

## NOTES FROM THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Washington, D. C., Jan. 15.—The republican managers of the house of representatives have been having lots of trouble ever since the holiday recess of congress ended. More "insurgents" were in their camp than they had reckoned. It was generally understood at the assembling of the national legislature that the beet sugar interests would be able to pull away a considerable number of republican votes when the final test came upon the Philippine tariff bill, but neither Speaker Cannon nor his most trusted lieutenant had the faintest idea that the disaffection was as great as it has turned out to be. In permitting such an extended debate on this measure the republican managers were not actuated entirely by motives of fair play. They were compelled to gain time in order to whip into line as many of the "insurgents" as possible. At one stage of the proceedings it began to look as if a combination might be formed to defeat the Philippine bill. Estimates of the strength of the "insurgents" have differed. One day the claim would be made that at least seventy-five disaffected republicans could be relied upon to kick out of the party traces. A few days later the claim would not be so high, ranging anywhere from forty-five to sixty. The defenders of the bill have from the very inception of the discussion put on a bold front and have never admitted the possibility of defeat. Their woes in private they have endeavored to conceal from the public. Both threats and sweet promises have been made privately to win back the deserters. The sweet promises have been intimations that if certain members would not join the opposition there was a possibility that later in the session a public building bill would be allowed to pass—one of those accommodating "omnibus" bills, though not near so expensive or expansive as the one that former Representative David H. Mercer, of Nebraska, pushed through the house shortly before his retirement to private life. That successful undertaking on the part of Mercer left him a wonderful reputation among new congressmen. That class of members have been introducing public building bills in such large numbers that the speaker made up his mind early in the game that a check had to be put upon the attempt to authorize the building of government structures in the smaller cities.

A most forcible and entertaining democratic speech delivered since the discussion on the Philippine bill commenced was that of Hon. Champ Clark, of Missouri. The demand for it is large. Mr. Clark is recognized as one of the readiest debaters on the democratic side. What makes his speech all the more valuable as a campaign document is that during the three hours he occupied the floor many of the leading republicans were drawn into the argument, and the well known Missourian was, therefore, enabled to hammer them in a way that will prove most pleasing to all men dissatisfied with the Dingley tariff law. And as this notable speech has created such a favorable impression it is appropriate in this correspondence to quote the concluding sentences, as follows:

"I hope that this day's work will open up a discussion that will be the cause and beginning of a wider discussion in the country, which will do one of two things—it will either drive the republicans of the agricultural districts into electing outspoken republican tariff revisionists here, or else the next house will be a democratic house. Truth is mighty and will prevail. If I have contributed even 'the widow's mite' to the approaching triumph of a righteous cause, the three hours which I have consumed have been profitably spent. I have an abiding faith that when the eyes of the taxpayers of the land are opened to the situation they will not longer stand for the monstrosities of the Dingley tariff bill."—(Prolonged applause on the democratic side.)

The attitude of Representative Babcock, of Wisconsin, has been a severe blow and a serious disappointment to the house republican leaders. Not only has he been acting conspicuously with the "insurgents" on the Philippine tariff, but he has for a year or more shown that many of the schedules in the Dingley law are distasteful to him and his constituents. Nor is that all. The republicans are evidently in danger of losing his services as chairman of their congressional campaign committee. As is well known he has for ten years managed successfully these contests

for his party. And not a defeat has yet been scored against him. Democrats recognize in Mr. Babcock a shrewd political calculator, an energetic organizer and an indefatigable worker. His right hand man in the committee, Congressman Overstreet, of Indiana, who has been for the past six years the secretary of the committee, has been offended by President Roosevelt in the distribution of patronage, and announced that he would not serve again. In the matter of patronage Mr. Babcock has been well treated by this and the previous republican administration. Offices in his district have been controlled by him. The LaFollette faction in this respect were practically ignored. Mr. Babcock's uneasy feeling is certainly not for lack of patronage. His constituents are known to be groaning under the burdens of taxation, and that is why he is so restless and averse to again managing a congressional campaign.

Before the end of the present month it is thought that the democrats and republicans will select their members of the congressional campaign committees. Quiet work in this direction has been going on for the past two weeks, but the actual organization of the committees will not be effected for several months. The democrats are at this writing discussing the question of the best man to be placed at the head of their campaign. Here and there a democratic congressman can be met with who advances the argument that it will make little or no difference whether his party controls the house in the next congress. Generally speaking, however, the democrats are very anxious to wrest control of this important body from the republicans. The sixteenth congress would meet in regular session on the first Monday of December, 1907, or nearly one year in advance of the next presidential election. Unless the unwarranted extravagances on the part of republican officials in various branches of the government are checked vigorously by the party in power there will be lots of investigating to do. In this congress republicans will pretend to look into matters that have been forced upon them by the activity of the democrats so far this session. The Panama canal situation is one, for instance. It will be difficult to get at the real facts, for the reason that the republicans dominate everything in the senate, and they have the power to smother testimony calculated to embarrass or injure the administration. That canal will be a long time building. No democrat hopes there will be necessity for a complete and thorough investigation two years hence if his party then happens to have a majority in the popular branch of congress. Democrats are fair enough and patriotic enough to hope that the exposures thus far made will cause the officials in charge of the work on the isthmus to leave no room for complaint. But if the reckless waste of the people's money continues they contend that the only way to put a stop to it is to have a democratic house get at the bottom of things. In other words, if they have the power there will be one of those old time investigations such as used to be made in the days of democratic control of the house.

The democratic attack upon the emergency appropriation for the Panama canal at the beginning of the session and the successful result by which \$5,500,000 was lopped off has had one other beneficial effect in the house at least. The urgent deficiency bill is the first measure that is prepared by the appropriations committee. Most people wonder why the committee have been so slow in reporting it. It is because Chairman Tawney discovered that heads of several of the departments allowed subordinate officials to call for sums of money larger than he thinks should be voted. Mr. Tawney has been sending back the demands for more money and has been calling the attention of the cabinet officers to a law passed by the last congress. That law expressly provided that the appropriations for certain things should be apportioned to spend so much per month through the year, and that if the amounts were exceeded the officials could be held to account and impeached. In most of the departments for a number of years the officers have been in the habit of making contracts in accordance with their estimates, and when they run short of cash they simply go to congress and ask that the shortages be made good in either the urgent or the general deficiency bill. Mr. Tawney appears to be an unusually wise chair-

man. In the face of the fact that his party has such an overwhelming majority in this house he does not care to bring into that body any appropriation bill containing a single item that can not be justified and defended. The gentleman from Minnesota fully understands that the democrats are on the alert and will be ready to expose any recklessness on the part of the department officials which may be encouraged by the appropriations committee.

About the most picturesque figure on the republican side in the present house is Ex-Speaker J. Warren Keifer, of Ohio. This venerable Buckeye statesman whom the country has practically forgotten, was picked up once more by his constituents and sent back to Washington, much to the gratification of those fond of gazing upon a member out of the ordinary run of human beings. The ex-speaker has a hobby. It is one that was ridden for four years or more by Representative Crumpacker, of Indiana. The latter had to abandon it because President Roosevelt, Speaker Cannon and nearly all the house republicans of prominence failed to encourage him in his efforts. Judge Crumpacker set to work to have representation in the south cut down on account of the new constitutions down in that section which have deprived the negroes and a small percentage of illiterate whites of their votes. General Keifer is pegging away at the proposition, and will not listen to the advice of his party associates. Well, the ex-speaker will not have a show in court, but if he persists he will have an opportunity to make a speech on the subject. His bill will never leave the pigeon hole in the committee room to which it will be assigned. The republican leaders came to the conclusion two years ago that an issue that has been virtually knocked out by the federal courts is a dangerous thing to fool with.

The senate republicans seem to be dreadfully afraid to come to any conclusion in the case of Senator Reed Smoot, of Utah. It has been dragging along for nearly two years. Their failure to report in the long session of the last congress was easy to account for. That would have been in advance of the presidential election, and they did not care to offend the followers of the senator out in the far west. Two and possibly three states might have been lost to their party. But they have been pressed hard to explain why they did not act last winter. The democratic position is that either the Utah man is entitled to remain a member of the senate or he is not, and they think that matters ought to be brought to a head within a few weeks. But the committee over which Mr. Burrows, of Michigan, presides, is delaying the decision until it can examine more witnesses. This may mean that the roses will bloom around Washington in the open air before the country hears whether Mr. Smoot is to retain his seat or be sent back to his people.

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### THE EXCLUSIVELY INTELLIGENT

The republican party of Nebraska, like the republican party at large, claims for itself a monopoly upon intelligence as well as patriotism. The republican state board of pharmacy has recently made to the governor of the state its report for the year ending November 30, 1905. The report is addressed "To His Majesty, J. H. Mickey, the Governor."

This is not to be taken as showing on the part of republican politicians a tendency toward the expressions and things common to monarchies so much as it is a justification of the proud claim made by republican politicians that the list of intelligent men begins and ends with the roll call of republican politicians.

### IN NEW YORK

Mr. McClellan has been formally installed for a second term as mayor of New York, but he had a mighty narrow escape. The small majority by which he won was both a personal victory for William R. Hearst and for the platform upon which he stood. The municipal ownership idea is steadily growing in favor among the rank and file of all political parties. Democratic leaders east, west, north and south will yet learn that they dare not antagonize that sentiment even in an indirect way.