

# The Nation.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 1909.

## The Week.

President Roosevelt is at his best in his veto of a bill granting monopolistic rights in a river in Missouri, and in his exposition of the sound policy of the government in dealing with the preservation and use of water power. It is possible that he a little exaggerates the danger of a combination to control all the hydro-electric resources of the country. Still, the possibility of abuse which he dwells upon is very real, and the need of adopting some such general and far-reaching plan as he proposes is urgent. Franchises in perpetuity for public-service corporations should now be thought as obsolete as the dinosaur. The limited term, the vigilant oversight, the regulation, the revocation on breach of conditions—these are the new ideas about corporations dealing in public utilities, and they have come to stay. President Roosevelt is quite right in contending that the mistakes of the past in giving away rights in the country's natural resources should not be repeated in the immensely important matter of generation of electricity from water-power.

That the President, for all his love of the military and his championship of the fighting spirit, leaves office without regrets from the army, is the assertion of the *Army and Navy Register* in its current issue:

His successor cannot do more to injure military discipline and create discontent in the personnel than has been accomplished by the present head of the nation.

As evidence of the kind of action that has brought about Mr. Roosevelt's unpopularity in the army, the *Register* cites the assignment to active duty of Lieut.-Col. Edgar A. Mearns of the retired list during his trip to Africa with the President. As to that, the *Register* says:

Mr. Roosevelt has no more right to have this retired officer assigned to such duty with him after March 4 than he has to assign any other retired army or navy officer to accompany a private citizen who chooses to travel for his health or excitement, at home or abroad.

It might have added that this course is

wholly in keeping with Mr. Roosevelt's use of United States war vessels as private yachts, not only for himself, but for members of his family. The *Register* is also excited over the assignment to the fine new army billet, that of paymaster at Honolulu, of Major Beecher B. Ray, the "political paymaster," who was given leave of absence to work for Mr. Taft's nomination and election during the greater part of 1908. The extent and usefulness of Major Ray's "pull" are hardly surpassed in the army to-day—and this under the administration of an ardent believer in the merit system.

Under the prodding of the House Committee on Military Affairs, the War Department, which has been asking for 612 additional army officers, has suddenly discovered that there is another way out of the dilemma, and has drafted a bill permitting it to place in active service 250 retired officers. This is precisely what the *Nation* has been suggesting. The War Department feels, however, that it must have the right peremptorily to order these 250 men to active duty; hence its appeal for legislation. The War Department ought certainly to have complete authority over its retired officers. They should in time of peace or war be at the disposition of the Secretary for such light duty as they may be capable of performing. Probably 400 retired officers are too old or physically too disabled to perform any duty; but many of the others would be grateful for active work, and the difference between active and retired pay would mean a good deal to them. The navy has found it desirable to keep on active duty a number of retired officers; surely, of the nine army officers ordered up for retirement on Friday last because they could not ride ninety miles, there must at least be eight capable of serving as recruiting officers, of teaching in schools, and doing other useful work for which active officers are now employed. From the point of view of economy there will be a great saving to the government if the new bill passes. But what Congress ought to insist on is that, besides using retired officers, unnecessary service away from regiments should be abolished.

ed. Why should there be infantry and cavalry officers in addition to engineers and medical officers, on duty with the Panama Canal? Why should there be thirteen active officers guarding Indian prisoners and running army prisons?

Mr. Taft's Atlanta speech last week was in excellent taste, and in spirit thoroughly in consonance with the occasion. Southern hospitality, ever generous, was at its best, and no one can doubt that it was actuated only by genuine good-will for the next President. Mr. Taft took the opportunity to dwell upon the desirability of a strong opposition party in local and State governments, "a substantial and intelligent minority which may become a successful majority," when abuses must be rectified. Not one of his listeners could dispute that truth. With the negro disfranchised, the South suffers gravely from the dominance of one party, for that carries with it the danger of control by cliques, the loss of public interest in public affairs, widespread indifference to the value of the ballot, and, thus, the opportunity of the demagogue to play upon prejudice and passion in default of a real issue. While it is true that the South is more tolerant than it used to be of those who differ with its pet opinions, Mr. Taft went too far in saying that the expression of any political view in the South no longer exposes him who voices it to possible ostracism; but Mr. Taft is quite correct in believing that his stay in the South will make for the growing independence of speech and political tolerance. So, too, beyond all doubt, will his administration.

The negro voters of Atlanta are entitled to the appreciation of the public for the high sense of citizenship they exhibited yesterday in supporting Mr. Maddox and the cause of good morals.

This high praise of the colored voter, from Hoke Smith's newspaper, the *Atlanta, Ga., Journal*, appeared immediately after the recent mayoralty election in that city. This *Journal* is the same newspaper which, under the malign influence of Gov. Smith, had been dwelling on the evils resulting, not from negro domination, but from negro attendance at the polls. It brought out all the

Reference Collection  
Lee College Library  
Baytown, Texas

NOV 2 1909

familiar arguments as to the necessary dominance of the white race, the untrustworthiness, ignorance, and general unworthiness of the black man. Yet when the negro came to cast his last vote before being disfranchised, he allied himself squarely with the reform elements and aided in defeating for reelection the drunkard who had been Mayor for some time past. If they were all that the *Journal* has painted them, the colored citizens of that city would have voted overwhelmingly for the defeated candidate. If the Georgia negro is disfranchised now, he has, at least, had another chance to give the lie to the white politicians who, for their own base ends, have so often maligned him.

Mr. Root's election to the Senate is accompanied by no signs of enthusiasm. This is partly because it has so long been certain. We get excited only over what is doubtful. New York is, of course, very glad to get, instead of Platt, a man of the new Senator's ability. For sheer intellectual quality, he has impressed himself upon good judges in Washington, both Americans and foreigners, beyond any man in public life. That he has a sort of austere pride of bearing, which the politicians resent as "coldness," does no injury to Mr. Root with the judicious. Yet the fact that he is not a slap-you-on-the-back statesman undoubtedly accounts, in part, for the lack of popular acclaim over his new honor. In addition, there is the fact that his choice was imposed upon the Republican party of the State from without. Roosevelt and Taft had far more to do with it than Assembly or Senate at Albany. Finally, to be entirely frank, there has been an uneasy feeling in this city and State that Mr. Root might have sat for the portrait which the President drew in his speech at Harvard, when he spoke of eminent lawyers who put their great abilities at the service of unprincipled speculators desiring to violate the law. This disquiet alone would have been enough to prevent Mr. Root's election, had there been a direct primary for the Senatorship.

Mr. Burton's election as Senator from Ohio is passing with little comment. Americans take their blessings quietly. Mr. Burton, be it said, owes his success to neither machine nor millions. His

promotion is in line with the older and better tradition about the Senatorship, which made it the due reward of faithful service as Representative or as Governor. There is nothing showy about Mr. Burton. He has long been a student, a hard-working member of the House, in which he has come to have great authority, and has established a reputation for poise, good judgment, and independence. The accession of such a man to the Senate is cause for congratulation, not to Ohio alone, but to the whole country.

The liquor dealers who announced, at a recent convention, that the agitation against their trade was rapidly subsiding, were trying mental science for their woes. Anti-saloon crusades seem to be still gathering force. State-wide prohibition was decreed last week by the Tennessee Legislature, and may perhaps be upheld over the veto just filed by the Governor. Texas politicians, including Senator Bailey, are seeking to avoid the issue by having the question referred to the people. In several States, brewers have besought the courts to declare liquor legislation confiscatory, but the request has been denied. The Alabama law has just been declared constitutional, and Georgia is construing hers so strictly that even newspaper advertisements of strong drink will, as the view runs, be impossible. If all this is not enough to wake the dealers from their self-imposed hallucination, we may add the prospect of a lively campaign for local option at Albany.

The acquittal of T. J. Hains brings up anew the question whether the morals of New York are any better than those of a frontier mining camp. Here was a man who once before had taken human life. Beyond all doubt, while his brother committed one of the coldest-blooded murders ever known in this city, he stood by and prevented any attempt to stop the shooting. If he was not *particeps criminis* in the first degree, then there is no such thing as being an accomplice. But apparently the jury disagreed; two of its members were sick; and finally, in order to obtain release from confinement, they, or some others, weakly yielded and agreed on a verdict of not guilty. This result is another evidence of the weakness of our jury system under the strain of

popular hysteria in regard to certain crimes, and the long-drawn-out terrors of a "famous" trial. It is only fair to say, however, that the whole fault in this instance does not rest with the jury. The District Attorney so handled his case as to demonstrate unfitness. If Capt. Hains shall now escape on the ground of insanity, New York may well hang out a sign: "Murderers Welcomed and Encouraged." The evidence in the Hains trial ought to open many people's eyes to the folly of asserting that in a case of this kind the sole blame rests upon the man who, to use the current cant, "ruthlessly breaks up the home." Behind the "unwritten law" is this unexercised belief of the middle ages, that, before the wrongdoer, the woman in the case is as helpless as a rabbit in a snake's cage. We have no defence to offer, Heaven knows, for the home-wrecker; we simply assert that the disposition to hold him solely responsible is a relic of the days when woman was an economic slave, who had no mind or moral standards of her own. But in this day and generation society cannot excuse her as if she were without free will or responsibility. If, therefore, we are going to adopt "the unwritten law" in this city, it ought to apply to both the guilty parties, and to be frankly put on the statute books. As matters now stand, any New Yorker who lifts his voice against lawlessness, South or West or East, must face the immediate *tu-quoque* of the Hains trial.

The placing on the European markets, this week, of a Russian government loan for \$275,000,000 has an interesting bearing both on politics and on finance. The mere fact of these enormous loans to the Russian Treasury is an important factor in Russian politics. From the time the first Duma was convoked, it has been recognized at St. Petersburg, both by crown and parliament, that so long as the Czar and his Ministers retained the right to raise money on the public credit, just so long would the hands of the Duma be tied. To realize the significance of this authority, one has only to imagine Charles the First, for instance, in control of the machinery for pledging England's credit to secure funds from foreign markets, and with those markets ready and anxious to make the loan. Re-convocation of a hostile Parliament might eas-

ily have been unnecessary; "ship money" would have been superfluous; and a series of bond issues, say, at Paris, might conceivably have bridged over 1640 and left the members of the Long Parliament to idle away their time and energy at home. It is through this power over the public credit, jealously guarded against attacks from the Duma, that autocracy has intrenched itself, even after the grant of Parliamentary discussion.

In the present case politics and finance have in turn conspired to influence the fortunes of the undertaking. The loan was apparently contemplated, with a view to meeting the constant and heavy deficits of Imperial finances, as long ago as the autumn of 1906. The strain which then existed on the whole world's capital resources, which forced the London bank rate up to 6 per cent., and which drove our own great corporations out of the bond market and into the market for short-term loans at high rates on their notes-of-hand, blocked the plans of Russia also. Then, too, nothing whatever could be done in the world-wide disorder of credit in the markets of 1907. With credit repaired and money easy after the liquidation of that period, plans for the Russian loan were laid again last summer; but the trouble in the Balkans, and the threat of open war among European states, again caused the bankers to withdraw. The announcement of the loan, the over-subscription of the part allotted to London, and the practically assured success of the Paris allotment, are evidence that both financial and political misgivings have largely passed away. But the fact of so enormous a requisition on its credit facilities leaves open the question how long this Russian borrowing can continue. Germany, a state in far higher standing on the money markets, has taken warning from the heaping-up of debt whereby future generations shall be charged with payment for the extravagances of the hour, and is maturing plans for laying the burden on the shoulders of present-day taxpayers. Sooner or later, the Russian government must do the same, and it is possible that then, as was the case in the Reichstag of a month ago, the Duma will find voice again.

Admiral Rozhestvensky, who died in

St. Petersburg last week, deserved something more than the sympathy he won as the defeated commander in the world's greatest naval battle since Trafalgar. The thoroughness of his defeat was not necessarily an index of his skill. The circumstances of naval warfare are such, especially in modern times, that there may be no alternative between victory and annihilation. It was different with the Russian forces on land, where Kuropatkin could survive such enormous disasters as Liaoyang, Sha-ho, and Mukden, and even turn them to advantage in schooling and hardening his troops. To Rozhestvensky no trials of strength were open, and he was compelled to meet Togo's seasoned forces with a hastily gathered fleet, manned by untrained land levies, badly officered and equipped. The celebrated episode with the North Sea trawlers shows in what a state of nerves this last despairing Armada of Russia's left the Baltic. The published journal of the chief engineer of the fleet, Politovsky's "From Libau to Tsushima," shows the state of apprehension in which men and officers alike went forward to meet their fate. To have brought such a conglomeration of fighting ships some eighteen thousand miles safe to the scene of battle was no slight achievement.

Affairs in the Balkans enter on a distinctly brighter phase with the conclusion of an agreement between Austria-Hungary and Turkey regarding the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Elements of unrest still remain. Monetary arrangements between Turkey and Bulgaria are still to be concluded, though there is little doubt of a final settlement. The people of Serbia and Montenegro continue to chafe, but at present they have only Russia's somewhat obscure sympathy to count upon. Whatever support they may find among the other Powers will surely not go to the extent of tolerating action that may threaten war. After all, it was Turkey that was the injured party in the whole affair, and with Turkey now definitely for peace, such chances of an outbreak as may have existed are greatly reduced. The meeting of a conference is now more probable than ever. It is true that the conference will find little to do except to ratify what the interested parties have already decided upon

among themselves. But if it is only the fear of what a conference might force her to do that has made Austria willing to come to terms, the calling of one has already been justified.

From England it is reported that public taste has been turning strongly to Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, and other writers who are believed to have done some meritorious work during the first half of the Victorian era. For such a revival, which, we trust, actually exists outside the imagination of some enterprising journalist, there would be ample justification. As against the modern realists who, largely recruited from among the women, have gone in strongly for highly-seasoned compounds of passion, politics, and sociology, we should be going back to the comprehensive sweep and masterful handling which makes of the great Victorian novel a little world, and not a "problem"—a world that cries and laughs, instead of whimpering and cackling, over large things like life, death, love, hunger, duty, pity, anger, and not the nerves of a young girl who was not brought up well or the "claims" of a woman who does not know what she wants. On the ground of economy the elder writers should be favored. Publishers unblushingly call upon us to pay \$1.50 for a novel that will help us wile away half an hour on a rainy day, or for just the story that goes with a hammock under the trees. Even though the original volumes of "Our Mutual Friend" or "Vanity Fair" or "Middlemarch" cost three or four times the fixed price of the present-day novel, there can be no comparison between the actual amount of protein, fat, carbohydrates supplied by one of Dickens's volumes and one of our modern tales. "Our Mutual Friend" has a better plot and mystery than most contemporary detective stories; more dramatic action than the great mass of cowboy, railway-accident, and sea fiction; more humor—that goes without saying—than any living author, with one possible exception, can now supply; more political satire than our novels of "uplift" about honest district attorneys and dishonest Congressmen; more truth about the slums than our ordinary novel of low life. When you balance accounts, it is Dickens that will turn out the lower-priced fare.



## FREAKS OF RACE PREJUDICE.

There has been considerable stir over the anti-Japanese bills laid before the California Legislature; and in an address in Washington on Monday, as well as in his telegram to Gov. Gillette, President Roosevelt has made a fresh demand for a "square deal" for the Japanese. Apparently, the matter is now to be threshed over again in the terrifying headlines of the sensational press. But a recent investigation by the Federal Bureau of Labor shows how little basis there is for the demagogue's frequent assertion that his opposition to the Japanese is neither blind nor selfish, but can stand the test of facts and logic. Two non-Aryan races are "invading" the Pacific Slope; from the West the Japanese, and from the South the Mexican Indians. Here is an ideal opportunity to show that race prejudice is rational.

The man from Nippon is of inferior stock, the Californian says, just as bad as "the dirty Chink." His personal habits, his morals, and his general view of life are so far below the American that they menace our society. But we hear no such charge brought against the "cholos," who have been pouring into the State. They are the lowest Mexican Indians, one degree removed from savagery. The Federal Bureau of Labor describes them as "Indians in physique, temperament, character, and mentality; unambitious, physically weak, irregular, and indolent." Their mode of life is evidently no better than that of the Chinese. "They are prejudiced against water, believing that washing causes fever." In the large filthy Mexican quarter of Los Angeles twenty-four men were found inhabiting one small, dark room. Surely, the Japanese could fall no farther below our standards.

But the yellow man has another fault; not only is he inferior, but, declares the Californian, he cannot and will not become Americanized. Supremely content with his own ways, he herds with his kind, lives in the old way, sends his earnings to Japan, and eventually follows them thither. But in this respect the yellow man is like the red man. Our government investigators find that the Mexican immigrant is a tramp laborer who comes north to pick up a few dollars, and, that done, returns to spend it in his cheap fatherland. He is "nomadic and outside of American civiliza-

tion." He does not mingle socially with others:

Intermarriage is rare, and when it occurs it seems to be a subject of apology. . . . The Mexican does not put himself forward or seek white society. He observes his own canons of reserve and dignity, which are never offensive.

The favorite objection to the Japanese is, however, that he underbids the American. In this respect he and the "cholo" are again brothers. Indeed, the Mexican plays the game even more sharply. In Texas he is displacing the negro on farm and cottonfield. In California, railway managers, ranchmen, and city contractors are giving him preference over Italians, Russians, Greeks, and Japanese, because he asks less, and is more easily controlled. He is particularly welcomed in some quarters, because he does not join labor unions and is always ready to turn strike-breaker. The Southern Pacific Railway is said to pay its Greek section hands \$1.60 a day, the Japanese \$1.45, and the "cholos" only \$1.25. The two former nationalities hang together, an offence against one being taken as against all; but a Mexican will not leave his job for anybody else's grievance.

If, under these circumstances, the 7,000 Japanese who entered this country in 1908 are a national menace, what can be said of an annual influx of from 80,000 to 100,000 Mexicans? It is perfectly clear that the rational Japanophobe should hate the "cholo" with burning fury. But the Bureau of Labor says:

The race sentiment of Americans toward Mexicans is . . . peculiar and illogical. . . . Organized labor, and white workers in general, do not appear to be opposed to Mexicans in the same way that they are to Orientals. . . . The American negro considers himself above the Mexican, and yet the latter receives more social recognition from the white man. . . . Mexican immigrants ride in white cars in Texas, and might eat at the same table with Americans.

In Los Angeles, Mexican children, to the number of 1,000, sit in the same school classes with American pupils and without discrimination. Their parents may do whatever Boston-born persons might, if they have the money. And as in Los Angeles, so everywhere between Galveston and Seattle.

Is half a continent, then, naively inconsistent or disingenuous? Some frank confessions force the latter answer upon us. An editor of a labor paper says:

"The Mexicans don't trouble us much. They can't do a white man's work." And railroad bosses without number point out two differences between Mexican and Japanese redounding greatly to the former's popularity. The Mexican, they say, is unskilled and remains so, while the "Jap" swiftly masters a trade or business. Again, the "cholo" can be led about like a lamb, but the miserable Oriental always has an eye open toward his rights and opportunities. And there the cat is out of the bag. The Japanese is feared for his virtues, without which he could scarcely be distinguished from the Mexican.

## THE GERMAN TAX FIGHT.

"We must be inspired by the categorical imperative of a burning, I might say, a passionate love of country," declared Herr Sydow, the German Imperial Minister of Finance, in concluding the first day's debate on the government's new tax proposals. It was a sign of the doubts he himself entertained as to the success of his campaign in the Reichstag, that he should thus early resort to the familiar trick of asking blind patriotism to take the place of calm reason and financial sagacity. But the Reichstag, though yet unable to follow up its success in bringing Kaiser and Chancellor to book in relation to foreign affairs, has not been willing to vote offhand as Sydow wished. It reassembled last week for the second stage of the financial discussion which bids fair to stretch throughout the whole winter; for during the recess the Finance Committee has accomplished nothing—*Ulk* pictures its members in night-gowns sleeping soundly—and the general parliamentary outlook is far from reassuring.

Not that the country is asleep. It has aroused itself against the new and radical taxes with a vigor that had hardly been expected. "Protests spring up everywhere like weeds," says the Munich *Neueste Nachrichten*, in commenting on the discouraging delay in dealing with the issue. Under the severe criticism of the important Commercial Diet, which met in Berlin early in December, hardly a proposal of Sydow's remained unscathed, and chambers of commerce throughout the Empire, taking their cue from that body, have assailed this or that tax. Societies, city governments, and local legis-