

The Public

First Year.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1899.

Number 45.

LOUIS F. POST, Editor.

Entered at the Chicago, Ill., Post-office as second-class matter.

For terms and all other particulars of publication, see last column of last page.

The president has carried his Spanish treaty through the senate, but by a narrow margin. The change of two votes would have produced a different result. And that change might easily have been made. Not all who are recorded in the affirmative really approved the terms of the treaty. Senator Mason had made a strong speech against its disposition of Philippine sovereignty, but fell into line for party reasons. Senator Perkins also was opposed to that part of the treaty, but voted against his convictions because he regarded a resolution of instructions from the legislature of his state as binding upon his conscience. Besides these two republicans, whose votes alone if cast against the treaty would have prevented its ratification at the present session, 11 democrats and two populists, most of them opposed to imperialism, voted—for one reason or another, but mainly because the ratification of the treaty was necessary to conclude a peace—with the majority. What enabled the president to carry his treaty through, was a feeling among both democratic and republican senators, that it would be impolitic to defeat a treaty of peace.

The event has proved that Wm. J. Bryan was right. Recognizing the difficulty of defeating a peace treaty even at the present session, and the certainty that a decision against the treaty now would be reversed by the new senate at a special session in the spring, he proposed to make the decisive battle against imperialism, not upon the ratification of the treaty but upon the question of disposing of

the territory which by the treaty Spain would surrender. To those who opposed Bryan's policy on the ground that the ratification of the treaty would be decisive of that question, the ratification now made must seem like the final triumph of imperialism. For if the treaty binds us, as these objectors have maintained, to a future policy at variance with our traditions, at war with our principles of government, and destructive of our national ideals, then the fight against American imperialism is ended. But to those who are in accord with Bryan, that fight has only begun.

It has been suggested by friends of the treaty that the battle with the Filipinos at Manila came just in the nick of time to secure its ratification. They certainly made the most of this sad event, to influence votes. But it is inconceivable that any senator would have changed his vote upon a question involving the fundamental principles of his government, merely because the newspapers were publishing alarming dispatches received through channels under the control of a censor. These dispatches might properly enough have suggested a postponement of the vote upon ratification. In that behalf it could have been reasonably urged that the senate should know the true and complete facts about the situation at Manila before acting finally upon the treaty. And incidentally it could have been argued that no harm would come from the delay, inasmuch as the treaty before becoming operative must be ratified by the Spanish cortes, which do not convene until the 20th—two weeks in the future. But the suggestion that the ratification was secured through the influence of the censored dispatches, reflects severely upon the mental balance and self control of

senators who went over to the majority side. We are disposed to credit them with better judgment and a clearer conception of their official responsibilities.

The truth about the battle at Manila is not known even now. According to the dispatches, the Filipinos made an unprovoked attack upon the Americans. But of this there is no certainty yet, for the press dispatches were censored at Manila, and the official dispatches are subject to emasculation at Washington. One of the press dispatches, in a paragraph which seems to have escaped the censor's scrutiny, somewhat discredits the story that the Filipinos were the aggressors. It came to our notice in the news reports of the Chicago Record. This paragraph indicated that American sentries precipitated the Filipino attack by firing upon Filipinos. Another respect in which the dispatches may be reasonably doubted is as to the casualties. The Filipino loss in killed and wounded is given at 3,500, the American loss being put at first at only 20 wounded. American losses, however, have been growing since the first report, and are now admitted to exceed 50 killed, with more than 150 wounded. But even this is out of all proportion to the reported loss of 3,500 on the other side. We are likely to learn in time, either that the Filipino loss was much less than that now reported, or that the American loss was much greater. In still another respect are the censored dispatches to be doubted. They tell of a decisive victory. But reputable persons whose familiarity with the Filipinos and the nature of the ground about Manila enable them to weigh the censored reports, dispute the probability of a decisive victory for the Americans, upon the facts so far divulged. We must wait for