

CURRENT TOPICS

KING EDWARD died at Buckingham palace May 6. He was attacked by acute bronchitis and died at midnight. An Associated Press cablegram says: "Only the nearest relatives and doctors were with the king at the end. The cause of death, it is understood, was pneumonia, following bronchitis. The Prince of Wales became king automatically on the death of Edward. He will take the oath of office before the privy council when it can be convened. At 12:32 a. m. announcement of the king's death had not yet been made to the people outside the palace. The prince and princess of Wales left the palace at 12:17 a. m., returning to Marlborough house. Some of the king's nearest friends declare that his illness was brought on by worry and loss of sleep resulting from the political situation. Only a few reporters and a few officials were at the palace when Lord Knollys entered the office a few minutes after midnight and quietly announced that the king was dead. Lord Knollys announced: 'His majesty passed away peacefully at 11:45 p. m.' The news was withheld from the press for half an hour."

GEORGE V. is the new king of England. Concerning the new king, a London cablegram says: "To begin with, George V. will be the first English monarch since the Stuart days of whom it will be possible to say that he is wholly and undisputably English. Even his grandmother, Queen Victoria, spoke English with a German accent, although she was intensely English in sentiment. The pro-German inclinations of the first four Georges were well known and most of them could hardly understand the language of the country which they had been called to rule. King Edward, while he spoke English like an Englishman born, was a cosmopolitan in tastes and sentiment, and never was so happy as when he was enjoying a holiday at some continental health or pleasure resort. He spoke almost all the European languages as well as his own and he made his reputation as the most astute diplomat in Europe largely owing to his ability to deal on equal terms with the diplomats of every nation. To the French he was a Frenchman, to the Germans a German. He was allied by marriage to the Scandinavian nations and it even has been said of him that he could understand the Russian point of view better than any minister he ever sent to St. Petersburg. Now it is different with his son. George speaks no language but English. He had the usual drilling at school in the European tongues, of course, but as soon as his formal education was finished he promptly forgot all about them, declaring emphatically that English was quite good enough for all of his wants. He doesn't like foreigners and, in fact, one of his father's chief trials was in persuading him to be ordinarily civil to diplomats and distinguished visitors whom it is his duty, as heir apparent to the throne, to meet."

AT THE ALABAMA democratic primaries Emmett A. O'Neal, of Florence, was nominated to be governor. John H. Bankhead was nominated for re-election in the United States senate. O'Neal was supported by the wets, while H. S. D. Mallory was the dry candidate. A Montgomery, Ala., dispatch carried by the Associated Press says: "It was practically a fight waged against the liquor reform element in Alabama by the business men. Women took a prominent part in the contest, and resorted to many unique methods of carrying the day. Alabama's prohibition wave began with the election of B. B. Comer as governor four years ago. He had been president of the Alabama railroad commission, and won fame as a reformer. It was just at the time when the prohibition wave was sweeping the south, and Robert B. Glenn was elected governor of North Carolina, and Hoke Smith made governor of Georgia. They were called the 'trio of true reformers,' and succeeded in closing up the saloons in their respective states. Comer was unable to carry the dry forces to victory when he was first elected, but two years later he succeeded in getting a state assembly that was overwhelmingly dry. Following local option victories in many of the

cities, the legislature passed the state-wide bill and closed up every saloon and club. Even the exclusive social organizations of the state were stopped from selling liquor in any form, and farmers' wives were not allowed to make wine or cider for their own use. The first victory of the wets was won last fall, when the people turned down and refused to ratify a constitutional amendment passed by the legislature that would have allowed the deputy sheriffs to search every place within the state, even the homes, in their hunt for liquor. It was then that O'Neal began his fight. He was at first opposed by Judge Samuel D. Weakley of the state supreme court, one of the leading Baptists of the state. A few weeks ago Weakley stepped down and the dries centered on Mallory. The race in the Fifth congressional district, the only contested district, seems to have been won by Representative J. Thomas Heflin, although his opponent, Judge A. J. Driver, polled a heavy vote. In the election two years ago Heflin had only one vote cast against him."

IN THE UNITED States senate, Mr. Bourne of Oregon, defended the election of senators by popular vote. Senator Bourne declared that Oregon has evolved "the best form of popular government that exists in the world today." Mr. Bourne said: "At the general election in June Senator Chamberlain defeated Mr. Cake, notwithstanding the state was overwhelmingly republican, thereby developing from the democratic candidate into the people's choice for United States senator. The normal republican majority in Oregon, I think, is from fifteen to twenty thousand. With full recognition of Governor Chamberlain's ability and fitness for the office, the fact that for nearly six years he made the best governor Oregon ever had and considering undoubtedly he is the most popular man in our state, I deem it just to the law and a proper answer to the criticism of enemies of the law that it destroys party lines and integrity, to state that in my opinion Senator Chamberlain received the votes of several thousand republican enemies of the law who believed that in electing Governor Chamberlain, a democrat, they would prevent a republican legislature from ratifying the people's selection, obeying the people's instructions, and electing as United States senator the individual, regardless of party that the people might select for that office. Thus they hoped to make the primary law and statement No. 1 odious and sought to create what they thought would be an impossible condition by forcing upon a republican legislature for confirmation the popularly designated democratic candidate for United States senator. They failed to realize that greater than party, and infinitely greater than any individual, the people's choice becomes a representative of the principle and of the law; and that the intelligence and integrity of the whole electorate of the state, as well as the integrity and loyalty of the members of the legislature were at stake and from any honorable viewpoint the mere intimation of the possibility of the legislature, or any member of the legislature, failing conscientiously to fulfil his pledge or loyally obey the instruction of the people would not only be an insult to the intelligence, but patriotism of the Oregon electorate, that they would permit such action to go unnoticed or without holding the culprit to a rigid responsibility for his treason."

IN THE SAME address Mr. Bourne declared the primary system to be preferable to the old convention plan, largely because it protected the people against boss rule. Mr. Bourne also found matter for praise in the initiative and referendum law and, in fact, in all the laws composing the system. "Results attained under direct legislation in Oregon," he said, "compare so favorably with the work of a legislative assembly that an effort to repeal the initiative and referendum would be overwhelmingly defeated. No effort has ever been attempted." Summing up Mr. Bourne concluded: "Plainly stated, the aim and purpose of the laws are to destroy the irresponsible political machine and put all elective offices in the state in direct touch with the people as the real source of authority; in short,

to give direct and full force to the ballot of every individual elector in Oregon and to eliminate dominance of corporate and corrupt influences in the administration of public affairs. The Oregon laws mark the course that must be pursued before the wrongful use of corporate powers can be dethroned, the people restored to power and lasting reform secured. They insure absolute government by the people."

MANY interesting developments have been made through the bribery exposures in connection with Mr. Lorimer's election to the United States senate. It would seem that the pass evil is not entirely abolished in Illinois politics. The following letters written by Browne, "the democratic leader," to the man who exposed the bribery have been made public. These letters follow: "June 1, 1909.—Friend White: I hope you will find it possible to be in Springfield early Monday, or, better still, Sunday some time. While we have the other crowd (the Tippit faction of the democratic party) beaten forty ways, as you saw clearly at Chicago on Monday, at the same time we must not let up for a minute. I shall rely on such good, solid friends as yourself and others like you to keep up the good work. * * * My best regards to you, old man.—Lee O'Neil Browne. P. S.—Have you sent for your transportation as yet? C. & A.: Write to president Chicago and Alton railroad, Railway Exchange building, Chicago, Ill. Illinois Central: Write to John G. Drennan, general counsel, Park Row, Chicago, Ill. Wabash Railroad company: Write to Col. Wells H. Blodgett, general counsel, St. Louis, Mo. Pullman passes: Write to Hon. John H. Runnels, general counsel, P. P. C. Co., Pullman building, Chicago, Ill., for half a dozen sets Pullman passes and return, good sixty days. More later, as soon as lists are made out."

THAT "MR. TAFT'S place is at the capitol, not gallivanting over the country," is the contention of the Chicago Record-Herald (rep.). That paper says: "When a cry of alarm was raised by his lieutenants in Washington President Taft responded at the end of a long-distance telephone. He was told that his railroad bill was being shot to pieces, but whatever his comment was he could do nothing for the badly mutilated measure. He had simply to leave it to the mercy of dubious friends and vigorous enemies. Possibly in the particular crisis after his repeated absences from the city his presence would have made no difference, but it is hardly to be questioned that his influence would be greater if he were less celebrated as a long-distance president. He can see the people without living on the road, but he can not direct the campaign upon which the success of his administration depends while he is being played as a traveling attraction several hundred miles away. And the actual fact is that at the very time when he was paying his tributes to art, music and baseball in Pittsburg and Cincinnati the Washington correspondents were sending out word that not only his railroad bill but his entire legislative program was in peril. The contrast thus afforded causes irritation as a matter of course. For pleasure jaunt succeeds pleasure jaunt, and battles must be waged while the general is away from the field visiting and attending ball games. This is a plan of campaign that will never win. It condemns a political leader as it would a military leader. The president's place is at the capital."

PLAINLY THE republican ship is leaking very badly just now. In another editorial the Record-Herald, referring to what it calls the "republican party crisis," says: "Can the republican party face the voters in November with a record of division, sterility and futile wrangling? Would a do-nothing session, after so much thundering in the index about pledge redemption and clinching progressive policies, reflect credit on either wing or faction of the responsible party? It is not too late to halt, soberly examine the whole situation and try the effects of conciliation and mutual compromise. The national platform is still there as a