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CONGRESS

Not Much Concerned About Anything Except Appropriations.

WASHINGTON, December 11.—In both houses the work is progressing in a manner that indicates lack of real earnestness. The prominent features of this week's proceedings are likely to be the anti-option bill in the senate and an appropriation bill in the house. The anti-option bill is the unfinished business on the senate calendar, and is expected to be laid before that body to-morrow unless an early adjournment prevents it.

In the morning hour Senator Mitchell will discuss his joint resolution proposing an amendment to the constitution providing for the election of senators by the votes of the qualified electors of the states. This joint resolution is indorsed by the committee on privileges and elections, and is undoubtedly strong in the senate, but because of its great importance it is hardly to be assumed that it can be passed during the scanty opportunity offered by the morning hour.

Once the anti-option bill is laid before the senate it will be open to discussion again, and positive action on the matter is expected this week. From present indications the daily sessions will be short, and an adjournment will be taken from Thursday to the following Monday. It is quite probable that in the house next week a great deal of information and opinions based on information will be submitted relative to the condition of the treasury.

It is the expectation of the leaders that with the exception of Monday, when bills concerning the District of Columbia will have right of way, practically the whole time of the house during the week will be devoted to consideration of the regular appropriation bills. The debate will begin on the army appropriation bill which the military committee will report on Monday, and which Chairman Outwaite at present intends to call up on Tuesday.

It is likely that the debate will take a much wider range than this bill, and will embrace the state of the revenues, of existing appropriations and, if it is possible, of the policy of the democratic party. The army bill in its aggregate shows a reduction from the total amount carried by the bill for the current fiscal year, but there have been several increases made in the appropriations under the head of "Department of Ordnance."

The military committee would not be surprised if an attack was made on some of these items by Mr. Holman and other rigid economists. It is prepared for any criticisms which may be made by adopting in its report the statements made by General Flagler showing the real and urgent necessity for additional appro-

priations, and is in for a lively fight if need be.

The appropriation committee has been at work on the District of Columbia and fortification appropriation bills for some time, and expects to report the latter bill in time to be taken up as soon as the army bill is passed.

The District of Columbia bill has caused considerable trouble to the subcommittee in charge of it. A host of local government officials have been examined, and on Monday the subcommittee will begin the annual preparation of the bill. It is believed that the bill will be reported to the house the latter part of this week.

Estimates for deficiencies have been received and they will be embodied in an urgency deficiency bill, to be reported to the house and taken up almost immediately for action, any other bills under discussion to temporarily give way.

It is the purpose of the managers of the house to get all these bills over to the senate before the holiday recess. The accomplishment of this purpose largely depends on the temper of the house, which, if in the mood, can protract consideration of the bills over several weeks.

MONDAY.

Davis, of Kansas, from the committee on labor, reported the bill to prohibit the employment of convict labor on public works.

In the senate certificates of election of electors for president and vice president of the United States were presented from the states of New Jersey, Colorado, Connecticut and Ohio, and placed on file.

Numerous petitions and remonstrances against the passage of the anti-option bill were presented and referred to the committee on agriculture. Petitions were also presented for closing the World's fair on Sundays, and in favor of the construction of the Nicaragua canal.

Senator Stewart introduced a bill amending the existing Sherman act so as to provide for the free silver coinage of silver bullion now held in the treasury, and in addition, for the issue of treasury notes based on the silver deposits, which notes are to be reclaimable in gold or silver coin at the option of the government, and are made legal tenders.

Senators Peffer and Call were appointed additional members of the committee on immigration.

Missouri has lately added another advocate to the People's cause. The Daily and Weekly *Wasp*, under the management of Prof. W. T. Foster, will hereafter be devoted to the principles of Populism, and will contain the professor's weather and scientific writings.

Write to the *ADVOCATE* for terms to solicitors. You will not lose anything by doing so.

RETALIATION.

The Steamship Companies Uniting Against the Chandler Bill.

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 11.—The representative of the *Globe-Democrat* is in a position to give a forecast of what the united steamship companies may do in the event that congress should pass an act suspending immigration for one year as proposed by the Chandler bill, recently introduced. The steamship companies look upon such legislation as foreshadowing a permanent act, excluding immigration for an indefinite period. They say that the inducements held out by Senator Chandler in an interview, that they could find their compensation in carrying visitors to the exposition during the year that immigration is suspended, are not practical. They see in the Chandler bill a direct menace, and must cast about for something else to employ their ships, which represent an enormous capital. The question is, what course will they take?

It is very probable that as soon as the Chandler bill comes regularly before congress, and its passage becomes assured, a meeting will take place between all the steamship companies carrying freight and passengers between European and American ports. This meeting will include representatives of English, German, French, Italian, Belgium, Dutch and other lines. A resolution will be submitted, deciding on the part of all lines interested to close American ports like New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, to European traffic, and to divert their carrying business to Halifax. This resolution will probably be carried, and the combined lines will at once enter upon a course of retaliation upon American commerce. The lines will refuse to carry exposition visitors except by way of Halifax, and in the same way will treat all freight intended for American ports.

If this policy is followed, as there is good ground for assuming, one consequence will be to stimulate American shipping. It will at once necessitate the building of a large merchant fleet to take care of the business now carried in European bottoms. The only damage likely to ensue is the losses sustained by American merchants, exporters and importers from the delay in creating a new merchant marine, and the extra expense involved in shipping via Halifax.

Another problem involved is, how far retaliatory measures of this sort can be carried without making an international question of them. The fact is pointed out that already an act is proposed in Germany to prohibit the operation of foreign steamship agents in the empire, the evident intention being the protection of the German carrying trade. In

the event of complications ensuing between the United States and the European steamship companies, by reason of the refusal of these lines to do business with American ports, England, Germany and other countries interested may combine in the enactment of laws putting a prohibitive tax on American vessels engaged in the carrying business with their ports. In that event the question is almost certain to pass into a diplomatic sphere, and become a subject for international arbitration. England will in all probability be ready to enter into a combination with the other powers, for the reason that Canada will derive the immense profit from the boycott of American ports, should that prove to be the ultimate policy of the steamship companies, and because any interference with her carrying trade invariably touches a tender spot, not to speak of the fact that any serious disagreement between continental Europe and the United States, relating to the commerce of the high seas, always redounds to her pecuniary profit.

The Chandler bill has many adherents in both branches of congress, and it is not assuming too much responsibility to predict that it will pass, if not in its present entirety, at least in a modified form. It is not in any sense a partisan measure. Fully as many democrats as republicans have openly committed themselves to this or some measure like it that will check the evils of immigration, and, if possible, suspend immigration entirely. That the steamship companies are apprehensive for their business is natural, and it is comparatively easy to trace, even at so early a date, what they will do to offset the effects of such legislation, should it come to pass. They will, as detailed above, play Halifax against American ports and await the result, in the hope of creating an international crisis by which they may profit.

Mine Inspector Stewart says in his last report that the coal product of Kansas for last year was 69,000,000 bushels, the largest the state ever had. Of the nineteen counties that produce coal, Crawford yielded 33 per cent.; Cherokee, 32 per cent.; Osage, 17 per cent., and Leavenworth, 10 per cent. Since 1889, when the last report was made, Cherokee increased its percentage of the whole state product, but the three other counties fell off some. In 1889 these four counties yielded the same proportion of the product of Kansas that they gave last year. With proper legislation to regulate mines and mining there is no telling how much coal Kansas would produce.

The Populists in the California legislature hold the balance of power, and will dictate who shall be Senator Felton's successor.