

# The Canton Times.

MOTTO: For fools of Government let fools contest; For wiles of faith let graceless zealots fight; What'er is best administered, is best; His can't be wrong whose life is in the right. — POPE

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*Board Superasson*



**E. v. SEUTTER**

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## Washington Letter.

(From our Regular Correspondent.)

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec 27 1895.—Speaker Reed's muzzles are in prime working order. He muzzled the members of the Ways and Means committee and compelled them to report two bills prepared by him; one increasing the tariff upon wool, woolsens and lumber to 60 per cent of what it was in the McKinley law, and raising the tariff upon everything else, excepting sugar, 15 per cent above present rates, and the other providing for the issue of three per cent coin bonds to replenish the gold reserve whenever the Secretary of the Treasury deems it necessary, and of \$50,000,000 in three per cent 3-year Treasury certificates, or so much thereof as the Secretary of the Treasury may need from time to time. He muzzled the objecting republicans who wanted the bills submitted to a caucus before being reported to the House, and lastly he muzzled the House and had his bills passed, notwithstanding that the democrats did all the protesting they could under the Reed rule, against the railroading of such important legislation through the House without debate. When one of his own party went to Mr. Reed and asked that a reasonable time be allowed for debate on the bills before they were passed Mr. Reed dismissed him by saying sharply: "The House isn't a debating society." In fact, for all practical purposes there is no House. Its powers have all been usurped by Mr. Reed and its only important duties are to obey his orders.

But there are neither Reed rules nor methods in the Senate, to which these bills have now gone, and the country may count upon their being thoroughly debated before they are acted upon. It is doubtful whether either of them can pass the Senate at all, and certain that neither can get through without being materially amended.

The President this week formally declined to accept the ram Katahdin, built by the Bath Iron Works, because of the failure of the vessel to make the speed stipulated in the contract. The rejection is merely a technical one, as the administration and the naval officers are entirely satisfied with the boat and know that the failure to reach the required speed was no fault of the builders who merely followed the government plans in the construction of the vessel. It would have set a precedent which might make trouble in the future to accept the vessel after its failure to make the speed named in the contract, so it was deemed best to refuse to accept. But the administration's influence will be used to get the joint resolution authorizing the President to accept the Katahdin, which has already been introduced, adopted by Congress, so there is little doubt that the Katahdin will soon be a part of Uncle Sam's navy.

In creating three Election committees to bounce those democrats whose seats are being contested by republicans to give those republicans who are holding seats which are contested by democrats a valid title to their seats, Mr. Reed overlooked one thing that is already making trouble. The committee on Elections has but one room, and each of the three committees claim the right to use it.

The union printers are not so glad about the extension of the Civil Service Office as they were. Already four non-union printers have secured positions in the building by passing the required examination, and there will be others, until their number grows so great that the office will have to be classed as non-union.

The report, although not yet officially confirmed, that Russia has offered to loan the United States \$100,000,000 in gold, without interest, has probably created greater consternation among the European gold kings who have been squeezing enormous profits out of the United States under our present bad financial system than did President Cleveland's bold announcement in behalf of the Monroe doctrine. Already an agent of the Rothschilds has been to

Washington to assure Secretary Carlisle of their willingness to furnish all the gold this government might need, notwithstanding their assertion right after the Monroe doctrine message was published that American securities of all sorts had been put on the black list. Of course there is no probability that this government will accept Russia's offer, but it was none the less a very friendly and gracious act on the part of Russia, and it furnishes the administration with a weapon that will inspire fear in the mind of the European gold kings, who know by experience what Russia can do in the financial line in opposition to them. Russia has not only made itself independent of the aforesaid European money kings, but while doing it has accumulated \$800,000,000 in gold. More than half of this gold, for which Russia has no particular use is deposited in European banks outside of Russia. That is the gold that she is willing to loan us. Its withdrawal from Europe would be a knockdown blow for the gold kings.

## Fire In the Dismal Swamp.

EDS. COUNTRY GENTLEMEN—The great "Dismal Swamp" of Virginia, is now on fire. The bears and other wild animals that make their home in the tangled recesses of this, the most wonderful and truly historical swamp in America, are driven out by the fires now raging there, and invade the corn fields of the farmers living near the margins of the swamp. The soil is of a "peaty" nature, and in seasons of prolonged aridity, it will burn for weeks. The fire slowly eats its way along, burning to a depth of two or three or more feet, and many hundreds of acres of timber are undermined by the fire and fall down, and make a desolate looking tangle until the growth of green weeds, reeds and shrubs of the following season covers up the scars.

It sounds a little odd to note the fact that bears and deer and other game are found within 15 miles of this seaport city of nearly 80,000 people. The Dismal Swamp is what may be termed a "freak" of nature. It covers nearly 800 square miles of territory. It really is a swamp on a hillside, as the entire surface of the swamp slopes gently and easily towards the sea. The highest point in the swamp is nearly 25 feet above sea level. Eight streams of considerable size have their headwaters in this swamp. Lake Drummond occupies a position in its centre, and at the highest point. It occupies a space of nearly five miles north and south, and four miles east and west. The lake is filled with juniper water, so called from the fact that the swamp is well covered with juniper forests, and the waters, in which the juniper roots are soaking, and into which the annual crop of juniper berries fall, are so impregnated with the medicinal properties of the juniper that they are the color of tea or vinegar or beer. These waters are drunk largely for their favorable action on the kidneys, and, strange as it may appear, the water never becomes stagnant or impure, and its keeping qualities are marvelous.

No one can satisfactorily account for the formation of the bed of Lake Drummond, except on the supposition that in the ancient past, during a period of prolonged dry weather, the waters of the swamp receded so far from the surface that the fires burned so long and so steadily, and on such a large scale as to actually burn out the bed of the lake. On the return of the usual rains, the burned out spot became filled with water, and so remains a lake to this day. Indian tradition supports this theory, and in fact it can hardly be explained in any other manner. Away to the southward, 100 miles or so, is another lake—Lake Matamuskeet—which, according to Indian tradition, was formed in the same way. The lake last named was formed much more recently than Lake Drummond, and tradition says it was 13 moons, or one year in burning. In many respects eastern Virginia and North Carolina

are remarkable sections of country. The soil of a field here, 100 miles long by 40 wide, is largely of alluvial character, and at some remote time was washed down from the slopes of the interior, and filled up the shallow sea that rolled here. Underneath the 15 or more feet of soil and sub-soil here, we everywhere find the old sea bed, and on the margins of the Dismal Swamp we now and then find the remains of the mastodon, and everywhere we find old sea-shells of extinct tribes of the sea.

Then again, we see everywhere signs that this coast has been slowly raised up, and we find marl (half-decomposed sea shells) 30 to 40 feet above the sea level. This marl was all formed under water. Of more recent date is the oyster-shell mound, made by the Indians. The headquarters of every tribe on these waters is marked by a huge mound of oyster-shells, showing that "poor Lo" knew a good thing, and got his living largely from the water, just as his pale-faced successor does at the present time. On all sides, if one but studies carefully, are signs that this is an old country, with an old history, and by closely observing the trend of business, one can see that this oldest old is rapidly taking on the airs the newest new.

Here are marks of Washington, as he surveyed the Dismal Swamp before the first revolutionary war. He surveyed the Dismal Swamp Canal, and here is "Washington's Ditch"—a smaller canal, still in existence. The Dismal Swamp Land Co. is still in existence, and ever since its formation in 1793 has paid annual dividends, excepting when interfered with by the wars of 1770, 1812 and 1820. Washington owned the largest individual interest in this old company, and it is stated that the stock of said company is still held largely by the lineal descendants of that oldest land company in America.

Some of the finest corn lands in the United States are found on the margins of the Dismal Swamp, and in fact the entire swamp is a rich, dark peaty mold—rich as an old mack bed. If drained it would make a "right smart" corn patch, the greatest trouble being to keep it from burning up during a dry spell.—A. J., Norfolk, Va.

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