

CURRENT TOPICS

THE Standard Oil trust magnates have not, until recently, felt it necessary to reply to public criticism. Although that great trust has been frequently arraigned its representatives never undertook an explanation until Thomas W. Lawson's articles appeared. Then the representatives of perhaps the greatest trust in the world seemed to deem it necessary to make reply. Now that Rev. Washington Gladden, followed by a considerable number of Congregational clergymen, has made vigorous protest against the acceptance by his church authorities of a gift of \$100,000 by John D. Rockefeller, Henry H. Rogers, vice president of the Standard Oil company, has been permitted to make a public statement.

MR. ROGERS, replying directly to Dr. Gladden's statement, and speaking, evidently for the Standard Oil trust, says: "Ministers say queer things. Dr. Washington Gladden says everybody knows that John D. Rockefeller has obtained his money dishonestly. With as much reason I could say that everybody knows that Dr. Gladden would not trust the ten commandments for ten days with the deacons of his church because they would surely break some of them and bend the rest. Slavery in certain sections of the United States was legal until President Lincoln's emancipation proclamation. Rebates on railroads were just as legal until the passage of the interstate commerce commission act. After an exhaustive examination by the industrial commission authorized by congress June 18, 1898, in a review of evidence the commission reported as follows: 'It has been charged as a matter of general belief on the part of almost all the opponents of the Standard Oil company that these discriminations in various forms have been continually received, even up to date. On the other hand, these charges have been denied in toto and most emphatically by every representative of the Standard Oil company with reference to all cases excepting one, which they claim was a mistake, the amount of freight due being promptly paid on discovery of the error. The Standard Oil company not merely challenged the opponents to bring forth proof of any case, but produced many letters from leading officials of railroads to show that the company had in no case received any favors or asked for them.'"

ROCKEFELLER'S proposed gift to foreign missions seems to have stirred public opinion as it was never stirred before. Many clergymen insisted that the gift should be accepted without question. At a meeting recently held in Boston, Rev. F. A. Noble of Chicago, representing the Congregational church committee which reported in favor of the gift, said in effect: "The American board is not an inquisitorial body. It was not organized to look into the morality of the man who makes a gift. The board was organized to propagate the gospel in heathen lands, and the charter provides that any man who makes a bequest shall have it carried out. No man has a right to hinder any other man who wants to do good."

REV. DANIEL EVANS, of Cambridge, Mass., protesting against the Rockefeller offer, said: "The serious national situation created by some corporations whose methods and practices are morally iniquitous and socially destructive should alarm the church. One of the corporations conspicuous and notorious for methods and practices which are morally iniquitous and socially destructive is the Standard Oil company, whose president is Mr. John D. Rockefeller. The facts are in the possession of the general public and in the light of them our acceptance of the gift and our relation to Mr. Rockefeller are being judged by the plain people. It cannot be overlooked that the prudential committee, as representing the board, is but the organ of the church in its missionary operations. We ask the prudential committee as an organ of the church not to involve the church in entangling alliances with opposing interests and antagonistic forces. The church, of which the board is a representative before the public, must be kept free to strike her blow and speak her rebuke against corporate evil and free to be the leader and inspirer of those who in many organized ways are fighting the battle of social righteousness."

SCOTT DODD, chief solicitor of the Standard Oil company, gave out a statement April 6 with reference to the Rockefeller gift for missionary work. The Associated Press, referring to Mr. Dodd's statement, said: "Mr. Dodd declares that the statement that Mr. Rockefeller made his money dishonestly 'is false, is vile, and being made by ministers in the pretended interests of morality, is doubly vile.' Mr. Dodd then says that the Standard Oil company does not own a share of stock in any railroad company, does not control any railroad company and that since the enactment of the interstate commerce law has not received lower rates than other shippers by rebates, arrangements, devices or plans of any character. The testimony of Howard Page, freight agent of the Standard Oil company, before the commission is quoted in this connection. With reference to gas and copper companies, Mr. Dodd says: 'No doubt many have been produced against Mr. Rockefeller by sensational writers, whose articles, accompanied by portraits and caricatures, are intended to create the impression that Mr. Rockefeller was principal in the affairs relating to the organization of the gas and copper companies, although no fact showing such connection is stated. The Standard Oil company has already denied that it had any connection or interest directly or indirectly in the organization of these corporations, and on the best authority the same denial is made for John D. Rockefeller. He had no connection with, nor interest in, directly or indirectly, the organization of these corporations.'"

AFTER reading Mr. Dodd's statement, Rev. Washington Gladden of Columbus, O., moderator of the general council of Congregational churches of the United States, made to Mr. Dodd's statement the following reply: "Mr. Dodd says that the Standard Oil company does not own a share of stock in any railroad company and does not control any railroad company. By this statement Mr. Dodd intends to convey and does convey to the public the meaning that the group of men with common interests who have always owned and controlled the Standard Oil company, and for whom the phrase 'Standard Oil' is an accurate and convenient synonym, do not own any railroad stock or control any railroad. Is this statement, which Mr. Dodd intends to convey, a true statement? Will Mr. Dodd specifically state that the group of men thus described do not own enough stock practically to control many of our important railroads? Until this question is definitely answered other parts of the manifesto may be neglected."

IN the municipal elections held April 5, there were many noticeable democratic victories. The most important was the election of Edward F. Dunne to be mayor of Chicago. Judge Dunne had a plurality over John M. Harlan, the republican nominee of 23,000. The principal issue was the municipal ownership of street railway lines and the contest was perhaps the most notable in the history of Chicago. John F. Smulski, republican nominee for city attorney, was re-elected over his democratic opponent by about 15,000 plurality. Aside from this and the fact that the new city council will be republican, the democratic city ticket was elected.

REFERRING to the great victory he won for the people, Judge Dunne, speaking to a correspondent for the Associated Press, said: "Party lines and personalities of candidates were entirely forgotten in today's election. Municipal ownership was the one great issue before the people of Chicago, and the returns show very plainly how the majority fell toward the private ownership of public utilities. It is the greatest victory municipal ownership ever won in this country. Every pledge that I made during the campaign will be kept. Chicago wants municipal ownership and during my tenure of office it will be my aim to bring about such a condition as rapidly as possible. I will appoint a corps of engineers to make a survey of all the street railways in the city, so that we will know just how the city, when it secures control of the lines, will be able to handle the proposition. I believe that before many months we will see the city of Chicago owning and operating at least one street railway line. The traction

question depends in a great measure on the action of the courts, but in cases where legal proceedings are pending I will endeavor to bring about an immediate settlement. It will be years before the city will come into possession of all the street railway franchises in Chicago, but we will gradually assume control of the different lines, and I believe the day will come when the people will control all of the street railway systems of the city.

IN St. Louis, Rolla A. Wells, present mayor and democratic nominee for re-election, was chosen over his opponent, John A. Tolty. Mr. Wells' plurality was 1,000. Democrats carried Kansas City, Kas., and Leavenworth, Kas. The Associated Press says that this was a revolution and entirely unlooked for in each case. William W. Rose, democrat, was elected mayor of Kansas City, Kas., by about 1,500 plurality. Peter Everhardy, democrat, was elected mayor of Leavenworth by about 200 plurality. Finley Ross, republican, was elected mayor of Wichita.

IN Colorado democrats were generally successful in municipal elections, Pueblo, Colorado Springs and Leadville, normally republican, being carried by the democrats. In the smaller towns where party lines were drawn, democrats generally won. Democratic victories were also noticeable in the municipal elections throughout Montana. In the city of Lincoln, Neb., Frank H. Brown, democrat, was elected mayor, receiving 600 majority over A. H. Hutton, republican. Mr. Brown is the fourth democrat to be elected mayor of Lincoln in thirty years. In many Nebraska towns, strongly republican, democratic nominees pushed their republican opponents very closely.

IN an address recently delivered in New York City, Governor Folk of Missouri, said: "The Missouri idea means the enforcement of law, and if that law be bad, the remedy is to repeal, not to ignore it. Disregard of one law breeds disregard for all law. In allowing some laws to go unenforced we reap a harvest in having all laws broken. Good men will observe even bad laws, but bad men will break even good laws. It should be that all men, good and bad, be compelled to keep all law, good and bad, because it is the law. The patriotism of peace is just as necessary as the patriotism of war. The patriotism of the ballot is even more necessary in a free country than the patriotism of the bullet. Plenty of men will die for their country, but the man who will live for his city and state every day is the man the government needs. The government never neglects the people unless the people first neglect the government. No government, city, state or national, was ever better than the people made it, or worse than they suffered it to become. Good citizens make good laws, but no law can make good citizens. States and cities do not consist of mortar and brick and stone, but of the character of their citizenship."

IN the grant made to the Illinois Central railroad company, it was provided that that company should pay into the treasury of the state of Illinois seven per cent of the gross receipts of the business. This result was brought about through the efforts of Stephen A. Douglas. Referring to this fact, a writer in the Dubuque, Iowa, Telegraph, says: "The Illinois Central opened for business in 1855 and that year paid into the state treasury the sum of \$29,751. In 1904 the state's share of the gross receipts were \$1,062,571. During the fifty years the road has been in existence it has paid to the state of Illinois the vast sum of \$22,130,529, an average of over \$450,000 per year. The railroad has prospered and built new lines southward and eastward since it began business and its receipts have grown to enormous proportions—perhaps far beyond what Senator Douglas conceived. The people of Illinois are relieved by his foresight and sagacity of a very considerable burden of taxation. No other state in the union receives any part of the gross earnings of a railroad and no other road has paid a sou for its state franchise, so far as this paper has knowledge. The justice and wisdom of the principle