

CURRENT TOPICS

THE BLOKLYN EAGLE gives the advocates of the trust system as a wealth-producer something to think about when it calls attention to the fact that, under the regime of the trusts, our national wealth is increasing not nearly so fast as when the field was open to individual initiative and enterprise. From 1850 to 1860 the national wealth increased 128 per cent; from 1860 to 1870, 84 per cent; from 1870 to 1880, 40 per cent; from 1880 to 1890, 55 per cent; from 1890 to 1900, 45 per cent. The rate of increase for the past seven years indicates that, for the decade ending 1910, it will be but 37 per cent.

REFERRING TO the Eagle's statements the Omaha World-Herald says: "As the Eagle suggests, here is a problem for the sociologists. For, while the percentage of increase is diminishing, the wealth itself, formerly widely diffused, is rapidly concentrating into the control of a comparative few. In other words, we're not getting rich as fast under a high tariff as we were under a low tariff; we are not getting rich as fast under the trusts, for all their 'economic saving' and tremendous productiveness, as we were before the trusts took control of our industry; and while the increase in wealth is slumping the people are sharing less in its benefits. A tariff-protected, trust-controlled prosperity, it would seem, is a glorious success—for the trusts. But for the common people it is not so unmixed a blessing as just common prosperity without the trimmings would be."

CLARENCE DARROW made the opening statement for the defense in the Haywood trial at Boise, Idaho. The Denver News gives the salient points of Darrow's speech as follows: "The Western Federation of Miners is an industrial, not a murderous organization. We will show you that the Pinkertons placed detectives in positions of responsibility as secretaries and presidents of miners' unions; that these hired men constantly advised the miners to strike, and that when a strike was on they counseled violence, dynamite and murder. We will have from twenty-five to thirty witnesses who will take the stand and contradict this man Orchard absolutely. We will show that while honest, hard-working miners were denied the privilege of passing the military lines at Cripple Creek, this leper Orchard went in and out as he pleased. We will prove Orchard's threats against Steunenberg—prove that he said Steunenberg made him a pauper instead of a millionaire. Haywood will take the stand and tell you his full connection with the Western Federation, and tell you everything he has done as an officer of the organization. Moyer will probably take the stand, and maybe Pettibone. Orchard was caught red-handed after the Steunenberg murder, and turned over to McParland. After some manipulation he was persuaded that the best thing he could do was to place the blame on someone else, which he did. He is getting the biggest price for this he ever got for a crime. He hopes to save his miserable neck."

FRANK A. DAY, private secretary to Governor Johnson of Minnesota, denies that he said at Omaha that Governor Johnson is a candidate for the democratic nomination for president. Referring to this the Minneapolis Journal says: "Governor Johnson still puts by the crown. The governor protests that he is helpless against the discussion of his availability by politicians and the newspapers and asserts that he does not wish to be regarded as a candidate. It is not necessary that it be even implied that the governor is not sincere when it is asserted that this attitude on his part is best calculated to promote his chances as a candidate. A man who is really available and who is fortunate enough to have other people urge his claims can do nothing to further his candidacy for any office than to seem to be indifferent to his nomination. But however the governor may feel about the matter, the eastern press will not let him alone, or neglect him as a democratic possibility. The New York Press, republican, by a process of elimination, starting with Mr.

Watterson's location of his 'dark horse' west of the Alleghenies and north of the Potomac, has concluded that Governor Johnson is the only man who resembles Mr. Watterson's candidate. A writer for the New York Evening Post takes the same view of Mr. Watterson's mystery. The Philadelphia Record, democratic, commenting on Mr. Johnson's Pennsylvania speech, thinks that his declaration for tariff revision is sure to be the dominant issue of the next campaign and sees special significance in the fact that it should have been promulgated so frankly in a protection stronghold. The New York Sun devotes a piece of its editorial space to the discussion of the same incident and thinks that 'since each party seems inclined to outbid the other to fatten federal power and starve the constitution, it is probably hopeless to expect that the return of constitutional government will be an issue,' and that under such circumstances 'a proposal for a revival of the democratic tariff reform is at least in the line of common sense.' The comparisons which are suggested by the concluding paragraph of the Sun's editorial must be conceded to be invidious, if not odious: 'While the corridors of Bedlam ring with the initiative and referendum and government ownership of railroads Governor Johnson's proposal of a vital economic issue will take old fashioned democrats back to Tilden, to Cleveland, to the days of democratic sanity and success.' While leading newspapers of the country are disposed to give much liberal space and serious consideration to his availability as a candidate, Mr. Johnson is quite right in assuming that it is unnecessary for him to do any talking."

ACCORDING TO the Washington correspondent for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat there is "blood on the moon." The Globe-Democrat correspondent says: "F. D. Coburn, secretary of the Kansas board of agriculture, must be unusually careful with his crop statistics and his advice to the Kansas farmers in the future. Secretary James Wilson of the department of agriculture is on his trail, hoping to pick up something on Coburn's fame as an authority on agriculture. 'Watch everything Coburn does; read everything Coburn puts out and report any mistakes or misstatements Coburn makes to me,' is the order which Wilson has given to his own army of experts. And the experts are watching and reading Coburn's stuff very carefully. So far they have found no mistakes or misstatements to report to their chief. Secretary Wilson is greatly nettled over a couple of jabs which Mr. Coburn has given him. Both have tended to humiliate Wilson among the farmers of the country. But Coburn was right in both instances. Two years ago Secretary Wilson put Kansas in the class of 'arid' states. Coburn could not stand for that, and he issued a pamphlet showing that Kansas produced more than Iowa, the home of Mr. Wilson; that in the production of wheat and corn combined Kansas led all states of the union; that Kansas farmers had more money on deposit per capita than the farmers of any other agricultural state, and a lot of information of that kind, which discredited the Wilson statement that Kansas was an 'arid' state. Then, to rub salt into the wounds, it just happened that Wilson had some speaking engagements in western Kansas and had to use boats to get to the place on account of heavy rains. Coburn gave the western newspapers the tip, and they printed cartoons of Wilson doing 'arid' Kansas in a boat. The drubbing that Coburn gave him caused Wilson to make numerous explanations, and it has always stuck in his craw."

COMMONER READERS will remember that when the green bug was devastating the Kansas wheat fields recently, out of the goodness of his heart, Secretary Wilson decided to give the Kansas farmers some advice as to how to beat that bug in the future. He wrote a letter to Secretary Coburn and asked that it be printed in the Kansas papers. In it Mr. Wilson advised Kansas farmers to plant turkey red wheat. He said that in 1897 he made some experiments and found that turkey red spread out and withstood the ravages of bugs better than any other kind. It was great on the stool,

etc. Coburn printed the Wilson letter all right. Then he gave out a statement himself showing that for the past twenty years Kansas had produced practically no other kind of wheat. Millers and wheat growers over the country then began to poke fun at Secretary Wilson for making experiments in 1897 with turkey red wheat which Kansas had grown successfully and almost exclusively for a decade.

REFERRING TO this incident the Globe-Democrat correspondent says: "For the federal agricultural department to be held up as ten years behind the times, grated on Mr. Wilson's nerves. In fact, it was the straw that broke the camel's back. He couldn't endure the grilling of Coburn any longer, without trying to get even. So he gave the order to his experts. 'I have read Coburn's last biennial report of a thousand pages or more, from cover to cover,' said one of Mr. Wilson's experts, 'and I could not find a thing that we could attack. It should be used as a text book in every agricultural college in the world. But I dare not say so to my boss.'"

MR. COBURN laughs at the suggestion that there is any trouble between his office and that of Secretary Wilson. Speaking to a Topeka (Kan.) correspondent for the Globe-Democrat, Mr. Coburn said: "As a matter of fact, Mr. Wilson and I are the greatest of friends, and he has no more ardent admirer than I. He is emphatically the greatest secretary, and President McKinley made no appointment, high or low, more wisely than that of James Wilson, as his minister of agriculture. The retention of Mr. Wilson as head of the department for all these years has been a piece of great good fortune for the country, as it will be if he is continued there by the succeeding administration. This does not necessarily mean he is always right or that he and I may not occasionally entertain conflicting views, especially about matters in Kansas, as our viewpoints are different. Probably not a week of all his useful life has been spent in Kansas, and it would be but natural that at long range he sometimes receives impressions different from those of us who never lived elsewhere. This has occurred on one or two occasions, and I have in kindly phrase commented on his seeming misapprehension of conditions here, not in any censorious spirit, but that he might be guarded against unwillingly doing us injustice later. Nobody in Kansas is hostile to Secretary Wilson. On the other hand, every man in Kansas is his friend, and I am sure he is mine. We are always glad to see him or his 'experts,' and have given them many a good lift in the interest of veracity."

DESPITE Governor Johnson's statement that he is not a candidate, his supporters are active in various sections of the country. A New Yorker who signs himself "G. B.," writes to the New York Evening Post as follows: "Can it be possible that the democratic candidate whom Colonel Henry Watterson has in mind for the presidency is Governor John A. Johnson of Minnesota? Is he the 'dark horse' who represents everything that is best and desirable for the chief magistracy of the country, and is sure to win the coming presidential race if nominated? Well, if Governor Johnson is Colonel Watterson's selection in the approaching great national contest between the republican and democratic parties, as the head of the latter, all praise and honor to him for his sound and splendid choice. About Governor Johnson's running qualities there can not be a particle of doubt. Just think of his carrying the state of Minnesota when he first ran for governor by a handsome majority at the same time that President Roosevelt carried the state by 160,000 majority. And then at his recent re-election, when the whole of the rest of the republican ticket was overwhelmingly triumphant, he, the democratic gubernatorial candidate, was again a winner by a substantial majority. What is the meaning of all this? Why, simply because Governor Johnson has proven himself to be a patriot and statesman of the highest character; because of his honesty,