

CURRENT TOPICS

A BRIDGEPORT, Conn., dispatch to the New Haven Union says: "In some respects the democratic victory in which Edward T. Buckingham was elected mayor by 3,043 is the most remarkable result of a municipal contest in the history of the state. The contest hinged upon a most drastic set of proposals for municipal reform proposed in the platform of the democratic party and urged by Mr. Buckingham in his speech of acceptance. A program of tax equalization will, it is said, be immediately carried out. The manufacturing interests and public service corporations will be most affected. There will be an investigation of the United Illuminating company, which furnishes the city and its inhabitants with electric current, and the private water works will be acquired by the city as soon as steps necessary to that end can be taken. The democrats captured nine out of twelve members of the common council and control that body."

THE LONG contested indebtedness in St. Clair county, Missouri, has resulted in another judgment. A Kansas City dispatch carried by the Associated Press says: "Bernard J. Burke, a New York capitalist, was awarded a judgment of \$552,000 against St. Clair county, Missouri, in the federal court here last night, because that county in 1870 floated bonds for the Lebo & Neosho railway, which was never built. When the bonds were issued the officers of St. Clair county thought the railroad would be built. Mr. Burke owned about \$200,000 of the county's bond issuance, and after hearing the history of the case the court held that he was entitled to a judgment for the full amount with interest. The controversy over the St. Clair county railroad case has caused endless litigation. All the power of the United States courts was used in an effort to collect from the county. The people elected county judges who refused to obey the court's orders, and more than fifteen county judges served jail sentences for contempt of court. The men received their regular salary while in jail."

THEY ARE TO have a special election to fill the vacancy in the lower house caused by Mr. Lorimer's election to the senate. Referring to the contest that is on over the republican nomination the Chicago Record-Herald says: "There is a unique opportunity for the republican voters of the Sixth congressional district of Illinois. They may, without peril to party dominance, give an object lesson to the whole country. Mr. Moxley is running as the exponent of Lorimerism, Cannonism, Aldrichism. His emphatic defeat would mean that the republicans of even this stronghold of reactionary republicanism would stomach no more. It would in no way affect the republican majority in congress, but would act as a wholesome warning of the state of mind of the middle west. Mr. Barnes, the independent candidate, stands on the tariff platform on which President Taft was elected. He believes in a tariff that will protect American industries and labor—not in a tariff that is a shield to protect extortionists. He believes that pledges should be sacred—not tossed to the wind after election. He should be elected and a great warning given."

THE AMERICAN Federation of Labor, in session at Toronto, was addressed by Samuel Gompers. He reviewed the proceedings in the case against Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison and denounced the court's decision as an attack upon the free press and free speech. He said: "I say advisedly that the whole people of our country are aroused to the seriousness of the situation. They realize that this attack upon a free press and free speech among the workers is only the insidious beginning of the entire withdrawal of those rights from the whole people whenever it might suit the plans of those who desire to profit by injustices and tyranny. The response of the masses of the people to the campaign of the American Federation of Labor for the preservation of constitutional rights shows how thoroughly our labor movement is in

harmony with the spirit of liberty and the love of justice and right which makes a nation great. The struggle is far from ended. Eternal vigilance ever was and always will be the price of the liberties of a people. Let no one doubt my great respect for the judiciary of our country; I have confidence in their integrity, no matter what their decision, still they are human beings and as such liable to err. I say this with respect not only to the three justices of the district court of appeals, but with reference to the judiciary generally. I repeat and emphasize this fact, that the doctrine that the citizen must yield obedience to every order of the court, notwithstanding that order transcends inherent, natural, human rights guaranteed by the constitution of our country, is vicious and repugnant to liberty and human freedom, and that it is the duty, the imperative duty, to protest. The history of the human race has been full of tyranny and the denial to the people of the right of expressing freely by speech or in the press their opinion. After the people established a government they recalled that they had omitted to safeguard this vital right in framing our constitution. Therefore, the first amendment to that instrument was that guaranteeing the right of freedom of speech and press. That means something. We do not need this right to please those entrusted with the authority of government. Free press and free speech were guaranteed that men might feel free to say things that displeased."

WRITING IN Collier's Weekly L. R. Glavis, recently dismissed by President Taft from his post as chief of field division of the general land office, charges that Secretary Ballinger while land commissioner, favored the granting of patents to Alaska coal lands of great value when the claims to these patents were under grave suspicion. The hand of the Guggenheims in the alleged attempted grab of 5,000 acres of coal lands, containing 91,000,000 tons of coal, is traced, according to Glavis, through what are known as the 'Cunningham claims,' it being alleged that Cunningham acted as agent for the Guggenheims, the real influence being that of the latter. In consequence of the Guggenheim influence, charges Glavis, Secretary Ballinger—then land commissioner—took a friendly attitude to the Cunningham claims, albeit Glavis alleges that these claims had been shown through his personal investigations to be of the shadiest character."

MR. GLAVIS makes charges as follows: That the land office ordered the Cunningham claims to patent without due investigation when Commissioner Ballinger knew they were under suspicion; that while in office Commissioner Ballinger urged congress to pass a law which would validate fraudulent Alaska claims; that shortly after resigning from office he became attorney for the Cunningham group and other Alaska claims; that there is a statute expressly prohibiting a former officer of the government becoming within two years a private attorney in any case pending in the department with which he was connected which arose or was pending at the time he was there, despite which fact President Taft approved Mr. Ballinger's employment; that soon after Mr. Ballinger became secretary of the interior his office rendered a decision that would have validated all fraudulent Alaska claims, and that if there had not been a reversal of that decision at every point by Attorney General Wickersham every fraudulent Alaska claim would have gone to patent; that the Alaska coal claims are still in danger. He says: "I assert that in the spring of 1909 the land office urged me to an early trial of these cases before the investigation was finished, and when Secretary Ballinger, as the President has stated, knew that the Cunningham claims were invalid. When I appealed to Secretary Ballinger for postponement he referred me to his subordinates. The department of agriculture intervened. I was superseded in the charge of the cases, and the man who superseded me indorsed my recommendations, and the postponement was granted. Immediately

thereafter I made my report on the Cunningham cases to President Taft, and was dismissed from the service for insubordination." Glavis traces the history of his connection with the Alaska cases from its beginning in the fall of 1907 to his dismissal. He insists that he found much evidence of fraud, that he laid that evidence before Commissioner Ballinger and Fred Dennett, first assistant commissioner, and that his official superiors constantly took an attitude of friendship to the Cunningham claims and of hostility to his charges against those claims.

REPLYING TO the Glavis article in Colliers, Secretary Ballinger makes the following statement: "My attention has been directed to the text of an article purporting to have been written by L. R. Glavis, which is to appear in Colliers Weekly, and advance copies of which have been furnished by that weekly to the press. The Glavis story is a tissue of falsehoods and insinuations, utterly unwarranted in view of the facts, easily obtained by anybody who wants them. It is not surprising that a publication which could, in pursuit of this same propaganda, recklessly, under date of October 30, reproduce a view appearing on a familiar railroad folder of the Grand River canyon in Colorado, as a picture of an available power site which was in danger of unlawful acquisition on the South Platte river, 200 miles away and across the continental divide, should be willing, without the slightest effort to ascertain the facts, to give wings to a story which had heretofore been submitted to so great and just a man as the president of the United States who, after a most careful consideration thereof, in which he had before him the complete files of the general land office, and of the secretary of the interior, relating to each and every one of the matters presented, pronounced the charges without justification. The statement of Glavis has gained nothing, either as to its veracity or justification, in the interval since its presentation to the president, and in view of the complete vindication by the president of myself and other officers of the department concerned, I will make no further statement at present."

CHARGING THAT the cotton schedule in the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill permits the protective policy to become a plunder policy, United States Senator LaFollette denounces that schedule bitterly in LaFollette's Weekly. Under the caption, "The Disgrace of the Cotton Schedule," the leading editorial says in part: "In the cotton schedule of the Dingley law, perversion of the protective principle was conspicuous in all its forms. In the Payne-Aldrich-Cannon 'downward revision' tariff, the outrages of the cotton schedule are perpetrated and accentuated. The power behind this new cotton schedule was the power of successful public plunder. And the incentive to it was more plunder. Under the Dingley cotton schedule, the duties levied on the imports of 1907 amounted to a fraction less than 45 per cent of the value of the goods imported. The duties of the Payne-Cannon-Aldrich cotton schedule applied to the importation of 1907 would average over 50 per cent of the value of the goods. Under the new schedule there are more prohibitive duties higher than before. Conservatively estimated the new schedule is at least 25 per cent higher than the old. There is no justification for increasing the cotton schedule. The labor cost in cotton manufacture in this country is decreasing, not increasing."

THE EDITORIAL declares the average wage of cotton mill operatives in 1905 was \$6.47 a week and the pay of skilled operatives but \$8.53 a week. The editorial concludes: "The indictment against the cotton schedule and its beneficiaries is made. The case against the 'captains of cotton' is in. The evidence of their grafting and embezzlements is abundant and conclusive. Charged by the people with the administration of a great trust fund for the benefit of 'American labor,' they loll and surfeit in wealth while the lawful beneficiary of that trust