

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Washington, D. C., Dec. 28.—The only significant political incidents of the week are the interviews with Southern Senators which have appeared in the Washington papers wherein they show signs of "crawfishing." With the same devotion to commercial considerations which marked the action of New England towards slavery prior to 1860, chambers of commerce and similiar bodies in Southern cities are calling on their United States Senators to vote to ratify the treaty with Panama, because of the "commercial" advantages to the South that will follow the building of an Isthmian canal. These Senators are being almost pointedly told that this is no time for any fine spun questions of honor. No matter what means were adopted to bring about this made-to-order revolution, this presto-change republic, no matter what treaty may have been entered into in the past under which the United States obligated itself to preserve intact Colombia's sovereignty over the Isthmus, we must shut our eyes to all such questions. The important thing to remember is that there is money in it, that "commercial" considerations alone should control.

It would be interesting to know whether any of the \$40,000,000 to be paid to the old Panama company (a large part of whose stock is undoubtedly held in Wall street) has found its way in small dribblets down among the opinion moulders of the Southern States.

The only other political straw is a long, carefully prepared interview with Congressman S. B. Cooper, of Texas, who is believed to speak for Senator Bailey of his State—heretofore regarded as for Gorman. Cooper intimates that the Gorman boom is losing strength. He hastens to insist that everything points to Gorman as chairman of the national committee to manage the campaign; but declares that he cannot believe Gorman will be nominated, as all who are for the Maryland Senator have an "if" or a "but" connected with their endorsement, and no man can be nominated with "ifs" and "buts."

The announced intention to send Bourke Cockran to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Mayor McClellan, and the further announcement that Congressman Ira E. Rider was to resign to make room for ex-Senator Charles A. Towne, indicated a determination on the part of the present leaders of Tammany Hall to cut a larger figure in the Democratic national convention in 1904 than has on occasions been the case. The expectation presumably was that Bourke Cockran and Charles A. Towne would, during the present session of Congress, deliver such speeches as would attract the attention of the country, so that on the assembling of the

national convention they, as the mouthpieces of Tammany Hall, might wield a large influence there.

The plan has been checked temporarily, at least, by the refusal of Congressman Rider to resign, the Washington Post quoting him as saying "that he has no intention of resigning and that no one has authority to speak for him on the subject and that he intends to serve out his term."

ROBERT BAKER.

NEWS

Week ending Thursday, Dec. 31.

So far from being at an end, as reported in the news dispatches of a month or so ago (p. 536), the civil war in Santo Domingo has developed into a triangular conflict and become more destructive than ever.

Hardly had the deposed president, Wos y Gil, signed articles of capitulation, which he did on the 24th of November, when a controversy arose between the partisans of ex-President Jiminez and those of Gen. Morales, both of whom had been leaders in the insurrection against Wos y Gil. Morales becoming president of the provisional government which was established upon the surrender of Wos y Gil, Jiminez promptly led an insurrection against it. A severe battle was fought at Santiago de los Caballeros on the 17th of December in which Jiminez was successful. As time went on matters grew worse for the Morales government in its resistance to Jiminez; and meanwhile a third faction, under Gen. Gelletier, formed a second provisional government, opposed to both Morales and Jiminez. This was done at Azua de Compostella, about the 20th. A press dispatch of the 28th summed up the situation as follows:

With two revolutions in progress, two provisional governments endeavoring to establish themselves, an independent body of insurgents in the field, and battles raging at a half-dozen places throughout the republic, the situation in Santo Domingo is more critical than at any time since the outbreak of hostilities several months ago.

Gen. Jiminez was fiercely attacking the city of San Domingo on the 27th.

In consequence of the critical situation in Santo Domingo the

American minister asked his government for the protection of an additional war ship in Dominican waters; and on the 28th Secretary Moody cabled Rear Admiral Lambertson, commanding the South Atlantic squadron at Trinidad, to dispatch one of his vessels to San Domingo at full speed to assist the gunboat Newport in protecting American and other interests.

American affairs in connection with the Panama question (p. 597) seem to be approaching a critical climax. There is no doubt, at any rate, that the President is making war-like preparations. Secret orders are reported to have been issued by the war department to all branches of the service stationed at convenient points on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts to be in readiness to move upon a minute's notice; and transports at New York, San Francisco, Boston and other points are held in readiness for instant movement. Orders were issued on the 29th to four companies of engineers, ten batteries of light artillery, ten regiments of infantry and two of cavalry, to hold themselves in readiness to move. These reports are, of course, not authoritative; but they have the appearance of being well founded.

Another European Power has recognized the Panama republic. This is Great Britain. The occasion was celebrated on the 25th, when the British consul at Panama announced the fact.

The arrival of Wm. I. Buchanan at Panama, and his presentation of credentials from President Roosevelt as American minister (p. 597) to the provisional government of Panama, were reported on the 25th.

In behalf of Colombia, Gen. Reyes, as special envoy from that country to the United States, presented to Secretary Hay on the 24th the Colombian protest against American interference in Panama. No reply has yet been made and the protest has not been authoritatively published. The following unauthoritative summary of the main points of the protest is reported in Washington dispatches:

The United States should conserve the

peace of the Isthmus by not preventing Colombia from compelling the submission of Panama.

The maintenance of order on the Isthmus should have been left to the Power holding sovereignty, which, in this case, is the sovereignty hitherto recognized by the United States, namely, Colombia.

The theory is inadmissible that the United States should permit dismemberment of Colombia merely to prevent temporary disturbance of transit across the Isthmus.

Colombia should not be required to submit to loss of territory simply from fear that interruption of transit might occur by her efforts to prevent such loss.

The sovereignty of a nation is paramount to the purpose of avoiding transitory prejudice to commerce.

The United States could most effectively prevent interruption of transit by notifying the Panamanians to abstain from obstructing the Colombian government in reestablishing order.

If the United States will use its troops to preserve Colombian sovereignty, Colombia will, under martial law, grant full authorization for the construction of the canal.

Colombia asks that, in the event of rejection of its proposition, the United States keep hands off while Colombia reduces Panama to submission, or that the United States grant a money compensation to Colombia for the loss of territory, the amount to be fixed by The Hague tribunal.

Elections for members of the constitutional convention of Panama (p. 584) were held on the 27th. Results in detail are not reported. It is stated, however, that the mixed candidates—Conservatives and Liberals—nominated by the junta, under whose auspices the elections were held, have been triumphantly elected.

In view of the wide-spread reductions of wages in the United States at this time, and a manifest tendency toward more general and further reductions, Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, advises union workmen to resist all reductions. His advice is given in an editorial in the organ of the Federation, in which he says:

We have advised and shall continue to advise our fellow workers to resist reductions in wages by every lawful means within their power, for, as we have said before, "It is better to resist and lose than not to resist at all." Let workmen peaceably accept reductions in their wages and it will be an invitation to repeat the reduction at will, intensifying the depression and provoking an indus-

trial crisis, forcing down workers in the economic and social scale and bringing on fearful poverty, misery and degradation. Resistance on the part of labor to reduction of wages will check to a great degree, and at least demonstrate to ignorant and short-sighted employers that such a course is exceedingly expensive to them and will prevent its repetition.

The most terrible disaster of the year on our side of the world occurred on the 30th at Chicago, with the burning of the Iroquois theater. This theater was of recent construction, having been completed last October, and was regarded as fire proof. A spectacular performance, "Mr. Bluebeard, Jr.," has been running since the opening, to packed houses. On the 30th at the afternoon matinee a very large audience was in attendance, mostly women and children. It is estimated at about 1,900. Toward the end of the performance, a few minutes before 4 o'clock, a sheet of flame burst through the skylight over the stage, carrying with it a heavy volume of black smoke which settled back in thick rolls over the shattered opening in the roof. A moment more and the roof was on fire. As it burned, light drifts of greenish smoke arose as if from an explosion of chemicals. Perhaps two minutes after this seeming explosion, shrieks and screams were heard, and the more fortunate of the audience came pouring out at the front entrance. Meanwhile, according to press reports, the stage had been burning, and flames and smoke and stifling fumes were sweeping the auditorium. The asbestos curtain would not work, some of the exit doors would not open, and the entrapped women and children were dying in crowds. The Chicago Tribune estimates the dead at 571 and the injured at 350. This estimate is doubtless conservative.

NEWS NOTES.

—Ex-Gov. Taft, of the Philippines, sailed on the 24th from Manila for the United States.

—The fifty-third annual convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science met at St. Louis on the 28th.

—Fay Lewis, of Rockford, Ill., offers to mail free of charge a copy of his "City Jail" (p. 575), to any judge, prosecutor

or jailer in the country, upon receipt of five cents for postage.

—Margaret F. Buchanan Sullivan, wife of Alexander Sullivan and for many years a prominent journalist of Chicago, died on the 28th. She was a proficient Greek, Latin and French scholar, as well as an able editorial writer.

—Wm. J. Bryan (p. 598) arrived at Copenhagen on the 25th, and after a long interview with Crown Prince Frederick, left for Berlin, where he was entertained on the 26th by the American ambassador, Mr. Tower. At a reception given in his honor by the American Chamber of Commerce on the same day, he delivered a speech which attracted extraordinary and most favorable attention in the German capital. Mr. Bryan was at The Hague on the 28th and in London on the 29th. He sailed from Liverpool for New York on the 30th on board the Celtic.

PRESS OPINIONS.

IS FREE SPEECH OBSOLETE?

New York Daily News (ind.), Dec. 20.—The Mayor of Paterson's refusal to permit American citizens to assemble in public meeting for the purpose of endorsing the Cooper Union resolutions relating to the case of John Turner arouses no public indignation, provokes no comment. It was an arbitrary denial of the right of petition, but what of that? A people that cares so little for its liberties as to make no protest against the monstrous usurpation of power by administrative officers that penalizes thought itself, cannot be expected to insist on the right of free speech. The Mayor of Paterson told Hugh O. Pentecost and other members of the Free Speech league that he "would not allow any discussion" of the law under which Turner was arrested; and he prevented by force the holding of a meeting by orderly citizens because he did not approve their opinions. So the American people have lost the right to discuss anything that Congress, in its infinite wisdom, may see fit to do; and any addequate clothed with a little brief authority may declare himself their master and disperse them with clubs when they meet. Americans submit to these things, not because they are profoundly respectful to the forms of law, for that they are not when the law and their desires conflict; but because the invasions of their liberties have not affected the personal comfort of masses of people, and they are indifferent to principles which their forefathers held to be of supreme importance.

CRIME AND COMMON SENSE.

Kansas City World (ind.), Dec. 26.—Two men are sent to the workhouse under penalty of ten days, \$10 and costs. At the end of ten days one pays his fine and is released. The other has no money, and stays in prison 20 days longer. Technically, then, he is imprisoned for being poor—jailed for debt. That is the view that Harris R. Cooley, director of charities in Cleveland, takes of it, and he says: "If the good of the offenders or of society demands that the prisoners should be held 30 days, they should be so held, regardless of social or financial standing." Cooley is a minister, built on the broad-gauge plan. He was allowed to work out his own plans with the Cleveland workhouse, and faced a storm of abuse for his alleged coddling of criminals. In two years he