

dred miles from its location, or the miscalculations of a naval commander, the natural and proper resentment of the public will be a serious thing for the Administration to encounter. The projected operations of our fleets and the precise locations of our ships ought to be kept secret by the Government; what the fleets have been doing the people have a right to know, and they may rightly complain if they do not know. The danger is that this excessive and unnecessary suppression of news will exhaust the patience of the press, the public and of Congress, and that the result will be the disclosure of more information than is proper and more than is at present asked for by a patient public, good-natured and so far trustful of the Government.

Is Sampson permitted to use his own intelligence as Dewey was, or is he being directed in every movement from Washington as commanders of the Army of the Potomac used to be with dilatory and disastrous results? The country is certainly entitled to a little information as to who is carrying on this war and how it has been carried on. We ask no disclosures of the coming events, but we may safely have history up to a pretty recent date. It is not among the impossibilities of the campaign that more or less serious errors in its management may have been or will be committed; and, in that case, will the people be amiable if all the evidence is held secret in the archives of the board of strategy? It is the safest course for that board to make public all information which does not directly give aid and comfort to the enemy."

#### Business in New York

The United States press claim that the war is not affecting business as it was feared it might. The reasons for this pleasant and unusual condition of things are plainly given:—the wants of the people are not lessened by such a war as that being waged with Spain; the calling of two hundred thousand men from the pursuits of peaceful industry, leaves the field of labour clear for an army of the unemployed; and the foreign trade of the United States, being largely carried on in ships flying neutral flags, could not be hampered much, even if the Spanish navy showed any activity. However, the cost of the war and its aftermath have yet to be reckoned.

In the meantime, the New York bank statement warrants the comfortable feeling prevailing in business circles, and it is to be hoped a speedy cessation to the war may enable our neighbours to reap the full advantage of the promised activity in trade. The recent bank statement shows an increase of \$14,267,900 in deposits, and the loans and discounts have increased \$7,857,000. The gold held by the banks of New York exceeds by \$82,000,000, the balance of a year ago, the total amount being nearly \$170,000,000—a sum greatly exceeding any previous accumulation by the banks.

The financial position of the United States is so

good that it seems a pity to sap its strength by indulgence in war, and it is not surprising if the people are betraying some impatience at the failure to put a speedy end to strife and are saying to the Secretary of war: "Finish this fight at once, and let us go back to work." So say we all.

#### THE LESSON OF THE ST. HYACINTHE TRAGEDY

The fatal catastrophe near St. Hyacinthe, where a hospital was destroyed by fire and several nurses and patients burnt to death, suggests the need of Federal legislation looking to the protection of the inmates of populated public buildings from such a terrible danger. There are a large number of schools, hospitals, asylums, factories, hotels, which are wholly without fire protection or any provision for their inmates being removed in safety in case of a fire occurring.

There are hospitals in this city, and elsewhere, where several hundreds of inmates are exposed to the same fate as befell the victims at St. Hyacinthe, there being no apparatus provided for speedy exit in case of need, or only such arrangements as would be wholly inadequate were a fire or a panic to occur. The propriety and the wisdom of legal intervention in this matter is recognized, as some of our cities have a by-law requiring provision to be made to meet emergencies of this class, but in most places this precaution has been overlooked.

But, were the hospitals, factories, schools, etc., in all cities so protected by fixed fire escapes, there would still be a very large number of such buildings without any appliances for rapid and safe exit, as they are outside municipal boundaries. To meet such cases, as well as those of a number of cities where no by-law requiring this protection exists, it is necessary for it to be enforced by Federal legislation. Human life is too sacred for its protection to be left to the eccentric and uncertain action of local authorities. There are in Canada a large number of summer hotels constructed of wood which are exceedingly dangerous to the guests and staff when a fire breaks out. We saw such a building burnt in Ontario a few years ago, happily without any fatality, as, being in the fall, the hotel was nearly empty. Had the fire occurred when the usual number of summer guests were there domiciled, there would have been an appalling holocaust, as escape by stairways would have been impossible. All through our manufacturing districts there are factories occupied by large numbers of employes, all of whom could not escape safely were a fire to occur. There are also schools, hospitals, convents and asylums in suburban districts, the inmates of which are exposed to grave peril owing to the absence of fixed fire escapes.

We submit that as such conditions exist the authorities in control of all buildings occupied by patients, scholars, guests or employes ought to be required by law to make adequate provision for their speedy and safe exit in case of fire. Such law needs to be expressed in a Dominion Act, as by it alone the inmates in buildings where the danger indicated exists could be protected from the risk of the most horrible of deaths.