

tionists, balked now and then but on the whole going steadily forward, even from generation to generation, have taken all minor coinage out of the legal tender category, have stopped the coinage of all silver legal tender, have reduced the volume of paper legal tender, and are now preparing to abolish utterly every kind of legal tender except gold. Unless laws for the collection of debt are repealed, this progress of the creditor class must either be stopped and reversed, or debtors will be at the mercy of their creditors with every financial storm that blows.

Trade can be carried on with very little legal tender. It can be carried on with none at all. Given some current funds for "pocket money," and all that normal trade requires to effect exchanges is free banking. But with laws for enforcing debt payments, which in turn necessitate legal tender, business carried on under a contracting volume of legal tender is in constant danger. It is like a boy's top, which is upright so long as it revolves briskly but tumbles down upon its side when its regular motion is impeded.

NEWS

Excitement over the coal famine in the United States (p. 634) has not at all subsided, but on the contrary has greatly increased. At this time there are no signs of relief, and the price of coal is as high as \$12 and \$15 a ton for anthracite and \$6 to \$8 a ton for bituminous, when to be had at all. A cold snap has made the suffering of the poor intense, and cases of severe illness caused by over-exposure to cold are reported by the score. According to the Chicago health department's bulletin of the 11th, "fully 10 per cent., or nearly 200,000 residents of Chicago, are to-day suffering from ailments of a grave character caused by privation and exposure resulting from the coal famine," and "already these ailments are reflected in the enormous increase of deaths among those at the extremes of life,—the young and the aged."

Steps were taken on the 7th in Chicago toward the institution of criminal proceedings against coal dealers for forestalling the market. This

movement was set on foot by the Illinois Manufacturers' association. Their investigations had brought to light the fact that there is more coal in Chicago now than at this time a year ago, which makes it clear that the famine is due not to shortage in supply but to a conspiracy of some kind. A special grand jury was therefore organized on the 10th to investigate the combinations in Cook county alleged by the State's attorney to have been entered into "to do an illegal act injurious to public trade." The examination of witnesses began at once and has continued daily since. There are many exciting rumors of evidence secured and to be secured and of "leads" to be followed; but the grand jury has made no report, and as its sessions are secret, of course no reliable information of its proceedings can be legitimately obtained. The city council passed an ordinance on the 12th imposing a fine of \$200 for every act of forestalling fuel and other merchandise. To cover a wider field the lower house of the Illinois legislature appointed an investigating committee on the 13th.

Suffering similar to that of Chicago is reported from Milwaukee, where the establishment of a municipal coal yard is proposed; from Detroit, where the same measure for relief is being shaped; from the cities of Indiana, where beans are being used in some places as a substitute; from the cities of Iowa and Illinois; from Baltimore, St. Louis, Kansas City and Topeka; from Omaha and other cities of Nebraska, a State in which corn is being used for fuel; from the cities of Ohio, in some of which the grand juries are acting as in Chicago, and where the attorney general has begun suits against several coal companies to forfeit their charters; and from Minnesota, New York and other States, both East and West. From many points come reports of the closing down of factories for want of fuel.

Among the means adopted to meet this emergency is a "get coal" conference to be held at Washington at a date yet to be named. It will be composed of delegates appointed by the governors and mayors of the suffering communities. This movement was decided on at Chicago on the 10th by the permanent committee of ten (Mayor Maybury, of Detroit, chairman), which was appointed by the coal strike convention held at Detroit last Fall (p. 439). Its object,

as stated in the resolution proposed by the Rev. R. A. White, of Chicago, one of the committee, and adopted by the committee, is "to impress upon the administrative officers of the government the necessity for immediate action on the coal situation."

In the House of Representatives at Washington a relief bill was agreed to unanimously on the 13th by the committee on ways and means. It provided for paying back to importers of foreign coal the amount of tariff duty exacted from them during the next 12 months. The Democrats on the committee sought to amend the bill by making coal free of duty. Failing in this by a strict party vote, they sought to have the rebate apply for an indefinite period. Again they were defeated. It was then that they joined in making the report of the committee unanimous. Representative McCall (Republican), of Massachusetts, attempted to have attached to the bill a provision that after the expiration of one year coal coming from countries which admit our coal free should pay no duty. This reciprocity proposition met with some favor, but Mr. McCall's Republican colleagues on the committee, with the exception of Mr. Tawney, of Minnesota, opposed making the temporary measure a vehicle for inaugurating a permanent policy and dissuaded Mr. McCall from pressing it. When the relief bill came before the House on the 14th it was passed by a vote of 258 to 5; and upon going to the Senate was immediately passed with an amendment, subsequently adopted by the House, making anthracite absolutely free.

A remarkably significant resolution was introduced in the House on the 14th, by the chairman of the judiciary committee, Mr. Jenkins, of Wisconsin, as follows:

Resolved, That the committee on judiciary be and is hereby directed to investigate and report to this house, with all convenient speed the opinion of that committee as to the power of Congress to declare that a necessity has arisen for taking possession of all coal, coal beds and coal mines in the United States and all lines of transportation, agencies, instruments and vehicles of commerce necessary for the transportation of coal, and that if, in the opinion of that committee, the power exists and a necessity for the exercise of such power has arisen that committee forthwith report to this House a

bill declaring the necessity, providing fully and in detail the occasions, modes, conditions and agencies for said appropriation that will fully and completely exhaust the power of Congress in that regard.

Mr. Jenkins is described as a good constitutional lawyer, and as explaining his resolution by saying:

I am calling attention to a power that I believe exists and should be developed. It is one of the sovereign inherent rights of the government. The situation is not as favorable for the exercise of that power as during last September, but conditions are much worse. Coal is a necessary of life. The people cannot obtain it and are suffering greatly for the want of it. Therefore, it is within the power of Congress in such a case to declare that an exigency has arisen for the exercise of the power of eminent domain, and this declaration is not open to inquiry by the courts. It is not the price of coal that creates the exigency, but the fact that the people cannot obtain it, and, that conditions are growing worse daily. Hence, it becomes the duty of the government to exercise this attribute of sovereignty and relieve the distress not by buying coal for the people, but by providing that they can buy it. This is the first time in history this nation could justly exercise that right of control. Unquestionably the power exists, as certainly as the exigency is present.

An extraordinary and startling effect of this coal famine is the willingness it has revealed among classes of people not usually accounted lawless to confiscate private property. A marked instance is reported from Arcola, Ill. In this town on the 10th a train load of coal, 16 cars in all, bound for Chicago, was lawlessly seized by a mob of 1,000 of the inhabitants and distributed in one-ton lots. An account was kept, and the leaders of the mob announce their intention of paying for the coal they confiscated when proof of ownership is made. The leaders of this mob were the pastors of the Presbyterian and the Methodist churches, two bank presidents, and other prominent citizens, besides a policeman. They notified the station agent that they wanted the coal and had the money to pay for it. He telegraphed for instructions and was ordered not to sell. The mob thereupon confiscated the property. The mayor is quoted as justifying the lawless act. A similar breach of the law was committed on the 10th by Armour & Co., the great Chicago packing house, which confiscated 150 tons on the way to the Chicago water

works. Similar lawless attacks upon property rights in coal are reported from other points.

Proceedings before the anthracite-strike commission of arbitration (p. 634) reached a point on the 9th where the nonunion men, having presented 150 witnesses, closed their case. The tendency of the testimony was to show that nonunion miners had been intimidated, and that a reign of lawlessness and terror existed in the anthracite region during the strike. Whether these outrages were connected with the miners' organization does not appear; but a short colloquy occurred on the 8th between President Mitchell and Judge Gray, chairman of the commission, in which the former resented a remark of the latter that seemed to imply that the miners' organization was responsible for the lawlessness. When the nonunion case had closed, the Delaware & Hudson company began offering testimony. It concluded on the 13th, and the Erie followed.

In civic affairs in the United States the most important event of the week is the adoption by the charter convention of Chicago of the final form for a proposed constitutional amendment (pp. 473, 586, 600), permitting a reorganization of the city government. The proposed amendment, to be the thirty-fourth section of the fourth article of the State constitution, would empower the legislature to enact a charter for Chicago. The general nature of the charter so authorized is described with extended particularity in the proposed amendment. One of its many clauses provides that it cannot take effect until "consented to by a majority of the legal voters of said city, voting on the question at any election, general, municipal or special;" nor can any special law affecting specially any part of the city and based upon the amendment take effect until "consented to by a majority of the legal voters of such part of said city, voting on the question at any election, general, municipal or special." The charter convention did not pass the proposed amendment until legal opinions had been submitted to it showing that it would not interfere with the adoption of the policy of municipal ownership of public utilities. Before adjourning, the convention resolved itself into a permanent body for securing the passage of the pro-

posed amendment by the legislature and its submission to the people.

Distinct progress has now been made in the settlement of the Venezuelan conflict (p. 632) with the creditor powers of Europe. The Venezuelan government, while regarding the demands of the powers as unjust and humiliating, was reported on the 9th to have acknowledged the necessity of yielding to superior force; and on the 11th, the American minister to Venezuela, Mr. Bowen, embarked for home to act as the representative of the Venezuelan government in arranging at Washington for the proposed arbitration. He was attended to the railway station in Caracas by President Castro and his cabinet.

Further victories by Castro over the revolutionists are reported. One was secured at the port of Tucacoas, 40 miles from Porto Cabello, the port having been recaptured from the revolutionists as the result of an hour's battle, after having been held by them for four months and used as a point for smuggling in arms and ammunition from Curacao. A second victory was achieved near Coro, where a small force of rebels was routed. The third was probably the most important. The battle took place at Cumana on the 4th, 5th and 6th. After a fight of seven hours on the last day, the rebels were driven from the field, leaving 200 prisoners and a large quantity of rifles and ammunition behind them. This fight was witnessed from nine British cruisers in the bay.

The uprising in Morocco (p. 633) would appear from the more or less trustworthy dispatches to be gaining ground over the sultan. A battle outside of Fez was reported to have occurred on the 7th and the sultan's troops to have been defeated. He was even said to have abandoned Fez, after losing his war minister and strongest adviser, Menebbi, who was killed in the battle. Moreover, serious fighting was understood to have taken place within a short distance of Tangier. But later dispatches contradict the reported death of Menebbi, and report a strengthening of the sultan's position.

NEWS NOTES.

—The German reichstag resumed its sessions on the 13th after the holiday recess.

—The legislature of Idaho has elected Weldon B. Heyburn, Republican, as the pro-