

WASHINGTON NOTES

Dull Holiday Week at National Capital—The Sultan's Salary—Cuban Annexation

Washington, D. C., Dec. 29, 1902.—(Special Correspondence.)—Official Washington at this time is very quiet, and but for the holiday season, the city would be as dull as the mid-summer, to escape the heat of which all who can leave for various resorts.

The consensus of senatorial opinion appears to be that nothing will be done by the upper house other than the work necessary for the consideration of appropriation bills. The steering committee of the senate takes the position that the people have indorsed the "let well enough alone" idea and that no legislation need, therefore, be enacted.

The report of the condition of the national banks of the United States, just issued, shows the resources of the 4,666 banks in operation to be \$6,104,091,916.46. There are 387 of such institutions insolvent and 1,418 in process of liquidation.

From the bureau of statistics, we get the information that the shipments of merchandise from the United States to Porto Rico have amounted to \$1,000,000 a month for the past year; to the Philippines, \$400,000 a month. The annual shipments to the Hawaiian islands is estimated at \$20,000,000, and to Alaska \$9,000,000.

The Sultan of Sulu is not slow to remind the United States of its financial obligations, and when, last month, he failed to get his salary and that of his adherents on time, he sent for the commanding officer of the United States troops in Jolo, and asked that a message be sent at once to Manila over the signal corps lines to hurry the money along.

Every man of these is a polygamist and a slave owner, and above the hut of each floats a "banner of the free." In view of the hue and cry against Congressman Roberts several years ago as to his polygamous relations, and the little misunderstanding about forty years ago over slavery that cost the nation \$3,000,000,000 and a million lives, it is interesting to read that this "great Christian nation" has a payroll in Sulu, where any slave can purchase his freedom by paying to his master the usual market price, by treaty with the United States!

Some figures showing the strength of the American federation of labor may be interesting to Independent readers:

Table with 2 columns: Category and Amount. Includes National unions (100), State federations (26), City central labor unions (424), Local unions (14,000), Local trade and federal labor unions directly chartered (1,483), Members paying a per capita tax (1,025,300), Receipts, 11 months, including balance of \$7,814.26 (\$152,312.47), Expenditures (120,086.74), Bal. Nov. 1, 1902 (\$32,225.73), Growth of the organization during 11 months ending November 1, 1902, there were organized: National and intern. unions (14), State federations (6), City central labor unions (127), Local trade and federal labor unions (877), Total new organizations (1,024), Total new unions formed by the federation and various national bodies (3,500), Total addition to union membership, estimated (300,000), Propaganda organization (15), Paid organizers in the field (150), Volunteer organizers (1,500), Expenses of organizing.

work, 11 months..... \$36,000 These figures will serve to illustrate the growing and irresistible force of organized labor, did they but direct their energies at the polls with the singleness of purpose shown in other directions. One day's work at the ballot box by the members of this organization has more than offset the good accomplished in the preceding 364 of the year.

The senate chamber more than likely will be the battleground over a substantial increase in the navy, the fight in the house having already been practically won. That body is apt to pass appropriations for at least four fighting ships, which is further than congress has ever gone at a short session. Senator Hale, chairman of the senate committee on naval affairs, is known to be opposed to any increase. Hale is the man whose extreme solicitude for Spanish welfare in the late war was the comment of the country. There are allegations that the relations existing between Hale and the wife of the then Spanish minister may have had something to do with his attitude, and, at any rate, his course is not gaining him friends here or in the country at large.

Some doubts are expressed as to whether the Cuban reciprocity treaty will have clear sailing when it comes before the United States senate. Grave doubts are expressed as to the power of the president to negotiate or the senate to ratify such a treaty. It is pointed out that the Dingley law, under which the reciprocity treaties now pending were negotiated expressly limited the time during which reciprocity treaties could be negotiated to two years after its passage. This time limit long ago expired, and a number of members of congress interested in the subject have searched in vain for any authority granted the president and the senate to negotiate and ratify treaties other than that prescribed in the Dingley act. This act also stipulates that the treaties after having been ratified by the senate, must be approved by congress and the fear is expressed that should the question be tested in the courts it would be found that the president had exceeded his constitutional authority in negotiating this treaty without the express permission of congress, granted in advance, as it is well known the constitution provides that all bills affecting the revenues of the United States must originate in the house. Should this treaty prevail, it is alleged that it will not calm the unsettled feeling in Cuba existing at this time among the land holders and business element, who, according to representations made by some of their people now in this country, can see no future for Cuba except through annexation to the United States. They reason that, no matter what reciprocal concessions might be made by congress, it does not necessarily follow that such a movement would inspire more confidence in the republic's stability on the part of other nations, or prove that the government of Cuba was in safe hands.

A reciprocity treaty with Cuba has always been opposed by the annexationists in congress, chief among whom is Congressman Newlands, who will be the new senator from Nevada. He says: "It is better for us to secure reciprocity with Cuba by political union than by treaty, which may create jealousy in other quarters, and of which there is already too much. Reciprocity treaties involving favoritism to certain nations will only in the end engender international dislike. If Cuba becomes a part of the United States she will, of course, have free trade with us, and it is the only way in which she can secure it as long as the protective system is maintained."

A scandal is now said to be imminent in the postoffice department, and the report is current that a demand will be made in congress after the holiday recess for investigation of certain divisions. The notorious favoritism of the department to the railroads has long been known, and it is now charged that four companies are successful in obtaining contracts to supply the letter boxes on a large majority of the rural routes. Their success is said to be chiefly due to the fact that their agents are usually on the ground canvassing in advance of the time the route is officially laid out and long before the agents of other companies are aware that it is to be established, notwithstanding the fact that there is supposed to be a fair field and no favorites.

This is said to be due to that fact that a high department official is a

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large stockholder in each of the four companies. It is said that his plan is to advise one or two of these companies, as soon as a route is surveyed, in order that the agents may canvass the route before the other companies know where it is to run. Usually the favors have been passed around among the four companies. In connection with the charges, it is known that many members of congress are dissatisfied with the treatment accorded them in the matter of rural free delivery. They claim that when they refused to comply with the request of certain powerful officials of the department they have been told that they could expect nothing more in the way of establishing routes in their respective districts.

Rank injustice has been done many members, particularly democrats, and great favors shown others by the department.

There is also much feeling over the fact that the salaries of Superintendent Machen of the rural free delivery service, and Superintendent Beavers of the salaries and allowances division, were each increased \$500 in the last appropriation bill without a recommendation from Postmaster General Payne, while the requests he did make were either wholly ignored or only partially granted.

Such a wholesale raise in salaries as the last bill provided for has no precedent in our history. No such extreme extravagance was never before attempted or practiced.

H. W. RISLEY.

Some reformers should remember that it is not the name "people's party" that excites the wrath of its opponents, but the principles that it advocates. The Independent does not care anything about party names. As far as that goes, one name is as good as another, but it does care about principles and will never abandon those it has so long defended. Those who think that they can avoid the bitter malice entertained by plutocracy and its ignorant following by adopting a new name, while retaining the old principles, will find themselves mistaken. The dailies will pour out the vials of their wrath upon the new name, just as they have upon the name "people's party."

The smelter trust out in Colorado is playing the same game on competing smelters that Morgan's steel trust adopted to down its big competitor. It has an interest in the railroads and gets discriminating rates so low that the other smelters are threatened with ruin. Trusts will exist and the people will be exploited for all they can produce above a bare existence just as long as the railroads remain in private hands. There is no way out of these difficulties but the populist way. The government must own the railroads.

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