

CURRENT TOPICS

THAT AT THE VERY MOMENT WHEN THE great powers of the world are pretending to be engaged in an organized effort to preserve the world's peace the United States should take steps to increase its naval forces to marvellous proportions, is thought to be strange by a contributor to a recent publication. This writer has overlooked the fact that in the opinion of military men, as well as that of many statesmen, "the best method of preserving peace is for a nation to be prepared for war." An interesting essay on this subject will be found in an address to the house of representatives delivered January 30, 1824, by President Monroe. The house had passed a resolution requesting the president "to communicate a plan for a 'peace establishment' of the navy of the United States." Mr. Monroe transmitted a report from the secretary of the navy containing the plan called for and availed himself of the occasion to make some remarks concerning this plan which, in his opinion, "the importance of the subject requires and experience justifies."

IN THIS ADDRESS MR. MONROE POINTED out that two great objections are to be regarded in the establishment of an adequate naval force: the first to prevent war so far as it may be practicable; the second to diminish its calamities when it may be inevitable; and in Mr. Monroe's opinion the subject of defense therefore "becomes intimately connected in all its parts in war and in peace for the land and the sea." Mr. Monroe reminds the house that "no government will be disposed in its wars with other powers to violate our rights if it knows we have the coasts and are prepared and resolved to defend them. The motive will also be diminished if it knows that our defenses on sea and by land are so well planned and executed that the invasion of our coasts cannot be productive of the evils to which we have heretofore been exposed."

IF A SYSTEM OF UNIVERSAL AND PERMANENT peace could be established, or if in war the belligerent parties would respect the rights of neutral powers, Mr. Monroe thought that we should have no occasion for a navy or an army; and therefore the expense and dangers of such establishments might be avoided. Mr. Monroe also brought out an interesting fact when he said: "The efforts of all ages prove that this cannot be presumed; on the contrary, at least one-half of every century in ancient as well as in modern times has been consumed in wars and often of the most general and desolating character. Nor is there any cause to infer, if we examine the conditions of nations with which we have the most intercourse and strongest political relations, that we shall in future be exempt from that calamity within a period to which a national calamity may be extended. And as to the rights of neutral powers it is sufficient to appeal to our own experience to demonstrate how little regard will be paid to them whenever they come in conflict with the interests of powers at war while we rely on the justice of our cause and on argument alone."

AN INTERESTING DISCUSSION, COMMENCED in the United States senate and engaged in by republican politicians and editors generally, relates to the question: "Did Mr. Dingley, the father of the existing tariff law, admit that many of the duties in that law were purposely placed higher than they would otherwise have been in order to have a margin for reciprocity trading purposes with foreign countries?" Senator Vest, in a speech delivered in the senate, said that Mr. Dingley did make this statement; but Senator Aldrich and other republican senators, who object to any interference with the tariff, insisted that Mr. Dingley did not make the statement and that the charge was "a reflection upon his memory."

IT WOULD BE INTERESTING IF THE REPUBLICAN leaders who deny the statement attributed to Mr. Dingley would explain why the duties in the Dingley tariff law were placed so high. Every one knows that these duties are exorbitant and it would seem that those republicans who are so ready to resent the charge that these high duties were established for the benefit of special interests would be quite willing to avail

themselves of the excuse that they were purposely placed high for what Mr. Dingley regarded as a patriotic purpose or as a basis for the conclusion of reciprocity treaties to which plan the republican party has repeatedly committed itself.

IN SPITE OF THE DENIALS OF SENATOR Aldrich and other republicans it seems to be so well understood that Mr. Dingley did make the statement attributed to him that there are some republican leaders who admit the fact. In a speech delivered in the senate January 13 Mr. Dolliver of Iowa said: "It is true that in the bill which he (Dingley) had reported from the committee on ways and means he did put duties up for the express purpose of having them traded down." Mr. Dolliver said that he did not regard such a work as "infamy" against which the memory of Mr. Dingley should be defended. Mr. Dolliver pointed out that the reciprocity provision in the Dingley act was as distinctly a part of the tariff policy of the United States as the coal schedule; and he intimated that it was a reflection upon the republican party that "not one line of the wisdom of James G. Blaine remained on the statute books and not a step had been taken to fulfill the purpose and spirit of the last Buffalo address of President McKinley."

IN SUPPORT OF THE CLAIM THAT MR. Dingley made the statement attributed to him, Mr. McLain, editor of the Philadelphia Bulletin, a republican paper, has written a letter saying that such a statement was made by Mr. Dingley to a member of the Bulletin staff. It is further pointed out that the Bulletin printed this statement in September, 1902, and although the statement obtained wide circulation its correctness has never, until now, been denied. Walter Wellman, the Washington correspondent of the Chicago Record-Herald, takes part in the discussion and reminds his readers that about one year ago he sent to his paper an interview with no less a person than Senator Hanna in which interview Mr. Hanna discussed the then pending Cuban tariff bill and said: "Everyone knows that many of the rates in the Dingley law were purposely put high for the purpose of using them to trade off to other countries for concessions, and it is not right now to fail to keep the promise which McKinley made to Cuba in order to preserve those high rates intact."

MR. WELLMAN FURTHER MAKES BOLD TO say that Senator Hanna obtained his information from President McKinley whose intimacy with Mr. Dingley and with the spirit of the Dingley tariff act is well understood. Mr. Wellman also quotes a republican, whom he says was closely connected with the ways and means committee at the time the Dingley law was framed, as saying: "There is no question that many schedules were pushed up for trading purposes. Why anyone should imagine it is an attack upon Mr. Dingley to ascribe such a statement to him, is more than I can understand. To shade duties for that purpose was a perfectly legitimate procedure. It is done by all protectionist countries which have reciprocal bargain relations with their neighbors. The Wilson tariff bill was loaded by items by the senate, which no one expected would become law, as they were mere clubs to hold over the house in conference, to be abandoned if the house gave way on something else. There was no conference and the bluff items stood. Appropriation bills are often stuffed by one house or the other in playing the same game. There was nothing reprehensible in putting high duties in a tariff act for reciprocity trading. If there is anything reprehensible about it the blame must lie upon those who will not permit the duties to be used for the purpose for which they were intended."

THE COAL CONSUMERS OF THE COUNTRY have recently felt very keenly the evil effects of private monopoly on a public necessity. The distress among the coal consumers of the country has increased day by day and the outlook for relief is not promising. The widespread distress, however, has found expression in a public way in various sections of the country. Mayor Harrison of Chicago issued an order directing the

purchase of twenty-five carloads of coal and caused the same to be distributed among the poor of that city. Mayor Maybury of Detroit has issued a call for the reassembling of the "Get Coal" convention at Washington January 27. The prosecuting attorney of Detroit has commenced proceedings against the local coal trust of that town. In the Indiana state legislature a bill has been introduced making it a misdemeanor for any one to participate in an effort to limit the output of coal. At Toledo, O., an order was issued directing the release of all prisoners who were confined on the charge of stealing coal and the announcement was made that until further notice no prisoners charged with coal stealing would be accepted by the jail authorities.

EVEN THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESS HAS been persuaded to pay some attention to the situation. On Wednesday, January 14, a bill was passed in one day through the house and the senate providing for a rebate equal to the duty now imposed on all kinds of coal coming from all countries for a period of one year. This bill provides: "That the secretary of the treasury be and he is hereby authorized and required to make full rebates of duties imposed by law on coal of every form and description imported into the United States from foreign countries for the period of one year from and after the passage of this act." In the committee having this bill under consideration Mr. Richardson, a democrat, proposed to strike out the words "for a period of one year." This amendment was voted down. Mr. Richardson then proposed an amendment placing all coals on the free list. This was likewise defeated. Finally the vote on the adoption of the bill was unanimous and when the measure came up in the house for passage it passed by a vote of 253 to 5. On the same day the bill passed the senate after it had been amended so as to provide that after the expiration of the twelve months the Dingley law should not be so construed as to justify a tariff on anthracite coal.

IT IS AN INTERESTING FACT THAT PRIOR to the meeting of the house committee which acted on this bill, the republican members of that committee held a session. Mr. McCall, a republican member from Massachusetts, proposed that provision be made that after the expiration of the year, during which the rebate is to be paid on all coal, that all coal coming from countries which admit our coal free of duty be admitted free into this country. Mr. Tawney of Minnesota, another republican, favored the proposition, but their colleagues on the committee opposed it on the ground that as a temporary measure was under consideration they should not adopt any permanent policy.

IN THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDING the passage of this bill, which report was made by Chairman Payne, it was said: "This is an emergency measure, demanded because of the scarcity and high price of coal resulting from the recent prolonged strike in the anthracite coal mines. Precedents for such action are found in the Chicago fire and the fire at Eastport, Me. In these cases congress rebated the duties on lumber used in rebuilding the burned districts. Whether the legislation will increase the importations or reduce the price of coal is a question on which men differ, but it is all congress can do in the premises and will satisfy the demand for many of our citizens. While there is a threatened coal famine in any part of the country we cannot turn a deaf ear to the cries of the people. The committee did not consider it best to make any changes in the tariff on coal after the period of one year had expired, preferring to bring in this as a purely emergency measure, and not desiring to go into the question of tariff revision, even upon this one article. If any relief can come to the people from such legislation it will be amply secured in the period provided for in the bill."

TWO STATEMENTS IN MR. PAYNE'S REPORT are particularly interesting. One is, "If any relief can come to the people from such legislation it will be amply secured in the period provided for in the bill." But it will be understood that