. Nothing but hard work, united work, will suffice. Nothing else will keep the senate from becoming non-protectionist."

THIS OUTCRY on behalf of the tariff barons moves Henry Watterson, writing in the Louisville Courier-Journal, to say: "Aside from the confessed alarm, this is wholly characteristic. Nothing else matters to beneficiaries of protection except their own pockets. Everything else is secondary to that. There are no principles if they conflict with protection. Political parties, by whatever name, must be classified merely as for or against protection. There must be no question of adjustment of protective schedules. There must be no question of unneeded or excessive rates. No schedule, how-

ever indefensible, even on the professed theory of protection, must be abolished or reduced. The right or wrong of no snout that has got into the swill must be considered. Every thief of the Forty Thieves, and of the Forty Hundred Thieves, must be safeguarded in his swag because, while one stick may be broken, a bundle of sticks may not. In short, the only issue in American politics is the power of the subsidists to continue to wring their subsidies from the consumers. Simply that and nothing more. It would seem that the consumers, on reading this outcry of the Tariff League, ought to take off a few coats themselves."

THOMAS R. ALLERTON, regarded by many as the richest man in Chicago, has, at the age of eighty-two, relinquished his allegiance to the republican party and joined the democrats. Commoner readers may be interested in the reasons for Mr. Allerton's change of front. A Chicago dispatch to the New York World says: "The antagonism of the veteran ranchman, packer, banker and capitalist has been aroused against the republican party on account of what he terms its tendency towards paternalism and meddling. 'A man's got to think in these times, and I've been thinking about where this country will land if the republican party stays in power,' he said. 'We'll have the government ownership of everything. That is what the republican party is trying to give us. Then what'll become of our individual rights? I've got a little stock-yard in Jersey City, and three men could do the work there if it wasn't for having about twenty government officials there to tell us what we have to do and what we can't do. Take cattle, for instance. It is the fool policy of the republican administration that is to blame for the high prices. It knocked the ranchman out of business. Did you ever stop to think, young man, how Roosevelt filled this country with government officials and spies? He more than doubled them; the country is overrun with them. They have spies everywhere, and what do they do? Nothing except interfere with everybody's business. Taft means well, but he acts wrong. Roosevelt is a socialist. He's got a big personal following because he's done things that tickle the public, and when he comes back he'll put on the lion's skin and go out and pose as the savior of the country, and I wouldn't be surprised if he was elected. I've done a lot of thinking, and if the democratic party puts up a good man like Judson Harmon and has a sound platform I'm going to vote the democratic ticket, and I tell you there's thousands of men in this country who think the same as I do. Bryan has too many theories. I don't think so much of Folk.'"

REPRESENTATIVE Edward L. Hamilton of Michigan, chairman of the house committee on territories, speaking to the Washington correspondent for the New York World, says: "The statehood bill sent by congress to the president for his signature is merely the enabling act. Under its terms the territories of New Mexico and Arizona will have to pass through a series of political acts before they are admitted to the union. It is possible that more than two years will elapse before the actual admission. There is a likelihood that the new states will not be ready to participate as such in the election of the next president in 1912. After the bill is signed the governors of the territories must call the constitutional conventions. The delegates to each constitutional convention will be elected by the voters of the territory. The call for their election must issue not less than sixty nor more than ninety days from the approval of the act. Then there will be sixty days before the call of the convention. The law provides that the delegates will be paid for but sixty days of the sittings of the convention. This is with a view to getting the new organic law of the two states framed within that period. Following the drafting of the state constitution, at the end of another sixty days there will be a general territorial election to ratify the constitution. The governor will then certify the

action taken with a copy of the constitution to the president and congress. Both president and congress must approve the constitution adopted." On the first Independence day following the actual admission of the new states the field of the American flag will undergo a change. In place of forty-six stars now appearing there will be forty-eight. For the first time in more than a generation the stars will appear in a perfect parallelogram—eight stars across the top and six stars deep. Heretofore it has been a problem to arrange the stars symmetrically. Now the number forty-eight is capable of regular arrangement.

THE COST OF living committee, appointed by the United States senate, has made its report. Senator Lodge was chairman of the committee. An Associated Press dispatch describes the report in this way: "The report made by Senator Lodge found that of the many causes contributing to the advance of prices the following were most marked: Increased cost of production of farm products by reason of higher land value and higher wages. Increased demand for farm products and food. Shifting of population from food-producing to food-consuming occupations and localities. Immigration to food consuming localities. Reduced fertility of land resulting in lower average production in increased expenses for fertilization. Increased banking facilities in agricultural localities, which enabled farmers to hold their crops and market them to the best advantage. It is found that this not only steadied prices but had a tendency to increase them. Cold storage plants which result in preventing extreme fluctuation of prices of certain commodities with the seasons, but by enabling the wholesalers to buy and sell at the best possible advantage, tending to advance prices. Increased cost of distribution. Industrial combination. Organizations of producers or of dealers. Advertising, over capitalization. Higher standard of living. The foregoing findings were gathered by measuring the prices of 257 commodities, included in the price of index number of the bureau of labor. These commodities were grouped with the advances during the period from 1900 to 1909 inclusive. The general wholesale price level duties advanced during that period 14.5. The groups show advances as follows: Farm products, 39.8; food, etc., 18.7; timber and building materials, 19.6; miscellaneous commodities, 14.7; cloths and clothing, 12.0; fuel, 6.9; house furnishing goods, 5.3; metals and implements, 3.6. A decline was shown for drugs and chemicals amounting to 2.9 per cent. The report states that in view of the fact that the increases have been so much greater in products coming either directly or indirectly from the farms than in any other line excepting products of the forest, the conclusion must be reached that the most important cause for the advance is to be found in a study of farm conditions. The democrats on the committee will make a minority report later."

THE POSTAL savings bank bill, as it goes to the president, is described by the Associated Press in this way: "The bill provides for the designation of postoffices as postal savings depository offices. The opening of such depositories is left to the discretion of a board of three trustees, consisting of the postmaster general, the secretary of the treasury and the attorney general. This board is given complete control of the depositories and of their funds. As it will require considerable time for the board to prepare its regulations it is impossible at this time to predict when the postal banking system will be in operation. In these depositories any person over ten years of age may make deposits of funds amounting to one dollar or multiples of that amount. Pass books will be issued to depositors and interest allowed at the rate of 2 per cent per annum. No person is to be permitted to deposit more than \$100 in any one month nor to be allowed to have exceeding \$500 to his credit at any time. The withdrawal of funds is to be permitted at any time. The postal savings funds thus accumulated are to