

CURRENT TOPICS

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO IT WAS ANNOUNCED that congress would be called in extraordinary session on Monday, November 9. Subsequently it was given out that because of the pressing problems, the extraordinary session would convene early in October. Later it was reported that many republican leaders objected to the October session, publicly on the ground that it would prevent senators and congressmen from making stump speeches in their states; and privately because it was thought to be bad policy to have congress in session prior to election day. At the same time it was reported in some republican papers that Mr. Roosevelt showed no disposition whatever to yield to the protests of the politicians and in some quarters it was predicted that in spite of these protests, congress would convene prior to election day. But under date of Oyster Bay, September 12, it was finally made known that the special session of congress would be convened on Monday, November 9. The Oyster Bay correspondent for the Chicago Tribune says that "the wishes of the representatives probably had a good deal to do with the final setting of the date on November 9, but it is thought here that the change of affairs in the outlook of currency legislation may have had more to do with the decision."

CUBAN RECIPROCITY WILL BE THE FIRST thing to be considered by congress and although this has been one of Mr. Roosevelt's pet plans, there are many reasons for believing that in republican circles Cuban reciprocity is not so strong at this time as it was one year ago. For instance, the two United States senators from Nebraska took issue with Mr. Roosevelt on his Cuban reciprocity measure and the Nebraska republican convention for 1902 adopted resolutions that very clearly served as an indorsement of Mr. Roosevelt's reciprocity plan and a rebuke to the Nebraska senators. But in the platform adopted by the Nebraska republicans in 1903 there is no mention whatever of Cuban reciprocity or indeed of reciprocity in any form, and Mr. Ross L. Hammond, editor of the Fremont Tribune, who was a member of the resolutions committee, has made public the fact that a reciprocity plank largely framed in the identical words used by Mr. McKinley in his last speech at Buffalo, was defeated in the resolutions committee by a vote of four to two. It is an open secret that the two Nebraska senators accepted the action of the 1903 republican convention of their state practically as an indorsement of their course with respect to Cuban reciprocity, and in other sections of the country, there are many evidences of a disposition to oppose Mr. Roosevelt's reciprocity plan with respect to Cuba.

ALTHOUGH REPUBLICAN LEADERS have repeatedly assured us that the money question was dead, republican circles are greatly disturbed because of the differences of opinion on the currency question. The Oyster Bay correspondent for the Chicago Tribune says: "It is known now that there are many serious differences of opinion between the leaders of the house and the senate and among business men generally as to the advisability of changing the currency laws. The president and others who desire financial legislation have become reconciled to the fact that only a remedial measure or slight consequence, if anything, can be pushed through at the extra session. No definite agreement yet has been reached as to the character of the financial legislation which may be enacted at the approaching session of congress. Indeed, it is not certain that an agreement can be reached between the two branches of congress whereby any special legislation can be enacted. It may be that a solution of the problem, which is alike complex and perplexing, will be reached before the convening of the extraordinary session, but even that is by no means assured."

EVER SINCE MR. ROOSEVELT PERMITTED General Miles to retire without one word of commendation for his distinguished services, dismissing him, with a formal order issued by one of General Miles' discredited subordinates, the president has encountered a series of unpleasant inci-

dents. It was generally agreed by men who make a study of politics that aside from the patriotic standpoint, Mr. Roosevelt made a serious political blunder with respect to General Miles' retirement. Even republican newspapers have criticised the president for the manner in which General Miles was dismissed and following closely upon the Miles' retirement, came the resolutions adopted by the Grand Army of the Republic commending the general because of his great services to his country. Since then, newspaper managers have shown that they at least believe that General Miles is very popular with the people because interviews with the old soldier have been greatly in demand and managing editors have put themselves to great expense in order to obtain special articles from his pen.

RECENTLY MISS MARIE COSTEAU OF 1305 Washington street, Boston, sent to Mr. Roosevelt a handsome flag. It is said that this young lady who is twenty-two years of age worked for many months upon the construction of the flag, using the finest materials she could obtain. The Boston correspondent for the Cincinnati Enquirer, referring to this flag, says: "Every thread with which the silken stripes were sewed was chosen with care and the forty-five stars embroidered on the blue field each cost \$1." When the flag was finished, Miss Costeau placed it in a satin box and sent it to the president with best wishes, and hoped that he might find it available for his personal use. Speaking to the Enquirer correspondent, Miss Costeau said: "I worked on my poor flag so hard and thought, of course, he would take it. I wrote that I was a French girl, but lived under the stars and stripes long enough to love the flag and the noble institutions it represented. Then I sent it away, but it came right back. The president says it's a rule that he can't accept presents. But I read that he takes other things."

THE COSTEAU INCIDENT WAS CONSIDERED of sufficient importance for an explanation to be sent from Oyster Bay. In a dispatch evidently inspired by the president, it is said: "Ever since the president has been in office he has consistently refused to accept valuable gifts from individuals. Tokens of slight value he frequently retains, especially where a refusal might wound the feelings of the donors. Then again, where communities present gifts to the president, in commemoration of events or of industrial or local enterprise, such presents are invariably accepted. While Mr. Roosevelt was on his western trip he received many souvenirs from towns he visited. When a neat satin box, tied with dainty ribbons, was delivered to the president one July day, and he saw the flag which Costeau had sent him, he at once exclaimed: 'Now, this comes obviously within my rule of refusing gifts. It is a valuable object, and a great deal of labor has been bestowed upon it.' By the president's direction the gift was returned with the explanation that the president could not receive gifts of any value from strangers, although the courtesy of Miss Costeau's offer was certainly appreciated. Section 1784 of the revised statutes, regarding the acceptance of presents, explicitly notifies officials, clerks and all subordinates in the government service that they are not permitted to send gifts to the president. Mr. Roosevelt has applied this section also to individual citizens."

SOME CURIOSITY HAS BEEN EXPRESSED concerning the fact as to whether Mr. Roosevelt applies this rigid rule to the acceptance of special trains at the hands of railroad magnates. Although in several newspapers this point has been delicately touched upon, we do not remember that any authoritative statement has been issued from Oyster Bay indicating whether Mr. Roosevelt applies section 1784 of the revised statutes to the offers by railroad magnates of free railroad transportation in special trains at enormous expense to the railroads.

WHILE IT SEEMS TO BE GENERALLY agreed that the wisdom of the general principle involved in the acceptance of presents by a

public officer cannot be disputed, there seems also to be general agreement that Mr. Roosevelt was a bit too particular with respect to the silk flag offered by Miss Costeau. In an editorial, the New York World states the case very happily when it says: "The chief value in the flag lay in the long months of careful handiwork put into it by Miss Costeau. But hers was purely a labor of love. She worked into the silken stars and stripes her regard not for President Roosevelt as a man or as a possible benefactor, but as the official head of the country she has adopted as her own. It does not seem that there could have been any loss of prestige or dignity in the acceptance of such an expression of an adopted daughter's love for the republic. Nor is it conceivable that an injurious precedent would have been established. Sometimes we are accustomed to consider what a president like Lincoln would have done under particular circumstances. It is easy to believe that 'Father Abe' would have taken Miss Costeau's flag and sent in return a letter that would have filled the little French-American girl's heart with long-enduring happiness. And their majesties the people would have been well content."

RECENT NEWSPAPER DISPATCHES INDICATE that Mr. Roosevelt and Sir Thomas Lipton are joint participants in a tempest in a teapot. Not that Mr. Lipton has done anything to incur the tempest, for, on the contrary, it seems that he has been altogether an innocent participant. But recently Mr. Roosevelt was invited to attend the annual dinner of a yacht club, and it was given out by his secretary that the president would attend only on the condition that Mr. Lipton and his party were not permitted to be present. Newspaper dispatches have had much to say of this unpleasant incident and since it became apparent that the president's action did not meet with popular approval, his friends have been very busy in the endeavor to explain the peculiar situation. The explanations given from various sources seem to be woefully inconsistent. The president's secretary very generously undertakes to assume the entire responsibility and yet the public does not seem to be satisfied that the responsibility belongs in that quarter. Finally it was announced in one of the now famous "authoritative" dispatches from Oyster Bay that Mr. Roosevelt would be delighted to have Mr. Lipton and his party present. In the same dispatch it was announced, however, that "Sir Thomas Lipton has other engagements and will not be able to attend the annual dinner of the yacht club."

A BILL HAS BEEN REPORTED TO THE COLOMBIAN congress by the committee appointed to consider the canal situation. Under date of September 12, a correspondent for the Chicago Inter-Ocean described the main provisions recommended by the committee as follows: 1. Approval of the action of the senate in rejecting the Hay-Herran treaty. 2. Authority to be given to the president to conclude treaties for a canal, or to contract for a canal with private parties, subject to the rights of the companies. 3. The Panama Railway company to be permitted to transfer its property, all existing obligations to be assumed by the purchaser, including the annual payment of \$250,000, and the surrender of the property to Colombia in 1967. 4. The canal company to be permitted to transfer its rights and property on payment of \$10,000,000 to the government of Colombia. 5. Authority to be given to the president of Colombia to make the following concessions and conditions: Lease of the canal zone for 100 years, not including therein the cities of Panama and Colon. Annual rental therefor, until 1967, to be \$15,000,000. Lease renewable every hundred years, with increase of 25 per centum in the rental for each succeeding hundred-year period. Neutrality of the canal and recognition of Colombian sovereignty over the whole territory and the inhabitants thereof. Mixed tribunals only in canal zone. Police and sanitary commissions to be exclusively Colombian. A time limit to be fixed for the completion of the canal and works. 6. Colombia to receive from the contracting government \$20,000,000 on the exchange of ratifications of the treaty. 7. Regulations to be made fixing the con-