

# CURRENT TOPICS

**A** DISPATCH that must be particularly interesting to those who contend that railroads are best conducted in private hands, was carried by the Associated Press under date of Tacoma, Washington, January 25. The dispatch follows: "Within the next thirty days several cargoes of coal will be received on Puget Sound to relieve the fuel shortage now existing at Tacoma and Seattle. According to advices received today the steamer Lyra sailed from Moji Monday with 1,000 tons of coal. The steamship Quito is to bring 5,000 tons and the steamship Pleiades is due here on February 1 and has 1,000 tons of coal. Never before in the history of this port has coal had to be imported from the orient to meet the local demand. Owing to the coal shortage many tugs are prevented from going outside to pick up vessels and as a result only sixteen have entered the straits in four weeks."

**F**ORMER GOVERNOR M'CONNELL, who was also late Indian commissioner, in an interview given to an Associated Press correspondent in Salt Lake City, Utah, charges gross mismanagement of the Indian schools and arraigns the system by which young Indian girls are taken away from their parents and sent to Indian schools. He alleges teachers in the schools practice great cruelty upon their charges and that girl pupils are allowed to be debauched. The blame for these conditions he places upon Secretary Hitchcock, whom, he says, he acquainted with conditions during his tenure of office, but who pigeon-holed his report. He further says the officials of the interior department conceal the true state of affairs from the president.

**T**HAT there are "a lot of swift minded, rapid thinking people in public life in Washington" is the opinion expressed by the New York World. The World bases its opinion upon this statement of fact: "Senator William B. Bate, of Tennessee, died March 9, 1905. Yesterday the senate transacted the usual amount of business and then listened to eulogies of the dead statesman, after which it adjourned as a mark of respect to his memory." James Wilson, secretary of agriculture since March 4, 1897, has just resigned the presidency of the First National bank of Traer, Ia., which he has held ten years. His reason is that he was too far away to do justice to the stockholders and depositors—a reason that was as good nine years and ten months ago as it is now."

**A**MOS PAYNE, Clarksburg, W. Va., writes: "We notice in The Commoner of January 4, 1907, under the caption of Current Topics the following: 'General R. E. Lee was born in Westmoreland county, Virginia, January 19, 1807. Thomas Jonathan Jackson (Stonewall) was born on the 21st day of January, 1824, in Lewis county, Virginia, now West Virginia.' Allow me to correct an error as to Stonewall Jackson. He was born in Clarksburg, Harrison county, Virginia, now West Virginia. I herewith enclose a picture of the house in which he was born. The house stood on Main street, but since the war was torn down and a business block now stands there, and is owned by David Davison."

**P**POINTING OUT that the proceedings in the anti-trust law are not the only methods to be adopted in attacking the Standard Oil monopoly, the Sioux City (Iowa) Tribune says: "The monopoly is protected by a proviso inserted through some of the subtle methods of which the Standard is master and as a consequence it enjoys high protection. This clause in the free list provides that a duty shall be imposed on petroleum or its products, equal to the duty imposed by the country producing it. The result has been that the Standard has an average of almost 100 per cent protection, the treasury department having held that the proviso refers to the origin of the crude oil and not the place where it was refined. Russia, which produces most of the foreign oil, has duties which average about 100 per cent. Some recently published figures in the Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter show how the monopoly benefits because of this high tariff. Oil which it sells for export of 7.5 cents a gallon in barrels, it sells for 12 cents at wholesale to American purchasers, a difference of 60 per cent. Another grade, 150

degrees w. w., it sells abroad for 9.5 cents per gallon in barrels and American consumers pay 13 cents. If it be assumed that the monopoly does not sell abroad below the cost of production and is merely meeting the prices of foreign competitors, it is evident that the tariff by indirection stands between the American consumer and his ability to purchase kerosene from one-third to two-thirds cheaper. It must be rather startling to the American public to realize that the vast Standard Oil monopoly has been built up under the shelter of the protective tariff which had no excuse that it was fostering infant industry because Rockefeller and his associates had cornered practically the entire business. Under such circumstances the duty was practically a gift to the trust and enabled it to pay 40 per cent a year on its capitalization. The fact that revision and the striking out of this duty would afford the people relief from the monopoly's extortion through foreign competition is another argument for speedy congressional action, especially since such action would help the government in its own fight against this combination of capital."

**T**HE INITIATIVE and referendum is growing in public favor. In his message to the Minneapolis legislature, Governor Johnson said: "I would call your attention to the merits of the advisory initiative and referendum. This permits the people of a state, county, city, village or town to express their views upon questions affecting their organization and is fast gaining ground upon the theory that the duly elected officers are the servants of the people who elected them and will be guided by the expressed views of a majority. The advisory initiative and referendum is but a step farther than the right of petition, and is not binding upon their officers. The enactment of a law providing for an advisory initiative and referendum can be accomplished without a constitutional amendment, and I am firmly of the opinion that such legislation is desirable. There can be, I am sure, no valid reason against the submission to the people of a proposed constitutional amendment providing for a direct initiative and referendum. This would give the people an opportunity to vote on the question whether or not they want the right to instruct their representatives and also the further right to pass upon the laws enacted by their legislature. But whether or not you would care to go so far in this direction, I would urge your consideration of a plan for an advisory initiative and referendum."

**D**R. MUNHALL, who recently closed a series of religious meetings at Emporia, Kansas, told, according to the Kansas City Journal, an interesting story. The Journal says: "A great many pennies had been put in the offering, and his attention was called to this. One night he held up a silver dollar and a copper penny and gave a conversation held by the two coins. 'You poor little red cent, you; you don't amount to anything. I'd hate to be you,' said the big dollar. 'I know I'm not very big,' replied the cent, 'but the children like me, and I can buy a good many things.' 'Huh! you can't buy anything at all,' said the dollar. 'Just look at me, big and bright and shiny. I can buy a whole lot more than you can.' 'Maybe so,' said the little red cent, meekly, 'but I go to church a heap oftener than you do anyway.'"

**S**ENATOR BAILEY was re-elected by the Texas legislature, receiving 108 votes out of 147 cast. A committee of the legislature is now proceeding with the investigation of charges filed against Senator Bailey by Representative Cocks. An Associated Press dispatch from Austin, Tex., says: "The special committees appointed by the two branches of the state legislature to investigate charges preferred against United States Senator Bailey met in secret session today. Because of the grave character of the charges involving a possible violation of a federal statute the committee has decided to limit the range of the inquiry until more definite information can be secured. The committee decided that Senator Bailey would not be required to appear until all the evidence was in, inasmuch as he is on the defensive. Senator Bailey will not leave Austin until after the investigation is concluded. The additional charges preferred against Senator Bailey by Representa-

tive Cocks concerning deals in Indian territory land charge that in 1901 Senator Bailey represented S. B. Burnett of Fort Worth, relative to the leasing of certain lands in the Kiowa and Comanche reservations from the department of the interior; also that in 1900 Senator Bailey represented the firm of Sugg Brothers, before the department of the interior in reference to approval of leases of Kiowa and Comanche lands which the firm was trying to lease and that large sums of money were paid Senator Bailey. The charges also declare that Bailey secured a loan from Judge J. M. Lindsay of Gainesville, Tex., in 1892 while procuring from congress right of way through Indian territory for the Gainesville, McAlester and St. Louis Railroad company. Another charge against Bailey is specified as follows: That in the spring of 1893 F. B. Stuart of Gainesville, Tex., a former law partner of said Joseph W. Bailey, was appointed a judge of the United States court for the Indian territory and appointed J. W. Philips of Gainesville, Tex., to whom Bailey owed considerable sums of money, as clerk of said court. That the compensation of said Philips as clerk was on a salary basis under the law as it then existed; said J. W. Bailey at said time being a member of the judiciary of the house of representatives of the United States congress procured the passage of an act which was approved November 3, 1892, (United States statutes, at large, volume 28), which put said clerkship on a fee basis and increased the compensation of the office of clerk to the sum of about \$25,000 per annum and thereafter, during the life time of Philips, now deceased, and during the incumbency of the office, Bailey procured large sums of money from time to time from Philips as compensation."

**T**HE ADOPTION by the senate and house of the amendment increasing the salaries of senators and members, reminds the Nashville, Tenn., Banner of the "salary grab" of the session of 1872-3. That increase of salaries applied to the members of congress voting the increase as well as to those of future sessions, while the increase recently adopted will take effect March 4, 1907, and will not apply to the present session. Referring to the 1872-3 salary grab, the Banner says: "The result was a wave of popular protest, which caused many of the congressman who voted for the bill to try to 'hedge' to appease their constituents. Some of them covered their extra pay into the treasury, some devoted it to charity, and not a few lost out in the succeeding election."

**R**EFERRING to the passage by the house of the bill prohibiting corporations from contributing to campaign funds, the New York Evening Post says: "It marks a distinct step forward in the purification of our elections. It does not, however, as was pointed out in the debate yesterday, estop any wealthy candidate from paying out a million dollars if he chooses. To some limitation on that, as suggested by Governor Hughes, we shall yet have to come. It was not a very pleasant debate for the republicans. The democratic leader, John Sharp Williams, did not neglect the opportunity to ask whether, 'with his great popularity throughout the country,' the president should not demand of his party the return of the money contributed unlawfully by the insurance companies from their trust funds to aid in his election. Friends of both Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Cortelyou will always have to blush for this failure to do a simple act of justice and right a great wrong. Republicans have been justly criticising Mayor McClellan because he was willing to hold an office the title to which is clouded. Mr. Roosevelt ought to be the first to wish to wipe off the blemish that rests upon the campaign for his re-election. Perhaps, now that the bill has passed, he may feel inclined to do his best to make the law retroactive by insisting on the campaign committee's turning back the moneys taken from widows and orphans."

**J**OSIAH FLYNT WILLARD, known to fame as "Josiah Flynt," died at Chicago. He called himself "the tramp lecturer" and made a specialty of questions dealing with graft. In fact it is believed he coined the word, and he wrote a book entitled, "The World of Graft." A writer in the New York Evening Post says: "Under the name