

# THE WEEK AT WASHINGTON

John R. Proctor of Kentucky, president of the United States civil service commission, died at Washington, D. C., on December 12 at the age of 59 years. Mr. Proctor has served on the civil service commission for ten years, being appointed by Mr. Cleveland.

In a caucus held by the democratic senators on December 12 it was practically concluded to offer no amendments to the Cuban reciprocity bill. The caucus was an animated one and was sharply divided on the point at issue, but ultimately reached a conclusion on the matter.

On December 13 Senator Quarles introduced a bill to further define the duties and powers of the interstate commerce commission. It provides that any order made by the commission after a hearing and determination had on any petition declaring any existing rates for the transportation of persons or property to be unjustly discriminative or unreasonable and declaring what rates would be just, shall become operative and be observed within thirty days after notice. It provides, also, that in the event of neglect to obey an order of the commission, performance thereof may be summarily enforced by writ of injunction or other proper process, besides a penalty of \$5,000 for each day of the continuance of such violation.

On December 13 the Colombian legation at Washington received advices from their country to the effect that the results of the election for president held throughout Colombia on December 8 show that General Reyes has been elected president of the republic. It will be remembered that General Reyes is at present in this country on a special mission from Colombia in regard to the trouble in Panama, which mission, however, has proved unsuccessful.

President Roosevelt announced on December 12 the selection of W. I. Buchanan of New York as the first United States minister to the new republic of Panama.

On December 14 Rev. Edward Everett Hale of Boston was selected as chaplain of the senate, beginning his duties on January 1. He is a Congregationalist and is now 83 years old and has agreed to accept the position.

It was announced on December 14 that a company of marines from the United States ship Prairie, stationed at Colon, Panama, had been landed and sent to Panama whence they are to be sent to a point on the coast south of the latter city. It is said that this action was taken in consequence of the attitude of Colombia toward the new republic, and that a long campaign of guerrilla warfare may be begun on the isthmus.

The brief of the government in the case of the Northern Securities company and others against the United States on appeal from the decision of the district court for the district of Minnesota, was filed with the supreme court on December 14, the arguments being identical with those originally made. According to a dispatch from Washington carried by the Associated press, the questions of law growing out of the statements are as follows: "First, has combination been accomplished by means of the securities company in violation of section 1 of an act of congress approved July 2, 1890, entitled, 'An act to protect trade and commerce against an unlawful restriction and unlawful restraints and monopolies,' hereafter called the anti-

trust act? Second, have the defendants monopolized or attempted to monopolize any part of the interstate or foreign commerce of the United States in violation of section 2 of the anti-trust act? Third, was the relief granted by the circuit court authorized by law?" The government maintains that each of these questions should be answered in the affirmative.

On December 15 the secretary of war approved the recommendation of the general army staff concerning the change in the present boundary lines of the army departments in the United States. There are to be four divisions in this country and one in the Philippines, the ones in this country to be known as the Northern, the Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Southwestern division. The order with regard to these divisions will become effective January 15.

The democratic caucus decided on December 15 that hereafter caucus action of the party should be binding and that all members should abide by such caucus action. During the meeting on December 15 the Panama canal situation was discussed and it developed that a sufficient number of democrats would vote for the treaty to insure its ratification.

At a conference between the executive council of the American Federation of Labor and Speaker Cannon and the chairman of the house committee on labor, the federation requested consideration of the eight-hour bill and the prison labor and anti-injunction bills, in the interests of labor.

On December 15 Mr. Williams of Mississippi introduced in the house a concurrent resolution proposing an amendment to the constitution to give congress power to collect taxes on incomes, and providing that such tax shall not be construed to be a direct tax within the meaning of the constitution.

It was recently announced that the full text of the Bristow report in regard to the investigations into the frauds in the postoffice department will shortly be printed and made public. This action was taken in accordance with the demands of the postoffice committee in the house.

The report of Messrs. Conrad and Bonaparte on the charges made by S. W. Tulloch, formerly cashier of the Washington city postoffice, was made public December 16. In this report suspicion is laid on Mr. Heath as to his personal integrity in connection with the frauds, as Messrs. Conrad and Bonaparte intimate that Mr. Heath is responsible for the corruption in regard to the administration of the Washington postoffice.

A Washington dispatch under date of December 16 says: The senate committee on foreign relations today voted to report the American Chinese commercial treaty without amendment. It was also ordered that a favorable report be made on the nomination of W. I. Buchanan of New York to be minister to Panama.

On December 16 the senate, by a vote of 57 to 18, passed the bill carrying into effect the reciprocity treaty with Cuba. The debate on the measure throughout has been spirited, the principal speeches on December 16 being those made by Mr. Spooner for the bill and by Mr. Bailey against it. The bill as passed carried into execution the treaty between the United States and Cuba which was ratified

last March. The treaty provides for a reduction of 20 per cent from the rates of duty under the Dingley law on all Cuban articles imported into the United States and varying reductions of from 20 to 40 per cent from the established Cuban duty on articles into Cuba from the United States.

The senate committee on military affairs on December 16 concluded its investigation of charges against General Leonard Wood, filed for the purpose of defeating his confirmation as major general. Secretary of War Root was the only witness examined during the day, and his testimony was practically the only defense that has been made for General Wood in the hearing. Secretary Root assumed the responsibility for many acts which have been charged to General Wood, and his testimony was an elaborate and carefully prepared defense of the general. After some consideration the senate committee decided to postpone action in the case of General Wood until January 4. It is said, however, that the majority report will be an indorsement of General Wood and his military and civil record in Cuba.

The isthmus canal question as affected by the president's recognition of the independence of the republic of Panama was debated in the senate on December 17. Mr. Hoar began the discussion and criticized the president bitterly for his course in the isthmus. Mr. Gorman followed Senator Hoar in condemning the policy of the administration, describing the president as "a second Napoleon." Senator Foraker defended the administration's course and in his speech deplored the discussion of the matter in open session.

A Washington dispatch, under date of December 17, says: The commission on public lands, recently appointed by President Roosevelt, to report on the condition, operation and effect of the present land laws, and of the use, disposal and settlement of the public lands, held its first meeting today. This body is composed of Commissioner W. A. Richards of the general land office; Gifford Pinchot, chief of the bureau of forestry, and F. H. Newell, chief hydrographer of the geological survey.

On December 17 the house of representatives passed the pension appropriation bill carrying \$138,150,100.

On December 17 the president signed the Cuban reciprocity bill as passed by the senate and issued a proclamation reciting the passage of the treaty and declaring the Cuban reciprocity treaty to be effective ten days from December 17.

On December 18 the discussion in the senate regarding the situation in Panama continued and although the debate was interesting was not marked with the excitement that characterized it on the preceding day. Senator Morgan introduced drastic resolutions touching the action of President Roosevelt with reference to the affair. In the resolutions introduced by Senator Morgan, it is declared that the president has no right to wage war against any foreign power without the consent of congress, when such country is at peace with the United States; that the provision of the canal treaty between the United States and Panama, guaranteeing the independence of the republic of Panama, is in effect a dictation of war with Colombia, that the intervention of the United States in preventing Colombia from suppressing the seces-

sion of Panama is contrary to the law of neutrality and the law of nations.

On December 18 the senate in executive session ratified the treaty with China for the extension of the commercial relations between that country and the United States. No opposition to the treaty was made in the senate, although Senator Nelson of Minnesota made a speech in which he criticized the convention as not being liberal enough in regard to the trade of the United States.

John A. Benson, a wealthy San Francisco real estate operator, was arrested on December 18, charged by the department of the interior as being the head of the alleged land frauds, extending over a dozen western states and territories. It is claimed that Mr. Benson has defrauded the government out of 100,000 acres of land. The information obtained in this case also implicates a number of persons at present employed in the interior department at Washington and a number of arrests will follow.

In an interview at Denver recently, Brigadier General H. C. Merriam, retired, was quoted to have said that the president's appointment of General Wood to be major general is generally unpopular and such appointment would tend to unsettle the army and injure its morality. On December 18 Secretary Root called upon General Merriam to explain this statement, and the general has said that his words were greatly enlarged upon.

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