

to improve it—an effect which in its turn would so increase population and prosperity as to greatly increase legitimate land values, and thus increase the fund that could in this manner be drawn on for all district needs. . . . At ten per cent. annual increase, the minimum rate testified to by witnesses before the committee, there would be an increment to land values of \$42,300,000 each year. This [now] represents the annual profit of land owners.

That report thus furnishes a definite official statement in support of the correctness of our contention that the pecuniary values which congressional appropriations produce in the District of Columbia are confiscated by the millions of dollars from the public treasury, where they belong, for the enrichment of local land owners. The same absurdly iniquitous condition, therefore, that existed when the century was young and Washington was little more than a governmental experiment, exists essentially now when a new century is about to open and Washington is one of the great capitals of the world. In this respect there has been no advance, no growth, no improvement.

That is the blot upon the century's development of the capital city of the great western republic. Nor is it any less a blot because so few now think of it as one. There were but few who thought slavery a blot upon the good name of the republic when it flourished in the District of Columbia. Less than half a century ago the public jail of the district was used as a slave pen and the sheriff as a slave keeper. Worse than that, men and women slaves were marched by slave dealers from the jail to their destination, openly upon the public streets, chained in gangs. Americans do not like to speak of this now. We are ashamed of it. That it was a blot upon all that was good and beautiful in what our growing capital represented has become all too plain. But it did not seem so then. Congress when appealed to to stop it as shocking to moral sensibilities and patriotic instincts, saw no reason for interfering. So is it with all institutional iniquities. But the greatest glory of a country consists in its discovery

of the true character of its iniquitous institutions and putting them behind it.

Greater is that than symmetrical architecture and fine statuary. While we should not be insensible to this external beauty, while we should enjoy it to the full in so far as it is expressive of exalted sentiment, no true American will ever forget that the noblest monument in Washington is the record of the abolition of slavery there. We could better spare all the beautiful art of the capital city, along with its magnificent growth, than that one act of national justice.

Feeling so, one cannot admire the external beauties of the city with the same unruffled emotions that one might experience if the common wealth they bring there were not still confiscated, through land monopoly, for the enrichment of a local class. May it not reasonably be hoped that the second century of our capital city will witness the end of this iniquitous policy in its government as the first did that of slavery? May we not think of our descendants a century hence as celebrating the beauties of civic righteousness which our capital city then displays, as well as its beauties of boulevard and monument and architecture?

NEWS

Business in congress has been pushed with unusual activity. Although the session is less than two weeks old, two important bills have already been rushed through the lower house, and another is well along upon its passage. One of the two bills that have passed the lower house is known as the "Grout oleomargarine" bill. It increases the present tax of 2 cents a pound on oleomargarine to 10 cents, when the article is colored to resemble butter; and it reduces the tax from 2 cents to a quarter of a cent when the article is uncolored. A substitute intended to recognize the value of oleomargarine as a wholesome and nutritious article of food, but to prevent its fraudulent sale, was defeated by a vote of 113 to 178, and the Grout bill passed on the 7th by 198 to 92. The other measure to

pass the lower house is the army reorganization bill. It increases the standing army, in round numbers, to a minimum of 58,000 and a maximum of 96,000, in the discretion of the president. There is a clause in the bill as passed which abolishes the army canteen by forbidding the sale of liquor of every kind upon any premises used for military purposes. The bill was passed on the 6th after two days' debate, by a vote of 166 to 133. The third bill to which we refer above, that which is well along upon its passage, is the bill for the reduction of war taxes. The debate upon it in the lower house, as it came from the committee on ways and means, began on the 11th.

In the senate the Hay-Pauncefote treaty for the abrogation of so much of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty as relates to the Nicaraguan canal (see *The Public*, first year, No. 43, page 8; second year, No. 97, page 9) was discussed in executive session on the 6th; and on the 12th a batch of reciprocity treaties was received from the president, together with certain extradition treaties and a supplementary treaty with Spain. The latter provides for the cession by Spain to the United States, for \$100,000, of four or five small islands of the Philippine archipelago which were accidentally omitted from the peace treaty signed at Paris.

Across the Atlantic another great legislature is in session—the British parliament. It listened on the 6th to the queen's speech, which was so brief that it may be reproduced here in full:

My Lords and Gentlemen: It has become necessary to make further provision for the expenses incurred by the operations of my armies in South Africa and China. I have summoned you to hold a special session in order that you may give your sanction to the enactments required for this purpose. You will not enter into other public matters requiring your attention until the ordinary meeting of parliament in the spring.

The customary address in reply having been moved on the same day, a bitter debate followed in which Secretary Chamberlain was made the center of attack. He responded with a fierce reply. Lord Salisbury participated in the debate, and referring to the Transvaal war declared that the conflict would not cease

until the two Boer republics had been divested of every shred of independence. At a late hour in the day the government presented to the house the supplementary war estimate, but its contents were kept secret. On the 7th Secretary Chamberlain stated that Sir Alfred Milner would be appointed governor of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. He also outlined the government's plan of reconstruction. A vote was reached on the 10th upon a proposed amendment to the address to the queen expressing regret that Lord Salisbury had recommended so many of his own family to offices under the government. The amendment was lost by 128 to 230. The main purpose of the session was accomplished on the 11th, when, the secretary of war having disclosed the contents of the supplementary estimate showing that £16,000,000 was required for the army, that amount was appropriated by a vote of 284 to 8.

While parliament was engaged in London upon the extra appropriation for war purposes, an immense Irish convention was assembling in Dublin. Over 3,000 delegates, representing county councils, district councils, borough corporations and branches of the United Irish league were in attendance. The convention opened on the 11th, and was described by John Redmond, who presided, as "the parliament of the Irish people." A resolution protesting against the British war upon the two Boer republics, proposed by John Dillon, was adopted unanimously. By an almost unanimous vote Timothy Healey and J. L. Carew were ordered to be excluded from the parliamentary party. At the second day's session a resolution was adopted demanding the sale of Irish lands to tenants at fair prices, and urging the necessity of stopping emigration to the United States. The Irish members of parliament attended the convention instead of appearing in their seats in the house of commons. They took this course because parliament had been assembled only to vote war funds for the subjugation of the Boers, a measure which they could not defeat and in the passage of which they had no wish to participate.

President Kruger, whose departure from France was noted last

week, arrived at The Hague on the 6th, where he was warmly received both by local officials and the public. Neither the queen nor anyone representing her greeted him; but the second chamber adopted a resolution of welcome, and on the 9th he had an audience with the queen, to which he was conducted by a court official in a state carriage. On the 11th, however, the government definitely and finally refused to take the initiative in urging Great Britain to arbitrate her differences with the Transvaal, explaining that the initiative is for the great powers to take and not for the smaller ones. It is rumored that the czar has refused to receive Mr. Kruger, but the Transvaal legation at The Hague contradicts the rumor.

In encouragement of Kruger's mission in Europe an immense Afrikander congress was held on the 6th at Worcester, a town in Cape Colony, not far from Cape Town. More than 6,000 Boers from different parts of Cape Colony were in attendance. Fearing some revolutionary violence, the British had posted troops and planted guns around the town. But no occasion arose for using them. The congress was peaceable throughout, although it freely condemned the British policy regarding the two republics to the north. Its session closed with the adoption by acclamation of three resolutions and the appointment of a delegation to deliver the resolutions to Sir Alfred Milner, governor general of Cape Colony, for transmission to the British government. The first resolution demands the termination of the war, protests against the devastation of the country and the burning of farms, and declares that the independence of the republics will alone insure peace in South Africa. The second urges the right of Cape Colony to manage its own affairs and censures the policy of Sir Alfred Milner. The third pledges the congress to "labor in a constitutional way" to attain the ends defined in the two preceding resolutions. In reply to the deputation, upon receiving these resolutions, Sir Alfred Milner said:

I shall forward these resolutions to the imperial government with my strong disapproval. They were framed by clever men now engineering the present agitation and encouraging those who are carrying on a hopeless resistance.

Meantime the largest Boer force now in service, led by the ablest cavalry general of the war, DeWet, was reported to have been caught in a trap. After DeWet's capture of Dewetsdorp, reported last week, he was chased by Gen. Knox, who appears to have driven him first southward and then to the west into the angle formed by the Orange and the Caledon rivers. Both streams were said to be swollen with recent rains, while strong bodies of British troops controlled every avenue of escape. On the 10th a London dispatch told of a great battle in progress, the Boers refusing to surrender and both sides suffering heavily. According to other London dispatches of the same date this struggle had then been in progress for ten days. But on the 12th Lord Kitchener reported that Gen. Knox was engaged in a running fight with DeWet, who was moving toward Reddersburg. From this report it is apparent that DeWet has crossed the Caledon and again eluded the superior British force.

The only other news of fighting in South Africa comes from points hundreds of miles farther north. Between Pretoria and Rustenburg, which lies west of Pretoria, a force of Boers, said to be a detachment of DeWet's command, attacked a British convoy on the 5th, killing 15 British soldiers and wounding 23; and on the 11th another attacked the British post near Barberton, killing 3, wounding 5 and capturing 13.

American difficulties in the Philippines continue to be as exasperating as those of the British in the Transvaal country, and for reasons not very dissimilar. In a letter of October 29, just published, Judge Taft, the president of the Philippine commission, explained:

The reelection of President McKinley will be a long step toward the complete pacification of these islands and will, I hope, end what remains of the insurrection, which is now continued only for election purposes, to influence the result in America. . . .

But these assurances are not borne out by events. Though it is now five weeks since Mr. McKinley's reelection, the Filipinos are still fighting with the patriotic ardor that has characterized their resistance to invasion from the start. On the 7th