

# CURRENT TOPICS

THE FEDERAL GRAND jury at Cleveland, Ohio, adjourned without returning any indictments against the Standard Oil company, or any of its co-conspirators. An effort was made to induce the jury to indict officials of the Lake Shore Railroad company, but this failed. It is now announced that the railroad end of the persecution will be dropped and efforts will be made at Chicago to indict the Standard Oil officials.

THE REPORT MADE by the committee of the trustees of the Mutual Life Insurance company discloses that Henry H. Rogers and William Rockefeller have withdrawn from the insurance company. It is given out by the Mutual officials that the Standard Oil company now has no interest in the insurance company. President Peabody has made public a letter he received from Mr. Rogers in which letter he says: "Apparently the people who are most active in their hostility to the present administration are using the fact of my connection with the Standard Oil company as a ground for criticism. While this is a sufficient reason for my refusal to be a candidate for trustee, since no one has a right to put such large interests in jeopardy, for the sake of achieving a personal vindication, it is yet true that, aside from the relations of Mr. William Rockefeller and myself as policyholders and trustees, neither the Standard Oil company nor anyone occupying an official position in that corporation has ever in the slightest degree had any business or other relation with the Mutual Life Insurance company. And in the case of Mr. Rockefeller, who is now absent, his policy matured some months ago, and was paid, and he, therefore, is no longer a policyholder. He also wishes to be relieved from any further service as a trustee. If anyone imagines that the Standard Oil company or any of its officers have profited out of any relation to the Mutual Life Insurance company, he must be strangely ignorant of the facts."

THOSE WHO CAREFULLY read the first of Thomas W. Lawson's articles of exposure will be particularly interested in an Associated Press dispatch from Boston. This dispatch follows: "Henry H. Rogers, Standard Oil magnate, must pay the receiver of the Bay State Gas company of Delaware at least one-half of the \$4,500,000 profit which he made in the now notorious New England Gas and Coke-Bay State Gas deal nearly ten years ago. This decision against Rogers which will lessen his wealth by certainly \$2,500,000 and perhaps a larger sum, was handed down by Judge Putnam in the United States court today. The judgment was issued in the name of George Wharton Pepper, receiver for the Bay State Gas company. Pepper sued Rogers for \$4,500,000, the amount of profit which he claimed Rogers made for himself by virtue of his position as a trustee of the Bay State Gas company. Although the amount given him is less than was asked, it is a material victory against the oil magnate. In the opinion handed down by Judge Pugam, Moorfield Story, the famous lawyer, is appointed master to decide what part of the \$4,500,000 profit Rogers must give up. If he is unable to fix the exact amount which Rogers is entitled to retain he is instructed to divide the amount and in any event Rogers must turn over \$2,250,000. The case was heard before a master, C. Austen Browne, in June and July of 1905 with the utmost secrecy. It was held in the office of Mr. Badger, personal counsel for Rogers, and all representatives of the press were barred. This was done for the sake of Mr. Rogers, who wished to avoid publicity. After 'star-chamber' proceedings, the case was argued before Judge Pugam last winter."

THE SUPREME COURT of Colorado, which deprived Alva Adams of the gubernatorial office is now busily engaged in pulling corporation chestnuts out of the fire. The court has made such remarkable orders in behalf of the special interests that even conservative law journals criticize it. The Central Law Journal of St. Louis, a publication of excellent standing and wide circulation among members of the legal profession, discusses the court's decisions from the

standpoint of the legal profession, and concludes a scathing arraignment of the court with the following paragraph: "We regret that we can go no further than to express our deep sympathy with the endeavors of the members of the bar of the state of Colorado to correct the appalling judicial conditions now existing in that state, and to assure them that the power of a united profession if properly exercised will very promptly and effectually correct the existing evils and give to the state an appellate judiciary of which it needs not be ashamed."

JOHN B. MORAN of Boston, who was elected district attorney on an independent ticket, has announced his candidacy for the democratic nomination for governor of Massachusetts. Mr. Moran has made an excellent record as district attorney. He has already been nominated for governor by the prohibition party. He fears that the democratic party leaders are endeavoring to have the convention adopt a corporation and trust platform. "The contest is one of the people for their rights," said Mr. Moran. "We welcome assistance from all believers in our principles and we invite attack from all enemies. We ask for no quarter and we will give none. Treat every man as an opponent until he proclaims his allegiance to our cause. If he hesitates, suspect him. Drive our opponents into the open, tear off their masks and fight them." The principal planks of the Moran platform are: "Public ownership and operation of public utilities in nation, state and city. Defense of all divorce cases to be conducted by district attorneys, that collusion extensively practiced now may cease. More stringent laws as to the receipt, expenditure and accounting of money by campaign committees."

WITH THE COMBINED democratic and prohibition vote Mr. Moran would have to draw from the republican ranks in order to be elected. The Boston correspondent for the New York World says: "The vote at the last election for governor was: Republican, 197,469; democratic, 174,911; prohibition, 3,286. George Fred Williams, former congressman and former national democratic committeeman, came out strongly for the nomination of Moran. Mr. Williams says Moran has restored the function of the grand jury, 'the most precious inheritance of the people's rights,' and says Moran 'by his relentless investigation of wrongdoers has been able to change the whole complexion of criminal proceedings, and give lifeblood to the whole body of our criminal law.' Mr. Williams adds: "In my judgment there is no office of state which would not likewise be revolutionized if men of the type of Mr. Moran could be found to fill it. While he has not been tried in executive work, I believe that his democracy is true; that he is incorruptible, and absolutely fearless, and that his motive in politics is to fearlessly and faithfully serve the people. I believe that he can restore the hopes and confidence of the people in their own government." Mr. Williams says there is reason to believe that a majority of the present state committee will co-operate in the Moran movement."

THE STEADY INCREASE in the cost of living is being generally discussed these days. The New York Commercial, a republican paper, says that this increase has been noticeable since 1900. The Commercial adds: "The fifth year of the twentieth century found the average wholesale price of commodities of 15.9 per cent above those of the last decade of the nineteenth century, while 1905 itself outdoes 1904 by 2.6 per cent. Comparing the 1905 average prices with the years since 1890 that show the lowest averages in each group of commodities we find that the 1905 averages show farm products 58.6 per cent higher than in 1896; food, and so forth, 29.7 per cent higher than in 1896; clothes and clothing, 22.9 per cent higher than in 1897; fuel and lighting, 39.4 per cent higher than in 1894; metals and implements, 41.8 per cent higher than in 1898; lumber and building materials, 41.4 per cent higher than in 1897; drugs and chemicals, 24.1 per cent higher than in 1895; house furnishing goods, 21.5 per cent higher than in 1897, and articles in-

cluded in the miscellaneous group, 23.4 per cent higher than in 1896. In December last prices reached their top limit for 1905, and this for the whole sixteen years. They were then 19.9 per cent above the average for the ten-year period, 1890 to 1899, 33.7 per cent above the prices in December, 1904. As to relative fluctuations in prices of raw and manufactured goods, with the single exception of 1893, during the years of high prices raw commodities were relatively higher than manufactured, and during the years of low prices, with the exception of 1898, raw were lower than manufactured. Curiously enough, and significantly, too, in 1905 the price of every one of the sixteen articles included in the farm products group was higher than the average price for 1890 to 1899. When we take a look backward over sixteen years and find that food, clothing and fuel have so materially advanced, while the cost of production in everything outside of labor has been enhanced by advances in both implements and important raw materials, the question arises as to what is to become of the man with the fixed salary and the estate with the fixed income."

THE NEW YORK SUN created something of a stir in Empire state politics by an editorial an extract from which follows: "The Sun craves permission to present its humble service to the supreme powers at Oyster Bay, to Messrs. Platt and Depew, to the new and austere hierarchy of Odell and associates, to one Frank Wayland Higgins, the putative governor of the state of New York, and to all the sober-minded and self-respecting republicans to whose confidence it can appeal, and, with all deference and respect, submits: The next governor of the state of New York will be a democrat. The next governor of the state of New York will be the next president of the United States."

A RESIDENT OF Atlantic City, writes to the New York Evening Post as follows: "As so-called 'conservative' newspapers assert that the present 'unrest' is the work of 'anarchists, socialists, and tearers-down,' perhaps you will give the following extract from the London Investor's Review (November, 1901): 'Crossing the Atlantic, what is the position of the United States? Purely non-moral—one might almost say anti-moral—finance has never in any country attempted such stupendous feats as in the United States of North America. Sheltered behind a customs tariff, in itself one of the most flagrant embodiments of political dishonesty the world now beholds, groups of individuals have striven to monopolize for their own interest, not merely the products of men's industry, but the gifts and treasures of nature, the unearned increment of future generations. And they have succeeded in doing this to an extent which has reduced the mass of the American people to a state of pitiful slavery. And one day, in spite of tariffs, of legislatures, and executive officials at their beck and call, the small knot of ravishers of men's lives, who seem to sway the interests of the great American republic as if they were their private business, will find that the moral laws of the universe can not be defied with impunity.'"

THERE DIED IN Baltimore recently a man whose life, according to a writer in the Literary Digest, was spent among flowers and whose contributions to the floral varieties was said to include the introduction into America of the geranium and the production of the American Beauty rose. The name of this man was Anthony Cook. The Hartford Courant says that Mr. Cook came from Germany where his father was florist to a royal family. Anthony Cook was born ninety years ago and never knew other love than that for the flowers with which he surrounded himself. The Courant says: "While he loved all flowers, his favorite was the rose, and its cultivation was a specialty in which he accumulated a considerable fortune. He raised about 6,000 rose plants a year and sometimes grafted as many as 16,000 buds in a single season. In good years, when the rose plants flourished, he cut between 50,000 and 60,000 blossoms. \* \* \* His life