

CURRENT TOPICS

ON JANUARY 9 presidential electors met at their respective state capitals and cast their ballots, each state selecting a messenger to carry the result to the national capital. Under the law, the electors are required to prepare and sign three certificates, certifying on each the vote of the state for president and vice president. The messenger delivers one of these certificates to the president of the senate, another certificate is forwarded by mail to the president of the United States while the third certificate is to be delivered to the federal judge of the district in which the electors assemble. On February 8 the senate and house of representatives will meet in joint session, count the electoral votes according to the certificates delivered to the president of the senate and will declare the election of the successful candidates. In this instance it will be shown that Roosevelt and Fairbanks received 336 votes while Parker and Davis received 140 votes.

SENATOR HALE of Maine, who has been endorsed by republican legislative caucuses of his state for re-election, will take his place after March 3, according to a writer in the Chicago-Record-Herald in the little group of five-term senators. The Record-Herald says: "Senator Hale was first sent to the senate in 1881, and is thus completing his twenty-fourth year of service. The senate contains now one six-term senator, Allison of Iowa, who has served continuously since 1873, and one other senator, Teller of Colorado, who has been elected six times, though he has not served six full terms. His first term was for but a single session, and after he had been re-elected he dropped out of the senate for two years to accept a seat in President Arthur's cabinet. Of five-term senators there are now Morgan of Alabama, Platt of Connecticut and Cockrell of Missouri, who have served continuously. Stewart of Nevada is completing his fifth term, but he had a twelve-year gap in his service, having been first elected to the senate, it is interesting to recall, as early as 1864. Senator Frye of Maine, is also in his fifth term, but his first term, to fill a vacancy, lasted but two years, so that his actual period of service is the same as that of Senator Hale. Senator Hawley of Connecticut and Senator Aldrich of Rhode Island are now finishing their fourth terms, and Senator Cullom of this state is just two years behind them in length of service."

THERE is said to be increased activity in Canadian iron and steel since the imposition of the \$7 duty on steel rails, which went into effect Dec. 1. The Chicago Record-Herald says that it is not expected however that the market will be held for Canadians. The Record-Herald quotes our consul at Toronto as saying: "The legislation will doubtless secure to Canada the establishment of new iron and steel plants or the purchase by American firms of plants already in operation." The Record-Herald adds: "There was a rumor, it appears, that the United States Steel Corporation had gained control of one plant at Collingwood, and though it was premature it is certainly possible for the controlling spirit of that combine to buy and build in many places beyond our borders. That its power should become international would be the natural sequence of the strength that it has acquired here through tariff aid and an organization making for monopoly, and it will be very interesting to watch the Canadian developments for signs of its expansion."

THE newspapers have recently paid considerable attention to Iowa's record for broken banks. One report that has received very general circulation says that during the year 1904 there were about forty bank failures in the Hawkeye State. The American Banker contends that this report does grave injustice to Iowa and quotes from the auditor of the state to the effect that there were not forty failures during the two years of 1903 and 1904. The American Banker declares that its records show that the actual failures during the year 1904 could not have exceeded eight state, and private banks, and two national banks, and adds that the majority of these failures in Iowa were caused by the dishonesty of bank officials.

BECAUSE of the number of fatal accidents to trains bearing the number 13, orders have been issued on the Mountain division of the Oregon Railroad & Navigation company which strikes that number from the train sheet. The Portland correspondent for the New York American says: "The tragic death of Conductor Charles F. Brown at Mamela in November was the climax. The last train order signed by Conductor Brown on that fatal trip was order No. 13, which he received at Bingham Springs, and which, in the usual jovial manner, he at first refused to sign for, telling the dispatcher to change the number. After a few joking words over the wires with the dispatcher Conductor Brown took the order and in delivering a copy of it to Engineer Peter Theisen, said in fun: 'That's a bad one, Pete. Look at the number and then look out.' It was the last order Brown received, it being a 'meet order' on train No. 1 at Meham."

R. W. SOMERS of Berkley, Cal., has discovered that he is the possessor of a fine violin upon which is inscribed the name of Steiner, one of the great old master violin makers. The Berkley correspondent for the New York American says: "While going over some lumber in his attic one afternoon Somers came upon the violin by accident, where it has been thrown eight or ten years ago. Its history before that period is uncertain. Somers at the time thought nothing of the instrument, and his son used it for a while as a sand shovel. It was while the youngster was playing with the instrument that a professor of the University of California came upon it and apprised its owner of its real value. Since then many art collectors have offered large sums for the violin, but, needless to say, Somers has declined them all."

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT recently called into consultation Senators Aldrich, Allison, Spooner and Platt of Connecticut, Speaker Cannon and Representatives Payne, Dalzell, Grosvenor and Tawney for the purpose for determining the administration's position on the tariff question. The Washington correspondent for the New York World says that the conference divided with Allison, Aldrich, Spooner and Tawney in favor of revision and Platt, Cannon, Grosvenor and Dalzell against revision, while Representative Payne, who, by the way, is chairman of the committee of ways and means, straddled. The World's correspondent says that it is likely that the joint committee of the senate and house will be appointed at the close of this session to sit during the summer and investigate tariff schedules.

MARY ROGERS is under sentence to hang in Vermont, January 16. Kate Rogers is to be hanged in Pennsylvania Feb. 3. Each of these women is charged with murdering her husband. Mrs. William Blickensderfer, wife of the vice president of the Blickensderfer Manufacturing company at Stamford, Conn., has issued an appeal to the women of America to join in protest against the execution of these two women. Mrs. Blickensderfer's grandmother was a schoolmate of Victor Hugo and the creator of Jean Valjean is quoted frequently in the appeal.

ALONZO TUBBS, a member of the Missouri legislature, has introduced a bill seeking to prohibit what is known as tipping in hotels, restaurants and eating houses in that state. Referring to this bill Mr. Tubbs says: "This seems to be a rapidly growing evil in this state and nation. The evil has become so great that no self-respecting man is willing to go into a hotel or restaurant where the practice is allowed without he is also willing to tip the servants. When the author of this bill goes into a hotel and pays for his dinner he thinks that the price of the dinner is fixed by the hotel itself, and pay for it at the office is all that he should be expected to pay, and that for the price paid at the office he should receive the proper service at the table without paying an additional sum to receive the proper attention at the table. It seems that proprietors of hotels and restaurants are encouraging this imposition in order to reduce the expense of their help to themselves. The tips

received at many of the hotels and high-toned restaurants have come to be such an important item in the pay of the waiters that the waiters are glad to serve in their positions without any pay except the tips received from the guests. In fact, there are hotels and restaurants in that state where the head waiter actually pays the hotel a bonus for his position and receives as his pay a percentage of the tips received by the under servants, these latter also receiving no pay from the hotel. The author of the bill, thinking this custom not only an imposition on the traveling public but incompatible with American citizenship and American manhood, thinks that the practice ought to be prohibited by law."

PAUL MORTON, now secretary of the navy, and at one time vice president of the Santa Fe railroad, in his testimony in a rate hearing case sworn in the United States circuit court at Los Angeles according to the New York American, as follows: "We (the Santa Fe) made several endeavors. We tried the costly experiment of being honest in this thing—living up to the law as we understood it, and declining to pay rebates, and we lost so much business that we found that we had got to do as the Romans did."

TWO bills relating to railroad rates and discrimination, now before congress, are attracting considerable attention. One is known as the Quarles-Cooper bill and the other as the Hearst bill. Referring to the Quarles-Cooper bill, the New York American says: "The Quarles-Cooper bill does not meet the demand of the people nor the necessities of the case, because under it the railroads would have all the advantages of delay, and could practically get two trials of every case. On an appeal, under the Quarles-Cooper bill, the railroad in a fight with a New York shipper—the Pennsylvania road, for instance—could send him to Indiana or Illinois to try its appeal. This bill gives the road the right to appeal to any court through which its lines pass."

THE advantages and disadvantages of the two bills are summed up by the American. The Quarles-Cooper bill is dissected in this way: "1. Permits taking additional testimony in federal courts on review. (1) This encourages railroads in practice of not disclosing their side of case before the commission, thus multiplying chances of erroneous finding by commission, of reversals by the courts, with protracted delay. (2) This means a double trial, one of the evils of the existing law, thus imposing great expense on the complainant and a useless burden upon the courts, which are already far behind their calendars. 2. Permits railroads to select the judge to re-try case from any circuit through which roads run. (1) This renders it quite feasible for the railroad to insure trial of every case before a judge of the road's own selection. 3. Makes it almost certain that all orders would be stayed for a year or more. (1) Because with the power of selecting the judge and the wide field to choose from, it would be obviously easy for a railroad to find a judge who would grant a stay. Witness the practice in New York state of procuring from up-state judges 'certificates of reasonable doubt' in criminal cases. 4. Permits an appeal to the supreme court in every case. 5. Fails to provide effective means of compelling before commission production of papers and answering of questions. (1) This is one of the worst evils of the existing law, under which a case can be halted for a year while the relevancy of a paper or of a question is being litigated all the way up to the supreme court, as in the coal trust case."

THE Hearst bill is described as follows: "1. Avoids all the enumerated objections to the Quarles-Cooper bill. 2. Provides a trained and experienced court for this special branch of law. This court gives attention only to interstate commerce cases. It is a regular court of appeals for transportation questions, and when its decision is rendered the case is at an end, unless there is a constitutional question involved, when an appeal lies to the supreme court. 3. Permits appeals from the interstate commerce court only when a federal