

SALT LAKE PRESS DISPATCHES.

FOR years the people of Utah were persistently traduced by means of dispatches sent by the Associated Press agent in this city and published in many papers east and west. The wilful falsehoods and malignant deceptions in these telegrams were repeatedly pointed out to the management, and the consequence was, at length, that the agent here was limited in his communications and told plainly what he must *not* do.

Since then news from Salt Lake to the eastern press has been very meagre, and of course anything which would tend to enlighten the country as to progressive movements here has been, if not suppressed, so presented as to make it appear of small moment.

The action taken to dissolve the People's party, for instance, was not reported until a private dispatch from a prominent Salt Lake citizen, received at Chicago, occasioned inquiry, and then, as we have been reliably informed, the Chicago manager had to send a special message to the agent here before he could obtain anything for the papers. And here is what he managed to get from the Salt Lake dispatcher of news, in reply to his query:

"Pursuant to call, and following an apparent programme, the People's Territorial Committee held a secret meeting this afternoon. Tonight it is given out that it passed a preamble and the following resolution:"

The resolution was then added with the annexed comment:

"But little importance is attached here to the action."

The public may judge of the truthfulness and fairness of this local agent of the Associated Press, when it is known that the proceedings of the meeting were published in the evening papers, and an official account had been furnished by the secretary to the "Liberal" organ in which the aforesaid agent grinds out dirty diatribes against decent people who differ with him on any subject.

The "secret" meeting had been announced in the public prints every day for weeks before it convened. The importance of the action taken at that meeting was considered of such magnitude that it not only occasioned widespread comment, but has been the chief object of the agent's effusions in the ring "Liberal" organ ever since. And yet if that private dispatch had not been seen by some reporters of the Chicago papers, who besieged the Associated Press agent in that city, the probability is that not a line in relation to the matter would have been sent from this city, because there was no excuse in the action of the committee for telegraphic misrepresentation and abuse.

SMUGGLING BY THE NAVY.

THE return of the "Omaha" and "Swatara" from the Asiatic station to Mare Island without passing under inspection, and the later discovery of a quantity of dutiable goods aboard, have started a controversial breeze that is threatening to breed a cyclone.

In this particular case the fault seems to fall in great measure upon the customs officers at San Francisco. At the same time the navy officers are far from being exonerated from blame. The accusers have not yet gone so far as to prove conclusively that the United States navy is engaged in a general smuggling business for the trade, although the charges from high quarters all but assert as much.

When the bill for transferring the revenue marine to the navy was under discussion, Senator Sherman's successful opposition to its passage was on the ground that the navy officers were habitual smugglers and ought not to be entrusted with the enforcement of the revenue laws. The following is from his remarks on that occasion:

"If reputation is not always at fault, the naval officers are generally supposed to be the largest smugglers in our country, in proportion to their number, and the idea of putting a naval officer to guard our coast against smuggling is at least rather a strange one for an old salt. I suppose there is scarcely a naval vessel that comes into our ports but what has goods that under the strict rulings of the treasury would be subject to duty."

Mr. Gray—"I should like to ask the senator from Ohio if that wholesale smuggling which he seems to think is engaged in by naval officers is a part of the high function from which we are going to call them when we transfer them to revenue duty?"

Mr. Sherman—"I think they will stick to their high function of smuggling more than they will to their new duty of guarding against smuggling. A revenue marine officer cannot enter a war vessel of the United States and inspect it as he would a commercial vessel, and the result is that many things are brought in here without paying duty."

Senator Sherman has been Secretary of the Treasury and is good authority on this matter. Though his charge here may in the heat of argument have been more or less exaggerated, with all possible allowance enough remains upon which to base a very boisterous scandal. The official report of the investigation in this recent affair at Mare Island may be expected to throw a little new light on that case and probably others. It is not too much to say that light is needed badly.

The officers of the navy are just as much subject to the customs laws as are private citizens. There is nothing in their official commissions that should in the slightest degree shield them from the regular consequences of lawless actions. On the other hand the position they hold presupposes

them examples to the citizens of obedience to established laws. The effect of such disclosures as the one at Mare Island is humiliating to the government, but it is a wholesome scandal.

RAMIE CULTURE ON THE COAST.

THE prominence that is being given to the development of the culture of the ramie plant in California, is making the subject one of general interest. At the last session of the State Legislature an appropriation of \$10,000 was made for the purchase of ramie roots for free distribution, and a bounty was offered for merchantable ramie fiber. The prospects are now that a new industry will spring up suddenly, which will prove of vast importance to commerce.

The ramie plant is a huge, stingless nettle, indigenous to Java and China, where its fiber has been used in constructing fabrics for centuries. The ramie fiber produced in these countries is used by France, England and Germany in the manufacture of fabrics that are sold for linens and a variety of similar goods, and is used also in the manufacture of silk dress goods, the wrap partly or entirely composed of of ramie fiber adding to the strength and body of the goods without depreciating their beauty, and thereby saving from 30 to 60 per cent of the silk otherwise required. The ramie plant is easily cultivated, yielding very largely on rich alluvial, sandy, loamy soil. It can be grown very readily in the Southern States, but there the moisture of the climate interferes with the drying of the stalks, which is essential to the economic separation of the fiber. With suitable soil and proper cultivation after the plants are well rooted, several crops can be realized each year.

The industry, to say the least, is worth watching. Utah may have occasion to try the experiment of ramie raising in this soil.

THE BRITISH COLONIAL SYSTEM.

THE extent of the British dependencies all over the world is about 9,000,000 square miles, with an estimated population of 300,000,000 people.

In India the Queen's authority is absolute, though the country is ruled by a distinct ministry. The British possessions in Borneo, in South and East Africa, and on the Niger, are under the protection of the Queen, but managed by chartered companies.

The self-governing colonies under the English flag are New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia, New Zealand, the Cape