

## Washington Letter

Washington, D. C., May 20.—Now comes again the presidential interference with state's affairs. Congress being out of session the administration has determined to establish "naturalization bureaus" in a number of leading cities. The purpose, so it is said, is to prevent election frauds. In every one of the cities there will be a federal chief and a number of detectives. Every voter must qualify before this bureau of naturalization. In other words every man who desires to vote for aldermen of Kansas City, Seattle or San Francisco must secure from Washington his right to vote.

This plan was announced at the capital today. Assistant Attorney General Cooley has started west to arrange the details and to select the chiefs of the various bureaus. It is his business to find in all of the growing cities of the south, and the middle west, men who will take their orders from the White House and determine who among the incoming immigrants shall be allowed to vote. It is not merely a matter of voting for congressmen or for presidential electors. If it were, the federal government might have the right—or the power—to exercise some supervision. But as our elections, state and national, coincide in almost every state in time, this purpose of the administration to determine who shall and who shall not vote amounts to a determination to control the election.

Some years ago there was an attack made by the democratic party on the so-called force bill. The attack was successful. What will the party, or the people, think of this purpose of the present administration to fix the qualifications of voters by edict issued from the White House?

It is a matter of gossip in Washington, how well founded few can tell, that fully six months ago, even before Foraker flung his glove in the president's face on the Brownsville matter, Mr. Longworth was saying at social functions that he would be the next senator from Ohio. The later report was that Congressman Burton aspired to that distinguished position, but within two days the story has been sent out, like one of those trial balloons that they send up from the White House, that the presidential influence will be used to elect Burton speaker of the house.

Nobody believes that even Mr. Roosevelt's great power could defeat Speaker Cannon. But it is to be borne in mind that the next house of representatives has not the overwhelming republican majority that has made of the Fifty-ninth congress such a well disciplined machine. A very few insurgents would make great trouble for "Uncle Joe" and it would of course be easy enough for the president to get such a body of guerillas together. Perhaps the story was sent out from the White House in order to suggest to Mr. Cannon that he had better be tame and tractable; that it would be wiser for him to give up the idea of having even a complimentary vote from the state of Illinois for president and see that that delegation is given to the heir apparent, Mr. Taft.

With Ohio apparently successfully under control of the big stick; with the first blow struck at Illinois, the president turns his political attention to New York. It is a curious fact that in the state of his birth, in the state which gave him his first political honors, he is weakest. Even with all the glamor of heroism in the Spanish war attached to him, he was elected governor of that state by a scanty plurality of 17,000. Governor Hughes a year ago was elected by more than three times as much. Last week at a meeting of the state committee of New York an attempt was made to pass a resolution naming Hughes as the logical candidate for the presidency. The Roosevelt influence defeated it. New York is not therefore happy. Today in Washington they say that there is much joy in the White House circle.

It is not the purpose of the republicans to revise the tariff in the next congress if they can help it. The campaign slogan of "Let the tariff be revised by its friends" is too good a one to lose by premature tariff revision in the Sixtieth congress. The tariff would have been revised long ago except for political reasons. Even the "standpatters" admit that many of the Dingley schedules have outlived their usefulness. In the Fifty-ninth congress there was

considerable tariff discussion that does not appear in the congressional record. New England and the northwest started a revision schism that made surprising inroads into the republican majority. At one time it almost looked like an extra session to consider the tariff. The republican whips were working overtime and "Joe" Cannon was doing his best to save the paramount issue of 1908.

Now it looks as if all this worry and work against tariff revision in the Fifty-ninth congress would go for naught. The Sixtieth congress may be compelled to take up the tariff question whether it wants to or not, "Joe" Cannon and other "standpatters" to the contrary notwithstanding. The new German-American agreement, intended to avert a tariff war between Germany and the United States has left our whole tariff policy in a most uncertain condition. The *modus vivendi* with Germany is very indefinite. The German administration in fact has notified us that it would not again ask German legislators to allow American imports under the full minimum tariff schedules unless our congress should show its inclination to reciprocate. For a number of years we have had tariff working agreements with Germany. These agreements alone have averted a tariff war between the two nations. The present *modus*, however, differs most significantly from the others in that it does not terminate at any given period. This means that Germany will give the next United States congress one last chance to revise the tariff or come to some definite reciprocal understanding. If the Sixtieth congress refuses to revise the tariff it means a commercial war with Germany. If it puts through a reciprocity treaty, other nations will demand the rights of the most favored nation. The protest of France against the present *modus* with Germany is evidence of that. What we grant to one, we must grant to all. Either that, or commercial war with the nations discriminated against. If congress pigeonholes tariff revision, European nations are sure to retaliate. The Sixtieth congress must face the question of tariff revision, however advantageous it may seem to republican politicians to save the issue for campaign purposes.

In Washington today there are two matters about which people interested in politics talk. One is the question as to whether the president will approve the constitution of Oklahoma and thereby enable that state to come into the union; the other is whether Foraker is going to fight.

The Oklahoma situation seems really the more important. Foraker promises fight, but of that more later. It involves the creation of a new state built from Oklahoma and the Indian Territory. A week or ten days ago I said that this state would have 800,000 population. I have just received a letter from the editor of one of the principal papers in Oklahoma in which he says:

"I note that you state in one of your articles that the population of Oklahoma is 800,000. Had you used this term to apply to the present territory of Oklahoma, your estimate would have been approximately correct, but I observe that it is used to apply to the Territory, embracing the new state, which includes the present Territory of Oklahoma and also Indian Territory. The present population of these two territories is in excess of 1,500,000 and some estimate it as high as 1,800,000.

"The difference is immaterial, but the aggregate is certainly sufficient to emphasize the justness of our demands for immediate statehood.

"We regard the constitution just formulated by the constitutional convention as the most perfect draft of organic law ever perfected. It meets with the full approbation of all of our people except the carpetbaggers and place seekers of the republican party, who are raising a dismal wail about a so-called gerrymander, which is not one whit more inequitable than the one given us by the republican districting boards last fall in defining the constitutional election districts.

"I beg your pardon for digressing from the purpose of this letter to this extent, but I feel warranted in some measure for doing so in view of the fact that the impression seems to obtain to some extent in the east that there is serious opposition to the adoption of the constitution just formulated."

That is the expression of a man who knows more about the situation in that southwestern territory than most of the people in Washington can know. What Mr. Stafford, owner of the Oklahoman, says may be accepted as the opinion of a man on the ground. Curiously enough there are other men deeply interested in the southwest interested in Oklahoma and in the

Indian Territory and to some extent interested in the politics of that section who would be glad if the president would refuse to approve the constitution proposed for the consolidation of Oklahoma and Indian Territory. Their argument is that if the president should so refuse there would ultimately be two states instead of one. There would be four senators instead of two. This seems to be an argument based on purely partisan political consideration. Since Oklahoma and the Indian Territory are prepared to join in single statehood, it is best for their people today that they should be given immediate entrance to the sisterhood of states. The correspondent whom I have quoted says that there are 1,500,000 people in the two territories. That so large a population should be denied the rights of American citizens would seem incredible.

The men who have been asked by the president to advise him on the question of approving the proposed new constitution for the combined state of Oklahoma, are of course all republicans, and, unhappily, most of them machine republican politicians. It is not surprising that Secretary Taft heads the list. As a candidate for the presidency Mr. Taft would very much grieve to see a new state come into being that might cast its electoral vote for the democratic nominee. Chairman Sherman of the republican congressional committee, is also one of the chosen advisers of the president; the chairman of that committee would naturally oppose the admission of a state that might send five democrats to the house of representatives, and two men to the United States senate. Tama Bixby, who for years almost uncounted has held federal office under a republican administration is here on the ground. D. W. Mulvane, of Kansas, republican national committeeman from that state, who has enriched himself enormously by his control of the electric railways, and lighting companies and telephone companies, and who naturally believes that the clauses in the proposed constitution of the new state will prevent his grabbing these public utilities within its borders, doesn't want that democratic constitution approved.

There are other distinguished partisans, and more distinguished pirates seeking to exploit the wealth of the new state for their own profit, who have been invited to consult with the president. What the outcome of their advice may be no one can tell today. But it is a curious fact that nobody except men of this type has been asked for his expression of opinion. Some men have volunteered suggestions, but it yet remains to be determined how much influence their arguments may exert.

Some of the opponents of statehood base their opposition on the ground that the constitution demands the initiative and referendum. Probably Mulvane of Kansas, republican national committeeman from that state, whose plans for exploitation of the public utilities of the new state would be balked if his hoped for franchises were subjected to a public vote, will be very vigorous in urging this on the president. But after all, the complaint is ridiculous. The words "initiative and referendum" are pedantic; they sound like the talk of a teacher of Latin in a high school. But what they mean is that on matters of importance everybody affected should be allowed to vote. Now in Oklahoma and the Indian Territory, every person affected by the constitution proposed, is to be allowed to vote on that document. The action of the convention is not final. There is the initiative and referendum established whatever the president may say. In nearly every state south of the Potomac river the people of the counties are allowed to vote on the question of whether there shall be liquor sold in that county. There again is that initiative and referendum that we are told is so revolutionary. Certainly the charge against the principle of direct legislation, which was put in the democratic national platform of 1900 can not be raised as a reason why the constitution approved by a representative body of the people of Oklahoma shall not be approved by the president of the United States.

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### GOOD WORK

Colliers is doing splendid work in exposing the "tainted news" bureaus. Now that the editorial columns of the subsidized papers have ceased to have influence the exploiters are stealthily poisoning the public mind through systematic misrepresentations spread broadcast through bureaus which furnish these misrepresentations free to papers that will use them. When a newspaper is offered material free it ought to inquire who pays the bill and why.