

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Tuesday, December 8, 1908.

The Opening of Congress.

Congress convened for the short session on the 7th (p. 226). Only perfunctory business was done by either House, except that in the Lower House Mr. Rainey introduced the following significant resolution:

Resolved, That a committee of five members of the House be appointed by the Speaker to investigate the purchase by the United States of the Panama canal property, with a view of ascertaining how much of the \$40,000,000 which appears of record to have been paid to the French company, was really paid to said company, or for stock or holdings of said company, or to the French government for said company; and with a view also of ascertaining how much of said sum, if any, was directly or indirectly paid to American citizens, or to an American syndicate; and with a view of ascertaining whether any member of either branch of the Congress of the United States or any person connected with the government of the United States in an official capacity profited directly or indirectly by said transaction. Provided, said committee shall have power to send for persons and papers and to examine witnesses, and also to employ a stenographer and one clerk. Said committee shall report the result of its investigations to the House with such recommendations as it may deem proper.

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On the 8th President Roosevelt's message was read. It is a document of 20,000 words, loosely composed, marred by repetitions, and dictatorial in tone. After making a favorable exhibit of Federal finances it recommends national supervision of all inter-State business; modification of the anti-trust law so as to permit combinations in the interest of the public and subject to supervision by the national government; preservation of natural resources; improvement of inland water ways; postal savings banks; parcels post on rural routes; national promotion of education; putting the census bureau under civil service rules; providing for public health; transfer of the public printing office to the Department of Commerce and Labor, and of the soldiers' homes to the War Department; prohibition of child labor; shorter hours of all mechanical labor; progressive inheritance tax on large fortunes; industrial education; employers' liability law, and increase of salaries for Federal judges. There is a rebuke to trades

unionism in politics. Maintenance of labor injunctions, without jury trial for contempt, is advocated; and Statehood for New Mexico and Arizona are recommended. Protection for fisheries is urged, and congratulations are offered on the progress of the Filipinos toward a somewhat distant era of self-government. Other specific recommendations are made. The message probably goes farther in the direction of Federal centralization and empirical socialism than any one of its predecessors. Congress is reported by Walter Wellman, the friendly correspondent, as receiving the message coldly, almost contemptuously, and as "the song of the dying swan." He says it was written not for Congress but "for the country, for history, for posterity," and "to complete the record."

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The Panama Canal Question.

Mr. Rainey's resolution for an investigation of the Panama Canal question (p. 699), introduced at the opening of Congress, as stated above, had been preceded by an open letter from President Roosevelt, which appeared in the newspapers of the 6th. The letter had been written on the 1st to William Dudley Foulke in reply to a request by Mr. Foulke for definite information as to the charges of the Indianapolis News against the Administration and Mr. Taft with reference to corruption in the \$40,000,000 paid for the French interests in the Panama Canal. In his long reply President Roosevelt charges Delavan Smith of the Indianapolis News with lying. He denies that either his brother-in-law, Mr. Robinson, or Mr. Taft's brother had anything to do with the Panama Canal affair. On the general question he writes:

The fact has been officially published again and again that the government paid \$40,000,000 and that it paid this \$40,000,000 direct to the French government, getting the receipt of the liquidator appointed by the French government to receive the same. The United States government has not the slightest knowledge as to the particular individuals among whom the French government distributed the sum. This was the business of the French government. The mere supposition that any American received from the French government a "rake-off" is too absurd to be discussed. It is an abominable falsehood, and it is a slander, not against the American government, but against the French government.

In the same letter, though in another connection, Mr. Roosevelt similarly denounces Mr. Lafan of the New York Sun. Referring to the Sun and the News together, he writes:

The fact is that these particular newspapers habitually and continually and as a matter of business, practice every form of mendacity known to man, from the suppression of the truth and the suggestion of the false, to the lie direct. Those who write or procure others to write these articles are engaged in the practice of mendacity for hire; and surely

there can be no lower form of gaining a livelihood. Whether they are paid by outsiders to say what is false, or whether their profit comes from the circulation of the falsehoods, is a matter of small consequence. It is utterly impossible to answer all of their falsehoods. When any given falsehood is exposed they simply repeat it and circulate another. If they were mistaken in the facts, if they possessed in their make-up any shred of honesty at all, it would be worth while to set them right. But there is no question at all as to any "mistake" or "misunderstanding" on their part. They state what they either know to be untrue or could by the slightest inquiry find out to be untrue.

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Mr. Laffan replies to Mr. Roosevelt with the countercharge that—

Mr. Roosevelt has shown in his frequent collisions with various persons of distinction that he has an overwhelming advantage over any respectable antagonist in his, Mr. Roosevelt's, complete freedom from any sense of personal obligation in respect of the truth. The editor of the Sun is fully alive to the extremity of the inconvenience which attaches to a personal controversy with a man who has shown himself capable of suppression and perversion of individual correspondence, an act which in ordinary life would, in the cognizance of any club or association of self-respecting gentlemen, entail his prompt expulsion.

Mr. Smith replies that the article in the Indianapolis News was taken from and credited to a New York paper, not the Sun, by a subordinate during his absence, and that responsibility for its accuracy was at the time expressly disclaimed. The paper alluded to by Mr. Smith is the New York World, which, replying to Mr. Roosevelt in its issue of the 8th, says:

President Roosevelt's reply is for the most part a string of abusive and defamatory epithets. But he also makes the following statements as truthful information to the American people: "The United States did not pay a cent of the \$40,000,000 to any American citizen." "The United States government has not the slightest knowledge as to the particular individuals among whom the French government distributed the same." "So far as I know there was no syndicate; there certainly was no syndicate in the United States." To the best of the World's knowledge and belief each and all of these statements made by Mr. Roosevelt are untrue, and Mr. Roosevelt must have known they were untrue when he made them. As to the detailed distribution of the Panama loot only one man knows it all. And that man is William Nelson Cromwell. The two men who were most in Mr. Cromwell's confidence are Theodore Roosevelt, president of the United States, and Elihu Root. It was they who aided Mr. Cromwell in consummating the Panama revolution, arranged the terms of the purchase of the Panama canal, agreed to pay \$40,000,000 on the canal properties and an additional \$10,000,000 for a manufactured Panama republic, every penny of both of which sums was paid by check, not to the French government, as Mr. Roosevelt says, but to J. P. Morgan & Co.

Presidential Election Returns.

The official count of election returns (p. 829) so far reported in the press dispatches are now as follows:

	Rep.	Dem.	Ind. L.	Pro.	Soc.
California ... 1908—	214,398	127,492	4,278	11,770	28,659
1904—	205,226	89,404		7,380	29,535
Colorado ... 1908—	123,700	126,644		5,559	7,974
1904—	100,105	134,687	824	3,438	4,304
Idaho 1908—	50,091	34,609		1,740	6,305
1904—	47,783	18,480	353	1,013	4,949
Illinois 1908—	629,932	450,810	7,724	33	29,364
1904—	632,645	327,606	6,725	34,770	73,923
Indiana 1908—	348,993	338,262	514	1,193	18,045
1904—	368,289	274,346	2,444	23,496	13,611
M'ss'ch'setts 1908—	265,966	155,543	19,237	4,373	11,789
1904—	257,822	165,746	1,294	4,279	13,604
Minnesota .. 1908—	195,786	103,433		10,114	14,469
1904—	216,651	55,187	204	6,253	11,692
Nebraska ... 1908—	126,997	131,099		5,179	3,522
1904—	138,558	51,876	20,518	6,338	7,412
Washington . 1908—	106,062	58,383	248	478	14,177
1904—	101,530	28,098	669	3,229	10,023
West Va.... 1908—	137,869	111,418	46	5,107	3,676
1904—	132,620	100,855	337	4,599	1,573

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Election Corruption in Chicago.

At the first primaries under the new direct primary law of Illinois (p. 466), held on the 8th of last August, gigantic frauds in Chicago were suspected in the perpetration of which it was believed that cliques of both the principal parties participated. Inasmuch as the then State's Attorney, a Republican, had been a candidate for re-nomination, it was considered improper for him to have any responsibility for prosecuting or refusing to prosecute alleged offenders. For this reason Frank J. Loesch, one of the leaders of the local bar, was appointed an independent special prosecutor of these cases. Under his management in that capacity the grand jury unearthed extensive bi-partisan frauds and indicted nearly 100 persons, some of them men of political importance locally. Trials were ordered at once, and were about to begin, when John E. W. Wayman, the newly elected State's Attorney—the Republican candidate who had defeated his predecessor at the primaries—appeared in court and demanded control of the cases. He had offered to appoint Mr. Loesch his assistant, but Mr. Loesch declined to act in any other capacity than that of special prosecutor, arguing that Mr. Wayman's personal interest is precisely the same as his predecessor's was. After a controversy the court sustained Mr. Loesch's contention, and the trials are proceeding under his control.