

# THE WEEK AT WASHINGTON

On December 19 Edwin Sefton, assistant secretary of the democratic national committee, was named as a member of the committee of the District of Columbia to fill a vacancy.

On December 19 both the senate and the house of representatives, after a short session, adjourned for the holiday recess, which will conclude January 3, 1904. The session of the senate on December 19 was largely devoted to the Panama question with speeches on both sides. In the house a resolution was agreed to by which the postmaster general was requested to forward to the house papers in the postoffice matter.

The American naval commanders in isthmian waters recently received instructions from Secretary of the Navy Moody, the keynote of which was: "Let Colombians take the initiative." The navy department is busy preparing for activity on the isthmus, however, and on December 20 it was announced that the Colombian government had sent two battalions of troops to the isthmus. Ten United States warships are now in isthmian waters ready for any Colombian attack. It has also been made known that Panama will assume payment of a portion of Colombia's debt, although disclaiming any obligation to such a course.

A letter written by Secretary Root to Senator Proctor, acting chairman of the committee on military affairs, which letter was dated November 18 last, was made public on December 20. This letter points out all the good words said of General Leonard Wood and his administration and urges in the strongest terms General Wood's promotion.

According to a report made by the commission on internal exchange in regard to the monetary system for China, it has been recommended that the ratio for China should be 32 to 1 between gold and silver coins, and that the same ratio should be adopted for other silver-using countries that may hereafter adopt the gold standard.

The annual report of the commission on Indian Territory was made public recently, and treats the Indian question in all its bearings. The commission declares it has administered on 20,000,000 acres of land belonging to the five tribes, and no less than 200,000 applications for citizenship enrollment have been passed upon. According to a Washington dispatch, to check the speculation in pine timber on the Choctaw and Chickasaw lands, the commission recommends the sale of the standing pine under sealed bids. Recommendations also are made that railroad companies be required to file with the commission plats of all lands sought to be acquired; that the coal and asphalt lands and deposits of the Choctaws and Chickasaws be sold under sealed bids; that congress authorize the establishment of public highways in the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations and that all leases, contracts or instruments of conveyance executed by citizens of the Cherokee and Creek nations, affecting the title of their lands, to become valid, shall, within thirty days from their date, be recorded in the recording office of the respective districts.

It was reported from Constantinople on December 20 that the porte has

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agreed to the demands of the United States government and has ordered the governor of Alexandretta to make ample apology to Consul Davis for the insults and assaults to which he was subjected by the police of Alexandretta while he was escorting to a departing steamer a naturalized American citizen named Attarin, who had been liberated from prison through the intervention of Mr. Davis.

On December 21 it was announced that several European powers will bring diplomacy to bear upon Colombia in order to prevent war between that country and the United States, and that several foreign powers have already taken the first step in that direction by informing General Reyes, through their representatives at Washington, of the futility of any attempt by Colombia to retake Panama. It has been made clear that Colombia cannot expect sympathy from the European powers in any movement she may make in Panama which would tend to involve her in war with the United States.

On December 21 Secretary Shaw transmitted to congress his estimates for the deficiency appropriation bill to be passed at the present session. The estimates aggregate \$8,025,801.22, including the following items: State department, \$199,483; treasury department, \$3,067,305; navy department, \$3,019,201; interior department, \$592,978; department of justice, \$171,340; postal service, payable from postal revenues, \$732,727.

Speaker Cannon, Representatives Hepburn and Richardson, comprising the commission having in charge the construction of an office building for the house of representatives, have been informed by Attorney General Knox that arrangements are being pushed to secure the title to various pieces of property preliminary to the erection of the building. The structure is to cost between \$3,000,000 and \$4,000,000, and its construction will take several years.

Frederic R. Coudert, the well-known lawyer of New York, died in Washington on December 20, where he went to spend the winter. Mr. Coudert was born in New York in 1832 and admitted to the bar in 1853, and for many years has been active in democratic politics. In 1877 Mr. Coudert was a delegate to represent the interests of American commerce at the international congress on the law of nations held at Antwerp, and five years later he attended a meeting of the same congress at Liverpool. He won great praise as the American representative in the Behring sea commission in Paris in 1895. A year later, when President Cleveland sought and obtained authority from congress to appoint a commission to investigate Venezuela's boundary dispute with Great Britain, Mr. Coudert was appointed commissioner.

The state of Minnesota on December 22 filed its brief in the suit of that state against the Northern Securities company which is being tried in the United States supreme court at Washington. In this brief it is declared that the purpose of the merger was in order to stifle competition.

By a cablegram from the Colombian minister of foreign affairs to General Reyes in Washington recently it was made clear that Colombia desires an answer to several points submitted to this government in regard to the Panama situation. In this cablegram the United States is accused of acting contrary to its precedents in the isth-

mian affair and an explanation is called for.

On December 19 General John C. Black of Chicago accepted the civil service commissionership, recently made vacant by the death of John R. Proctor.

It was announced from Washington on December 23 in a special dispatch to the Omaha World-Herald that President Roosevelt is exerting his efforts to have Secretary of War Root, who will resign the duties of his present position on February 1 next, to become the chairman of the republican national committee, and thus succeed Senator Hanna who, it is conceded, will retire from the committee after the meeting of the national convention in June next. It is also regarded as certain that Secretary Perry S. Heath of the national committee will also retire from his post.

Conferences are being held in Washington in regard to the issue of bonds for the raising of money with which to pay for the friar lands in the Philippines. It has been determined to authorize the issue of \$7,000,000 of 4 per cent, redeemable after ten and within thirty years, Philippine bonds, and these bonds are to be offered for sale early in January.

On December 23 it was announced that C. M. Watson will succeed George W. Beavers, one of the officials concerned in the frauds in the postoffice department, and who had the position of superintendent of salaries and allowance of the postoffice department. Mr. Watson's appointment will take effect on January 1.

It seems that General Reyes, the special emissary from Colombia to this country, realizes that the situation in regard to Panama may mean grave consequences to his country, and he is exerting every effort to bring the Colombian people face to face with the situation as he sees it. It was recently reported that he will conclude his mission to this country as speedily as possible and return to Colombia and assume personal command of the army.

Brigadier General G. H. Burton, who has just completed a tour of inspection of the various branches of the national soldiers' homes, recently made a report of his tour and in this report it is shown that during last year 33,157 old soldiers were cared for. Of this number over 25,000 were drawing pensions aggregating \$3,166,743.

Secretary of the Navy Moody has asked congress for an immediate deficiency appropriation of \$57,146 for the marine service, this sum being made necessary by the recent activities in Panama and also the plans in regard to the new naval station at Guantanamo, Cuba.

The prosecution against those persons who are engaged in trying to acquire large tracts of the public domain in a fraudulent manner is being pushed and it is reported that the laws that have made this absorption of the public lands possible are to be speedily repealed.

On December 25 it was reported that Secretary Root had forwarded to the house of representatives through the treasury department a supplemental estimate of \$2,526,100 for the defense of the insular possessions of the United States. In his request the secretary says: "Defenses for Porto Rico, the Hawaiian islands, Guam and the Philippines are urgently needed to protect the newly-acquired territory

of the United States and government property to be stored there, also to prevent interruption of cable communication between San Francisco, Hawaii and Manila. This estimate is submitted with the object of beginning the construction of these defenses at once at such insular localities as are now the property of the United States, or may become so before the appropriation is exhausted, and of acquiring additional land deeded as sites for defenses of the territory of Hawaii."

Ex-Governor Isaac Sharp of Kansas died in Washington on December 25 at the age of 71 years. He was born in Pennsylvania, but went to Kansas in the early '50's, where he played a prominent part in the Kansas-Missouri struggle.

It was announced from Washington on December 25 that Minnesota members of congress declare that Joseph J. McCarty, formerly city comptroller of St. Paul, has been practically agreed upon as the successor of Henry A. Castle in the office of auditor for the postoffice department. Castle is a Minnesota man and on the strength of that fact the Minnesota senators and representatives laid claim to the place.

It is admitted at the war department that several transports are being made ready at San Francisco to be sent to Panama immediately in any emergency, and despite the secrecy maintained, it is believed that troops are to be sent to the isthmus.

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