Public and Private Business.

Congress has now been in session for more than a month, but has not yet begun fairly to consider the great public questions before it. This is in part because great bodies move slowly, and in part because the public business is greatly impeded by business of a private nature. Thousands of private bills have already been presented, referred to committees and ordered printed; and still they come. The journal of the House shows something over 4000 bills thus far introduced, and there are hundreds more awaiting a chance for introduction. With each successive session, more unimportant bills are presented and the time will soon come, unless a change is made, when either the session will have to be indefinitely prolonged or else nine-tenths of all the bills introduced will have to be shelved. As it is now the number of bills which secure a hearing is a very small proportion of the number of bills presented.

Of course congressmen are under strong pressure in this matter. They have constituents who are interested in the private bills, if they are not so themselves; and if the private bills are not attended to the constituents howl; and the howl of a private constituent often makes a very distinct impression on the congressman when the howling of the great public is only an indistinct murmur in his ear. Congress exists to some extent for the protection and care of the individual, as well as of the general public; but there is a proper measure in all things;—and sooner or later some limit to the amount of private business will have to be set, or some new method of disposing of it adopted, or else all public business will be swamped by the private. How to get such a limit or what new method to adopt, is unquestionably a problem of considerable magnitude. But there ought to be minds equal to it, in the national Legislature.

Pope on Porter.

After a silence of many years before the assaults of his critics, Gen. John Pope speaks in his own behalf, and twenty-six of the ample pages of the *Century* magazine for January are devoted to his account of the much discussed battle of Bull Run. Gen. Pope very distinctly ascribes the reverse to the Union arms in that battle to the inaction of Fitz John Porter. "General Porter," he says, "neither obeyed nor attempted to obey his (Pope's) orders." He adds:

In this battle (of August 29) the 5th corps, under General F. J. Porter, took no part whatever, but remained all day in column, without even deploying into line of battle or making any effort in force to find out what was in their front. That General Porter knew of the progress of the battle on his right, and that he believed the Union army was being defeated, is shown by his own despatches to McDowell, several times repeated during the day. * * * Not the artillery only, but the volleys of musketry in this battle were also plainly heard on their right and front by the advance of Porter's troops much of the day. In consequence of his belief that the army on his right was being defeated, as stated in more than one of these despatches, he informed Gen. McDowell that he intended to retire to Manassas, and advised McDowell to send back his trains in the same direction.

For this action, or non-action, he has been on the one hand likened to Benedict Arnold, and on the other favorably compared with George Washington. I presume he would not accept the first position, and probably he would hardly lay claim to the second. Certainly I have not the inclination, even had I the power, to assign him to either or to any position between the two; and if he were alone concerned in the question, I should make no comment as all on the subject at this day. Many others than himself and the result of a battle, however, are involved in it, and they do not permit silence when the second battle of Bull Run is discussed.

Taking the enemy's own account of the battle that afternoon, which lasted several hours, and its result, it is not unreasonable to say that, if Gen. Porter had attacked Longstreet's right with ten or twelve thousand men while the latter was thus engaged, the effect would have been conclusive. Porter's case is the first I have ever known, or that I think is recorded in military history, where the theory has been seriously put forth that the hero of a battle is the man who keeps out of it. I had telegraphed General Halleck on the 28th our condition, and had begged of him to have rations and forage sent forward to us from Alexandria with all speed; but about daylight on the 30th I received a note from General Franklin, written by direction of General McClellan, informing me that rations and forage would be loaded into the available wagons and cars at Alexandria as soon as I should send back a cavalry escort to guard the trains. Such a letter, when we were fighting the enemy and Alexandria was full of troops, needs no comment. * * *

At no time during the 29th, 30th and 31st of August was the road between Bristoe and Centreville interrupted by the enemy. The orders will show conclusively that every arrangement was made in the minutest detail for the security of our wagon train and supplies; and General Banks's subsequent report to me is positive that none of the wagons or mules were lost. I mention the matter merely to answer the wholly unfounded statements made at the time, and repeated often since, of our loss of wagons, mules and supplies.

In the course of his paper General Pope denies the old "Headquarters in the Saddle" story, and says the expression is a very old "chestnut." He first heard it when a cadet at West Point, and it was then told on Gen. Worth. "I presume," he says, "it could be easily traced back to the Crusaders and beyond; and while it may not be as old as the everlasting hills, it is certainly old enough to have been excused from active duty long years ago. Certainly I never used this expression or wrote or dictated it, nor does any such expression occur in any order of mine; and as it has perhaps served its time and effected its purpose, it ought to to be retired."

It Will Not Work.

The civil service commission, Mr. Dorman B. Eaton says, has not thought it necessary to adopt a rule that government offices once included in the list to which the civil service rules are applicable can not be taken from that list by reducing the number of employes below 50. Mr. Eaton says that this was attempted at Burlington, Vt., and at Port Huron, but without success. The rules approved by the president give a list of offices to which they are applicable. This list can not be added to or deducted from without the president's approval. The president has declined to permit an office to be taken out of the list by the reduction of the number of employes, and the commission sees no necessity for further action. Under this decision the various good Democrats who have been expecting appointments in the customs service in Vermont, will have either to give up their hopes or else go to work with their spelling books.

GERMAN SOCIALISTS.

THEY PLOT TO BLOW UP A CITY WITH DYNAMITE.

Fearful Disclosures—Proximity of a Dynamite Plague on this Side the Water—Need of Earnest and Severe Legislation.

CHICAGO, Jan. 14.—Investigations made periodically by the city police and private detectives have disclosed that the German anarchists of this city have been engaged assiduously in manufacturing dynamite bombs and in experimenting with other infernal machines for the purpose, as they declare, of destroying the militia and blowing up large public buildings when the "great revolution begins." Week before last the metal workers voted funds to arm themselves, and cabinet makers set aside one-half of their entire surplus for the purchase of Winchester rifles. The socialists boast they have over 9000 bombs loaded and distributed. The socialists possess a German organ which week after week disseminates incendiary ideas, while from its job press issue circulars, maps, etc., giving instructions in warfare and practical explosives.

The socialist leaders claim they have established depots for storing bombs and they have lists of prominent persons to be disposed of by dynamite, and claim that every Sunday morning for a year, bands of socialists have been going to the country to practice throwing the bombs and that tests of their effectiveness and manner of explosion has been frequently made. In a conversation Wm. Pinkerton claimed to have representatives in each of their clubs and know all that is going on, being paid by an organization of citizens. He says the socialists have repeatedly in the meetings talked of blowing up his office, and he has it fortified with Winchester rifles. At any time he can keep the socialists at bay as far as his block is concerned.

Joseph Gruenhut who is the author of the eight hour agitation "thinks the great crisis will come on or about the first of May, for the men who have work will strike for shorter hours, and the thousands out of work will have no more consideration for the strikers than the people who now have jobs have for the idlers who are starving and freezing. These idlers will take jobs which will be offered by employers and the strikers will resist. Then the police and militia will be sent to hold down the strikers while their places are being filled. This will produce an outbreak which will be joined in by the socialist labor organizations and, in fact, all the laboring men who believe in the eight hour system. "This is the occasion for which I think the socialists are arming."

THE BELL TELEPHONE CASE.

Secretary Lamar's Report to Attorney-General Goode.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 14.—Secretary Lamar sent to Acting Attorney-General Goode the following letter: "Sir, I have under consideration the papers referred to me touching the Bell telephone patents. The petitioners ask the department of justice to cause or allow appropriate legal proceedings to be instituted in the name of the government to vacate and annul the Bell telephone patent of the 7th of March, 1876. I thought my own consideration should be directed to two questions. First, has the government a right to institute such a proceeding and second, if it has such a right, should the proceedings recited on the respective petitions or either of them be instituted? The first of these questions has an affirmative answer from a number of precedents in this department, and has received a like affirmative answer from the United States courts. If it had not been thus authoritatively settled, I should on principle have reached the same conclusion.

The government asked a judicial inquiry into the patent of the Bell Telephone company. If such patent was obtained by fraud, of the patent office and with the collusion or inadvertence of the executive officers of the government. Surely if power to vacate a patent wrongfully issued exists at all, there need not be a statute to provide the mode of its exercise when the mode exists without a statute. An inventor is the sole owner of his invention, but to publish it by use or otherwise, is to give it the world. The rights which would then accrue to the whole people from such publication, are confided as a part of the general trust to the government with power by its patent, to create for the inventor a monopoly in the use of his invention. This patent just as a patent to land, shuts out all the world except the patentee from its use and enjoyment.

The grounds of invalidity alleged against the Bell patent may be substantially summarized thus: The first patent was procured by fraud of the patentee through the collusion of an officer of the patent office; second the invention was not patentable because already public. Inasmuch as the defence is very voluminous and conflicting and charges are preferred against the patent office, and the question is one that demands a great deal of scientific research, I think it would comport with the dignity of the government and the gravity of the subject and would insure a final and just adjudication of the merits of the controversy to have it settled in such a court as will best subserve the purpose of public convenience."

L. Q. C. LAMAR.

A DENIAL FROM HEADQUARTERS.

The C. V. R. R. People Declare the Late Report About them Untrue.

ST. ALBANS, Jan. 14.—The management of the Central Vermont Railroad company whose headquarters are here authorize an emphatic denial of the report recently telegraphed from Toronto to the effect that the Grand Trunk railway had leased the Central Vermont road, and that John Porteous was to be made manager of the same. No such scheme has been proposed or considered for a moment by any of the parties interested, and there was no foundation whatever for so absurd a rumor. The report in question is entirely sensational and on a par with several others of a similar sort that have been circulated recently for effect and without the least regard for facts.

A Negro Baby's Awful Death.

WALLINGFORD, Conn., Jan. 14.—The following horrible story comes from Pond Hill: Yesterday morning a colored woman, whose name is not known, living near Pond Hill, wished to leave her home for a short time to go to a neighbor's. As the fire in the stove had gone out, but the stove was still warm, she put her six months' old baby on the pillow in the oven to keep it warm while she was gone and closed the oven door. Soon after she left the house her husband came in and started a fire in the stove, the wife seeing the smoke from the house of a neighbor rushed home and found the baby burned to a crisp.

FATAL EXPLOSION.

A Catholic Church Demolished—Several Men Killed.

FORT WAYNE, Ind., Jan. 14.—A terrific explosion occurred in the boiler room of St. Mary's Catholic church on the corner of Jefferson and Lafayette streets at 1:30 o'clock this afternoon. A moment later the flames were emerging from the debris of the wrecked church. The fire department succeeded after hours of work in quenching the flames. The church, which was one of the largest and finest in the city, is a complete wreck, and the loss will not be less than $65,000. The report of the explosion shook the windows in the buildings for a mile around. The air was filled with flying bricks, stones and other portions of the building. While a large brick chimney in the building toppled and fell, the side walls bulged out but did not fall. The roof of Rev. Father Echtering's residence was entirely demolished while the Catholic church building immediately south of the church, which was filled with children at the time was terribly shaken up, though none of the inmates were badly injured. Miss Alberta Willard, a 13 years old girl, on her way to school, was passing the ill-fated church at the moment of the explosion, and one of the large doors suspended just above the main entrance gave way and fell, crushing her beneath its weight, killing her instantly. After the fire was gotten under control, men set to work to explore the ruins for the dead or wounded. After a half-hours' search they came across the blackened and mangled body of Engineer Anthony Evans. The body was horribly mutilated, the top of the head being completely blown off, his brains scattered and the arms and legs broken in half a dozen places, and the entire body burned and scalded until it resembled little that is human.

A SHOCKING MINE EXPLOSION.

Thirteen Men Killed—The Face of Nature Considerably Scratched.

EVANSTON, Wyo., Jan. 17.—The fire damp explosion in mine No. 4 yesterday, at Almy, three miles northwest of this place, proves to be one of the most serious in the history of Rocky Mountain coal mines. Occurring as it did at night, the death role was limited to 13 persons. The whole face of the country, and that portion of the settlement fronting the slope, gives evidence of the terrible force of the explosion. The weight and ten houses were entirely demolished. The [illegible] house was wrecked, while [illegible] business houses lost [illegible] doors or chimneys. The mouth of the slope has the appearance of a [illegible] from which fully a thousand [illegible] of rocks have been torn and distributed over the adjacent country. A train of [illegible] cars going down into the mine at the time of the explosion was [illegible] into fragments, and shot out as though from the mouth of a cannon.

AMERICAN-CANADIAN FISHERMEN.

The Former do not Want a Renewal of the Treaty of 1873.

BUFFALO, N. Y., Jan. 14.—Messrs. Whitten and Pierce are here on important business connected with the fishery interests of the great lakes. "We propose," said Mr. Whitten, "to get the prominent fishermen of this vicinity to memorialize their congressmen on this subject, to prevent, if possible, the appointment of another fish commission like that of 1867, which gave to Canada $5,000,000 as a bonus under the reciprocity treaty of 1873. "The gist of the whole matter," said Mr. Whitten, "lies in the fact that the Canadians are very anxious to have this treaty renewed while it is not at all to the present interests of the United States to do so. In other words their gain by the treaty is much greater than ours, especially in the matter of sea coast fisheries. We do not care to fish in their waters, or if we do we would prefer to have them pay duty on our fish than to get their fish without that tax, and this is what we want to explain to the people and get them to prevent a renewal of the reciprocity treaty of 1873."

MANGLED TO DEATH.

Terrible Railroad Collision—Four Train Hands Killed.

MICHIGAN CITY, Ind., Jan. 14.—A collision occurred on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, near Coburg, two miles and a half west of Alida, yesterday, whereby one engineer and three firemen were killed. The trains colliding were both heavily loaded freights, the east-bound one being a double-header, while the westward one was in tow of a monster locomotive, known as a "camel back." The train drawn by this engine should have stopped at Alida for orders, but the engineer and fireman, it is alleged, were both asleep, and they ran to the crossing at a high rate, and continued on a downgrade. Both trains were on a downgrade and rounded a curve at the same time, doing twenty-five miles an hour. The result was that the three engines and twenty cars of merchandise and live stock were heaped into one unrecognizable mass. This caught fire and burned freely for some time. The engineer of the west bound train was found with his head split open from the crown to the neck and the face fell forward upon his breast, while his brains were scattered about. One fireman became pinned in between pieces of the wreck and was suspended by his head until he was roasted to death. A second fireman was cut completely in two and the dismembered parts of his body were found some distance apart. The third was badly injured, and died after a few hours of suffering. The other two engineers escaped by jumping. The extreme secrecy of the Baltimore and Ohio management prevented the reporters from obtaining the names of the killed or injured employes.

The Lancaster Bank.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 14.—The action to be taken by the comptroller of the currency in reference to the Lancaster National bank is not yet settled. Although it was intimated yesterday that a receiver would not be appointed, it now appears that a receiver is likely to be appointed. Comptroller Cannon says that the latest returns convince him that the bank should not be allowed to resume business after so long a suspension and such a complication of its affairs. He is not yet satisfied as to the value of the bank's assets, and a letter was to-day sent to the examiner calling for a report as to its ability to meet its liabilities. Comptroller Cannon expects a report in a few days upon which he can act. He is convinced that such mismanagement has been shown as to reflect severely upon the fitness of the present officers to conduct the bank's affairs.

AN UNJUST SENTENCE.

A PENNSYLVANIAN'S STORY WHICH SEEMS HARD INDEED.

Defrauded of the Valid Titles to Land Legally Purchased—His Home Attacked and he Convicted for Another Man's Crime.

CHICAGO, Jan. 17.—Milton Weston, who stands convicted in Allegheny county, Pa., as accessory to a murder, returned to Chicago yesterday to close up some business affairs, prior to returning to Pittsburg to receive his sentence of four years in Riverside penitentiary. Weston's reputation has been beyond reproach, both as a business man and socially. He has a mother, wife, children and brothers residing in this city, all of whom are highly esteemed. "For forty-three years," he said to a reporter, "I have lived here and done business and no man can place a black mark against my character anywhere. This thing has cost me $200,000, besides $45,000 lawyers' fees, over $300,000, about all the fortune that I had. Even my my wife has mortgaged her farm and pledged her diamonds to help me out of trouble, but I am still here, the victim of a cruel conspiracy. The story has never been told that I discovered the value of natural gas for illumination, and its utility for fuel.

I purchased 1050 acres of land in West Moreland county from Hillery J. Brunot, brother of Felix Brunot, the Quaker Indian commissioner. I paid $20,000 for the land and $4000 to remove a cloud from its title. I received a deed from Brunot, wherein he agreed to give me a good and sufficient title. The first payment is on record. Before the second payment became due I was notified by the owners of the best leases that Brunot did not own them at all. I immediately took steps to possess myself of these leases, which I succeeded in doing for 99 years and I placed them on record. Regardless of this, and in violation of the sale to me, Brunot sold the same to another gas company, which attempted to dispossess me.

At that time myself and wife lived on the land, and for several days and nights before, my wife had been there almost alone, with but one lady companion. Haymaker, who was unfortunately killed, was the agent of Brunot. He had 150 men under him, armed with pick handles and revolvers, who came upon us while we were in peaceful possession, to try to dispossess us. Who would not have resisted to defend his own?

In the melee that ensued, Haymaker was killed, and while that killing was charged to my foreman, the fact is he was killed by his own men, by a shot intended for my foreman. I was living on the property with my wife, and she was 600 feet from where the fight occurred and witnessed it, but she was not a competent witness for her husband. I shall go back to Pittsburg and face my sentence."

Mr. Cook Still has Hope.

NEW YORK, Jan. 17.—In an address today before the American Temperance association in Chickering Hall, Joseph Cook of Boston, said: "We are the most drunken race on the planet, and the palm for red noses should be awarded to the Irish, Germans and Americans." To make the knowledge of the alcoholic effects on the human system compulsory in schools, was the way to take the bull by the horns. Mr. Cook has not lost all hope yet that the Republican party would lead the crusade against the liquor interests.

France and the Church.

ROME, Jan. 17.—The Pope in receiving Count Behain, French envoy to the Vatican, complained of the conduct of the government of France toward the church. The Pope's allocution in reference to the Carolines question congratulates the Catholics upon the fact that the supreme authority of the church has been amply recognized by the two illustrious powers between whom counsels of the church have assured concord. The monarchist papers in France denounce the government's declaration regarding the clergy, as open war upon the clergy and church.

A Fatal Cave in.

ALBURTIS, Pa., Jan. 14.—A terrible cave in occurred yesterday afternoon at Rittonhouse Gap on the Catasaqua and Folgerville railway. It happened in an ore mine owned and operated by Mr. H. K. Hartsoil of this place, and buried about a dozen men. At 7 o'clock the bodies of James Shiffert, Frank Eck and George L. Miller had been recovered. They had been suffocated. Large gangs of men are endeavoring to rescue the others. The mine gave employment to a large number of men, but most of them had left work at noon.

An After-house's Ghostly Inmates.

VINEYARD, Mass., Jan. 14.—A vessel's after-house apparently newly painted was picked up on the shore on the 11th inst. It had been long in the water and two human skeletons tied together by a rope were also found. They are thought to be two of the many victims of the steamer City of Columbus wrecked off Gay Head two years ago. A lot of shoes similar to those taken from the City of Columbus at the time of the wreck were also washed ashore.

Another Collision.

WINCHESTER, Va., Jan. 15.—A collision occurred near Millville, the first station from Harper's Ferry, to-day, between the engine of a ballast train, said to have been running at a high rate of speed, and a freight train also running very fast, to make up lost time. Four men were killed and others on both trains saved their lives by jumping. Seven cars were thrown into the Shenandoah river, and both engines were ruined.

Ghastly Scene at the Gallows.

BELLEVILLE, Ill., Jan. 15.—Noah Merriman, the wife murderer, was hanged to day. Previous to his execution he admitted having killed his wife and confessed the murder of a female peddlar in East St. Louis some years ago. The name of the woman he would not reveal. While the noose was being adjusted about his neck, he fell in a dead faint and it required three men to hold him in position over the trap. The trap was then sprung and he died in 12 minutes after suffering the most terrible agonies.

Panic Stricken Pugilists.

NEW YORK, Jan. 15.—A boxing entertainment was given by the New York Athletic club at Sixth avenue and 55th street last evening, and while the two local boxers were on the stage some one shouted "fire." In an instant the audience of 1,500 persons was on its feet, and fighting to get down the main stairway. The alarm was caused by a defective chimney, which filled the hall with smoke. Luckily no serious accidents resulted from the panic, but the major part of the crowd left the building, having lost all interest in the boxing match.