

# CURRENT TOPICS

**T**HE "ANNUAL MARCH" of the strawberry is an interesting study. The first to reach the market come from Texas and Florida in the latter part of March. By the time the Texas and Florida berries are exhausted the Arkansas and Georgia berries appear. These are followed in turn by the berries from Missouri and Tennessee, and then the Nebraska and Ohio berries, big and luscious, delight the eye and palate. Then the strawberry season closes with the fruit from Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. Thus from the Gulf coast to the Great Lakes the trail is marked with the crimson stain of this most delicious fruit, and it gives gustatory joy to millions for six or seven months of the year.

**T**HE RAPID progress of work upon the Panama canal will soon be greatly accelerated. The commission has just made requisition for a lot of articles that will greatly facilitate the work. Among other things asked for are six porch swings "four feet long and thirty-two inches deep," fifty refrigerators, thirty dozen demijohns, 500,000 paper napkins, 100 rocking chairs, 100 double beds with springs, 250 mirrors, 5,000 soup spoons, 100 sideboards and a full supply of ice cream freezers and water coolers. Just as soon as the supplies arrive renewed activity will mark the work on the canal. In order to write fully of the progress of the work after these necessary canal supplies are received, the commission has also ordered 684,000 writing pens and an adequate supply of stationery. The written sheets will be held together by 500,000 clips.

**A** KNOXVILLE, IOWA, reader of The Commoner writes: "Will you kindly publish in your next issue the names of the men who composed the committee that settled the Hayes-Tilden dispute in 1876 and are they all dead or is any of them yet living? I ask this favor for the benefit of your many readers in this county, not having the necessary information at hand?" The electoral commission was appointed by an act of congress January 29, 1877. The commission was composed of the following: Senators George F. Edmunds, Oliver P. Morton, Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, Allen G. Thurman and Thomas F. Bayard; Representatives Henry B. Payne, Eppa Huntoon, Josiah Abbott, James A. Garfield and George F. Hoar; Associate Justices of the Supreme Court Nathan Clifford, William Strong, Samuel F. Miller, Stephen J. Field and Joseph P. Bradley. All of these gentlemen, we believe, are dead.

**S**OMETHING OF A sensation was created at Washington when it was charged that Frank H. Hitchcock, first assistant postmaster general, has been sent on a tour through the south for the purpose of rounding up the organization politicians and determining how serious is the opposition in that section to Roosevelt's control of the national convention of 1908.

**R**EFERRING TO THIS report the Washington correspondent for the New York World says: "The first intimation that Mr. Hitchcock had been detached from his official duties by the president and sent on a purely political mission came in dispatches from Atlanta and other southern cities where Mr. Hitchcock is holding long consultations with federal officeholders and other republican politicians. For a long time it has been known that the policy pursued by President Roosevelt was not acceptable to any of the southern factions. There has been especial protest against the apparent disposition of the administration to recognize the comparatively small group of white republicans, while ignoring the large number of black republicans there. It is pointed out that in spite of disfranchisement laws in most of the southern states the black members of the party are greatly in excess of the white, and the former protest vigorously at being excluded from participating in its policies. For some time it has been self-evident that the president is going to spare no opportunity to use patronage power in all parts of the country to further his political plans. The defiance of the Wadsworth faction in New York, the demand for the resignation of Internal Revenue Collector Sanders, at Rochester, because he has been unfavorable to the policies of Governor Hughes, the announcement that Hughes will be the dispenser of administration patronage in the

Empire state, the appointment of Pearl Wight as republican 'boss' in Louisiana, and now the sensational development that Mr. Hitchcock has been sent to Georgia to quell the insurrection there and that he will also investigate conditions in South Carolina and Florida before his return, all point to the conclusion that an aggressive warfare has already been opened by the administration and that its opponents will be kept exceedingly busy from this time on."

**F**IRST ASSISTANT Postmaster General Hitchcock, returning from his southern trip, denied that there was any political significance to his journey. He said: "It is true that while my trip was partially one of inspection, and one which I had planned months ago, I discussed politics to some extent. This was only natural as I was called on by many southern republicans officially connected with the government and otherwise interested. I saw no evidence to justify published reports of disaffection in the ranks of the republicans in the south, such as organization of opposition movement and that sort of thing, which we have been hearing about for some time. In those states which I visited, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, the republicans are in hearty accord with the administration. They are Roosevelt men through and through." Referring again to the question of opposing organizations, he remarked that of course there were a few disgruntled and generally discredited men who have dropped out of the old organizations, but that such were in the decided minority.

**T**HE MEN WHO followed "Little Mac" will be interested in this story printed by the New York World: "Personal effects of General George B. McClellan, which have been stored in a warehouse in Orange, N. J., since he died there in 1885, are now being overhauled and within a few days will probably be dispersed. Army uniforms worn by him have been burned because they were moth-eaten. Boots, weapons and various other articles are to be sent to army posts throughout the country. Some of the old household furniture is to be sent to Princeton where the general's only son, Mayor McClellan, has a residence. General McClellan owned a handsome country seat on the Orange mountains. After his death the family moved away. From time to time since then members of the family have given away articles of furniture and letters. Yesterday, while Mayor McClellan's wife was going over what remained, a negro made away with a cane. Policeman Timothy Cronen recovered it and it was presented to him as a reward."

**S**OME OF THE political friends of Governor Hughes of New York do not think kindly of the "friendly" attitude recently taken by the Roosevelt-Taft forces. Mr. Hughes' friends say that the opponents of Roosevelt and Taft would be very likely to be in favor of Governor Hughes so far as the endorsement of the New York delegation is concerned. They point out that the Roosevelt-Taft leaders realize this, and that they have forced their attentions upon the governor with the view of making it inconvenient for him to align himself with the opposition.

**R**EFERRING TO this interesting move, the Albany correspondent for the New York Evening Post, says: "Whatever the effect upon the governor, however, there is little reason to question the political sagacity shown by the president in making the move. He might well believe that the country at large, rightly or wrongly, would at once conclude that he had saved the governor's program. He might naturally infer that even the newspapers, which criticized his methods, would applaud his motive. When the legislation had been passed, it would not be possible to prove, by any known process, whether the result had been due to Hughes or to Roosevelt, or to both, and the natural result would be to divide the praise. In any such division the president might expect the lion's share, as a national figure. Finally, as a result of the president's move, the governor is now placed in an exceedingly awkward position, and his discreet silence in the matter has shown this. However much he may resent the Roosevelt interference, he can not make any public protest, for this would

seem to convict him of ingratitude toward the man who unquestionably nominated him. It might even savor of petty jealousy in the matter of the credit due for the victory achieved. But not to protest is to confess. To accept an alliance with the president by silence, or to run the risk of appearing an ingrate, this is Hughes' choice. In thus accepting the president's aid, which he can not by any manifest method avoid accepting, the governor, moreover, places himself under obligations. At a later time the president may not unnaturally demand the assistance of the governor, whose success he has in a considerable degree made possible, or, at least, is believed to have made possible."

**C**LEARLY MR. ROOSEVELT is not to have clear sailing in the fight for the New York delegation. Many newspapers, not as a rule hostile to the president, criticize him for removing certain federal officials for "political reasons." The New York Evening Post says: "Accounts from Washington of the president's reasons for turning spoilsman in New York betray a certain amount of confusion. It is not wholly clear whether Mr. Roosevelt's announced determination to use the federal patronage in this state after the fashion of what he used to call the 'spoils-mongers,' means war on Wadsworth or help for Hughes. Seemingly, it is a little of each—a nice mixture of personal revenge and zeal for a good cause. The latest explanation, however, is that there was the added motive of heading off Odell. Alarmed friends of Roosevelt brought him word of a 'plot'—the president is never happy without a plot, unless he has a conspiracy to comfort him. The crafty ex-boss and ex-governor, he was informed, was planning to rally his friends in support of Hughes, and so regain control of the organization. Instantly the president resolved to beat Odell with his own weapons. Like another Hamlet to another Laertes, he said: 'Nay, an thou'lt mouth about offices, I'll rant as well as thou. Woo't drink up platforms? Eat thy promises? I'll do it.' It can not be too distinctly laid down that President Roosevelt's removal of Collector Sanders of Rochester purely for political reasons, as is officially admitted, is directly in violation of his own professions and pledges, as it certainly is of all sound principles of civil service reform. It is not alleged that Sanders was in any way incompetent or derelict. He was simply 'Wadsworth's man,' and therefore had to go."

**T**HE ANTI-ROOSEVELT war goes merrily on. Former Representative Wadsworth of New York has given out a newspaper interview in which he makes a bitter attack on President Roosevelt. The president demanded the resignation of Archie Sanders, collector of customs at the Rochester port, and Mr. Roosevelt's friends explain that this and other removals were made in line with his plan of co-operating with Governor Hughes and consulting him about federal appointments. A Washington dispatch says: "President Roosevelt has been at work on this plan of harmonizing the republican party in New York for some time, and it was furthered to a great extent when Henry W. Taft, brother of Secretary Taft, a few days ago made his statement after a long conference with President Roosevelt. Recently the president had a conference with Charles P. Taft, of Cincinnati, another brother of Secretary Taft, and an influential politician in Ohio. After this conference Charles P. Taft went to Ohio and started a canvass of the state to develop the Taft presidential sentiment."

**M**R. ROOSEVELT'S friends made much of the reported interview in which Senator LaFollette declared that Mr. Roosevelt must be a candidate to succeed himself. The Washington correspondent for the New York Evening Telegram says: "Why is President Roosevelt so determinedly opposed to recognition of Senator LaFollette, of Wisconsin, in connection with the republican succession in 1908? It may be said this question has been more frequently asked than any other one since the president began interesting himself in the 1908 outlook. LaFollette is regarded in Washington by many as more nearly representing Roosevelt ideals and ideas than any other man prominently before the nation. He is,