

CURRENT TOPICS

A SPECIAL ELECTION was held in Lincoln, Neb., April 11 to determine whether the city should re-admit saloons. One year ago Lincoln by a vote of 349 abolished the saloon. Then a number of saloons were established in the town of Havelock about four miles from Lincoln. During the past year the police of Lincoln have been greatly bothered by intoxicated men going from Havelock to Lincoln. The people of Havelock also grew weary of having their town made the headquarters for drunks. On April 5 an election was held in Havelock and the people of the town by a majority of eighty abolished the saloons. This victory greatly encouraged the temperance workers in Lincoln. The saloon people made a desperate fight. They held meetings in the city auditorium bringing to Lincoln Clarence Darrow of Chicago, Mayor David E. Rose of Milwaukee, and Charles A. Towne of New York. The temperance people also held large meetings. The result of the election April 11 was 5,208 dry to 4,273 wet, giving a dry majority of 935. This was a marked gain over the dry majority of one year ago.

THE LINCOLN, Nebraska Journal, referring to the contest, said: "The total vote of 9,481 was the heaviest vote ever polled in the city of Lincoln, and more than 2,000 larger than that of a year ago. The Taft-Bryan total vote in 1908 was 9,177. The election was acknowledged by all to have been the most strenuous ever conducted in the city on any issue. The organizations of both sides were perfected to a high degree, the drys plainly outdoing the wets in their methods and the activity of the workers. The drys used more than forty automobiles and any number of carriages and other vehicles. The wets were short on automobiles, having not nearly so many, but using every hack, cab and carriage that was for hire in the city. The drys had a thorough organization in every polling precinct in the city. They had challengers in every polling place, each supplied with lists of those who were subject to challenge. The wets on the other hand made no pretense of an organization in some precincts. The wets were extremely confident up to the noon hour. Then the scarcity of their vote in the extremely wet precincts as compared with that in the dry precincts alarmed them. They redoubled their efforts during the afternoon, the result showing in the rapidly increasing vote on the wet side and the tremendous stream of applicants for certificates. No trouble resulted in any precinct and it was said when the polls closed that it was as orderly an election as was ever conducted in Lincoln, which has had the name of holding well-regulated elections."

INDIANA DEMOCRATS held a rousing banquet at Indianapolis on Jefferson's birthday. The Associated Press report follows: "Six hundred democrats of Indiana entertained prominent leaders of the party from other states at a banquet in celebration of the anniversary of the birthday of Thomas Jefferson tonight. John W. Kern, the democratic candidate for vice president in the last national election, introduced the speakers, and in presenting Governor Thomas R. Marshall of Indiana, said: 'He is a man that has made good to the extent that we think he could be called to a higher position.' Responding to Mr. Kern, Governor Marshall declared that he was a 'candidate for no office under the sun.' 'Let the future take care of itself,' said Governor Marshall. 'I believe that a man that seeks by trick or scheme to be nominated for president of the United States is not fit to fill that office.' The reading of a congratulatory letter from Governor Judson Harmon of Ohio, was received with cheers and great applause also greeted the name of William Jennings Bryan, when Mr. Kern read a letter from him in which Mr. Bryan said that President Taft, in his Lincoln day address, had endorsed 'the quantitative theory of money.' The program of speeches follows: James Hamilton Lewis of Chicago, 'The Nation's Foreign Policy'; John J. Lentz of Ohio, 'Jefferson, the Radical'; Joseph W. Folk of Missouri, 'Progressive De-

mocracy'; William Sulzer of New York, 'Democratic Opportunity'; Governor Thomas R. Marshall of Indiana, 'Evolution and Departure from State's Rights'; Lafayette Pence of Colorado, 'The Income Tax Struggle.'"

THE EDITOR of the Atchison Globe directs attention to a temperance lesson from everyday life. He says: "The decision of the Cincinnati baseball club not to sign players who drink marks another long step in the cause of temperance; longer, perhaps, than when a state goes dry. Only a few men make up a single major league baseball team, but the influence is wider than that, wider than the whole league, or all major leagues. It is as wide as baseball, and that includes the country, particularly the young men and boys of the country, of whom drunkards or decent citizens are made. Of course, the best ball players do not drink, but, because his season is long, the ball player is less restricted in his habits and training than any other athlete. He is allowed to eat what he likes, to smoke when off duty, and heretofore he has been allowed to drink. If he chose, and some good ones have, to eat, or drink, or smoke his head off, he did it, and lost his job. Booze has sent almost as many ball players to the junk pile as old age, and has sent them a good deal quicker. But that hasn't frightened the young men who aspire to be ball players, or who aspire to other positions of trust and honor. They can drink or leave it alone. But the fact that they must leave it alone to get the position will help, and that qualification is being made in more and more lines every day. Drinking is a fool habit, and costs a good deal more than the money paid out."

FOR SEVERAL days prior to the holding of the Washington, D. C., banquet newspaper dispatches were full of predictions that Mr. Bryan's letter (printed in last week's issue of The Commoner) would not be read because some of the leaders did not agree with some of the things Mr. Bryan had written. The letter was finally read, so the newspaper dispatches say, "to the banqueters who remained until a late hour," at 2 o'clock in the morning. One dispatch says: "Congressman Clayton read the letter from Bryan written from San Paulo, Brazil, to the banqueters who remained until a late hour. When he read, quoting from Bryan, 'I take it for granted that your gathering will not adjourn without the adoption of a resolution urging the ratification by all the states of the income tax amendment to the federal constitution,' Clayton asked if there was a man in the room who opposed it, to speak now or forever hold his peace. Representative Rufus Hardy of Texas demanded that a show of hands be called, which was done. Only one man voted in the negative, and he announced that he did so because the tax was unnecessary. Clayton then declared that Bryan's suggestion had been carried." The speakers at the Washington banquet were Champ Clark, Representative Harrison of New York, Senator Shively of Indiana, and John Temple Graves of Hearst's New York American. Mr. Graves said that Mr. Hearst and his independence league would come into the democratic party if it would become a "party of responsibility and of principle."

COMMENTING ON the criticisms of Mr. Bryan's letter by certain democratic leaders at Washington, the Denver Times prints this editorial: "It takes some ingenuity to twist William J. Bryan's Jeffersonian letter of yesterday into anything of ill nature. Naturally a man who has been the leading and best abused exponent of certain ideas of public policy, and who has gone oftener to sublime defeat than any other citizen, must feel a thrill of joy when he observes his victorious opponents adopting his theories. And he ought to be permitted to call attention to the case without offending public sensibility. It is the only way his triumph can express itself. Taft and the republican party have the same right to adopt the ideas which Bryan expounded, as that eloquent American

had to derive the same ideas from Aristotle, Adam Smith and James B. Weaver. All developed truth is the common heritage of the race. And the right to make test and experiment of policy is an integral part of our right to evolve. No doubt Mr. Bryan is amply satisfied with the general conversion of the people to many of his pronouncements, even though some other candidate always happens to be 'next' when authority to administer the truth is being conferred by popular will. He is only another illustration of the great law of average. One man theorizes and another practices. One soldier fights and falls in the front rank, so that another may sweep on to victory. There is nothing of pain or humiliation in this to the real philosopher or patriot. Indeed it is the only reward to which he may aspire with any expectancy; for it is the almost universal rule. Mr. Bryan has a continuing mission—if he will perform it with the cheerfulness and courage which have heretofore characterized his efforts. He has every right to be a mentor to his party; and, through that party of suggestion, to influence in large degree the party of administration. And in this view of him, Bryan is both useful and popular. Urging the democracy to unified opposition to trusts and the trust-breeding schedules of tariff; there may be a gradual conversion of the republican machine to that gospel. And this ought to be more consoling than to gain the presidency."

AN "INDEPENDENT refiner" has written to the New York World an interesting letter relating to the "Rockefeller foundation." This letter follows: "Even the World, which usually digs below the surface for its estimate of human actions, has words of commendation for John D. Rockefeller's new incorporation of himself for philanthropic purposes. I ask you, therefore, what word it has for me. I am one of the submerged foundation stones upon which the Rockefeller foundation rests. Upon the bones of my petroleum refining business and fair superstructure of this loudly acclaimed work of beneficence is built. I invested all of my own money and the money of trusting friends in the construction of a petroleum refinery upon the Standard Oil company's publicly made assurance that it did no business in the state in which I purposed to refine and sell oil. When the refinery was built and in working order the Standard Oil company, which was really in the state, by predatory methods and unfair competition drove me out of business. The entire investment was a loss. My own reputation for business ability was ruined. I am not alone as a foundation stone of the Rockefeller foundation. There are many others. But mine is, I think, the most newly placed stone in the gruesome pile. I am reduced to actual privation and great mental distress, while Rockefeller, whose monopoly first deceived me, receives the plaudits of the world for his great benevolence. I sat in my pew in church yesterday and heard my pastor praise the wonderful Christian love and charity of Rockefeller! What word has the World for me?"

PUBLICITY

A house committee has favorably reported the bill introduced by Representative McCall, of Massachusetts, providing for publicity of campaign contributions. A desperate effort was made by certain republican leaders to bury the measure and it may be doubted that equally desperate efforts will be made to defeat it in the senate if not in the house. The Philadelphia Evening Times, referring to McCall's measure, says: "It is to be hoped that the democrats in senate and house are in earnest and will lose no opportunity to procure the enactment of an effective statute. They should have the help of every republican, progressive or regular, who has a sincere desire to see politics in this country put upon a higher plane."

Failing to defeat the measure openly it will be amended so as to make it of no practical service, provided republican leaders have their way. Democrats, however, should persistently push this measure.