

CURRENT TOPICS

THE United States supreme court, on January 30, delivered an opinion in the case of the United States vs. Swift and company. This was the beef trust case. The government charged the packers with conspiracy in restraint of trade. The Associated Press report says: "The opinion was handed down by Justice Holmes and affirmed the decision of the court below which was against the packers. In his opinion Justice Holmes discussed at length the various contentions of the packers and disposed of them individually. He admitted that some of the charges were less specific than desirable, but said this was necessarily true on account of the vast extent of the field covered. He added that sufficient had been shown to prove continuance of offenses and an offense of such a nature as to justify the proceeding. The opinion continues the injunction granted against the packers under the Sherman anti-trust law by the lower courts. The opinion was concurred in by all the members of the court."

COMMENTING upon the court's opinion, Attorney General Moody said: "The opinion sustains in all respects the contention of the government and affirms the decree of the court below in all substantial particulars. The case decides that the traffic in live stock transported from the state or territory of its origin to another state for sale is interstate commerce and that those engaged in buying and selling such live stock are engaged in interstate commerce. This question has been before the court twice before, but was left undecided because the cases in which it was presented turned upon other considerations. The decision condemns as an unlawful restraint of trade the combination between independent dealers to suppress all competition in the purchase of live stock thus situated. It condemns as an unlawful restraint of trade the combination between such dealers for the purpose of fixing and maintaining uniform prices for the sale of meat throughout the country; it condemns as an unlawful restraint of trade the combination between such dealers to obtain preferential rates for the transportation of their product by common carriers. The decision makes it clear that all combination between independent individuals, partnerships or corporations engaged in interstate commerce by which competition between them in such commerce is suppressed, fall under the prohibition of the so-called anti-trust act."

THE packers themselves refuse to express any opinion, but John S. Miller, their chief counsel, is quoted by the Associated Press as saying: "The order, as I understand it, simply makes permanent the injunction restraining the packers from doing business in restraint of trade and in violation of the Sherman anti-trust law. They have assured me that they have done nothing in violation of these. Hence the permanent restraining order does not, in any manner, inconvenience them. It does not charge them with or convict them of wrong doing. I can not say what further action may be taken. The only thing that I see that could be done would be to request a rehearing of the case."

JUDGE PETER S. GROSSCUP of the United States circuit court of Chicago, referring to the supreme court's decision in the beef trust case, says: "The substance of the case presented to the circuit court was, whether the purchase of cattle from sellers living in different states, to manufacture into dressed meats, and the sale of such meats to purchasers in different states constituted interstate commerce or not. The decision establishes the right of the government to prevent combinations among the manufacturers of meats. It is a long step in the direction of effectual government supervision. But to my mind the real significance of the decision is much deeper and far reaching than even this. It effectively clears the decks for what I believe will be the next really great national movement—as the restriction, and finally the abolition, of slavery was the last great fundamental movement—the organization and supervision, by the nation itself, of the great corporations of the future—a movement whose chief object will be not so much to control prices, or merely to curb power, as to bring corporate ownership within the reach and reasonable confidence of

the people at large, and thus to re-peoplize and republicanize again the industrial ownership of the country."

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT delivered an address before the Union League of Philadelphia on the evening of January 30. He paid some attention to the railroad question, declaring that while the railroad managers were entitled to exact justice, the people were likewise entitled to justice. He said that the railroad managers must recognize their duty to the public and that control of railroad rates must be exercised by some governmental tribunal. Explaining his railroad policy, the president said: "We are not trying to strike down the rich man; on the contrary, we will not tolerate any attack upon his rights. We are not trying to give an improper advantage to the poor man because he is poor, to the man of small means because he has not larger means; but we are striving to see that the man of small means has exactly as good a chance, so far as we can obtain it for him, as the man of larger means; that there shall be equality of opportunity for the one as for the other. We do not intend that this republic shall ever fail as those republics of olden time failed, in which there finally came to be a government by classes, which resulted either in the poor plundering the rich or in the rich exploiting and in one form or another enslaving the poor; for either event means the destruction of free institutions and of individual liberty. Ours is not a government which recognizes classes. It is based on the recognition of the individual. We are not for the poor man as such, nor for the rich man as such. We are for every man, rich or poor, provided he acts justly and fairly by his fellows, and if he so acts the government must do all it can to see that inasmuch as he does no wrong, so he shall suffer no wrong."

FOR years, Abraham Lincoln has been accredited with the saying: "You can fool all of the people some of the time, some of the people all of the time, but you can not fool all the people all of the time." The Washington Post says that Representative Snooks of Ohio recently received from "a curious constituent of a literary turn of mind who studies the sayings supposed to have fallen from the lips of great men," a letter inquiring what speech of Abraham Lincoln's contains these famous words. The Post says that Representative Snooks referred the inquiry to the congressional librarian and that Assistant Librarian Spofford, who is famous as a literary authority, reported that the sentence does not occur in any of Lincoln's writings. Mr. Spofford says that Mr. Nicolay, Lincoln's secretary, told him (Spofford) that they were spurious. Mr. Spofford says P. T. Barnum, the great circus man, was the author of the popular sentence which has been heard millions of times on the stump in every political campaign during the last quarter of a century.

MAXIM GORKY, the Russian writer, has, according to newspaper dispatches, been confined in a St. Petersburg prison. A writer in the Louisville Courier Journal says: "Gorky won his fame as a writer of novels setting forth the joys, sorrows and friendships of tramps, among whom he lives. He has never mingled political treatises with his text, but his works present in a poignant way the cause of the poor of Russia and they are not without their effect in a political sense. It is the crushing weight of Russia's governmental system that is keeping the people poor and adding to their misery, and he conceals nothing of this condition of things. His books have gone over the world, and now, at the age of thirty-six, he is regarded as ranking next to Tolstoy among the contemporary writers of Russia. Gorky's real name is Pjeschkoff. He could scarcely read at fifteen. In his early years he was a shoemaker's apprentice, working inhumanly long hours; an engraver, a painter of ikons, a cook's helper. He was a boatman for a while, and then he labored in the quarries. He served as baker's boy at \$1.50 a month, worked in a sawmill and as longshoreman. Of late the Russian government has been suspecting him of revolutionary purposes, and when he issued a message to the people and a defiance of the czar last week the authorities placed him under arrest."

THE administration has been severely criticized because of what is known as the "Santo Domingan treaty." Senators claim that the agreement entered into between the administration and the Dominican government amounts to a treaty, and treaties can not be made except "by and with the advice and consent of the senate." Commander Dillingham of the United States navy and the representative of the Dominican government signed a protocol, which it is charged practically creates a protectorate by the United States over Santo Domingo. Among other things, this protocol provides that the United States is to aid in restoring the credit, preserving order and increasing the "efficiency of its (Santo Domingo) civil administration and advancing the financial progress and welfare of the republic."

SENATOR BACON of Georgia recently introduced a resolution calling for information on this subject. The resolution was referred to the committee on foreign relations. Later the senate was informed that the secretary of state would consent to send to the senate a treaty framed on the lines of the protocol. Later dispatches say that instructions have been sent to the American minister at Santo Domingo, directing that the protocol be amended to make perfectly clear the limitations of the responsibility of the United States in Santo Domingan affairs.

ACCORDING to government reports, Carthage, Mo., is the most healthful city in the United States. A dispatch to the St. Louis Republican, under date of Carthage, Jan. 28, says: "For several years this city has held the banner for lowest rate of mortality, and this year, according to Doctor A. Rhoads, who compiles the mortality table for Uncle Sam, the number of deaths is smaller than last year. The population of Carthage, according to the government representative, is 11,700. The total number of deaths during 1904 from all causes was 81. Of this number there were 11 deaths from tuberculosis. The death rate per thousand of population was, therefore, 6.92. In 1903 there were 99 deaths in the city, and in 1902 there were 104."

ENGINEERS have decided that the Brooklyn bridge must be rebuilt because of the great strain to which it has been subjected. The Brooklyn correspondent for the Milwaukee Sentinel says: "To do this will require at least two years. Meanwhile traffic between New York and Brooklyn will have to be diverted to the Williamsburg bridge, the new Manhattan bridge, and the Brooklyn subway tunnel, in course of construction. Four or five years may elapse before this can be accomplished, as great traffic problems will have to be solved beforehand. Though an inspection of the Brooklyn bridge shows it to be safe, it is admitted by all the engineers who have been connected with the work that even steel has an age limit, and that this limit is being approached. The structure is withstanding a weight of traffic which it never was intended to bear when the plans for the construction were made. It is estimated that the cost of the rebuilding will be about \$5,000,000."

A STRANGE scene was recently enacted in the police court at Atlanta, Ga. The Atlanta Constitution tells the story in this way: "Mrs. Mattie Eads, fined for insulting a neighbor, put up her 10-year-old son as collateral until she could raise the amount of the fine. Without shedding a tear, the child placed himself in the custody of Probate Officer J. N. Gloer and remained a prisoner in the juvenile ward as hostage for his mother. This act of sacrifice gave liberty to the mother and thus escape a term in the city stockade. When the fine was finally paid Turnkey Steerman released the boy."

WRITING from Washington to the Chicago Record-Herald, Walter Wellman says that in its decision of the beef trust case, the United States court cut the ground from under what is known as "government by injunction." Mr. Wellman says: "Among the numerous exceptions to the government's bill entered by the packers was one that the bill of complaint and the allegations