

from other causes will be about 5,000. The pension system was the greatest burden in 1893, when it was equal to \$2.24 per \$1,000 of taxable property; it is now \$1.34 per \$1,000. In ten years more the burden will cease to be noticed, says Commissioner Ware. The pension commissioner recommends some new legislation. He thinks that those who are convicted of an infamous crime should forfeit their pensions or their rights to pensions; that pensions should be denied to women who marry soldiers as the soldiers become old pensioners, and that a different system of examining applicants for pensions should be adopted, the present system, in his opinion, being uncertain, expensive, and unsatisfactory, for it is liable to outside control and political dictation."

A READER of the New York Sun recently submitted to that publication the following inquiry: "I recently stated to a friend that the stock of a certain London water company was the highest priced stock in the world and that I believed that a fraction of a share of the said stock had occasionally been sold at an enormous price. This he was inclined to doubt. Was I not right—and tell me the name of the water company and something of its history and the price of its stock?"

REPLYING to this inquiry, the editor of the Sun says: "You were right. The shares in the New River company, recently taken over by the municipality of London, were the highest priced stock in the world. In 1609 Hugh Myddleton, a London goldsmith and the projector of the scheme, turned the first sod of the channel river rising at Chadwell and Amwele Springs in Hertfordshire, which was brought to London by a winding course of forty-eight miles, and completed in 1613. Stock in the undertaking consisted of 72 shares, divided into King's and Adventurers' which originally brought only 5 pounds apiece. Charles I sold his shares to Myddleton's representatives for an annuity of 500 pounds. On November 1, 1876, part of a King's share was sold at the rate of 94,050 a share. On July 17, 1889, an entire Adventurer's share was bought at auction by the Prudential Assurance company for 122,800 pounds. In 1888 the annual income of the company from land and water was stated to be 511,356 pounds. On June 24 of this year all the property of the New River and several other London water companies was taken over by the municipality under the Metropolitan Water act at a total cash price of 24,695,200 pounds."

INSTRUCTIVE contribution to the discussion of the disfranchisement question was recently made in a discussion between the Washington, D. C., Post and one of its readers, Dr. Robert Rayburn. In a widely copied editorial the Post said: "The Post has never believed that disfranchisement should be drawn on the color line. We have always preferred the Massachusetts plan of shutting out incapables from the voting privileges. And the state of Mississippi and South Carolina, whose negro population is in excess of the total of whites, borrowed the Massachusetts scheme. We hope our correspondent has noted the important fact that the Mississippi adaptation of the Bay state plan for protection against an ignorant and degraded mass of voters has been carried to the United States supreme court, and that its constitutionality has been affirmed by that tribunal."

REPLYING to the Post article, Dr. Rayburn wrote as follows: "As will be hereafter shown, the plans for excluding illiterate voters in Massachusetts and Mississippi are radically different in the following respects: First—The Massachusetts law did not deprive a single voter of his right of franchise, for it only referred to future elections, which would occur after the passage of the law. Second—The Massachusetts plan was perfectly fair in that it gave no preference to the white over the colored voter, but treated all alike. As your readers well know, this is not the case in Mississippi. By a clause in its new constitution, that state has practically disfranchised all its colored voters on the ground of illiteracy, while it allows the white illiterate voter the franchise. What has been the effect of this? Mississippi, at the last election, with a population of 1,551,270, cast only 48,648 votes; only one-third of the white voters went to the polls. Maryland at the same election, with a population of 1,188,044 (nearly 400,000 less), cast 244,695 votes. Mississippi is rapidly becoming an oligarchy."

CONSIDERING Dr. Rayburn's last remark, the Post asks, where the responsibility would rest if Mississippi should become an oligarchy and then the Post adds: "It was as all-candid minds

concede, impossible for that state (Mississippi) to remain in the condition in which the Fifteenth amendment placed it." The Post continues: "With a black population, largely in excess of the total of white inhabitants, and led by unscrupulous adventurers from the north, the situation would have been intolerable and impossible of maintenance, even had the freedmen been of a superior class. But there was not anywhere in the area that had been covered by slavery a more hopeless mass of ignorance and superstition than Mississippi held. The white minority, in delivering itself from the domination of such a majority, obeyed the first law of nature, which is higher than constitutions or statutes. But it fortunately happened that Massachusetts had pointed a way, for their deliverance, by which they were able to obey both the first law of nature and the constitution of the United States. That point has been settled once and for all by a decision of the highest tribunal."

IT IS vigorously contended by the Post that there is no substantial difference between the Mississippi plan and the Massachusetts plan, the Post contending that the Mississippi plan, whatever may be said to the contrary, has passed the crucial test and stands approved by the United States supreme court. The Post adds: "It may be that there are defects in the application of suffrage laws in Mississippi which are not found in Massachusetts, but if the white people of the Bay state, or of any other northern state, had, like the white inhabitants of Mississippi, been submerged under an ignorant and superstitious black majority, a deluge of semi-barbarity, controlled by the cunning and greed of a few white adventurers, what would have been the result? Who does not know that, if the men in Mississippi who owned the taxable property and had almost a monopoly of the influences that dominate civilized communities, had quietly submitted to negro and carpet-bag rule, had been content to be represented in the United States senate by a negro barber from Terre Haute, Ind., and a white school master from Hartford, Conn.—who does not know that such craven submission would have incurred the contempt of all the white manhood in the north? And, more than that, the intelligent negroes of the north would have despised them. But the main fact for Dr. Rayburn, and those who feel as he does on this subject, to consider it this: The Mississippi plan has the approbation of the court of last resort. Another fact that we commend to their serious attention is that the uninterrupted trend of events for the past twenty-five years has been toward a return to ante-bellum conditions as relates to state control of suffrage."

THE title of an editorial recently appearing in the Atlanta Constitution is "Statistical Jugglery." It would be well if this editorial could be printed in every newspaper in the United States. In the beginning the Constitution says: "Among the many good old reliable aphorisms needing modern revision, is the one which touts the everlasting veracity of figures. A very pertinent instance is given by Chairman Cowherd, of the democratic congressional committee, wherein he dissects the optimistic table of statistics on wages and the cost of living, recently sent out by Commissioner Wright, of the government labor bureau. Mr. Cowherd very plainly demonstrates that the statistical conclusions of the commissioner were artfully manipulated to suit the exigencies of a republican campaign. He confirms this assertion by producing contrasting figures from the most reliable sources, among them Dun's commercial review, which is undoubtedly the best authority on this subject in the United States, with apologies to Mr. Wright, Chairman Cowherd summarizes the showing of the commissioner, as follows: 1. That the retail prices of food were 10.3 per cent higher in 1903 than the average for the 10 years from 1890 to 1899. 2. That the weekly earnings per employe were 12.3 per cent higher in 1903 than the average for the 10 years from 1890 to 1899. 3. That the purchasing power of the wages was, in 1903, 1.8 per cent greater than the average for the 10 years from 1890 to 1899."

IT IS further pointed out by this same authority that Mr. Cowherd thinks it is cause for surprise that the commissioner did not make his margin of increase even larger. The most plausible explanation of his failure to do so being the probability that the present industrial conditions would have caused "a rather more audible smile than that now being indulged in at present." For instance, Chairman Cowherd takes up minor points of the labor situation and the wage purchasing power as indicated by the government reports and analyzes the same as follows: "1. The number of people employed in 1903 was 26.4 per cent

greater than the average from 1890 to 1899. 2. The hours of labor per week were 3.4 per cent less in 1903 than the average from 1890 to 1899. 3. Hence, the weekly earnings of all employes were 41.9 per cent greater in 1893 than the average from 1890 to 1899. It is plain to every purchaser of household supplies for the past 10 years that these statistics are utterly unreliable and have been manipulated in the interest of protection and of the republican party. The truth of the matter is, there are 200,000 wage earners today on a strike. They are on a strike either because the cost of living has reduced the purchasing power of the wage received or because their wages have been reduced within the year. The trade journals inform us that for the years 1903 and 1904 the wages of 1,000,000 men, largely in the protected industries, have been reduced from 10 to 30 per cent. It is estimated that the number of men now unemployed is 600,000. They have been laid off by the railroads and by hundreds of the great mills throughout the country. Many have been dispossessed of their former homes and are sleeping in the parks in the great cities. They have hungry families, for whom they are unable to provide, and more men have committed suicide in the past year than ever before in the history of the country."

MR. COWHERD further points out that Dunn's price tables are scientifically constructed; that they are proportionate with consumption and maintain an even balance between the relative importance of the articles consumed; that Commissioner Wright's tables made for campaign material, show an average increase in prices since 1872 only one-half as great as those of Dunn. Explaining how easily this specious showing may be made, Chairman Cowherd says: "He magnified little, trivial articles, like nutmegs, putty, and alum, until they looked as big as cotton, corn and hay. Thus in his 1902 report the decline in the price of nutmegs more than counteracted the advances in the prices of sugar, eggs, milk, bread, and fresh beef. The average family consumes about 3 cents' worth of nutmegs in a year and \$150 worth of these other articles—that is, Colonel Wright magnified nutmegs about 5,000 times before he compared them with these other articles. In this way Colonel Wright kept prices down, so that for 1902 his figures showed an increase of less than 26 per cent over the 1897 prices, while the scientific figures of Dunn showed a difference of about 37 per cent."

COMMENTING upon this interesting statement, the Atlanta Constitution says: "It seems that even twenty-six per cent was too alarming for campaign year, so the wily statistician resorted to a very ingenious scheme to prune this down apparently. Instead of making the basis of computation wholesale prices, which are almost universally stable, retail prices of a favorable nature in isolated communities were hauled into requisition. In this extraordinary way, the prices of thirty articles of food were collated at figures which made a very favorable showing for the administration. As Mr. Cowherd says, however, 'the cost of food forms only about 40 per cent of the cost of living. For aught that this report tells us, the cost of clothing, of fuel or rent and other items of the cost of living, may have gone up three times as much as has the cost of foodstuffs. It is easy for an expert to jump at conclusions.' He makes out a pretty plain case of 'expedient manipulation' relating to the wage scale, in the following explanation: '* * * Out of the 3,429 establishments selected for comparison, 1,199, or more than one-third, are in the building trades. Of the remainder, 1,188 establishments were flour mills, bakeries, foundries and machine shops, planing mills, newspaper printing offices, marble and stone works, blacksmithing and horseshoeing shops, and street and sewer works. All of these and many others are in the unprotected industries, and in many of them the strength of the unions has been developed in recent years, so that the rise in wages comes within the period covered. Not one-fourth of the establishments selected are in the protected industries. Colonel Wright began an investigation of railroad and mining wages. In his report he expresses regret 'that the force available for the prosecution of the work did not permit of the extension of the investigation to cover transportation, mining, agriculture, and the other great industrial groups.' The last report of the interstate commerce commission gives the real reason why the bureau of labor report contains nothing as to railroad wages. This report indicates that average wages were only about 3 per cent higher in 1903 than in 1897. Their publication would have spoiled the colonel's figures and seriously marred the harmony of the effect. Hence, he wisely decided to cut them out."