

CURRENT TOPICS

IT IS NOW PLAIN THAT THE ISTHMIAN canal will figure conspicuously in the coming session of congress. The rejection of the treaty by the Colombian congress will, in the opinion of many well informed men, open up the entire canal question for general discussion. It is understood that Senator Morgan will insist upon changing the route and adopting the Nicaraguan line. It will be remembered by many that it was freely predicted by Senator Morgan and others who favored the Nicaraguan route that the adoption of the Panama route would result in failure and that it was also charged by some that the Panama route was advocated by a number of men who were really anxious to destroy the canal proposition altogether. There is no mistaking Senator Morgan's determination to push the Nicaraguan plan and it may not be doubted that he will be able to justify his position in a very substantial way.

FROM WASHINGTON COMES THE ANNOUNCEMENT through a semi-official channel that Mr. Roosevelt has no sympathy whatever with the Nicaraguan idea and that he has no intention of having recourse to that route. Walter Wellman, the Washington correspondent for the Chicago Record-Herald, who, by the way, has the habit of speaking for Mr. Roosevelt, says that if the pending treaty finally and completely fails, Mr. Roosevelt will look about for other means of acquiring the necessary rights at Panama. Mr. Wellman says that a number of the president's advisers urge him bluntly "to take what we need." Mr. Wellman says that probably there is not another first class nation in the world that would hesitate for a moment to seize the isthmus for the purpose of conferring upon it and the world the boon of a great ship canal connecting the two principal oceans of the world; and this Washington correspondent explains that "only mawkish sentiment and fine-spun moral considerations stand in the way of the United States, and these obstacles are likely to be swept away if the little band of boodlers at Bogota continue to block the path of progress."

ACCORDING TO THE SPOKESMAN FOR the administration, before the time comes when President Roosevelt will be called upon to demonstrate whether or not he has enough nerve to solve the problem with a man-o'-war and a battalion of marines, there are various possibilities in the situation which must be permitted to work out: 1. The Colombian congress may ratify the treaty without amendment in order to avert the danger of the threatened secession of the states of Panama and Cauca. 2. If the Colombian legislators are not sufficiently impressed by that hazard, a million or two of French money, contributed by the stockholders of the new Panama Canal company, may open their eyes. Unofficial information received here indicates that the Panama stockholders are watching the situation very carefully, and that they have an agent at Bogota. Rather than lose the chance to sell their property to the United States they would probably be willing to give up a million or two of the \$40,000,000 purchase money to the Colombian recalcitrants, and unless the statesmen of Bogota are much maligned, a million dollars would buy their entire congress, bag and baggage. 3. If the treaty is amended and then ratified there is a possibility that the United States senate may accept the amendments. It will all depend upon what the amendments are. The state department continues to assert unofficially that any amendment of the treaty would be fatal. It is the duty of state department officials to say this for effect at Bogota, but it may or may not be true. A moderate increase in the price of the concession might be accepted by the United States. A provision depriving the United States of the needed control over the canal zone would not be accepted.

IT IS FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT IF everything else fails Panama and Cauca are very likely to revolt and set up as an independent state and that if this revolt occurs it will not take the United States government very long to recognize their independence and not much time will be lost in concluding the treaty with the new government. Mr. Wellman says that the United States is already the ultimate authority in that

region. He says that "by treaty we are required to maintain the freedom of transit across the isthmus. More than once has this government found it necessary to preserve the peace by stationing warships and landing marines there. If a rebellion comes on, of course fighting will ensue, and the United States is already bound to interpose. If out of this ruction there emerges a new isthmian state, protected by the great North American republic and with that great world enterprise, the canal, well assured, the people of Colombia will have their high-headed legislators to thank for it."

BUT EVEN THIS REPUBLICAN CORRESPONDENT does not imagine that the sailing according to this chart will be entirely easy. Referring to the plan he outlines, Mr. Wellman says: "Of course there will be no lack of sentimental people in the United States who will set up a cry of 'robbery' and 'rapine' and 'imperialism.' But a number of senators and other public men have already told President Roosevelt that, in their opinion, public sentiment will uphold him. If the United States were to seize the isthmus through lust for territory or to escape paying a proper price for the canal concession, or through any other improper motive, the censure of the moralists would be well deserved. But everyone knows that if circumstances push the United States into such an enterprise the step will be taken unselfishly. We are to put \$200,000,000 of money in an isthmian canal for the world's good as well as our own. The \$10,000,000 and the annual bonus which Colombia now has a chance to acquire will, in that case, be paid to the isthmian states. The United States will carry to the isthmus not only vast treasures and great prosperity, but the blessings of assured peace, good government, improved sanitation of the region, development of the resources of the country. Even Colombia will lose nothing except the price of the concession, and that her statesmen propose to throw away by defeating the treaty."

AT THIS POINT MR. WELLMAN REVEALS A little secret. He says: "In this connection it is interesting to know that for several years Mr. Roosevelt has believed the United States must ultimately take possession of the isthmus as a sort of trustee for civilization. According to his philosophy the owners of great corporations have not the right to do as they like with their property regardless of the interests of the people, nor have the rulers of states the right to do whatever they please with their territory irrespective of the world's needs, or, as our forefathers put it, 'without a decent regard for the opinions of mankind.' These rulers of a state are directly trustees for the people of that country, but indirectly they are trustees for the world's interests that may be affected. They must stand or fall according as they meet their responsibility. Spain's regime in Cuba, China and the South African republics are recent examples of the working of the higher law of accountability beyond the frontiers. The Colombians stand in grave danger of adding their country to the list."

CABLEGRAMS FROM PEKING ANNOUNCE that Minister Conger has secured a written promise from Prince Ching to sign a treaty with the United States including a guarantee that Moukden and Ta Tung Kao shall be open ports from and after October 8. The importance of this promise is explained by the Peking correspondent for the Philadelphia Public Ledger in this way: "Of the two ports to be opened, Ta Tung Kao is apt to prove the more important. It lies on the right bank of the Yalu river, not far from its mouth, and close to it is the Korean town of Wiju, an important trade center, which will prove tributary to the new port. At present Ta Tung Kao does not amount to much, but rapid development is looked for as soon as it becomes a treaty port. At first the United States government sought to have Takushan made the open port in this part of Manchuria, but the Japanese favored Ta Tung Kao, and the United States abandoned Takushan in favor of Ta Tung Kao when it appeared that the latter is open all the year around, while Takushan is closed by ice during several winter months. Moukden is at the head of navigation on Idao river

and is the point from which caravans start through Manchuria and Siberia. It is at present the largest mart in Manchuria next to Niu Chwang."

THE TROUBLE IN MACEDONIA CONTINUES with greater force than ever. It seems that the Macedonian troops are well armed and organized and this alone gives promise of a long struggle. In some quarters it is believed that Russia will intervene, this hope being based on the action of that country in sending a squadron of its fleet to Turkish waters. On August 16 it was reported that the Bulgarian government had presented a memorandum to the powers setting out at great length the condition of affairs in Macedonia as well as the causes for the present insurrection. On the next day, August 17, it was announced from Constantinople that an imperial call had been issued for 52 additional battalions of troops, about 52,000 men, to be sent to the disturbed territory. News of a fierce fight in the neighborhood of Monastir came from Sofia, Bulgaria, on August 18. It is said that the Turks were worsted, their loss being 210 killed and wounded, after a battle lasting six hours. It appears that Bulgaria is preparing to take part with Macedonia against Turkey, as it is reported that Bulgaria has practically mobilized an army, the troops now under arms numbering 70,000 in that principality. The gravest circumstance in the Balkan situation is considered to be the attitude of the Turkish troops as many of them are in a state of insubordination, and the lack of discipline among the soldiers is very marked. It is regarded as possible that on account of the danger to the foreign consuls at Salonica and other Turkish ports, joint naval action on the part of the European powers may be accomplished. It is believed that the only way to avert a bloody war in the Balkans is for the powers to insist upon a speedier enforcement of the reforms in Macedonia and whether this course will be pursued remains to be seen.

A FRENCH SYNDICATE HAS JUST OBTAINED the permission of Spain and Morocco after long negotiations to construct the great submarine tube under the Strait of Gibraltar, which project was the scheme of the famous Paris engineer, M. Jean Berlier. The difficulties to be overcome were not so much geographical obstacles, as the task of inducing the government of Morocco to give its consent to the undertaking. It is said that the English sought to influence the sultan of Morocco against the scheme, but French diplomacy at last prevailed and his consent was obtained. A writer in the Cincinnati Enquirer says: "The French syndicate has issued bonds to the amount of 123,000,000 francs, the estimated cost of the tunnel, and 119,000,000 francs for the new Morocco railway, to extend from the mouth of the tunnel. The latter will be about 18 miles long and run from Tarifa to Tangiers. It is predicted that France by this enterprise will gain great prestige in Morocco and will cripple England's power, so long maintained by Gibraltar."

A REMARKABLE FEAT WAS RECENTLY performed in Paris when one of the bridges of the Seine, the so-called Passerie de Passy, was lifted bodily and slowly rolled up the river for 90 feet. The bridge is a solid structure consisting of two arches at each end, each of which measures 106 feet, and a central arch, measuring 136 feet, the entire bridge weighing 360,000 tons. The remarkable part of the feat was that after only six weeks of preparation for laying the rollers and setting the winches 24 men sufficed to move the entire structure. The removal of this bridge was made necessary by the works of the new underground electric railway of Paris, which railway is making giant strides toward completion, and when finished, will be one of the most perfect and convenient underground electric railways in the world.

RAPID PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN the application of electricity to various branches of work and not the least interesting is its application to a sculpturing machine recently exhibited at London. A London cablegram to the New York World, under date of August 15, said: "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and an American sculptor, W. G. Jones, have been exhibiting this week