

CURRENT TOPICS

GOVERNOR CUMMINS of Iowa expresses the opinion that the scheme which Senator Elkins has planned out for the establishment of a court to exercise jurisdiction over questions arising over the interstate commerce act will not provide the people with relief. A railroad publication known as "Freight" and published in New York city, recently asked Governor Cummins for his opinion on the Elkins measure. In his reply the governor says that he favors the plan outlined in Mr. Roosevelt's message, which he thinks will, if adopted, provide relief promptly. The governor adds: "The bill which, according to newspaper report, is to be brought forward by Senator Elkins, establishing a circuit court of interstate commerce to take jurisdiction of all matters arising under the interstate commerce act, would, in my opinion furnish no practical relief for the evils of excessive and discriminating rates. The examination of a freight rate in a court hampered by all the rules which regulate the introduction of evidence, accompanied by the delays which are common in such tribunals, attended with the cost which is incident to technical litigation, and followed by no effective result until the supreme court of the United States is reached, will afford no remedy to the business interests of the country. To establish such a court for the original hearing of complaints as an answer to the demand which the people are now making is to keep the promise to the ear and break it to the hope."

ACCORDING to newspaper dispatches, some enterprising person has originated a plan for the collection of the repudiated bonds of certain southern states. According to these dispatches, these repudiated bonds are being secured by brokers and the plan is to dispose of them in northern states at a profit. It is held that the northern states can issue and collect while both the states and the brokers make good profits. The United States supreme court, in the case of South Dakota vs. North Carolina, held that because South Dakota had accepted a bona fide gift of North Carolina bonds, that South Dakota was entitled to recover, although the former individual owners of the bonds would have no power to sue North Carolina. It is said that the state of Louisiana has \$32,000,000 of this indebtedness while Mississippi has \$22,000,000. The Chicago Record Herald says that the total debt that has been "repudiated" by nine southern states is estimated at more than \$230,000,000; while accrued interest would double the amount.

RECENTLY Senator Foster said that great care should be exercised in framing arbitration treaties made with other countries, in order that these treaties contain no provisions which may be interpreted to mean the payment of fraudulent reconstruction debts of the southern states. Approving the Foster note of warning, the New Orleans Times Democrat says: "Republicans join with democrats in denouncing these debts, and declaring that the question as to responsibility for them must not and can not be considered by any arbitration tribunal. No one wants to enforce the payment of these infernal debts," says Senator Cullom; and his view of the situation is accepted by nearly all the prominent republicans in congress. "There is nothing in the objection raised," he continues, and a number of lawyers join in declaring that these debts can not be arbitrated. The treaties we make with foreign powers specify the cases in which arbitration should prevail; and if the debt of any American state were brought before the arbitration tribunal, we would have a right to object to its consideration. We are further told that the senate is very careful in adopting any treaties and will leave no loophole by which the holders of the fraudulent or repudiated bonds may present their claims against any American state."

THE United States supreme court, speaking through Justice Day, has held that an allowance to a wife and children is not in the nature of an ordinary debt and therefore can not be discharged in bankruptcy. In his opinion Justice Day says: "The bankruptcy law should receive

such an interpretation as will effectuate its beneficent purposes and not make it an instrument to deprive dependent wife and children of the support and maintenance due them from the husband and father, which it has ever been the purpose of the law to enforce. Systems of bankruptcy are designed to relieve the honest debtor from the weight of indebtedness which has become oppressive and to permit him to have a fresh start in business or commercial life, freed from the original obligations and responsibilities which may have resulted from business misfortunes." "In other words," says the Atlanta Constitution, "the distinction is clearly drawn between the obligations and responsibilities arising from business misfortunes and that high obligation to wife and children represented by alimony. The court undoubtedly does the just and right thing in drawing that distinction."

CHRISTMAS Day of 1904, according to newspaper dispatches, was not all "peace on earth, good will to men." The New York World has compiled from newspaper dispatches an interesting showing: Gen. Nogi's right wing advanced and captured new flanking position at the northwest of Port Arthur after hard fighting. A hotel-runner thoughtlessly turned the signal lights at Brown Crossing, and there was a collision at Mount Carmel, Ill., which cost seven lives. Judge Noyes of Plaistow, Mass., was called from church, where he was singing in the choir, to preside at the arraignment of twenty-two men arrested at a chicken fight. A crowd returning from midnight mass at Plainfield, N. J., tried to lynch four negroes who had fatally stabbed two policemen and wounded a third. A five-year-old girl in New York accidentally killed her baby brother by giving him carbolic acid and camphor by mistake for soda water. Frederick Fredericks of Brooklyn was fatally stabbed by an unknown man for resenting an insult offered to a young woman companion. Two men were killed and another fatally injured in a collision between ice boats on Onondaga lake. Two persons were suffocated to death and three others seriously injured in a tenement house fire on Allen street.

TO AVOID a collision with a trolley car the driver of a fire-engine raced his horses along a crowded sidewalk. Nobody was hurt. Two Italians fought a duel in West Farms square in the midst of a crowd of pedestrians. One of the principals was mortally wounded, and the other then tried to shoot a policeman. A crowd of Italians in One Hundred and Ninth street assailed policemen who were making arrests and the police had to draw their revolvers to protect themselves. A prominent democratic politician of Brooklyn was assaulted and robbed by three negroes. Mrs. Mary E. West of East New York fell dead while trimming a Christmas tree. Somebody exploded a dynamite bomb in a three-story tenement house on Third avenue. Christian Lawrence was knocked down and fatally injured on Broadway by a runaway horse. A young woman companion was painfully bruised. A Brooklyn boy died from hemorrhage of the nose after arranging a Christmas celebration. During a fight with the city marshal a young man at Blackshear, Ga., killed his father. A freight elevator operator at Sherry's fell to the bottom of the shaft and was killed. A socialist leader at Pawtucket was found dead on the railroad track. A Baltimore man was seriously wounded by a negro burglar who entered his daughter's bedroom. Two men held up a passenger train near Valley Springs, S. Dak., shot the cars full of holes and made the passengers dance jigs in the aisles.

THE total vote for president in the late election was 13,508,496. The New York World, which seems just now to have a weakness for election figures, says: "This was 460,078 less than the vote in 1900, notwithstanding an estimated increase of nearly 7,000,000 in population and of 1,400,000 in eligible voters. What should the total vote have been in November had the interest of citizens in the result been profound and their preferences between the candidates sharply defined? The fullest vote in proportion to popula-

tion ever cast in a presidential election was in 1896, when the ratio was 1 to 5. By this ratio the vote in November would have been 16,600,000. The vote actually polled was 3,092,000 short of this.

DR. LYMAN ABBOTT recently delivered an address before the Harvard students and his statements on that occasion have created a commotion in ecclesiastical circles. Dr. Abbott is being severely criticised by many clergymen and yet he is not without ardent supporters. The New York Sun contributes to the discussion an interesting parallel column. The Sun takes from Dr. Abbott's address this extract: "The Ten Commandments did not spring spontaneously from Moses, but were, like all laws, a gradual growth; and that man is a creature of evolution, not a creation. I believe in a God Who is in and through and of everything—not an absentee God, whom we have to reach through a Bible or a priest or some other outside aid, but a God who is closer to us than hands or feet. There is only one energy. That energy has always been working. It is an intelligent energy. No scientist can deny it. My God is a great and ever-present force, which is manifest in all the activities of man and all the workings of nature." Then the Sun compares the Abbott remarks with the following declarations made by Tom Paine: "The Commandments carry no internal evidence of divinity with them; they contain some good moral precepts, such as any man qualified to be a lawgiver, or a legislator, could produce himself, without having recourse to supernatural intervention. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the Scripture, which any human hand might make, but the Scripture called the Creation. The only idea man can affix to the name of God is that of a first cause of all things. Do we want to contemplate His power? We see it in the immensity of the Creation. Do we want to contemplate His wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed."

THOSE who imagine that the republican congress may be depended upon to provide the people with protection from corporation imposition will do well to read a telegram sent to the New York Press, a republican paper, by its Washington correspondent. That correspondent says: "Various Wall street interests have been 'assured' from here than the recommendations made in President Roosevelt's message should not be regarded too seriously, because there is no possibility, in the opinion of these Congress lobbyists, that legislation such as recommended will be enacted. They seek, in other words, to bolster up the stock market, with the assurance that they will 'take care' of all legislation looking to the federal control of railroad traffic rates, or to Federal espionage over the great insurance corporations of the country, or to strengthening the anti-trust laws. A financial expert sent out the following from here today: 'The financial world has been assured that there shall be no legislation along the lines recommended in the President's message relating to the regulation of railroad rates. This assurance has been given in ample time to protect the market, and it is claimed that Washington should not be held responsible for the crash which Wall street is experiencing.'

THERE are now said to be only 1333 American buffalo in existence. The various herds with the number of each are given by the Kansas City Journal as follows: "Pablo-Allard, etc., herd, on Flathead Indian reservation, Montana, 330; running wild, west of Great Slave lake, 200; in the Austin Corbin park, New Hampshire, 160; herd of James Philip, Fort Pierre, S. D., 90; herd of Charles Goodnight, Goodnight, Tex., 50; in Banff Rocky Mountain park, Canada, 45; in Yellowstone park (Inclosed), 40; in Bronx park, New York, 32; in Yellowstone park (running wild), 30; herd of John E. Dooley, Utah, 30; herd of G. W. Lillie (Pawnee Bill), Oklahoma, 28; herd of Lincoln park, Chicago, 20; herd of Burgess & Hanson, Luana, Iowa, 20; herd of J. J. Hill, Cardigan, Minn., 18; in the Cincinnati Zoological park, 16; herd of C. J. Lenander, Bancroft, Iowa, 10; in