

WASHINGTON

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WASHINGTON, March 9, 1870.

Visit of General Quesada to the President and War Department—Protracted Interview With the Senate Committee on Military Affairs—Favorable Condition of Patriot Affairs in Cuba.

General Quesada, accompanied by Colonels Loynez and Verona, of his staff, and Señor Ruiz had an interview of an hour's duration to day with the Senate Committee on Military Affairs and others, numbering twelve senators in all. The arrangements for meeting with the committee were made by one of its members who takes a deep interest in the cause of Cuba. Having met General Quesada privately and heard his story he concluded that the Military Committee ought to hear it. All the members of the committee were present except Senator Abbott. General Quesada, after being introduced to the members of the committee, expressed his thanks for being permitted to appear before them and represent the cause of the patriot Cubans. He intended, he said, to state the condition of affairs in Cuba as they were, because there was nothing to be gained by misrepresentation. The facts were sufficiently favorable to the Cubans, and they were not compelled to circulate false reports; that they would leave to their enemies. General Quesada produced a map of Cuba, which, he said, had been prepared with great care and accuracy, showing the parts of the island occupied by the Cubans and those held by the Spaniards. The committee would see, he said, that the Cubans held at least two-thirds of the island. Instead of losing they had steadily been gaining ground. It had been objected that the Cubans did not possess any seaport town or any of the chief cities of the island. To this he would answer that the chief difficulty with the Cubans since the revolution began was want of arms and ammunition. They had force enough to move upon and capture Havana or any of the other seaports of the island, but owing to their lack of artillery they could not hold them against the enemy, who in this respect were well equipped. They had no desire to destroy the cities, and had they captured them this would have been their only method of keeping the enemy from again retaking them. The Cuban army amounted to between fifty and sixty thousand effective men. A large number of these, however, were armed with nothing but swords and sabres, and were useless in an open fight with well armed infantry. The great want of the Cuban army was arms. Could they be supplied with these the contest with the Spaniards would be brief. They would at once assume the aggressive and capture Havana and other seaports. This was the reason why the Cubans asked the United States to recognize them as belligerents. They could then purchase arms and send them to Cuba.

In reply to a question from a member of the committee General Quesada said the patriots had established a regular government, with Cespedes as President. Their Legislature was something like our old Continental Congress. He said the stories of the resignation of General Jordan were set afloat by the Spaniards. He had information to that effect. General Jordan was very popular with the patriot army and with Cubans generally. He was enthusiastic in the cause and had a firm belief in its ultimate success. With regard to the mode in which the Spaniards conducted the war General Quesada said their barbarism was unprecedented. Nothing equalled it except the Indian savages of the plains. It was customary for them to mutilate the dead. He had himself seen Cubans killed in battle with their ears cut off and their persons otherwise horribly mutilated. They were in the habit of butchering their prisoners without mercy, and very few Cubans taken in battle had ever been exchanged. Thus far the Cubans had not destroyed property on the island except when it became absolutely necessary. They had burned several plantations in order to keep them from falling into the enemy's hands, and thereby affording the means of subsistence to their army. Destruction of property generally would be a last resort.

The members of the committee expressed their sympathy with the Cubans, and assured General Quesada that they would do all they could to secure the recognition of the patriots as belligerents. Quesada replied that that was all they asked or expected from the United States.

From the Senate Chamber the distinguished party visited the Executive Mansion, where they were at once escorted into the presence of the President by General Dent. General Quesada presented a letter of congratulation to the President of the United States from Señor Cespedes, President of the provisional government of Cuba. The President received General Quesada with great courtesy, and at once entered into an animated conversation. General Quesada went into details in regard to the situation of the revolution and communicated much private information, which it would be indiscreet to make public. The President listened with marked attention and seemed struck with the information which he received. It seemed as if a void had been filled. The President displayed that his own knowledge, so far as it went, of the struggle, was ample. The President expressed no opinions, though his manner made a gratifying impression upon the Cuban gentlemen. General Babcock was presented to General Quesada and his staff officers during their presence in the President's office.

From the Executive Mansion the party visited the War Department, where they met General Belknap, Secretary of War, and had a pleasant talk. They next visited General Sherman and remained in conversation for some minutes. The party next proceeded to the Navy Department and were presented to Secretary Robeson and Admiral Porter. The Admiral is probably the most outspoken friend of the Cuban cause and talked quite plainly on the subject of Cuban independence. During their visits to-day the General and Señor Ruiz called upon Mrs. Secretary Fish. It is their intention also to call upon the Secretary. General Quesada will remain here during the present week.

Meeting of the Friends of Cuba.

General Quesada met this evening with the members of the Cuban Female Junta of this city, of which Mrs. Senor Pomeroy is president, at Senator Pomeroy's residence, and received his friends. Among those present were General Quesada and Colonels Loynez and Verona of his staff, Señor Ruiz, Senators Carpenter, Pomeroy and Morrill, of Vermont; Representatives W. D. Kelley, of Pennsylvania, and Orange Ferris, of New York; Rev. Dr. Newman, with a number of ladies and gentlemen friendly to the Cuban cause. After some time spent in social conversation Senator Pomeroy introduced General Quesada in a few remarks. The General thanked those present for their sympathy, on behalf of himself and Cuba. Remarks favorable to the Cuban cause were made by Senator Carpenter, Judge Kelley and Judge Ferris, and a resolution was adopted expressing sympathy

with Cuba and the struggling patriots. Senator Sumner was not present at the meeting.

Vigorous Efforts to Defeat the Washington and New York Air Line Railroad Bill—The Lobby Force Largely Augmented—New York Democrats Opposing the Measure.

The most powerful lobby now here is that in the interest of the railroad companies running between this city and New York. Its object is to defeat the passage of the bill authorizing the construction of the proposed air line railroad to New York, now before the House. These lobbyists become so bold that they thrust themselves upon the floor of the House while it was in session and intruded themselves upon members in their seats. To such an extent was this carried that Mr. Rogers, of Arkansas, was compelled to ask the Speaker yesterday to enforce the rules, alleging that at every turn he was confronted by railroad lobbyists. In addition to the fresh arrivals from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland, a number of the old hacks who loiter about the capital have been employed. Among the most active, influential and respectable of new arrivals are W. Prescott Smith, of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad; Gustavus J. Theobald and A. W. Markley, of Camden and Amboy; A. K. McClure, of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore road; Major Koonz, of the Baltimore and Ohio; Mr. Penreid, R. Pomeroy and others too numerous to mention. These gentlemen do not seem to care much about the passage of the bill in the House. They say they expect it will pass there; and one of them impudently told a member from New York that they did not propose to operate among the members of the House. There were, he said, too many of them. They proposed to lavish all their labors upon the Senate and in that body they expected to defeat the bill. All the democratic members from New York, under the lead of Sunset Cox and Fernando Wood, are violent in their opposition to the bill, on the ground that it will invade the rights of the States. It is said that the distribution of annual passes from here to New York is very general. One of the lobbyists is reported as having a pocket full of these, which he gives away with a recklessness that would doubtless astonish the stockholders of the roads in whose interest he is employed. What the end of the whole matter will be remains to be seen. The House, today, while half the seats were vacant, refused to second the demand for the previous question, and the bill went over till to-morrow. The same House passed the bill at last session, and if it is defeated now its failure will be largely due to the work of the lobby.

The Telegraph Monopolists Overreaching Themselves—Success of the Postal Telegraph System in Great Britain.

The Western Union monopolists are likely to overreach themselves in their efforts to create prejudice against the postal telegraph project. Ever since the establishment of the government system in England stories have been set afloat by the Union people representing the thing as a gigantic failure, a huge piece of mismanagement, and a grand cause of general embarrassment to business men. The Atlantic cable has been liberally employed to disseminate these stories, and some cunning European agents of the Western Union Company have been quite industrious in cooking up despatches for publication here and elsewhere. The object of all this has been to create a false impression as to the practicability and utility of postal telegraphs, and thus to deceive Congress. Reliable intelligence received here proves that all these stories are in the main fabrications, and that where they are true they furnish an argument in favor instead of against the project. The information to which I allude is that the postal telegraph has proved a great blessing to the people, and that its popularity is so great that the existing lines are inadequate to get through the largely increased business. To prove that what I state is not mere barren assertion, I may mention the fact that General C. C. Washburn to-day received a letter from Mr. Frank I. Scudamore, Secretary of the British Post Office, and one of the principal promoters of the postal telegraph system in Great Britain, in which it is observed that despatches were transmitted over the ocean cable representing the system as a failure "at a time when there was no delay whatever, when there was no dissatisfaction, and when it was not possible there could have been any complaints, inasmuch as the conduct of the telegraph business under the Post Office had only commenced an hour or two before the telegram was transmitted." The letter then continues thus:—

A very large increase of business, consequent upon the reduction to a shilling rate, has caused some delay. We are, however, improving in working from day to day, and I have no doubt whatever of the success of our scheme.

Thus you will perceive that one of the official heads of the system in England exposes the miserable shams of the Western Union monopolists, and gives the lie to all their late statements. General Washburn is determined not to be turned aside from his work, and will use every proper means to bring it to a successful issue in Congress this session. He has repeatedly tried to get the House to authorize him to send for persons and papers in prosecution of his investigation, but the monopoly lobbyists on the floor have thus far defeated his efforts. With such authority as he seeks he could compel the Western Union people to make a fair and candid exhibit of their business; but, knowing and fearing this, Orton & Co. have instructed their friends in the House to make objections on the ground of economy. General Washburn, however, will try to obtain his information in some other way, should the House again refuse to give him the required authority.

Bill for the Re-admission of Georgia—The Reconstruction Business Nearly Played Out.

The bill to admit the State of Georgia to representation in Congress, reported by Senator Trumbull to-day from the Judiciary Committee, is the same as that which passed the House yesterday. It will, probably, go through the Senate after some debate, notwithstanding the fact that Ben Butler is busy with honorable Senators trying to convince them that John Lingham's amendment should not be adopted. This reconstruction business is turning out more than was bargained for. The fact is, that it has consumed so much time already that public business has been materially delayed and important measures in committee have been lying for weeks awaiting action. The oldest Senators say they have never known a session where business was so much behind hand.

The Financial Situation.

One of the subjects talked over yesterday in the Cabinet was the financial situation, which all agreed was most favorable. The resumption of specie payment will not be attempted at present.

The President's State Dinner.

At the President's State dinner this evening Representatives Conger and Bowen occupied one end of the table and Representatives Wells and Loughridge the other. On one side of the table were Representative Griswold, Mrs. Morrell, Representatives Myers and Cullom, Mrs. Scott, Senators McCreery and Carpenter, Mrs. Grant, Senator Willey, Senator Ferry, Mrs. Washburn, Representatives Lynch and Jencks, Mrs. Hoar and Representative Cassna; and on the opposite side Representatives Hoar, Wilson, of Ohio, and Washburn. Mrs. Lynch, Senator McDonald, Senator Stewart, Mrs. Ferry, the President, Mrs. Carpenter, Senator Scott, Representative Morrell, Mrs. Myers, Representative Hooper, Representative Benjamin and Mrs. Griswold.

The President at the Capitol.

The President spent several hours this afternoon at the Capitol, occupying what is known as the President's Room. He received various Senators, who called more to pay their respects than to converse on business. This is their first time that any President has visited the Capitol and occupied the room set apart for him, excepting during the closing hours of Congress, to sign and approve bills or for the transaction of other business, when minutes are precious and despatch is required.

The Appropriation Bill.

The Committee on Appropriations are now ready to report the naval appropriation bill. The amount is not over \$15,500,000. The committee have made much progress with consular and diplomatic, Post Office, and army bills. The remainder, to complete the series, are those making appropriations for fortifications, rivers and harbors, and sundry civil expenses.

Time for Withdrawing Spirits in Bond.

The Senate Finance Committee were equally divided to-day—three against three—on the propriety of passing the House resolution extending