

# CURRENT TOPICS

NEW INTEREST WAS AROUSED IN THE Isthmian canal by the announcement on November 3 that the independence of the Isthmus of Panama was proclaimed on that day. Newspaper dispatches say that at 6 o'clock a large crowd comprising men of all political parties assembled and marched to the headquarters of the government troops where Generals Tovar and Amaya were imprisoned in the name of the republic of Panama. The fact of the Panama revolt was formally conveyed to our own state department by the United States consul at Panama in this dispatch: "An uprising took place at Panama tonight. Independence was proclaimed. The Colombian army and navy officials were made prisoners. A government was to be organized consisting of three consuls and a cabinet. It is rumored at Panama that a similar uprising was to take place at Colon."

AS SOON AS THE NEWS REACHED WASHINGTON a cabinet meeting was called. The navy department announces that it had received word of the arrival of the Nashville at Colon and that orders had also been issued to the Dixie, now on her way to Jamaica, to proceed at once to Colon and the Boston, which is now at San Juan del Sur, to go to Panama. It is further announced that the Wyoming, the Marblehead and the Concord, which compose Rear Admiral Glass' Pacific squadron, are under orders to remain temporarily at Acapulco so as to be ready to proceed to the Isthmus if the situation becomes worse. It is also stated that the Baltimore is now on her way to San Domingo and that upon her arrival there she will be ordered to proceed to the Isthmus.

ON NOVEMBER 4 THE STATE DEPARTMENT received a request from the representatives of the revolutionary department in Panama that the United States recognize the new state. Information was further conveyed that Panama was being shelled by the Colombian gunboat Bogota and instructions were at once cabled to the United States vice consul there to protest against the bombardment. The commander of the cruiser Boston was also directed to prevent the Bogota from continuing the bombardment and to resort to necessary measures to enforce this plan. The Panamans issued what they called a declaration of independence, setting forth that they have "great and long grievances" and that the Panama revolt is "a movement to cut the links which retard our (the Panamans') civilization, place obstacles in the way of progress, reduce our happiness and render nugatory the ends of political entity upon which we (the Panamans) have entered." It is declared that this movement is necessary for the purpose of "satisfying obligations and promoting within the bosoms of the people respect for right and liberty." The proclamation issued in accordance with this declaration of independence was unanimously approved by the municipal council and the populace was called upon to sign the declaration. The provisional government of Panama notified the agents of the steamship companies not to accept Colombian passengers for Colombian ports unless they could show passports.

THE DISPOSITION OF THE UNITED STATES authorities is perhaps indicated in a letter received by the prefect of Colon, which letter was sent by John Hubbard, commander of the Nashville. In this letter, Commander Hubbard said: "The condition of affairs at Panama, I am advised, is such that any movement of the Colombian troops now at Colon to that neighborhood must bring about a conflict and threaten that free and uninterrupted transit of the Isthmus which the government of the United States is pledged to maintain. I have therefore the honor to notify you that I have directed the superintendent of the railroad that he must not transport on his line troops either of the government or the opposition party. Trusting that this action on my part will meet with your cordial acquiescence, I have the honor to be, very respectfully, etc."

THE CAUSE OF THE PANAMA REVOLT IS the rejection of the Panama canal treaty by Colombia. A Colon, Colombia, cablegram to the Cincinnati Enquirer says that the revolutionists are not only planning the independence of the

Isthmus, but are looking forward to the annexation of Panama to the United States and a subsequent completion of the Panama canal under American auspices. In some quarters there is a suspicion which in some instances amounts to conviction, that the revolt in Panama has been deliberately encouraged by American representatives and that this is one method employed by Mr. Roosevelt to insure the construction of the canal along the Panama route and at the same time to score quite a point for himself along strenuous lines. Advices from Germany and other foreign nations having some interests in South America are to the effect that they will not interfere with the United States program on the Panama question and there is reason to believe that the difficulties will be speedily adjusted by the successful revolt on the part of Panama, aided and encouraged by the powerful influences of the United States.

THE SITUATION IN THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA continues to absorb public attention. It will be remembered that when the insurrection broke out and Panama proclaimed her independence, the Colombian generals, Tovar and Amaya, were imprisoned by the Panamans. On accepting the terms offered them by the junta, however, they were released and immediately left the Isthmus for Colombia. It is said that these arrangements were made through the efforts of Commander Hubbard of the United States gunboat Nashville and other American civil officers stationed in Panama. The people of Colon have also joined the new movement and there is much rejoicing over what seems to them the stability of the republic. The provisional government, on November 4, issued a proclamation to the people of the Isthmus setting forth the grievances inflicted by the Colombian government, and touching upon the failure of that power to ratify the terms of the Hay-Herran treaty with respect to the construction of the Panama canal.

THE RECOGNITION OF THE DE FACTO GOVERNMENT of Panama took place by the authorities at Washington on November 6. The United States government, being bound by treaty to maintain order and preserve free traffic across the Isthmus, takes the position that it is now bound also to prevent any hostile collisions either along the line of the Panama railroad or at the termini, Panama and Colon. It was announced that officials familiar with the country declare that the Colombian government will find it impossible to move an army overland to the Isthmus, and that if an attempt is made to bring troops either to Panama or Colon by water, the United States naval officers at those points would interfere. On November 6 Secretary of State Hay issued the following statement in regard to the situation in Panama: "The action of the president in the Panama matter is not only in the strictest accordance with the principles of justice and equity and in line with all of the best precedents of our public policy, but it was the only course he could have taken in compliance with our treaty rights and obligations. By our treaty, entered into with New Granada in the year of 1846, New Granada guarantees that 'the right of way or transit across the Isthmus of Panama, upon any mode of communication that now exists or that may be hereafter constructed, shall be free and open to the government and citizens of the United States. This is a right which we acquired by the treaty, not gratuitously conveyed, but in return for an important compensation, for in the same article the government of the United States guarantees 'positively and efficaciously to New Granada, by the present stipulation, the perfect neutrality of the before-mentioned Isthmus, with a view that the free transit from the one to the other sea may not be interrupted or embarrassed in any future time while this treaty exists, and in consequence the United States' guarantee in the manner the rights of sovereignty and property which New Granada has and possesses over the said territory."

FURTHER COMPLICATIONS IN THE PANAMA situation were indicated by a reported interview with Gonzales Torres, consul general of Colombia, who said that the Colombian government is massing 7,000 troops and will march them overland to Panama for the purpose of tak-

ing possession of that territory. In that interview, Torres declared that in spite of American interference Colombia would fulfill her treaty duty and would "not permit the United States to take part of her territory under the pretext of creating a new republic." The state department at Washington on November 7 received notice that Bruneau Vareila, one of the financial agents of the Panama Canal company, would represent the new government of Panama as its diplomatic agent at Washington.

POLITICIANS INTERPRET THE RESULT OF the recent election in New York city as a rebuke to Roosevelt while the result in Ohio is pointed to as an extraordinary indorsement for Mark Hanna. A dispatch to the Omaha World-Herald, under date of Columbus, O., November 4, says: "'Hanna for president' is the cry that has been started in the ranks of the Ohio republicans by the overwhelming plurality given the republican state ticket and the large number of republicans elected to the legislature yesterday. Republicans say it means when the Ohio result is compared with results in other states that Hanna is the logical candidate for the presidency. The republican leaders are silent. Chairman Dick declined to talk today when asked if, in his opinion, the Ohio result had any such significance. Ohio republicans journeying back from New York recently have been telling stories of widespread opposition to President Roosevelt in the east. Perhaps it means that Senator Hanna will further contest with the president's friends for the Ohio delegation to the next national convention. It is significant that Chairman Dick in assigning causes of the great republican victory, first laid stress on the part Senator Hanna played in the campaign. He said it was first of all an indication of the confidence the people have in him as a leader. After that he referred to Candidate Herrick, Governor Nash's administration, Tom Johnson's weakness, and last of all, President Roosevelt's national administration."

CONGRESSMAN FOWLER OF NEW JERSEY announces that he has prepared a new financial bill which embodies in a general way the views of bankers. The Chicago correspondent for the New York Times says that Mr. Fowler's new bill will include three leading features, each of which would represent an exceedingly important change in the currency system of the United States and yet would be accomplished, Mr. Fowler thinks, "so smoothly and in such popular form as would prevent distrust or opposition from any quarter."

THE FIRST FEATURE OF MR. FOWLER'S new currency bill provides for the retirement of the greenback or rather for their impoundment through a stipulation that banks be compelled to hold 40 per cent of their cash reserves in United States notes. The Times correspondent says: "As the national banks today are voluntarily holding \$163,000,000 in these greenbacks, Representative Fowler thinks that this requirement would involve no hardship to the banks. It would, according to his idea, be an effectual way of divesting the greenbacks of their power for harm, and would avoid the criticisms that have attended former schemes for driving out the greenbacks, since in this case no contraction of the currency would be involved, and whatever burden the scheme might necessitate the banks, and not the government, would have to bear."

THE SECOND FEATURE OF MR. FOWLER'S bill provides for the depositing of all public money with the banks, the government to get 2 per cent interest. The Times correspondent says that under this plan the "relations between the government and the banks would be no different from the present relationship of states, municipalities, and large corporations to the banks where they keep their money on deposit. This feature resembles the plan of the Aldrich bill introduced at the last session of congress, with the important difference, however, that the government would secure 2 per cent interest as against nothing in the Aldrich bill; but on the other hand, would not require the banks to invest in government bonds and other securities to be used as guaran-