

guage in Brittany. The ministry had issued a circular forbidding the use of this language in preaching and catechising in the Breton churches, and a Republican deputy from Brittany interpellated the ministry on the subject, denouncing the circular as vexatious and tyrannical. He said, incidentally, that over 740,000 inhabitants of Brittany can speak no other language than the Breton. Replying to this interpellation, the premier, M. Combes, defended the circular as a necessary measure in the interest of the national language. He was sustained by the chamber by a vote of 349 to 185.

It is reported regarding the revolution in Morocco (p. 649) that France has warned the sultan of the probability of European interference if fighting near Tangiers is continued. This report, however, was described on the 15th, by the premier of Spain, Senor Silvela, as "inaccurate." Of the progress of the revolution, but little information is available. The sultan's army is said to be demoralized, and rumors of his abdication are afloat. But the reports are not authentic.

In the United States the most absorbing news of the past two weeks, that regarding the coal famine (p. 648), is losing its hold upon the public mind, if, indeed, the circumstances themselves are not rapidly changing for the better. At any rate the complaints of shortage are less noticeable. In Chicago the special grand jury investigating the subject (p. 648) made a remarkable report on the 19th. While it presented indictments against 17 individuals and 27 corporations, charging them with conspiracy in restraint of trade, it reported nevertheless that the coal shortage was "not owing to or appreciably influenced by any conspiracy or combination in restraint of trade or any attempt to forestall the market." The unfortunate condition of affairs is attributed by it "primarily and principally to the recent great strike in the anthracite coal fields," which, as it asserts, "resulted in a reduction of approximately 25,000,000 tons in the output of anthracite coal—an equivalent of 50,000,000 tons of bituminous coal." It finds, also, that with the falling off in supply there was a great increase in demand; and that the railroads and the mine owners have been doing all in their

power to relieve the consequent distress. "Individual instances of breaches of contract and extortion" are referred to, but the jury finds "no evidence that these have been due to anything but individual unfairness or greed; nor does it find these instances to have been more numerous or more exasperating than might be expected in the circumstances." Yet, while finding "no evidence that the present condition of the coal industry is owing to or is appreciably influenced by any company or combination in restraint of trade," and while "convinced that under the conditions enumerated the natural law of supply and demand accounts sufficiently for the high prices prevailing, the jury does find that there exists in the city of Chicago, and in the State of Illinois outside of Chicago, and in the neighboring States, certain combinations in restraint of trade within the meaning of the statutes." Therefore, it files the indictments referred to above.

A Chicago matter of more importance, both locally and financially, is the movement for public ownership and operation of street railways, which has now reached a critical point. The most important street railway franchises of the city are about to expire, unless they are protected, as the street railway owners contend, by a law of 1865, which may possibly operate to extend all street car franchises until 1964. This question was raised in the early '80's, and was compromised by an extension for 20 years, the companies to pay a \$50 tax annually on each of their cars, and the question of the old 99-year extension—from 1865 to 1964—to remain meanwhile in abeyance without prejudice to the rights of either party. Upon the approach of the termination of this 20-year extension, and in view of the enormous majority of the vote in Chicago last spring for municipal ownership of public utilities, Mayor Harrison recently appointed a committee of aldermen and citizens to consider the subject. The committee drafted a bill enabling the city to take over and operate the street car systems upon approval by a majority of those voting upon a referendum demanded at any time by 10 per cent. of the registered voters. We gave the substance of the bill as recommended for submission to the legislature by the committee (p. 569) about a month ago. It is now known as the "Finn" bill.

A few days thereafter this committee met in conference with the standing committee of the city council on local transportation. An irreconcilable difference of opinion arose, strongly indicating an aldermanic influence against the "Finn" bill and apparently originating in the offices of the street car companies. At a subsequent conference of these two committees, held on the 8th, Alderman Jackson proposed a substitute measure which is now known as the "Jackson" bill. It provides, with reference to the referendum, that municipal ownership shall not be adopted without a majority vote not merely of those voting on the question but of the registered voters, and that municipal operation shall not be adopted without a two-thirds vote of those voting upon it as a separate proposition. No demand by petition can be made for a referendum. Other objections are raised to this substitute, but the principal and most impressive one rests upon the statement that the bill was drawn and is being pressed by the legal advisers of the street car companies. No action was taken by the committees at their joint meeting, and on the 12th Alderman Jackson introduced his bill personally in the council.

The question of recommending this bill to the legislature came up before the Chicago council on the 19th upon a motion to substitute the "Jackson" bill for the "Finn" bill. After a sharp debate the substitution was made by a vote of 48 to 19.

Meantime the traction interests are striving to secure an extension of their existing franchises. Representatives of the Eastern interests are on the ground; conferences have been held, some of them secret, between street car representatives and aldermen; and all kinds of rumors as to offers made for extensions are in the air. Nothing is reported definitely and reliably, but it is believed that the companies are willing to offer compensation to the city, to agree to some kind of municipal acquisition clause, and to improve the service.

Proceedings before the anthracite arbitration commission (649) at Philadelphia seem to be drawing slowly toward a close. The Erie company continued offering evidence on the 14th, 15th, and 16th, when it was