

# CURRENT TOPICS

FIVE HUNDRED NEBRASKA democrats assembled at Lincoln on March 6 for the purpose of effecting a more thorough organization of the party in the state, and to lay the foundations for the state and congressional campaigns to be fought out this year. A meeting of the state central committee and the visiting democrats was held in the afternoon, and at 10 p. m. the 400 enthusiastic democrats sat down to a "dollar dinner" served at the Lincoln hotel. Dr. P. L. Hall, former chairman of the state central committee, presided at the banquet as toastmaster. With two exceptions the speakers were Nebraskans, General James W. Weaver of Iowa, and former Governor Thomas of Colorado being the visiting speakers. General Weaver's toast was "Jefferson or Machiavelli," and Governor Thomas' toast was "The Consumer." Cato Sells of Iowa was invited but was unable to be present.

PATRICK M'KILLIP, of Platte county, A. C. Shallenbarger of Harlan county, H. H. Hanks of Otoe county, George W. Berge of Lancaster county, G. M. Hitchcock of Douglas county, and W. H. Thompson of Hall county, were the speakers from the state. Every address was upon a timely topic, and every speaker added to the enthusiasm and the determination of Nebraska democracy to remain in the forefront of the battle for the people's rights. Government ownership of the avenues of transportation was a dominant note, and several speakers declared in favor of building a governmental transcontinental line from New York to San Francisco. At the conclusion of the banquet, by unanimous vote, the assembly sent greetings to Mr. Bryan and wishes for his safe return.

SEVERAL REPUBLICAN senators who have publicly declared themselves in favor of the ratification of the Santo Domingo treaty, have privately expressed their displeasure with the terms of that treaty. Those who favor the treaty say that the Santo Domingo treaty will not be used as a precedent. Replying to this claim the New York Evening Post says: "It is used as a precedent. Hayti is in trouble about her foreign debt, and recourse is at once had by the creditors, not to Port-au-Prince, but to Washington. Uncle Sam, in his new role of liquidator of all the bad debts in this hemisphere, is called upon to arrange the affair. This was inevitable. As soon as we begin to act as receiver and guardian for one bankrupt republic, the disordered finances of all the others will infallibly be brought to us. We know of no single argument advanced for our intervention in Santo Domingo which does not apply, or could not be made to apply, to all other republics in arrears and in difficulty between us and Cape Horn. And the greater part of their debts, like those of Santo Domingo, is practically of the nature of gambling debts. Speculators have simply taken chances, as in a lottery, and now we are to guarantee the lottery. President Roosevelt, who a little time ago was speaking complacently in his message about his 'police power' over all disorderly republics, and was reported by his friends as determined to straighten out the whole lot of them, now gives it to be understood that Santo Domingo will be the very last imprudence of the kind. But logic is logic, and a precedent is a precedent, even in a government by non-sequiturs. Hayti's creditors may be troublesome callers at the state department, just at this juncture, but we may be sure that, if the president's Dominican policy is adopted, they are but the first of a long line."

JOHN R. WALSH, former president of the now defunct Chicago National bank, proprietor of the Chicago Chronicle, "defender of national honor," and a person so devoted to high moral ideals that though professing to be a democrat he could not give support to the democratic national ticket, has finally been arrested by the federal authorities and required to give bond in the sum of \$50,000. Mr. Walsh is charged with having made a false report of the condition of his bank. It is charged that he made a report showing that at the close of business in 1905 the amount of loans and discounts of the bank, on which officers and directors were liable, was \$245,000, when in reality the amount of such

loans and discounts was \$3,000,000. It is charged that he reported that the amount of loans and discounts on which officers and directors were not liable was \$10,658,226.64, when the amount of such liabilities was in reality \$7,500,000. These are the specific charges upon which the warrant for Mr. Walsh's arrest was issued. But it is claimed that many other specifications could be made, and it is intimated that many others will be made.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS under date of Chicago, December 28, 1905, reported that Secretary Shaw had declared that there would be no criminal prosecution growing out of the closing of Walsh's financial institutions. In that dispatch Secretary Shaw was quoted as having said: "John R. Walsh did not take one dollar dishonestly. He did no more than many other bankers of the United States are doing all the time. The rumor of criminal prosecution is nothing but talk. There has been no embezzlement or theft. For every dollar taken out gilt edge security was placed within. The depositors will get every dollar they deposited, and when that has been accomplished, the responsibility of the government ceases. That part of the banking law prohibiting the loaning of more than 10 per cent of the capitalization to one man may have been violated. That is not a criminal violation and all that can be done is to liquidate the bank and pay off the depositors. The violation of that law by one bank is no more than has been done by almost every bank in the country."

IT IS NOW EXPLAINED that the arrest of Walsh was due to the department of justice rather than to the treasury department. But inasmuch as the department of justice has taken cognizance of Walsh's short-comings in spite of the clean bill given him by the treasury department, would it not be well for the department of justice to give some consideration to Secretary Shaw's claim that Mr. Walsh "did no more than many other bankers in the United States are doing all the time." The authorities certainly went to the limit to protect that "frenzied financier," and perhaps in doing so they gave some consideration to the great service he has habitually rendered the republican party. It may be that Walsh has done "no more than many other bankers in the United States are doing all the time," but Walsh's offense may have been in being found out, and perhaps it would be well for public interests if the department of justice proceeded against other malefactors in time to protect innocent people from loss.

THE PEOPLE OF New York who, relying upon District Attorney Jerome's stump speech, cast aside all partisan prejudices and gave to him enthusiastic support, are just now showing their great disappointment, and they have good reason for this. Although the revelations before the insurance committee showed that many men high in financial circles were guilty of outrageous crimes, District Attorney Jerome has not proceeded against them. Recently several members of the McCurdy family set sail for Europe, and when Mr. Jerome was criticised because he had not caused the arrest of these people, he explained that he had obtained from the McCurdys written pledges in which they had promised to return whenever he should make such a request. It was further explained that Mr. Jerome had obtained a similar pledge from James H. Hyde.

IS THERE A BURGLAR, highwayman or cut-throat in all the land that would not be glad to place such a pledge in the hands of the authorities? And why should such extraordinary consideration be given these rich and influential scoundrels? Mr. Jerome's associates are every day engaged in prosecuting men whose offenses, compared with those of the McCurdys and the Hydes, are inconsequential. These men are required to go to jail unless they can furnish gilt edge bonds, and yet he permits the McCurdys and the Hydes to go abroad, and explains that he has required of them a written pledge that they will return in the event he deems their re-

turn necessary. It is a very sorry piece of business, indeed, and The Commoner does not hesitate to reiterate that, in the opinion of many men who once had confidence in him, District Attorney Jerome is, in the language used by Bismarck in referring to Salisbury: "A wooden lath painted to look like iron."

THE DENVER (COLO.) NEWS recently published a cartoon representing Senator LaFollette as addressing the senate somewhat in this fashion: "I am a republican. I favor the Hepburn rate bill. I believe in municipal ownership. I am opposed to Chinese emigration. I believe in labor unions. I think Filipinos should be free." In the cartoon it is represented that Mr. LaFollette's remarks created consternation in the senate chamber. One senator is represented as exclaiming: "Bring me water or I'll faint!" Another: "Why, he's a socialist!" Another: "He's truly unconventional," and another: "Let's go to the cafe. He's a bore." But the people in the galleries who, in this instance are certainly made to fairly reflect public sentiment, are represented as saying: "Go it, Bob! You're all right." As the News cartoonist says, "it is a new brand of republicanism presented to the United States senate." But it is, unquestionably, popular among the masses.

AT A CLUB MEETING held recently in Lincoln, Nebraska, Mr. J. E. Miller, a prominent merchant, read a paper on "Campaign Funds." Mr. Miller took the position that the amount of funds used by political parties should be limited in amount, and that publicity should attend the purposes for which they are expended. He insisted that the publicity should be made prior to the election. Mr. Miller explained: "It might be interesting to know, after election, that Mr. Rockefeller contributed \$1,000,000 to the campaign fund of the democratic party, but it would have no effect. Let the matter be published before election and the effect would be manifest at once. In England each party must publish the amount of contributions at once. The candidate is not allowed to spend over a certain amount of money. In Canada the candidate is not permitted to have carriages to take the voters to the polls. They take the ground that this is a means of bribery. If the voter does not care enough about the outcome of the election to go to the polls, let him lose his vote." It is a good sign that such discussions as these are carried on. Any measure seeking a cure of the evils growing out of contributions to campaign funds will fail in purpose unless it provides for publicity prior to election day. Mr. Miller takes an unassailable position when he insists that campaign contributions be made known to the voters prior to election day. The people are entitled to know in advance just where the respective political parties obtain substantial support. To have this knowledge prior to election day would enable the citizen having no ax to grind to cast his vote in a way that would best subserve public interests.

RECENTLY THE Brooklyn Eagle, famous for its leadership of a more or less "safe and sane" democracy, referred to George Foster Peabody as a thoroughly "safe and sane" democrat. Referring to this statement Mr. Peabody sends a letter to the Eagle in which letter he says that he is still "safe and sane," but adds that possibly not in the commonly accepted sense. Referring to Mr. Peabody's letter the Springfield Republican says: "He proceeds to frame a platform for the national democracy which makes the radicalism of Bryan seem an inconsequential matter. He believes that the time is coming for the democratic party to reassert its fundamental principles of human liberty and personal rights as against the power and aggrandizement of syndicated wealth."

IN HIS LETTER to the Brooklyn Eagle Mr. Peabody says: "A patent fact in the social structure of today is that the average man does not have continuous employment, and further, that the whole surplus production beyond the daily consumption is to so large an extent divided among the few who may not unfairly be