

CURRENT TOPICS

KINGSTON, THE picturesque capital of the island of Jamaica, was devastated by an earthquake followed by fire, January 15. Dispatches say that hundreds of lives were lost. Some reports estimate the number at 1,000. The United States navy department, immediately on receipt of the news, ordered swift vessels and later battleships to go to the relief of the stricken Jamaicans. But the governor of Jamaica declined aid.

THE UNITED STATES weather bureau issued the following bulletin relating to the Kingston earthquake: "The earthquake recorded at the weather bureau on Monday afternoon at 3 hours 38 minutes 23 seconds, is undoubtedly a record of an earthquake that is reported to have occurred in Jamaica at the same hour. By the use of well known seismological formulae we may deduce from the records made at Washington that this earthquake began at 3 hours 33 minutes 9 seconds p. m. 75th meridian time. Judging from the magnitude of the motion recorded at Washington, we regard the present disturbance as of relatively slight intensity as compared with other recent earthquakes, as for example, that at San Francisco, Valparaiso and the great earthquake reported in the Indian ocean October 1, 1906. This is especially true in view of the fact that the distance of Kingston from Washington is only about 1,420 miles; while San Francisco is at a distance of 2,435 miles and Valparaiso is about 4,900 miles, that is, nearly three and a half times as far away as Kingston; both lying almost exactly south of Washington. The amplitude of the motion at Washington in the present case was distinctly less than in each of the other great earthquakes, and we may therefore conclude that the violence of the motion at Kingston was also less."

KINGSTON IS THE capital of the island of Jamaica and is the principal seaport and commercial city. A writer in the Omaha World-Herald says: "It has a population of 50,000. It is 169 miles, almost straight south of Santiago de Cuba. It is situated on the south coast and on the north side of a fine harbor. The latter is a land-locked basin, available for the largest ships, and is inclosed on the south by a long tongue of land, at the extremity of which is Fort Royal. Jamaica is an island 140 miles long by about seventy wide and is a British possession. The only volcanic formation in the island is that at the Lowlayton and Retreat estates in the parish of Portland, a mile from the sea, in the county of Surrey, in which Kingston is situated. There is, however, no defined crater, and the volcanic materials are the only evidences remaining. The coast formation of Surrey county is of white and yellow limestone and the greater part of the country is very mountainous. In August, 1903, Jamaica was swept by a hurricane which almost destroyed Port Antonio and caused damages in the island amounting to \$10,000,000. Thousands of houses in Kingston were damaged, the wharves were battered and several coasting vessels were sunk. On November 13, last, a sharp earthquake shock was felt in the south and the north of the island. It was followed immediately by a second shock, the heaviest experienced in Jamaica in many years. In 1692 a great earthquake destroyed Port Royal, of whose 3,000 houses only 200 were left standing. It was this catastrophe which led to the founding of Kingston, many of the survivors removing to where Kingston now stands. In 1782 a severe conflagration visited Kingston, destroying property to the value of \$2,500,000, and in 1843 another fire caused damage of \$15,000,000. In August, 1880, a cyclone passed over the eastern half of Jamaica, destroyed nearly all the wharves in the harbor of Kingston and also caused much damage to the shipping in the harbor. There was a double shock of earthquake at Kingston, each consisting of a large number of tremors, December 17, 1870. The shocks were felt throughout the island. A tremendous hurricane visited Jamaica in 1881. The whole island was deluged, hundreds of houses were washed away, vessels were wrecked and about 1,000 persons were drowned. Kingston is laid out with regular and wide streets. The better class of houses are neatly built, with wide verandas and surrounded by handsome gardens. Street cars run to the sub-

urbs and two lines of railway connect the city with the northern and eastern parts of the island. Kingston has a botanical garden, library, museum, hospital and various other public buildings, and is the seat of an Angelican bishopric. The harbor of Kingston is considered to be one of the finest in the world, and is protected by forts. Commercial houses of the city have extensive relations with Southern Cuba and Central America as well as with the United States and Europe."

SENATOR GAMBLE of South Dakota was re-elected in the face of the fact that he had maintained his son on the senate payroll while he was attending school. Friends of Senator Gamble announce that he craved the fullest investigation by the legislature, but after the legislature concluded to investigate it must take in the entire South Dakota delegation in congress. Gamble's colleagues, Senator Kittridge and Representatives Burke and Martin sent to members of the legislature this telegram: "Newspapers just received report that you stated before senatorial caucus that Senator Gamble and his friends court full investigation by legislature, but must include whole congressional delegation. We accept the challenge, require investigation immediately and ask fullest inquiry into all our official acts. To this end we will respond promptly to any call of the legislature."

INVESTIGATIONS OR attempted investigations of senators and prospective senators seems to be the order of the day. In Texas a contest is going on over a resolution to investigate Senator Bailey. In Nebraska it was necessary for the republican members to vote down a resolution calling for the investigation of Norris Brown, republican, who, two days after the defeat of that resolution was elected to the senate. In the Colorado legislature a resolution to investigate Mr. Guggenheim was voted down by his supporters who afterwards elected him to the senate. Although Senator Gamble of South Dakota was re-elected in the face of charges, several resolutions calling for his investigation have been introduced in the South Dakota legislature.

SEVERAL INQUIRIES have been received by The Commoner relating to the extent of legal tender of American money. For the information of a number of Commoner readers these extracts from a circular issued by the treasury department are given: "Gold coin is legal tender at its nominal or face value for all debts, public and private, when not below the standard weight and limit of tolerance prescribed by law; and when below such standard and limit of tolerance, it is legal tender in proportion to its weight. Standard silver dollars are legal tender at their nominal or face value in payment of all debts, public and private, without regard to the amount except where otherwise expressly stipulated in the contract. United States notes are legal tender for amounts not exceeding \$10 in any one payment. Treasury notes of the act of July 14, 1890, are legal tender for all debts, public and private, except where otherwise expressly stipulated in the contract. United States notes are legal tender for all debts, public and private, except duties on imports and interest on the public debt. Gold certificates, silver certificates, and national bank notes are not legal tender, but both classes of certificates are receivable for all public dues, while national bank notes are receivable for all public dues, except duties on imports, and may be paid out by the government for all salaries, and other debts and demands owing by the United States to individuals, corporations and associations within the United States except interest on the public debt and in redemption of the national currency. All national banks are required by law to receive the notes of other national banks at par. The minor coins of nickel and copper are legal tender to the extent of 25 cents."

BY A VOTE OF 10,959 to 2,886 the people of Toronto, Canada, have authorized the municipality to enter into a contract with the hydro-electric commission of the provincial government for supplying the city with electric power.

The Buffalo (New York) Courier refers to this as "a scheme worth watching," and adds: "Under the provincial enabling act the cities of Hamilton, Galt, Berlin, Dundas, Woodstock, Ingersoll, St. Marys, London, Guelph, St. Thomas, Stratford, Hespeler and Brantford will next Monday vote on the same proposition. The prospect is that the citizens of all these places will follow the example of Toronto, and will thus take the first co-operative step toward obtaining cheaper electric power. The vested interests of course are stubbornly fighting this concerted popular movement. The proposed experiment of a combination of Ontario cities in obtaining from a common source, the Canadian Niagara Falls, cheap power for city uses and for the development of their manufacturing industries is attracting much attention. Possibly it may become a valuable object-lesson for other regions on both sides of the border."

AN ASSOCIATED PRESS dispatch under date of San Francisco, January 17, follows: "The foundation for the suit which will test the right of the local board of education to bar children of Japanese parentage from the public schools was laid this morning when Keikichi Aoki, the ten-year-old son of a bookseller, demanded admittance to the Redding primary school and was refused permission to enter. Application will now be made by attorneys for the boy to the supreme court for an alternative writ of mandamus, and the United States attorney will file in the federal court a bill in equity, the two proceedings to be commenced simultaneously and under the direction of Attorney General Bonaparte. The proceeding this morning was a perfunctory one, and was in accordance with an arrangement reached yesterday by United States Attorney Devlin and representatives of the board of education. Accompanied by his father, Assistant District Attorney George Clark and D. S. Richardson, foreign secretary of the Japanese consulate, the boy appeared at the primary school at the opening of the morning session at 9 o'clock. Miss Mary A. Dean, the teacher, stood at the door, barring the entrance, and Attorney Clark demanded that the boy be admitted. Miss Dean answered with a formal refusal, in which she was supported by School Directors Walsh and Altman, and the proceeding was over."

AN ANTI-TREATING club has been formed at the national capital, according to the Washington correspondent for the New York World. This club is composed of leading business men who consider that treating has grown into a most pernicious habit. Here is the pledge the members sign: "I hereby agree and solemnly affirm that during the year 1907 I will neither accept nor extend a treat to anyone of intoxicating liquors in any public bar in the District of Columbia. For each and every violation of this provision of my agreement I further agree to pay into the treasury of the Anti-Treating club the sum of \$10. All fines secured by the Anti-Treating club will be used for charitable purposes." Edwin H. Pillsbury, a real estate man, is president of the club; Frederick K. Barbour, vice president, and Emanuel Speich, secretary and treasurer. David Moore, one of the organizers, reports that success is assured. In paying fines members are on a strict honor basis.

REV. H. W. HILLIER is a Baptist clergyman having in charge certain organization work among the children attending what is called the Armitage school and chapel in New York. Recently before the Rockefeller Bible class, John D. Rockefeller, jr., called upon Mr. Hillier for a report on the Armitage work. The New York World report says: "Mr. Hillier explained that the settlement aims to be a friend and ally of every movement that tends to improve the neighborhood life. Young Mr. Rockefeller and some members of the class questioned the speaker regarding obstacles to the work and about the character of the children in his section. Mr. Hillier replied: 'The character of the children in my district is not of as high a standard as I hope to have it, and yet they are not as tough as they have been painted. It can not be expected