

CURRENT TOPICS

WILL M. MAUPIN, who has been actively connected with *The Commoner* since it was first established, has been appointed by Governor Shallenberger to be labor commissioner for the state of Nebraska. Mr. Maupin has for years been a faithful champion of democratic principles and he has been an ardent worker for the cause of organized labor. His appointment by Governor Shallenberger was a recognition of organized labor, although Mr. Maupin was cordially supported by democratic newspaper editors generally and by many men prominent as workers in the democratic ranks. *Commoner* readers who have come to know Mr. Maupin well through his charming verse and bright story, will be glad to know of his good fortune and they will be glad to know, too, that they will not be denied the pleasure of reading "Whether Common or Not." Mr. Maupin will continue to contribute to *The Commoner* that interesting department.

JOSEPH TELLER, a New York working man, makes contribution to prosperity literature in a letter addressed to the *New York World*. The letter follows: "Christmas was the first time for me to see a bread line. The talk of 'peace on earth and good will to men' is preposterous. How can there be peace and a bread line at the same time? How can there be peace when thousands of men must humiliate themselves and stay in line for hours to procure a miserable lunch? How can there be peace when you see women with infants in their arms, waiting many hours that they may get some food for themselves and little ones? How can there be peace when every man in the bread line represents a broken home, an aching heart, the longing of children for their fathers and innumerable weeping mothers of these men in line? No peace will reign on earth until poverty is abolished and every man celebrates Christmas and other holidays at his own table, surrounded by his beloved ones, and not in the bread line."

A SPECIAL dispatch from Rome printed in the *New York Herald* says: "Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Scannell, of Omaha, have been received in private audience by the holy father, to whom they gave an account of the state of their dioceses, at the same time presenting their congratulations and those of their diocesans on the occasion of the pope's jubilee. They will remain in Rome at least until the end of January. The *Herald* correspondent is in a position to say that never before were the chances of Archbishop Ireland's becoming the second American cardinal so strong as they are today. The president-elect is a warm personal friend of the archbishop, and this fact is now urged by the admirers of Mgr. Ireland as an additional reason for giving him a seat in the senate of the church, and if the president-elect will express a desire to have this honor bestowed on the archbishop of St. Paul the appointment is as good as certain."

FAR-REACHING effects of Italy's great earthquake are indicated by a writer in the *New York World*, who says: "It will be years before the Italian coast recovers from Monday's catastrophe. The rebuilding of San Francisco can have no parallel there. In the American city material destruction was tremendous, but there was little loss of life. The real city—its men—remained, their faith in its future grounded both in sentiment and conviction. But in many an Italian town half the people are dead, while for the rest it is a place of evil memories and poor prospects. Villages will recover more slowly than cities. Messina and Reggio can not be killed. Their position in the path of commerce requires rebuilding, though Messina will continue to lose in relative importance to Catania and Palermo. Great modern ships more often go through the straits without stopping for repairs or transshipping cargo than did the buffeted little sailing craft of old days; and Messina has behind it no such tributary country as the plain of Catania, or the 'shell of gold' which smiles on Palermo;

but Messina will be again Messina. There are villages in the earthquake zone which will hardly survive. Of many of them, until the panic, almost all the able-bodied men were in the United States. If these people must build up from the bare earth their ruined fortunes, it is as easy to do so in America as to stay by the haunted sites of their old homes. Relatives in the new world will hold out help with lavish hands. Nor should Americans of other races be backward in this. Economic conditions will aid in depopulating the region. For years the condition of Sicily and Calabria has been a problem of statesmanship, California has hurt the fruit industry, the crude processes of sulphur mining afford only the scantiest wage, and the barrenness of the grain lands of the interior is a continuing evil from the time of Cicero. Nothing but money sent from America has made life possible in many families. The brief ministry of Sonnino, Italy's ablest statesman in all but tact, set the railroad problem on the way to solution and planned tax and industrial relief for the south, but had time to accomplish little. The debate of such proposals as a government bounty on denatured alcohol distilled from unsold lemons and grapes show how keen is the crisis, even without earthquake. Unless the living are too few to swell the hosts, an increase in Italian immigration may be expected. If the newcomers are to herd in our cities, waiting for the resumption of construction work at full tide, much suffering may still await them. But there is room for all who may be helped to a foothold upon the land, which none know better how to cultivate."

FROM MR. BRYAN'S recent address at Uniontown, Pa., the *Omaha World-Herald* prints this extract: "The great curse of this country today is the corporate influence that controls the party organization. For a quarter of a century the great corporate interests of this country have dominated this land through the republican party and in this last campaign the largest single influence against us was the influence of the great corporations. I was defeated, gentlemen, but I might have won had I been willing to purchase a victory as the republican party purchased a victory. I was defeated by influences that no republican can refer to without blushing. A few days after the election Mr. Brown, an officer of the New York Central railway—have any of you ever heard of him? Mr. Brown, according to a newspaper, said that he had just sent out a hundred telegrams, placing orders for \$31,000,000 worth of goods that had been held up and were contingent on Mr. Taft's election. One man representing one company ordering \$31,000,000 worth of purchases, contingent upon the election of a republican candidate! Suppose that one man had divided the orders among half a dozen doubtful states, it would amount to \$5,000,000 in orders for each doubtful state; and suppose he had divided these orders among a few large factories in each of those close states. Do you not suppose it would exert a tremendous influence? These corporations that had these contingent orders, would they not immediately become interested in the election and would they not tell employes how to vote? And were not orders placed for the very purpose of coercing employes? Would anyone doubt that this tremendous power in the hands of one man might turn the tide in this state? In the state of Missouri we lost by less than 5,000 votes. Consider that 2,500 votes turned from one side to the other would be sufficient to turn the electoral vote in our favor. I had an interview with a republican there, in which he said that he had heard a speech from Mr. Cannon down there and that Mr. Cannon had said that if they would show their influence by electing a republican congressman from that district, he would get them a tariff on zinc and that, influenced by Mr. Cannon's statement, they had helped to carry Missouri for the republican ticket. A promise, by the speaker, of a tariff if they would carry the district was so potent that it was sufficient to elect a congressman, and thereby turn the state. If that can be done by a speaker's promise, if it may turn the vote of a

people in a district, what may be done by men like Mr. Brown, representing great corporations, who places \$31,000,000 worth in orders contingent on republican success that he may coerce men into voting the republican ticket? And, if that can be done by the New York Central, what about the Pennsylvania? What about the Erie? What about the Baltimore & Ohio? What about the Wabash? What about the Santa Fe and the Rock Island, the Union Pacific and the Northern Pacific? Why, my friends, you can take a few of these men and count them on the fingers of your two hands, and if they all act like Mr. Brown they can bring enough influence to bear to coerce and change hundreds of thousands of votes in those close states. I say to you, my friends, in all sincerity, I would rather remain a private citizen than be president and be backed by an influence like that which elected Mr. Taft. I am told that more than one hundred republicans honor us by their presence tonight. I want to say a word to these republicans. I am not soliciting their votes. I can make my living. I can leave my children all I need to leave them. I tell these republicans that I am fighting for their children when I am trying to make this great country a people's government. I ask these republicans whether they dare stand before their God and boast of their part in the victory that throws the greater part of the wealth to one person and places the fetters more and more on the struggling masses of this country? Do they think they have reason to be proud of their party? I am proud of mine. I have made my fight and I am not ashamed of it. I would not today trade places with Mr. Roosevelt. In the thick of that fight he dragged down the high position of president and made it a football of American politics. I would not trade positions with Mr. Taft. I would rather be a private citizen with a record of having fought for what I fought for than be president and be tied as he is tied to these interests which gave him his election."

REFERRING TO the proposition that the president's salary be increased to \$100,000 S. S. W. Hammers of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, writes to the *Philadelphia North American* to say: "We recently noticed in your paper that the president's salary was to be raised to the enormous sum of \$100,000 annually. This we call outrageous. It costs the people of this country over a million dollars to elect their president. The salaries of all public officials of this government should today be reduced at least one-half. We have hundreds of hard-working men in Adams county today who are working in the lumber mills who are getting \$1 a day, and must pay 50 cents a day for boarding, leaving them 50 cents per day to support large families. At the same time the trusts are making millions upon the necessities of life. The poor, hard-working men must help keep these sap suckers. It is true we have labor unions, but we see the members of these unions on every street corner. We ask them why they are not employed. Their answer is, shop shut up, no work. They can make their prices, but not the work. Speaking of the laboring class, we must deduct about half their time for bad weather. The state is full of hard-working men who make about \$75 yearly, and keep large families, and our president can not live on \$4,000 and over monthly. Now talk of giving him over \$8,000 monthly. Outrageous!"

A PECULIAR Christmas story is given to the *New York World* by its St. Louis correspondent in this way: "A Christmas tree, ornamented as for children's festival, stands on the grave of Mrs. Martha Adeline Rolling in Concordia Lutheran Cemetery. Over the tree and covering the entire burial plot is a canopy of holly and evergreen supported by frame work like that of a tent. On the tree are thirty-three electric lights—green, red, amber and white—the number equalling the years of Mrs. Rolling's life. The headstone bears twelve lamps, corresponding to the number of years of her married life. On the grave in green and red letters,