

THE action of the National Committees of the two great political parties in choosing St. Louis and Chicago as the places for holding the conventions in 1904 is extremely gratifying to the people of the West. All indications point to the assurance that the conventions this year will go down in history as the most important since anti-bellum times. The policies to be adopted and the platforms to be promulgated will mark an era in the chronicles of both parties which the leaders have for months realized would decide, possibly for a decade, the destinies of both. That the balance of political power is now held in the West is now generally admitted. The East and South are practically known quantities. The unknown equation is the West. To control the vote in the Middle West and Southwest is the end which the leaders of both parties hope to attain.

It is a fair prediction that the two great parties will go to the people on the issues raised by the policy of expansion adopted by the McKinley-Roosevelt administration, the Panama canal issue, and possibly the question of currency. These are the questions which are occupying the attention of political economists and theorists today. Without one exception these questions have already been before the people. Whether time and experience will tend to prompt a revision of our so-called colonial policy and our financial policy remains to be seen. Regarding the attitude of the people toward the canal issue there has never been an expression at the ballot-box. Upon all these questions the voters of the country, will, in all probability, have an opportunity to speak in November. The world looks to the peo-

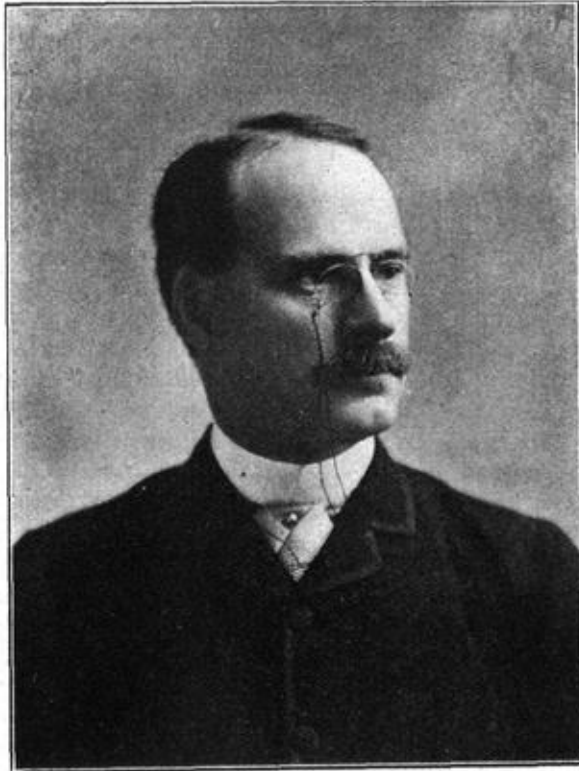
ple of the West and Southwest for a solution of the problems of the hour.



EARLY last month Gov. William H. Taft took the oath of office as Secretary of War in President Roosevelt's cabinet, succeeding Elihu Root. Judge Taft returned from the Philippines to accept the portfolio, resigning his position as governor of those islands. Gov. Taft's successor in the Philippines is Gen. Luke Wright of Memphis, Tenn., who was vice-governor under Taft, and who has already demonstrated his ability as an executive officer.



INDICATIONS point to the early ratification by the Senate of the treaty with the republic of Panama, providing for the construction by the United States government of the isthmian canal. Sentiment in the States has been somewhat divided as to the propriety of entering into this agreement with Panama after her secession from the republic of Colombia. But in the face of these objections is the apparent determination on the part of the people who reside in the southern and western portion of the United States of America to see the canal built, and the fight which was at first made was made, not along political, but industrial and sectional lines. That the canal will be built now seems an assured fact. Its effect on the development and growth of the Middle West and Southwest is too obvious to require even a casual allusion. With the ports of South America open to commerce from the Mississippi and the country tributary, the cities and agricultural sections affected will feel from the very first the impulse which the new waterway will promote.



William C. Whitney.

THE death of William C. Whitney early last month removes another figure long prominent in the affairs of the nation. Educated for the bar, Mr. Whitney early in life entered actively into politics. By judicious investments he amassed a fortune, and at the time of his death was a millionaire many times over. President Cleveland, after his first inauguration, made Mr. Whitney Secretary of the Navy.

Since his retirement from office he has been identified most prominently in the field of sports. Mr. Whitney's stables were among the finest in the country, and his horses have, for years, been prize winners on the Eastern race courses. His ideals were lofty, and in politics as well as on the race track his name was the synonym of honesty and integrity. Mr. Whitney was a strong advocate of a greater navy.

SENATOR MARCUS A. HANNA, perhaps the most conspicuous among the public men of the day, died at Washington, on February 15, after a somewhat protracted illness. The immediate cause of his death was typhoid fever, following a gradual break down noticeable to those closely associated with him for many months. Senator Hanna became best known to the people of the country through his masterful conduct of the campaign, which ended in the nomination and election of William McKinley as President. His selection as a United States Senator followed the selection of Senator John Sherman to be Secretary of State in President McKinley's first cabinet. He was twice re-elected, the last time by an almost unanimous vote of the Ohio legislature. Mr. Hanna's early life was spent in the wholesale grocery establishment of his father at Cleveland. Later he engaged extensively in lake transportation, and in the manufacture of steel. It is related that the friendship between Mr. Hanna and Mr. McKinley dated from the trial of a lawsuit many years ago in which the former was the prosecuting witness and the latter the

attorney for the defense. Mr. McKinley's signal victory won in this case attracted Mr. Hanna to him. How deep that friendship became, and how lasting, is a story which the American people know. Those who were closest to Mr. Hanna during the last years of his life say his heart was broken by William McKinley's tragic death. A nation's sorrow found its outlet in public demonstration, in tributes of love, but the blow was one which this friend of friends could not long survive. He went forth from McKinley's tomb as one alone, whom no man could comfort. Mr. Hanna has written his name, unaided, on the pages of American history. He had his political enemies. No man who occupied his position could have avoided them. In his own party his friends were legion. As the friend of the laboring man he took a foremost part in the organization of the Civic Federation, and was ever active in its promotion. Though an employer of labor, it can be truthfully said of him that in conducting the great industrial enterprises of which he was the head, he carried into effect the doctrines and principles for which he publicly contended.

TREES bend now as in meek surrender
 When the South comes up with a soft caress;
 And slant beams fall with a touch so tender
 They wake old songs in the wildwood's stress.

Then, a thrill, like hope in the heart of a lover.
 Follows the sound, as the bird notes ring,
 And the hunters pause in the dripping cover
 To hail with joy, the approach of spring.