

CURRENT TOPICS

THE PROFITS made by the Harriman syndicate in the Alton railroad deal are described by the New York World as follows:

\$22,000,000 taken at 65 and sold at about 90	\$8,000,000
30 per cent dividend	6,669,000
\$22,000,000 bonds taken at about 60, sold at 80	4,400,000
Sale of preferred from old to new company	3,055,000
Sale of Springfield-Peoria branch line ..	1,500,000
Bonus voted to Mr. Harriman for services	100,000
Total in seven years (1899 to 1906) ..	

SENATOR DEPEW delivered a set speech in the senate recently, and concerning this effort the Washington correspondent for the New York Post said: "It was all that the term implies; a rather depressing performance. Mr. Depew read from a printed pamphlet without gestures and without hardly a modulation of his voice. He was not interrupted. This select assortment of statesmen sat about him and heard his words: Penrose, Ankeny, Millard, Platt, Keam, Dryden, Wetmore, and Heyburn. When Mr. Depew sat down and had swallowed a troche, Mr. Ankeny, 'the irreducible minimum,' shook his hand in congratulation. Senator Carter of Montana performed a like office. His colleague, Mr. Platt, summoned his attendant, and, leaning heavily upon his arm, was conducted from the chamber. The business of the senate was resumed as though it had not been interrupted. It is the custom, for the benefit of the galleries, for senators to crowd about and congratulate one of their colleagues at the completion of a long and formal address. Mr. Depew was spared this mockery."

IN THESE DAYS of railroad wrecks, Commoner readers will be interested in the reminder given by the New York World to the effect that on July 24, 1846, occurred the first railway accident of note in the United States. It happened on the Erie road, then less than five years old. A car went through Seaman's Bridge, near Monroe, Pa. Three persons were killed outright, three died later of their injuries. The World says: "This casualty aroused great interest at home and abroad. No columns of matter from the railway officials were printed explaining that the accident was unexplainable. There was no board of railroad commissioners to certify that everything it could find in the road's equipment was all right. In suits for damages it was established that the wreck was caused by the collapse of a cast-iron spoked wheel. The railroad paid the judgments. And straightway the wheel with spokes gave way to the solid pattern used later on all the roads in the country. But that was sixty years ago."

MISS BARBARA B. BARR, a member of a Florence, Pa., church choir, laughed eight hours and, according to the Philadelphia Public Ledger, "nearly laughed herself to death." Having, under the doctor's care, recovered, Miss Barr told the joke that caused the odd paroxysm. "A trembling patient in a dentist's chair exclaimed, 'Oh, doctor, why were we not born without teeth?' 'We were,' Miss Barr's appreciation of the joke, she says, was nearly killing."

THE OPPORTUNITIES of Mr. Cortelyou, the new secretary of the treasury, are described by the New York American in this way: "By the terms of the new currency bill passed by the senate at the dictation of Nelson W. Aldrich, the secretary of the treasury may take from the custom houses the three hundred millions of annual receipts and deposit them in any bank he chooses to designate. This vast sum of the people's money will draw no interest—for the people. That it will draw interest for the banks goes without saying, and the determination of the banks to get all the possible income out of it was shown by Aldrich's curt refusal to admit into the bill a provision that the banks pay as much for the use of the money as they would on private funds deposited in like amounts. This measure was passed under the pretense of relieving the money market. Aldrich and Senator Spooner insisted that the struggling financial firms whose establishments are grouped on the lower end of Manhattan Island are constantly menaced by lack of money, and that it was the duty of a paternal

government to guard them against this distressing condition by giving them access to the three hundred millions of dollars which constitutes a very considerable share of its regular revenue. Now, whenever stock-jobbing, wildcat speculation, reckless plunging and market-rigging bring about a panic, the innocent perpetrators of the same can rest easy on their pillows—for has not their friend Cortelyou the power to save them from the consequences of their acts? And they have good reasons to believe that Mr. Cortelyou will not falter in this 'duty.' When he gathered the 'yellow dog' funds from Perkins and others he laid himself under obligations to Wall street which no high financial gentlemen could repudiate and maintain that reputation for spotless honor that, as is well known, is the foundation of all Wall street operations. He added to those obligations last fall when he quartered himself at the Manhattan hotel and received contributions for the state campaign. The debt may now be discharged as promptly as Mr. Cortelyou sees fit. With him rests absolutely the manner and place of the money's disposal, and it is hardly to be imagined that he will deposit much of it in western banks which made no campaign contributions, and whose only justification in asking for it is that they need it to relieve actual conditions of local business distress."

WITHIN a few days after President Roosevelt delivered his speech in which he denounced as "molycoddles" those who object to football, the Associated Press carried this dispatch: "President C. W. Eliot of Harvard university, in his annual report which will be presented to the board of overseers this week, maintains that football, despite new rules, remains an undesirable game for gentlemen to play by multitudes of people to witness. President Eliot declares that football is properly described by the adjective 'fierce,' and that no game in which there is recklessness in causing or receiving bodily injuries is fit for college use. Basketball and hockey are placed in the same class with football and President Eliot advises that intercollegiate contests in any one sport be limited to two games, all other games to be between teams made up at Harvard. He also decries the 'excesses of cheering,' which characterizes present intercollegiate contests as 'absolutely unnatural.'"

THE FIGHT on tariff revision within the republican party is evidently to be a bitter one. Representative Burton of Ohio, who has been chairman of the rivers and harbors committee, desired a change, and according to the Washington correspondent for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat aspired to one of the three republican vacancies on other committees in the next congress. Mr. Burton sought on the ways and means committee but, according to the Globe-Democrat correspondent, he was turned down by Speaker Cannon. Mr. Burton believes that the republican party should make some declaration as to tariff revision in advance of the next general election, but the speaker, it is well known, is a standpatter.

THE JAIL SENTENCE of Former Senator Joseph R. Burton of Kansas, will terminate March 22, when he will be released from the Ironton, Missouri, jail. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment but his term is shortened thirty days for good behavior. Burton says he and his wife, who has been living in Ironton since last fall, will return directly to their home at Abilene.

THE DECISION of the New York court of appeals in the case of George W. Perkins is, according to the New York Press, of no consequence whatever and has no bearing on the question of the guilt or innocence of Perkins, in the matter of the larceny of trust funds from the New York Life. The majority opinion holds that the absence of proof of criminal intent removes the element of criminality from the act of Perkins in handing over money that did not belong to him to a political campaign committee. This does not prove that Perkins did not take the money with criminal intent. It proves that the criminal intent was not shown to the satisfaction of the court of appeals. And this was what might have been expected in view of the fact that District Attorney Jerome, who presented the polite case against Perkins to the court of appeals, has all along contended that there was no criminal in-

tent. Jerome has persisted that it was 'honest larceny,' and the meaning of the decision is that he has succeeded in getting four out of seven of the judges to agree with him. What they would decide in the event of proof submitted to a jury that the larceny was committed with criminal intent, which Jerome did not attempt to do, is another question. In this case the four judges believed that proof of criminal intent was necessary to hold Perkins on the magistrate's warrant in the polite Jerome proceedings, and in the absence of such evidence refused to hold him. The New York judges and lawyers who asserted that it did not matter whether Perkins intended to commit a crime when he took the money that did not belong to him may take comfort out of the very healthy opinion, uttered by Judge Cullen for the minority, that larceny consists in taking property belonging to some one else, even for a commendable purpose. This decision, which is a vindication neither of Perkins nor of Jerome, so far as the larceny case goes, of course is quite apart from the accusation of forgery lodged by the grand jury against the former vice-president of the New York Life, and upon which he must stand trial. The district attorney has never said there was no criminal intent in this instance."

THIRD ASSISTANT Postmaster General Edwin G. Madden will soon retire, having "resigned in disgust." Madden has made himself unpopular because of his radical orders concerning the mail privileges of newspapers, and newspaper editors flatter themselves that they had something to do with his retirement. The Washington correspondent for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat says that Madden retires because he was overruled in a decision which he rendered in favor of the Lewis Publishing company of St. Louis, which company published the "Woman's Magazine" and "Farm Journal." Madden ruled that these papers could go through the mails but the St. Louis postmaster protested and Postmaster General Cortelyou overruled Madden and sustained the postmaster.

THE FIFTY-NINTH congress had a picturesque conclusion. The Washington correspondent for the New York Evening Post says: "There always have been happy speeches and songs, and other things, which have come to be taken as a matter of course, but today, just as the members of the house rose in their places to sing under the leadership of Representative Watson of Indiana, the republican whip, 'My Country, 'Tis of Thee,' every man pulled a good-sized American flag from under his desk, unfurled it, and waved it over his head. And as very few of the 386 representatives in congress were absent, the result was picturesque and beautiful. Representative Loudenslager of New Jersey is responsible for the flag idea. He has been in congress long enough to realize that there is something of a sameness about adjournments, and he decided to wake things up for this once. And he did. For, following the unfurling of the national banner came a burst of applause that rose and fell and rose again, to last until even the enthusiasts on the floor and in the galleries grew tired of the racket."

THE STORY of "a regular story book policeman" is told by the New York correspondent for the Pittsburg Dispatch in this way: "A strapping, fine-looking policeman in lower Broadway the other day at noon slapped the face of a boy teamster when he did not stop when he gave him the signal and was grossly impertinent when chided for it. Before the teamster's face ceased to tingle several other teamsters had jumped from their perches to aid the boy. The sidewalk and streets were jammed. The teamsters who went to the rescue threatened the policeman. One took his number. Another abused him. A third grabbed him by the arm. The fourth made a demonstration as if to strike. The situation had an ugly look. The policeman was cool. He said they could have all the trouble they wanted. 'But, see here,' he said, in a fatherly sort of way, 'you fellows want to get to your destinations. You don't want to lose your time. I can cause you more trouble than you can make for me in a week. Get back to your wagons and move on.' 'But you slapped this boy's face,' said one teamster, 'and you are too big for that. You apologize to him or we will see this thing to the end if we have to lose the whole day.' 'The boy disobeyed and then used bad language,' replied the big copper.