

CURRENT TOPICS

B. F. YOAKUM, chief of the Rock Island Frisco railroad lines, addressed the farmers' union at Shawnee, Okla., recently. Mr. Yoakum said: "We should make more homes and not so many fighting ships. It is better to grow more farm products and to make prosperous the man who sows and harvests than to build more battleships and new guns. If development is permitted to go on and our country to grow as it should we need not fear war with any country or combination of countries." Another thing which Mr. Yoakum decried was the wanton extravagance which the government, he declared, had always practiced with reference to the construction of water ways, as well as wanton extravagance in all lines. "The story of wanton extravagance on the part of the government," he said, "is being so broadly told that the masses are beginning to realize that something is wrong. The same disregard of the value of money would send the strongest private business in this country to speedy bankruptcy. This extravagance is the result of increasingly expensive political machinery, and the deficit in our national expenses should be made up by reducing expenditures and not by raising taxes to increase revenues."

MR. YOAKUM declared that he was not speaking against the army and navy, but simply against the growing expense of maintaining them. Last year, he said, they cost every family of five the sum of \$17. France has been compelled to adopt a new form of taxation to build up her navy, and the bitterest fight which parliamentary England has had in decades is being waged over new forms of taxation. "The European nations are teaching us a lesson," he declared. "The controversies in England, the recent troubles in Spain, the unrest in Russia and the quarreling over military taxes in Germany and the struggle against new taxes in France should strengthen our faith in the proposition that it is better to build homes than it is to build battleships. The extension of the grain and the cotton fields in the Mississippi valley and in the west are stronger military defenses than are ships. We should spend more of the money we burn up in powder in making new farms. A forty-acre farm irrigated will comfortably support a family of five. It costs \$55,000 to make a twelve-inch gun. This money would reclaim 1,571 acres of land, providing homes for 196 people. When all the guns on all the battleships are shot one time the government blows off in noise and smoke the sum of \$150,000. This would reclaim 4,000 acres of land, giving homes to more than 500 farmers and their families. The money consumed in powder is lost for all future time."

THE WASHINGTON Times prints what it claims to be the explanation for the resignation of Crumpacker of Indiana from the ways and means committee. The Times says that Mr. Crumpacker would have resigned long ago except for his aversion for creating a party scandal. The Times tells the story in this way: "Representatives are not in the habit of resigning from the ways and means, especially in circumstances which make reasonably certain that they may be retained. The reading of the letter of resignation caused a mild sensation, for everybody realized that back of it there was some remarkable story. Mr. Crumpacker was on the committee throughout the preparation of the Payne bill, and had been a hard worker. After the measure had been completed and was ready for reporting to the house the fight over the election of a speaker and the re-adoption of the old rules came up. It became sharp and close and it presently became apparent that the life of the old organization and the old rules hung in the balance and by a most slender thread. At the very crisis of this fight the republican members of the ways and means committee were told on the highest authority of the house organization that they would have to re-organize the bill so far as concerned its relation to the duty on petroleum. Under the Dingley act petroleum was subjected to a countervailing duty. The committee had removed this and

placed petroleum unqualifiedly on the free list. But the word from the organization was sharp and final. That countervailing duty must be restored because it was necessary in order to get certain votes which must be controlled for Cannon and the rules. The committee took back the bill, and obediently made the change. It was not an easy thing to do, in view of the fact that there had been no opposition in the committee to the removal of this duty, and that it had been announced and widely published that the change to free petroleum had been made. But the committee took its orders and obeyed them. One member who didn't at all like to make the eleventh-hour change was Sereno E. Payne. Another was Crumpacker. Indeed, the entire body was filled with disgust and dissatisfaction over the proceeding, but the word of the organization was law. Crumpacker was so disgusted that he spent three days in solemn contemplation of whether he would not write the speaker a letter, resigning at once. He talked with some close friends about it and was advised that to resign at that time when the reports were in circulation about the alleged deal to get voters in exchange for the oil duty would certainly stir up a sensation. It would compel men to talk about things nobody wanted to talk about, and in all probability would cause the introduction of a resolution for an investigation, which would be likely to bring out various embarrassing things about the eleventh-hour changes in the bill and about the interests which were taken care of in consideration of special relations to the higher powers of the house. Crumpacker, to avoid a mess that would certainly be unfortunate for the party at the very beginning of the tariff consideration, decided not to resign. He took his medicine, acquiesced in the oil duty and went through the motions of regularity. After the bill got into the house the insurgents managed on a fluke one day to get in control long enough to strike out the countervailing provisions and place oil absolutely on the free list. The vote on the proposition was very close. Speaker Cannon turned over the gavel to a substitute and went down on the floor, where he made an impassioned speech in favor of retaining the duty. When he was done the roll was called and it was noticed that Crumpacker was not among those voting. He dodged, his disgust having reached the point where it could not longer be neutralized. And that is the reason, or at least one of the reasons why, when the tariff bill was duly passed and the possibility of party scandal avoided, Crumpacker resigned from the committee."

THERE IS SOME disturbance just now over the fear of a tariff war between France and the United States. An Associated Press dispatch from Washington says: "If there has been any discrimination against France in the application of the provisions of the new tariff to that country, officers of this government are not aware of it. They are quite confident that the impression which seems to obtain in some quarters in France that such is the case is founded upon a complete misunderstanding of the facts. This may be simply stated from the point of view of the executive branch of this government. At the same time it is stated that the president is entirely willing to consider carefully any representations in the nature of a protest that may be made. Indeed, there is reason to believe that exchanges on the subject have taken place. It may be interesting to know just what effect the application of the new tariff would have on the commercial relations between France and the United States, presuming the normal course were followed and also what might be the results of a tariff war brought about through the application by both countries of punitive maximum rates. The balance of trade with France was in our favor during the fiscal year of 1908, showing exports of \$116,000,000 as against imports of \$112,000,000, a reversal of conditions in the previous year when French imports amounted to \$128,000,000 as against exports to that country of \$114,000,000. Each country will suffer should a tariff war between France and the United States ensue and reprisals be made

by applying the maximum rates of the respective tariffs. America would feel the effects in the exportations of canned meats, table fruits, dried or pressed fruits, common wood logs, hops, prepared pork, mineral oils, lard and Porto Rico coffee, while France would be hard hit in exportations to the United States of brandies, still wines and vermouth and champagne. When the reciprocity agreement with France expires October 31 the exporters will be required to pay on American importations an increase of from \$1.75 to \$2.60 per proof gallon on brandies or other spirits distilled from grain or other material; an increase of from 35 to 45 and 60 cents per gallon, respectively, according to alcoholic strength, on still wines and vermouth in casks, an increase of from \$1.25 to \$1.85 when imported in cases made up of bottles or jugs, and also an increase of from \$6 to \$9.60 per dozen quarts of champagne and other sparkling wines. Should the maximum rates be levied by the president as a result of discrimination against American products, there would be an addition to these rates of 25 per cent ad valorem."

THE FRIENDS of the late Lieutenant Sutton are not satisfied with the verdict of the court of inquiry. An Associated Press dispatch from Washington says: "Sharply criticising the conclusions of the court of inquiry which recently reinvestigated the death of Lieutenant James N. Sutton, of the United States marine corps, Henry E. Davis, counsel for Mrs. Sutton, in a statement declares that the judge advocate was derelict in his duty in not confirming the two legal propositions submitted by Mr. Davis. Had he done so, and the court heeded him, Mr. Davis says, 'it would have been absolutely obliged to exclude the hypothesis of suicide and almost as certainly to exclude the hypothesis of a wound self-inflicted as the explanation of the cause of Lieutenant Sutton's death.' Of the two propositions, Mr. Davis states that one of them related to the 'quality and extent of evidence necessary to avoid a verdict of suicide, and the other was as to the conditions under which a phenomenal explanation of a given situation—in this case the nature of Lieutenant Sutton's wound—could be accepted.' He refers to the language used in the decision of the court as 'eminently unjudicial and unnecessarily harsh.' 'I am compelled to this course in large part,' said Mr. Davis, 'by the apprehension that those who know only so much of the case as the press has found it possible to publish, may be led to think that the determination of a body of officers in the military service of the country must be a righteous result, and that Mrs. Sutton's attitude may have been justly estimated by those to whom the honor of the service, as well as the cause of justice, was for the occasion committed.' Mr. Davis then reviews exhaustively the finding of the court and concludes by saying that the statement is on his own responsibility and is given out without conference with any other person. Mr. Davis declined to state what further action he would take, although it was made evident that the case would not be dropped."

DO THE FARMERS UNDERSTAND?
 Dunlap, Kan., August 18, 1909.—
 Dear Commoner: In your issue of August 13, 1909, you ask: "Do the republican farmers understand now what a protective tariff means?" One ex-republican farmer thinks he knows; viz. To us it means, root hog or die, that the few may revel riot in riches gathered from the toilers. I would say to the fool farmers, of which I am one, we have the numbers and the means if we had the good sense to secure legislation, state and national, that would be just and equitable to all. I know that protection, as used, is a fraud, thief, robber and assassin of our industry.
 P. B. MAXSON.
 A Farmer, 83 years old.