

Secretary of the Navy, George von L. Meyer, Massachusetts.

Secretary of the Interior, Richard A. Ballinger, Washington.

Secretary of Agriculture, James Willson, Iowa.

Secretary of Commerce and Labor, Charles Nagel, Missouri.

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Special Session of Congress.

Immediately after delivering his inaugural address, President Taft issued a proclamation calling a special session of the new Congress, the 61st, to meet March 15.

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The Steel Merger.

In the closing days of the 60th Congress, on the 2d, the judiciary committee's report of the Senate on the steel merger (p. 227) came to the Senate in a way to make it plain that the committee had a majority favoring censure of President Roosevelt for granting permission to J. P. Morgan and E. H. Gary to violate the Sherman anti-trust law by purchasing the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company for the steel trust. Chairman Clark reported the disagreement of the committee, and soon afterward Senator Culberson presented the views of seven members of the committee. These were signed by Senators Nelson, Kittredge and Foraker (Republicans), and Culberson, Bacon, Rayner and Overman (Democrats).

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In the opinion of Mr. Nelson, the President was not authorized to permit the absorption, which is declared to have been in violation of law. Mr. Nelson thought, however, that the President may have been misled or duped by officials of the United States Steel corporation, Messrs. Frick and Gary, who urged upon him the necessity of permitting the steel corporation to buy the Tennessee concern in order to save a business institution of New York city during the panicky days of October and November, 1907. Mr. Bacon expressed doubt whether the Senate should pronounce finally upon the question of whether the President committed a wrongful act, for the reason that the Senate is judge in impeachment proceedings. He took the position that the merger was illegal, but that the Senate should not take any action to prejudice any proceedings that might hereafter be brought before it. Later Senator Foraker filed his individual views declaring that he did not think it necessary for the committee to consider whether the transaction was a violation of the anti-trust law. He said that the reply of the committee should be confined to the one question as to whether the President was authorized to permit the merger, and that this should be answered in the negative. In view of the fact that representatives of the steel corporation called upon the President and asked his advice concerning the

transaction, and that the question also was submitted to Attorney General Bonaparte, Senator Foraker took the position that the steel corporation should not be condemned for its action.

The disagreement on the resolution was placed on the calendar, and expired under the rules with the close of the session.

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The Italian Elections.

General elections in Italy for a new parliament (p. 227) were held on the 7th. The socialists, very numerous in Italy, were divided. On the one hand were the uncompromising Socialist-party socialists—"middle-of-the-roaders," as they would be called in this country, and on the other were opportunistic socialists, who broke away from the party to make what in our politics we should call "fusions" with Republican and other radical groups. According to the latest reports, the socialists, republicans, and other radicals have greatly increased their strength. At least 19 socialist members were elected, and twenty-six more were made eligible for the second ballot; while the republicans and other radicals elected 28, and placed 11 in the running for the second ballot. "All the newspapers," say the dispatches from Rome, "comment on the notable triumph of the socialist and republican parties, declaring the extreme Left will be greatly increased in numbers and in fighting strength." This result is all the more significant from the fact that the working classes in Italy are largely disfranchised.

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A Union of the South African States Probable.

The convention of thirty representatives from the four self-governing States of South Africa—Cape Colony, Natal, Orange River Colony and the Transvaal—with two from Rhodesia, which opened at Durban last October (vol. xi, p. 732), to consider the question of consolidating or federating the States, has at last drafted a constitution (p. 208) which is to be submitted to the several State parliaments this month, and if approved by them will then come before the Imperial parliament. The convention has proceeded farther toward unification than was thought probable at the time of opening, when men like Dr. L. S. Jameson advocated federation as a step toward a final nationality. According to the London Nation:

Although the status of province is retained for the several colonies, and provincial assemblies will still exercise certain governmental powers, the triumph of the principle of union over federation is pretty complete. . . . The South African Constitution seeks closer unity by stricter limitation of the powers of the provincial councils, which hardly exceed those possessed in this country by county councils and other elective units of local government, and through the appointment by the central

government of a provincial administrator as the chief executive officer; and of an auditor of provincial accounts in whom will be vested a strong central control over provincial finances. If these proposals are adopted, British South Africa will, to all intents and purposes, become a single self-governing State, containing within itself full legislative, executive, and judicial control, with the exception of such almost nominal limitation upon legislation as is contained in the right of the Crown to disallow acts, a dwindling control over foreign policy, and an appeal in special cases from the Supreme Court of South Africa to the Privy Council.

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The constitution as drafted almost entirely excludes the native population from the franchise. This undemocratic feature is criticized by The Nation, and by that sturdy old democrat of South Africa, Mr. Theodore L. Schreiner, but there is little probability of any broad admission of native races to citizenship in States largely founded by those who would exploit native labor.

NEWS NOTES

—The street car men of Manila, Philippine Islands (p. 130), went on strike on the 4th.

—The lower house of the Nebraska legislature on the 4th adopted by 62 to 34 a Constitutional amendment empowering women to vote.

—Speaker Shurtleff (Republican) of the Illinois legislature (p. 226), has appointed Democrats as chairmen of 14 of the 62 committees.

—The expiring 60th Congress increased the President's salary from \$50,000 to \$75,000, but refused the usual appropriation of \$25,000 for his traveling expenses.

—Senator Isaac Stephenson of Wisconsin was re-elected on the 4th by 63 out of 123 votes cast. The legislature had been at a deadlock since the beginning of the year.

—Southern and western Arkansas was devastated on the 8th by a tornado. Brinkley is reported to have been wiped from the map by the storm and a fire which followed it.

—John Z. White of Chicago lectures at the Ford Hall Meetings (Bowdoin street and Ashburton place), Boston, on the 21st at 7:30 p. m., upon "Unemployment, Its Cause and Cure."

—The Cleveland traction receivers (p. 224) reported on the 5th a surplus for the month of February of \$28,978.71. They are reported by the Plain Dealer of the 6th as attributing the gain to higher fares.

—Photographs of President Taft and ex-President Roosevelt were sent by wire from Washington to New York on the 4th. These are said to be the first telegraphic photographs transmitted in the United States.

—The National American Woman Suffrage Association will hold its 41st annual convention in Seattle, Washington, July 1st to 7th. "Woman's Day"

at the Alaska Yukon Exposition will be observed during Convention week.

—At the Detroit primaries on the 2d, action was taken by women voters to defeat what is known as the "Martindale faction" of the school board. In consequence, of the eleven Martindale candidates for nomination, seven were defeated.

—Indictments against the New York World were found in the Federal Court at New York on the 5th for the same alleged libels as those upon which the indictments at Washington (p. 205) were found against the World and the Indianapolis News.

—Copies of the Johnstown Democrat containing Bishop Williams's remarkable address on "Wealth—Productive, Predatory and Parasitic," delivered recently at the Vine Street Church, Cincinnati, are held for distribution at 5 cents in stamps, by Daniel Kiefer, 530 Walnut street, Cincinnati.

—Ricardo Flores Magon, Antonio I. Villareal and Librado Rivera, the Mexicans indicted for breach of American neutrality laws (p. 122), were taken on the 3d from Los Angeles, Cal., to Tombstone, Ariz., for trial. They are to be defended by Clarence S. Darrow of Chicago, and H. F. Ring of Texas.

—Judge McPherson, of the Federal Court, sitting at Kansas City, on the 8th decided that the 2-cent fare law of Missouri (p. 208) and the maximum freight-rate law are invalid because these rates are insufficient to yield 6 per cent per annum over and above expense of maintenance and operation.

—The autonomy for Iceland proposed last Spring by the Commission from the Danish and Icelandic parliaments (vol. xi, p. 181), is not satisfactory to Iceland, according to a report from Copenhagen. The majority of the present Icelandic parliament favors the dissolution of all governmental ties with Denmark.

—The new President of Cuba, Mr. Gomez, signed, on the 6th, a general amnesty bill recently passed by the legislature, providing for the release from prison of persons convicted of crimes that could not be considered gravely atrocious. In accordance with the bill the Havana courts on the 8th issued orders for the release of more than 800 prisoners.

—Ex-President Roosevelt is to sail from New York on the 23d, on a hunting trip to Africa. He is to lead a scientific expedition of the Smithsonian Institution under the management of Maj. Edgar A. Mearns. Two other naturalists are to be of the Smithsonian party—J. Alden Loring and Edmund Heller. Mr. Roosevelt is to spend the time preliminary to his departure for Africa at his home at Oyster Bay.

—The Congressional ship subsidy bill, passed by the Senate, was defeated in the House on the 2d by 175 to 172. Among those voting in the negative were 30 Republicans, including Burton of Ohio, Lowden, Knopf, McKinney and Wilson of Illinois, Crum-packer of Indiana, and Murdock of Kansas. Only four Democrats voted for the bill—Bartlett of Nevada, Estopinal of Louisiana, Hobson of Alabama and Jones of Virginia.

—The Russian Douma shows marked and unexpected courage from time to time. For example, during the discussion of the budget of the ministry