

The Independent.

VOL. XIV.

LINCOLN, NEB., DEC. 18, 1902.

No. 30.

ANTI-TRUST BILLS

Congressman Shallenberger Explains to House Committee—the Venezuelan Imbroglie—Postal Robberies

Washington, D. C., Dec. 15, 1902.—(Special Correspondence.)—It is but natural that the American people are just now very much interested in the trust question, an interest born of suffering experienced from their exactions. A number of anti-trust bills have been introduced in congress, one of these by Representative Shallenberger of the Fifth Nebraska district. The house committee on judiciary has been holding a series of hearing on the question, and before this committee Mr. Shallenberger was yesterday summoned to explain the provisions of his bill, an outline of which was before given in these columns.

The publicity feature, spoken of in the president's message, is a prominent factor in all these bills, and Messrs. Shallenberger and Littlefield of Maine engaged in a quite lengthy discussion as to the efficacy of the remedy proposed, Mr. Shallenberger taking the position that not only should publicity be given to trust management to protect prospective investors, but to that greater and more interested class, the whole people.

In his address before the committee, Mr. Shallenberger called attention to the fact that there were at least eight distinct evils in the trust system, the three principal of which were the destruction of competition, fraudulent and overcapitalization and the favoritism of the tariff and the railroads. He went on to explain the feature of his bill, by which he proposed to do away with these evils, and the intent of the non-partisan tariff commission to report on the subject.

A large crowd was present at the hearing, and Mr. S. was freely complimented on the merits of his bill and his knowledge of the subject in hand. The Washington papers were all quite extended in their comments.

This has not been a busy week in congress. The opponen's of the omnibus statehood bill have taken up the time of the senate in filibustering to prevent a vote thereon, but, now that the bill has some republicans, led by Quay, to assist the democrats, there is a fair possibility of its passage.

The bill to pay the expenses of the anthracite coal commission has passed both houses; the pension, legislative, judicial and executive appropriation bills, in all of which there is a slight increase, have passed the lower house; while the immigration bill has received senate approval.

The death of Tom Reed is deeply lamented in many quarters, as he was recognized by those best capable to judge as being the ablest republican of them all. It cannot be denied that his last days were somewhat embittered by the fact that he could not reach the goal of his ambition—the presidency. He was out of harmony with the majority of his party on the Philippine question and this induced his withdrawal from public life.

A comparison between the Panama and Nicaragua routes for an American isthmian canal has been made by the bureau of statistics. The total length of the Panama route is 49.09 miles, that of the Nicaragua route is 183.66 miles. The relative cost of constructing the canals is, Nicaragua, \$189,864,062; Panama, \$144,233,358. The annual cost of maintenance and operation is, Nicaragua, \$3,300,000; Panama, \$2,000,000. The annual cost of maintaining the Suez canal is about \$1,300,000. An average steamer would require twelve hours to pass through the Panama canal and thirty-three hours to cross the Nicaragua. But the sea distance between New York and San Francisco by the Nicaragua route is 498 nautical miles less than by way of Panama.

Secretary Hay yesterday informed the cabinet that the Panama negotiations had been practically completed with the exception of fixing the increased price which Colombia is anxious to secure for the concession.

The bureau of engraving and printing had money to burn last month and save money by burning it. Forty thou-

sand dollars' worth of revenue stamps mixed with the regular fuel was shoved into the furnaces every day for a month, and as a consequence the price of a ton of coal was saved every twenty-four hours.

Owing to the high price of anthracite coal and the scarcity of fuel at the bureau it was thought best to get some good out of the tons of waste stamps that represented a value of over a million dollars. This is the first time in the history of the bureau that such a use has ever been

made of condemned stamps, and the precedent will probably be followed on future occasions.

It is estimated that the total weight of all mail matters, exclusive of government "free," mailed during the year was 745,742,872 pounds. The actual postage revenue derived from this source was \$116,728,644. Of this sum \$90,950,751.72 was received for first class mail, \$4,541,523.59 for second class, and \$20,957,110.44 for third and fourth class mail.

The railways these days are working

Uncle Sam to a finish.

Postmaster General Wilson is the only postmaster general who ever concerned himself enough about the matter to endeavor to secure honest weighing of the mails. He caught one railway company in the act of padding the mails, and the manager of the company candidly confessed that he crowded free postage matter into the mails during the quadriennial weighing period in order to get as large a weight-basis for calculation of payment as possible. The weight of mail matter per day ascertained by the weighing is made the basis of payment, in accordance with certain established rules. Routes carrying mail the whole length receive from \$50 per annum per mile for 200 pounds of matter daily to \$200 per mile per annum for 5,000 pounds daily. On the Pennsylvania and New York Central systems this works out to 9 cents per ton per mile, as compared with 3-10th of a cent per ton-mile paid for some freight.

But this is not all the railways get for carrying mails, and padding the weights is a venial offense compared with the way the government is mulcted by its own act for the use of railway mail cars. These cars are all owned by the railways and the government pays for their rent as well as for transportation of the mails. This rent is paid at the following rates: 40-foot car, \$25 per mile per annum; 45-foot car, \$30 per mile per annum; 50-foot car, \$40 per mile per annum; 55 to 60-foot, \$50 per mile per annum.

Under these rates, for which, by the way, congress is responsible, \$3,463,916.70 was paid for the use of 622 regular cars and 154 in reserve. If the reserve cars are used half the time it costs the government \$5,000 a year for each car, which is all it costs to build one. The car will last at least twenty years, and extract from the government \$100,000.

It now costs the government about \$47,000,000 a year to transport the mails by railways and steamships, including the salaries of the railway postal clerks. It is a charge that under economical and careful management and some revision by congress of the postal laws, might be cut in two. There is no excuse for a post-office deficit in view of this extravagance with the railways.

The people are clamoring for extension of the rural delivery mail service, and are being put off with the cry that there is no money, and yet at the same time they are keeping in power an administration that thinks nothing of squandering millions every year to convince the railroads it is worth their while to put up large contributions to aid the trusts in carrying elections for the g. o. p.

The imbroglie in Venezuela is engrossing much attention just now, and if the action of the United States so far in the premises is any criterion the Monroe doctrine bids fair to go "the way of all flesh," along with the Declaration of Independence and the constitution.

The Germans have already sunk a part of the Venezuelan navy, and, with England, have blockaded Venezuelan ports, but yet have committed no overt act looking toward the exercise of sovereignty. However, it is well known that Germany has never accepted the Monroe doctrine in good faith, and doubtless now awaits an opportunity to step over into Brazilian territory, which she has long coveted, and which she thinks she may secure through collusion with England, in view of the administration's strong friendship with our mother country.

The United States is, in no sense, bound to offer an impediment in the way of the payment of honest debts, but Secretary Hay is not exercising our offices in the American way Blaine and Olney would have done to prevent European aggression. Our minister's action has tended more to give the world notice that our sympathy is with the stronger nations in the controversy.

And yet, the people voted for this sort of thing!

H. W. RISLEY.

Jackson (O.) Herald: The president says we have the power to control the trusts, but he never said that he felt inclined to exercise it.

Christmas

(How the earth-man explained its significance to the man from Mars.)

*You say you ne'er saw aught like this?
Then you certainly missed much, for see
You get a taste of Heavenly bliss
Under our Christmas tree.*

*We earth folks are mighty sinners
And our quarrels would never cease
Were it not for the Christmas season,
That wonderful season of peace.*

*The very best that is in us
Comes to the surface then;
And we're only rivals as far as we show
Good will to our fellow-men.*

*For once in the year we cast aside
Our heart-ache and care and sorrow;
Our faces assume a brighter look,
Saying, "Worry, I'll meet you tomorrow."*

*But where do we get this blessing?
(I always forget you're from Mars)
It's a costly gift from the Giver
Who owneth and guideth the stars.*

*He gave us the first Christmas present
On the Christmas day numbered one,
When to this world, in unmeasured Love,
He sent His beloved Son.*

—Anna Krumbach.

*Down from the Heavens they came on that evening,
Heavenly messengers, Angels of light;
Bringing good news to the shepherds affrighted
Trembling in awe of the presences bright.
Down from the Heavenly portals they're winging,
Hark to the angels, oh hark to their singing;
Throughout the world the sweet carols are ringing
"Peace unto mankind; a Savior is born."*

*Once more the heralds announce the glad Christmas
"Love rules the earth—Let the people rejoice.
Praise ye the Lord who is King of all nations;
Praise Him, oh praise Him, all ye who have voice."
Up to Heaven's portals triumphantly winging,
List to the children, oh list to their singing,
Join in the carols so joyously ringing
"Peace unto mankind; a Savior is born."
—Verna F. Barr.*

Money and the Taxing Power

BY W. H. ASHBY.

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It gives The Independent great pleasure to announce to its readers that arrangements have been completed for the publication in serial form of Capt. W. H. Ashby's work on political economy, "Money, and the Taxing Power." This will be published in installments of about two columns a week, beginning January 1, 1903, until finished—which will probably be some time next summer. The Independent's policy will be to progress by easy stages, giving our readers no more each week than they can read conveniently and mentally digest. Well written criticisms of any position taken by Captain Ashby will always be welcomed.

Captain Ashby has for years been a student of political economy, and for a long time accepted without question many of the so-called fundamentals of the science. But as his investigations proceeded he was at times confronted with obstacles that were insurmountable and which necessitated his taking a circuitous route, or a retracing of his steps and search for a new path. Finally he resolved to begin at the beginning and survey his

own road through the forest of political economy, accepting no landmarks and blazings which did not show unmistakable evidence of authenticity under the searchlight of reason. "Money, and the Taxing Power" constitutes his field notes in making this survey.

In part Captain Ashby's work is iconoclastic. He has no reverence for idols simply because they have been worshipped for generations. Yet his conclusions in many respects are in harmony with those of the great economists. Written in the clearest of English, and avoiding as far as possible the stilted style adopted by most writers on political economy, it cannot fail to give our readers a rare treat.

Tell your neighbors about this new feature of The Independent. Let them try a three months' educational trial trip subscription. A silver dime will pay the bill. And if at the end of that time Captain Ashby's instruction has not become a necessity, it will be easy to discontinue. Don't forget the date: January 1, 1903, when the first installment will be printed. Begin at the beginning and don't miss a number.