

THE FUTURE OF CUBA. A NOVEL AND PERPLEXING PROBLEM.

SENATOR O. H. PLATT SAYS CONGRESS CANNOT AMEND THE ISLAND'S CONSTITUTION—FOUR GUARANTEES SUGGESTED.

Washington, Jan. 31.—Senator Orville H. Platt, of Connecticut, chairman of the Committee on Relations with Cuba, does not share the opinion that Congress can do as it pleases with the Cuban Constitution when that instrument is finally reached through the hands of the President.

In my view of the question, Congress has not the power to deal directly with the Cuban Constitution. That instrument, when finally completed and adopted by the regularly authorized body formed by proclamation of the executive authority of the United States to frame a constitution, cannot be brought before Congress.

Further than this Senator Platt declined to express his views at this time for publication. A majority member of the Committee on Relations with Cuba, who for obvious reasons does not wish his name to be used, when the foregoing interview with Senator Platt was shown to him and he was asked for an interpretation in detail of some of the general and somewhat veiled statements, said that while he agreed in the main with the chairman of the committee, still he was not so positive as the Connecticut Senator seemed to be that Congress was powerless to do anything of a direct and legal character.

First—A permanent naval base for the United States. Second—The right hereinafter to maintain military garrisons in the island. Third—Control by the United States of all the public lands and creation of a public domain. Fourth—The right of this country to control all foreign treaties made by Cuba.

The point is dwelt upon strongly that the propositions enumerated should be embodied in the Constitution of Cuba—the organic law of the island—so that this country's protectorate can never be menaced by political agitators or the mutations of parties.

MANY CONGRESSMEN HESITATE TO DEAL WITH THE CUBAN PROBLEM.

Washington, Jan. 31 (Special).—Attention is called to the interesting fact that the so-called Cuban "problem" is absolutely unique. Never before has there been a case exactly like it. Cuba is neither an Egypt nor a Transvaal. Its freedom was secured by the military intervention of the United States, and guaranteed by stronger and more binding obligations than even those vouchsafed to all the States of the New World by the Monroe Doctrine.

It is a curious and possibly significant fact that no Democrat of importance in either House will consent to be quoted on Cuba at this time. Not even after Senator Platt's interview had been read to a number of Democratic Senators could one of them be induced to give the slightest hint of the Democratic point of view or intention.

LAST HONORS TO VICTORIA. CONTRASTS AND ANALOGIES OF JUBILEE AND FUNERAL PAGEANTS.

ROYAL VISITORS AGAIN IN LONDON—MOVEMENTS OF RICHARD CROKER.

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London, Feb. 1. 1 a. m.—Strange are the contrasts and analogies of the Queen's Jubilee and the Queen's funeral! Royal visitors and special Ambassadors were coming and going yesterday at the time of the Jubilee, and the Lord Chamberlain and the Master of Ceremonies, with Equestris and Lords-in-Waiting, were again in attendance upon Princes and distinguished representatives of foreign countries, and there were constant glimpses of royal liveries in the roadways.

The programme of the naval demonstration in honor of the Queen has not been altered, and will be carried out by the Admiralty with precision if Spithhead be clear of fog and without a heavy sea.

Rarely, if ever, has such a superb collection of magnificent wreaths been seen as that which has arrived at Windsor for the funeral of the Queen. Hundreds of floral offerings have been made and hundreds of orders still remain to be carried out.

Richard Croker, who has run up from Moat House, is expected to return to Walsingham House, in Piccadilly, to witness Saturday's spectacle. He went back to Letcombe so unexpectedly that the villagers had no opportunity for publicly welcoming him after his unexplained absence.

TO LEAVE COWES TO-DAY. QUEEN ALEXANDRA AND ROYAL PRINCESSES WILL TRAMP IN THE MUD BEHIND THE COFFIN OF VICTORIA.

Cowes, Jan. 31.—A glittering crescent of light stretches this evening from Cowes to Portsmouth. It consists of ten miles of warships, the pick of the British, French and German navies. These lie at anchor, ready to take their part in to-morrow's ceremonies, when the navy will pay a last magnificent tribute to the sovereign whose reign was marked by the greatest naval progress in the history of the nation.

WEATHER OMENS NOT PROPITIOUS. The omens for fine weather to-morrow are not propitious, but the first of thousands of spectators are arriving this evening, together with soldiers.

DAINTY LUNCHEONS FOR LADIES. If you are downtown shopping drop in and have a dainty luncheon at the Hotel Victoria, Broadway and 7th. Music by Prof. Burton's Orchestra.

FEAR A PANIC IN CUBA.

BUSINESS MEN ALARMED AT THE PROSPECT OF INDEPENDENCE.

[BY CABLE TO THE TRIBUNE.]

Havana, Jan. 31.—Owing to the conflicting reports from Washington regarding action by Congress on the Cuban question, there is an unsettled feeling here in business circles. The stock market again showed evidences of unrest, and all business interests are affected by the report that Major Ladd will be relieved as treasurer and all the other departments will be turned over to the Cubans.

DEADLOCKED OVER GOMEZ. BITTER FEELING ENGENDERED IN THE CUBAN CONVENTION.

Havana, Jan. 31.—At last night's session the Cuban Constitutional Convention finished a lot of minor business, completing its work to Section 12.

After a discussion lasting two hours Señor Gener, who is an avowed Gomez man, entered, and a call was made for the president to assemble the Convention. The opponents of General Gomez, however, refused to take their seats, and after several efforts, the delegates withdrew from the hall.

NIGHT SESSIONS TO EXPEDITE ACTION ON THE SHIPPING BILL.

Washington, Jan. 31.—After the adoption of the conference report on the Army bill, on motion of Mr. Frye the Senate resumed consideration of the Shipping bill, and voting began on amendments.

NO ORDERS TO RELIEVE MAJOR LADD.

Washington, Jan. 31.—It is said at the War Department that there is no purpose to make any immediate changes in the tenure of the United States Army officers now administering the civil affairs of the Military Government of Cuba.

PROBABLE NEWSPAPER SPECULATION.

THE RESTAURADOR'S PERIL. FORCED TO BURN WOODWORK AND THE LAST BARREL OF PORK AS FUEL.

San Juan, Porto Rico, Jan. 31.—The Venezuelan gunboat Restaurador, formerly the Atlanta, George Gould's yacht, which left Brooklyn on January 24 for La Guayra, Venezuela, arrived here to-day.

MARITIME CONGRESS FAVORS BILL.

THE CARACAS OVERDUE AT SAN JUAN.

SUBSIDY BILL'S PROSPECTS.

HAS RIGHT OF WAY IN THE SENATE—THE OPPOSITION DIVIDED.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

Washington, Jan. 31.—The Shipping Subsidy bill occupied little of the Senate's time this afternoon, the conference report on the Army Reorganization bill displacing it until 5 p. m. The adoption of this report leaves a clear field for the Shipping measure, whose exclusive right of way will not be disputed for several days at least.

THE INJURED.

TWO AMENDMENTS ADOPTED.

ATTITUDE OF THE DEMOCRATS.

CLIMBED DOWN LADDERS.

THE CARACAS OVERDUE AT SAN JUAN.

FIRE DEVASTATES A BIG AREA.

TWO FACTORIES, THREE LUMBER YARDS AND SEVERAL TENEMENT HOUSES SUFFER.

LOSS PLACED AT \$1,250,000; SEVERAL PEOPLE HURT.

The seven story building owned and occupied by the William Wicke Company, one of the largest manufacturers of cigar boxes, labels and ribbons in this country, at Thirty-first-st. and First-ave., and the annex of the factory, with a frontage in Thirty-second-st., just east of First-ave., were destroyed by fire last night.

Not only was the property destroyed, but the fire did considerable damage to a lumber yard east of the premises, five three story tenement houses, No. 522 to 530 First-ave.; three five story tenement houses just north of the factory building proper, and two lumber yards in the rear of the tenement houses No. 522 to 530 First-ave. The total loss was estimated as high as \$1,250,000.

One fireman was seriously hurt, two sick persons in tenement houses near the factory were overcome by excitement and were taken to Bellevue Hospital, a horse attached to a fire engine was injured and had to be shot, and a business man, who is said to be staying at the Waldorf-Astoria, was found lying unconscious in the street.

THE INJURED.

COYLE, Joseph, of Truck No. 12, fell off ladder; both ankles broken; taken to Bellevue Hospital.

HERBERT, Arthur, of the Atlas Manufacturing Company, Chicago, found unconscious in street; said to have been hit over head with a club by policeman.

M'CONNELL, Mrs. Sarah, of No. 128 First-ave.; was sick in bed and became hysterical; taken to Bellevue Hospital.

MORGAN, John, an invalid, of No. 241 First-ave., became hysterical; carried out of his home by a policeman.

By an explosion in the engine house of the Wicke Company in the afternoon two persons were seriously hurt and a score of persons slightly injured. The explosion badly damaged the engine house and blew out many of the windows of the building, and of those in houses within two blocks of the building.

A FINE EXHIBITION OF BRAVERY.

A remarkable exhibition of bravery was given by firemen at the blaze last night. While walls were shaking and flames coming out of all sides of the Wicke factory building, they stood at their post playing streams of water upon the burning structures until they were driven away by leagues of flame that seemed at one time to envelope them.

How the fire started will probably remain a mystery. It broke out soon after 7 o'clock last night, several hours after the firemen who had responded to the alarm for the fire resulting from the explosion in the engine house in the afternoon had gone home.

CLIMBED DOWN LADDERS.

In a jiffy the men were climbing down the ladders, and in a few minutes they reached the street and were out of danger. They were at once sent in. The first engine companies to reach the scene were Engine Company No. 21, whose house is in East Forty-first-st., and Hook and Ladder No. 7.

When they got to the building big clouds of smoke and flames were issuing from a door leading into the basement. Captain Rowan of the engine company saw that the fire threatened to do serious damage, and sent in a third alarm. The heat from the blaze was even then intense in Thirty-first-st., and within five minutes after the firemen arrived a fourth and a fifth alarm were sounded.

Before many ladders were raised against the building the fire had reached the three story tenement houses at the southeast corner of Thirty-first-st. and First-ave., and were eating through the roof of the building. About the same time the fire shot to the five story building Nos. 404, 406 and 408 East Thirty-second-st. The flames ran through this building as if it were made of very light material. The lumber

yard of the Wicke company, to the east of the factory building, was then threatened, and the lumber yards of the Buckout and Wicke companies in the rear of the three five story tenement houses in First-ave., between Thirty-first and Thirtieth sts.

GAS TANKS THREATENED.

For some time the flames threatened to reach the gas tanks at Thirty-second-st. and the East River. The firemen were afraid that even if the fire did not get to the tanks the heat might cause them to explode, and for the first time in years an order was issued not to allow any one within two streets of the fire. This order was a sweeping one, and affected even newspaper men and the representatives of the insurance companies.

Before the tanks were threatened, the firemen fighting the blaze on the Thirty-first-st. side of the factory building were in danger of being killed by falling walls or by the flames. A score or more men were standing in this street, within a few feet of the building. Some were operating Water Tower No. 3, and the others were either on ladders or attending to the hose lines of Engine Company No. 21.

FIREMEN SUFFER INTENSELY.

On one of the ladders was Joseph Coyle, of Truck No. 12. So quickly did the flames spread that the firemen did not wait to unhook the three hoses attached to Engine No. 21. Most of the firemen were then almost ready to drop where they stood, owing to the intensity of the heat from the blaze. The horses were gracing about. The firemen gave no signs of wavering, however, until a column of smoke rolled down upon them and shut them from the view of the spectators for several minutes.

Some of his comrades picked him up and carried him to a safe place. He was later taken to Bellevue Hospital, where he was found to have received a fracture of both ankles.

As he was being carried away a back draught almost knocked the firemen in the street down. Some of them, hatless, turned toward the avenue and walked for some time in a dazed condition. Others, frenzied with pain, ran toward the avenue. Among the men in the street at that time were Captain John, "Barney" Conlin, John Flynn and John Gillespie, of Engine No. 21. To stand at their post a few minutes longer was almost certain death, but they could not forsake the houses attached to the engine of the company. Several staggered toward the animals and loosed the traces. It was then seen that one of the horses was weak from the heat and smoke. The men shouted at the animals and beat them with a broken trace.

Two of the horses started to run to the avenue, dragging along the weak animal. Near the avenue was a post, and the horses ran into it and were caught. The sick horse fell at the post and his mates, in their efforts to escape from the scorching heat, dragged him against the post and into the avenue. The injured animal had to be shot.

Soon after the horses got clear of the post, part of the wall on the Thirty-first-st. side of the building fell and wrecked Engine No. 21 and the water tower.

Thousands of people gathered in all the nearby streets in an incredibly short time, and kept the three hundred and fifty policemen hard at work keeping the fire lines clear.

The fire was the most spectacular that New-York has ever seen, according to men old in the Fire Department service. The flames leaped hundreds of feet into the air, and there were few points in the entire borough of Manhattan from which the blaze could not be seen. For blocks away from the fire the flames made it so light that papers could be read with ease.

Chief Croker, when seen after the worst of the fire was over, said that it was the hottest he had seen in this city for years. He said the flames had burned with almost incalculable rapidity, and that within thirty minutes after the blaze was discovered the main building was a wreck, and nothing left but a portion of the walls.

Captain Delaney said the crowd that surged about in an attempt to get within seeing distance of the fire was the worst he had ever encountered.

Chief Croker said that the fire was the hottest he had ever experienced. In First-ave., on both sides of the street, from Thirty-first-st. south to Twenty-ninth-st., window panes were cracked and melted by the intense heat, and for a corresponding distance northward.

A cab driven by an employe of Bellevue Hospital was allowed to go through the fire lines by a policeman. It was stopped by Chief Croker, who wanted to know who was in it. He was told that a person suffering with smallpox and a physician where in it, and were hurrying to a hospital where smallpox patients are received. He ordered the driver to turn into one of the cross streets, and not continue up the avenue.

The occupants of the buildings Nos. 404, 406 and 408 East Thirty-second-st. were the J. B. Coit Company, manufacturers of gas tanks; Miller, Dubrué & Peters, cigar molds; the Innovation Trunk Company and the Wicke company.

Chief Croker, speaking about the cause of the fire, said: "At 7 o'clock one of the watchmen went with a lighted candle into a vault. As soon as he left the vault there was an explosion in it. There must have been chemicals in the vault."

At 1 o'clock this morning Chief Croker said that he thought the loss was about \$1,500,000. The fire was said to be safely controlled at 2 o'clock this morning. Firemen were playing many streams on it from all points, and said there was no danger of any further spread. The crowd was still large at that hour, and it was plain that many meant to make a night of it. The firemen said the fire would smoulder for a week.

FIRE ENGINE STRIKES A GAR.

While making an effort to pass a north bound Third Avenue trolley car last evening Charles Speck, driver of Engine Company No. 33, situated in Great Jones-st., ran into a Fourteenth-st. cross-town car going west.

The engine was on its way to the fire at Thirty-second-st. and First-ave.

CONVENIENT TRAVELLING FACILITIES.

West 2d Street Station of the Pennsylvania Railroad is centrally located and easily reached by cab or car.—Adv.

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD'S TRIPLE TERMINALS.

Foot of West 2d St., Deshleres St. and Cortlandt St. Convenient to all sections of the City.—Adv.