

in which there will be no tariff issue. That very fact will be a strong reason why their opponents will wish to make the tariff an issue. There is some truth in what Mr. Roosevelt says respecting the appointment of the American Tariff Commission, but it leaves a misleading impression of the situation. The American Congress did not place tariff construction in the hands of a Tariff Commission. The Commission was appointed to collect information bearing on the tariff question. It has issued a number of reports containing much interesting information. But in none of these reports does the Commission attempt to settle, or assume an authority to settle, any disputed tariff question. The information is given and members of Congress are left free to apply it as they deem best. So the tariff question has not been "taken out of politics" as Mr. Roosevelt says. The Republicans will raise the question at the times and places when and where they think they can do so to advantage, and the Democratic speakers will be forced to deal with it. Traditionally the Republicans are the high tariff party, and the Democrats are the advocates of lower duties. The present tariff, devised chiefly by Senator Underwood, may be taken to represent the Democratic idea on the subject. It is too early in the campaign to make predictions with anything like certainty as to the result of the Presidential contest. This much, however, may be said, that the tendency of public opinion of late has been against the Democrats and that the Republicans seem to feel very confident that they are to win. And there is little doubt that Republican success will mean a return, in some degree, to the old-time Republican policy of high protection.

A Widespread Trouble

On the principle that misery loves company, the Canadian public, who are threatened with a large increase in railway rates—the matter being now under consideration of the Board of Railway Commissioners at Ottawa—may find some comfort in the fact that increased rates are being demanded in all quarters, and in most cases are allowed by the governing authorities. Tramway fares are everywhere increasing. In the larger operations of the steam railways the situation is the same. This is true not only on this continent, but in the old world as well. The travelling public in Great Britain have been chafing under the charges of the transportation lines, but there is no help for the complainants. On the approach of the holiday season an intimation that the passenger rates, already quite high, were to be increased caused much alarm among those who were planning vacation travel. As the Government still control the railways, earnest protests against the threatened increase were made in the House of Commons. The Government, however, held

out no hope of relief. Mr. Bonar Law said the British railways were working at an estimated deficit of £54,000,000 a year. The pay bill of the railway companies had risen from £47,000,000 to £161,000,000, or over three times the pre-war figure. Coal and engineering works were costing three times the pre-war figure, while steel rails and pig-iron were four times. The cost of living and every other index one could apply had risen out of all proportion to the proposed increase in rates.

The Telephones

Before the public have had time to recover from the shock of the railway companies' demands for higher rates they are further disturbed by the announcement that the Bell Telephone Company are applying for a substantial increase of their charges. The rally of complainants against this proposal is even larger than in the case of the railways. Municipal councils, boards of trade, manufacturers' organizations are preparing to be represented in opposition to the telephone company in the hearing that is to take place before the Board of Railway Commissioners. The question is one of the utmost interest, and the various bodies representing the public do well to give it prompt attention, with a view to having a thorough enquiry before the appointed tribunal. But it is not a question upon which hysterics are required. That telephone rates should be expected to remain as they are when the cost of everything else is advancing is not reasonable. The proposal to make a moderate increase of the rates for residences has not elicited much objection. A proposal that in the business world the flat rate system shall be replaced by charges proportionate to the number of messages is the alarming part of the new plan. To what extent and on what terms the new system shall be applied is a proper matter for enquiry and careful consideration. But to the principle itself one cannot easily see any objection. Where there is but a moderate use of the telephone the flat rate system may work fairly enough. But where the instrument is used frequently, as for business purposes, there is obvious unfairness in charging as much for a dozen messages as for a hundred. That payment should be made in proportion to the services rendered is surely a sound principle. In the application of that principle regard may be had for the general rule that the purchaser of large quantities gets a better price than he who buys in smaller lots. An attempt to resist entirely the telephone company's application could not be expected to succeed. The public are interested in having an efficient telephone service, and such cannot be obtained unless the company are allowed rates that will provide for efficient maintenance and expansion and a reasonable return on the capital invested. Within these lines the company's application is a fair

one. If more than this is sought, the representatives of the public may properly offer strenuous opposition to the proposal.

The Little American Republics

Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Democratic candidate for Vice-President, in making his campaign in the Western States, is overplaying his part as an advocate of the League of Nations. Speaking at Butte, Montana, last week, he argued that the United States would be all-powerful in the League, because the votes of Haiti, St. Domingo, Panama, Cuba and Central American countries could be controlled by the United States. The relation of these little republics to the United States will justify an expectation that they will desire friendly relations with their big neighbor. But in advancing the argument that they are to be counted on as coming under the control of the Washington Government Mr. Roosevelt goes too far and destroys an argument hitherto used by American public men. It has always been claimed for the United States that, while desiring to befriend the little republics, the American Government left them absolutely free and independent in all their relations with the world. Any attempt on the part of the Washington Government to exercise a control over their relations with other countries would be flagrantly at variance with the benevolent intentions hitherto declared. It would properly be resented by the republics concerned and might justly be the subject of remonstrance from other governments. The fear that Uncle Sam will not always be as kind and disinterested as he claims to be has long been in the mind of the men of the smaller American nations. Mr. Roosevelt's indiscreet boast of the control of these little nations by their big brother will not tend to allay that fear. It will be remembered.

Poland

The struggles of the people of Poland for independence during a long period of years always enlisted the sympathies of the British people. Poland's independence, provided for in the Treaty of Versailles, was hailed with rejoicing by the friends of liberty everywhere. In Poland's present fight against the Bolshiviki of Russia she will have a large measure of sympathy throughout the world, even though Mr. Lloyd George has had to admit in the British House of Commons that Poland was rash in entering upon this war. Just when the cable had given the world the impression that the Bolshiviki were surrounding Warsaw and that the fall of the Polish capital was inevitable, a sudden turn of the picture shows us the Polish army, well organized and under capable leaders, driving back the Russian forces and winning great victories.