

CURRENT TOPICS

THERE is considerable comment concerning the youthfulness of the Wilson cabinet. A writer in the New York Herald says: In Europe kings and ministers have shown such longevity that it has been said the world was governed by old men. In striking contrast is the average age of about fifty of the new cabinet at Washington, the president himself being close to the year which is sometimes spoken of as being the prime of intellectual life, although old for athletes. When the present British cabinet was reconstructed at the death of Campbell Bannerman five members retired at the average of sixty-five, and five succeeded at the average of about forty, making the average under fifty-two for the cabinet as reconstructed. This compares with the average for the Canadian cabinet of sixty-one. There were ten British ministers under fifty and only three Canadians. There was no Canadian under forty, whereas there were two in the British cabinet in the thirties. Although Mr. Roosevelt was younger than Mr. Wilson, being the youngest of all presidents, his cabinet was older, averaging fifty-four. It is odd that when it is so often remarked that science is prolonging human life our statesmen are growing younger. In the days of "the fathers" the age of presidents was nearer sixty than fifty. J. Q. Adams at fifty-seven being the youngest of the first half dozen, and fifty-six being the average for twenty elected presidents. This does not include presidents succeeding to the office from the vice presidency, as did Mr. Roosevelt at forty-three. It was only our earlier presidents who were elderly. Washington himself was a colonel at twenty-two, Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence at thirty-three, Patrick Henry made his famous "treason" speech at twenty-nine, Alexander Hamilton made himself immortal as a financier at twenty-four with his conception of a national debt as a national blessing. On the other hand it is but a few years since A. R. Thayer analyzed the ages of 530 prominent men of the nineteenth century and found the average age of 112 statesmen was seventy-one. If there is one deduction clearer than another from these facts it is that work is the best preservation of youth. Thus it was heard with regret within the past few days that a leading railway president was attacked by heart disease shortly after his retirement. It probably was the accumulative effect of overwork, but the change of habit precipitated rather than averted it. Just as runners get their "second wind," so many men renew their strength after passing the age which is critical for most. This may be only another way of saying that passing that age is proof of unusual stamina. There are two recipes for growing old. One is to have a weak heart and a good digestion. The other is to get a pension or a government clerkship. Not long ago there were living several widows of revolutionary veterans, and there were 1,587 clerks at Washington ranging from sixty-five years up to ninety, and many over eighty.

REFERRING to the new attorney general, a writer in the Cincinnati Enquirer says: That senators, representatives and the administration may settle or create issues on the tariff schedules every voter in the United States is aware of; that the state department has before it problems for solution that may have a powerful influence upon the future of the republic, and that may make or mar the success of the administration, all recognize. Potent factors as these may be in brightening or dimming the record of the new administration, our readers should bear in mind that the work of the department of justice, over which Hon. James C. McReynolds has been called to preside, is of such transcendent importance that it bids fair to exercise greater potency in the shaping of the material interests of the country than the action of any other branch of our government. Mr. McReynolds brings to this herculean task an experience in the study and practice of the laws bearing directly upon the problems he deals with that few, if any, other lawyers of the country possess. As assistant to Attorney General Wickersham in several of the most important of the suits brought under the Sherman law, and

in the proceedings looking to the dissolution of companies in accordance with court decisions, it is known that upon all points his opinions were not in harmony with those of his chief, but his sense of duty to his client, the government, prevented him from weakening the position of its chief representative by expressed open dissent. A native of Kentucky, educated in Tennessee and Virginia and trained in the practice of the courts of New York, he can be said to have had a national training, while his close association with such eminent jurists as the late Justices Jackson, of Tennessee, and Harlan, of Kentucky, and their associates has served to equip him to contend with the most formidable of legal opponents. That Attorney General McReynolds will move forward to legal triumphs no one who knows his great ability and clear judgment doubts, and President Wilson strengthened his administration decidedly when he secured Mr. McReynolds's consent to enter his cabinet.

SPEAKING of Franklin K. Lane's successor as interstate commerce commissioner, the Sacramento (Cal.) Bee says: John H. Marble, at present secretary of the interstate commerce commission, who will be appointed to fill the vacancy occasioned by the selection of Franklin K. Lane as secretary of the interior in the Wilson cabinet, was a printer by trade and for many years a strong leader in the Typographical union. He then became associated with James H. Barry in the San Francisco Star, and afterward entered upon the profession of law. He is a very bright, able, honest man; an indefatigable worker, quiet and modest. His services as secretary of the interstate commerce commission rendered him invaluable to that body. He is a staunch personal friend of Franklin K. Lane, and undoubtedly the latter had considerable to do with the choice of Mr. Marble as his successor. John H. Marble may be expected to follow along the path in the interstate commerce commission mapped out by his chief, Franklin K. Lane, and to show himself a loyal servant of the people.

TWO distinguished democrats are having trouble these days. The Washington correspondent for the Associated Press tells the story in this way: Tags of identification may yet be necessary to distinguish James C. McReynolds, the new attorney general of the United States, from Representative Gordon Lee of Georgia. The two statesmen are almost twins in appearance. Already a number of embarrassing and humorous incidents have occurred to both as a result of the strong resemblance. Former Senator Joseph W. Bailey was among the first to become confused by the striking similarity. He counts both of them among his close friends. On the way to the department of justice he saw the attorney general, as he supposed, headed toward the White House about a half block distant. "Oh, Mac," called the senator, breaking into an undignified run, "hey, wait a minute." Pedestrians looked with surprise on the former senator's sprint and the senator's ruffled feelings were not smoothed on overtaking his supposed quarry. Representative Lee laughed at him merrily.

THE inaugural prayer was delivered by Rev. Ulysses G. B. Pierce, chaplain of the United States senate, and was as follows: "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, at the opening of this congress we stand before thee to acknowledge thy providence and to implore the continuance of thy favor toward this thy people. Bend over us, we humbly beseech thee, and hearken unto our prayer. We ask thy blessing, our Father, upon him who this day surrenders the high office to which he was called by the suffrages of this people. We pray thee to watch over him, to direct his feet into the paths of peace and to keep him in the memory and esteem of this people. We pray thee, most merciful God, to bless thy servants, the president and vice president of the United States. Anoint them with thy spirit and plentifully endue them with thy grace. Protect them by thy heavenly power and direct them by thy counsel,

that they may serve thee with reverence and Godly fear. For all who, by the suffrages of this people, are called to exercise authority, we pray that as they rule by thy favor, so they may serve in thy fear and with an eye single to thy glory. We pray thee, O God, to bless our country. Deliver us from violence without and discord within. Defend our liberties and uphold our free institutions. Extend unto us the peace that floweth as a river, enriching our borders with peaceable industries and with honorable toil. Upon the altar of the hearts of this people kindle into flame the fire of patriotic devotion, that, by thy grace, this may be that happy nation whose God is the Lord. We invoke thy blessing upon this congress, begun in thy name. So direct their deliberations and order their counsels that the time may be hastened when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our God and of his Christ. And unto thee, O God, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and whose dominion endureth throughout all generations be glory and praise now and forevermore. Amen."

A MERITORIOUS MEASURE

Representative Keckley of York county, Neb., has introduced a railway rate measure, House Roll No. 518. The bill has passed the committee of the whole in the house and will probably pass the house. The reduction provided for is very conservative, the railroad commission having found that an even larger reduction would be reasonable. This bill should be enacted into law.

"House Roll No. 518. A bill for an act to fix maximum rates to be charged for the transportation of certain property within the state of Nebraska upon and over the lines of railway companies or common carriers within this state and to delegate powers to the state railway commission, to regulate the same and to provide penalties for the violation of this act, and to repeal Chapter 95, Session Laws of 1907. Introduced by Representative C. R. Keckley of York.

"Be it Enacted by the People of the State of Nebraska: Section 1. It shall be unlawful for any railway company or common carrier, operating or doing business in the state of Nebraska, to charge, collect or receive for the transportation of live stock, potatoes, grain and grain products, fruit, coal, lumber or building material in carload lots, within the state of Nebraska, more than ninety per cent of the amount fixed in the classification and schedules of such railway companies or common carriers for the transportation of such property in force and effect on their various lines of railway on the first day of January, 1913, or more than eighty per cent of the amount of any class rate, or charge for any other freight, however classified, in force and effect on the above date, until after the state railway commission shall have provided a greater rate upon any article or property in such schedules from the rate herein fixed.

"Section 2. The state railway commission shall have the power to hear and determine whether or not the freight rate upon any article or articles in such schedule or classification of rates is either so high as to be unjust to shippers, or so low as to be unremunerative or unjust to any common carrier affected thereby, and upon complaint, in writing of any person or corporation affected thereby, particularly specifying the article or articles upon which such rates are either too high or too low and the facts in connection therewith, said railway commission shall set forth such cause for hearing and upon trial thereon and a full hearing after the notice thereof, shall either raise or lower the rate herein fixed upon such article or articles to the end that the same shall be just and reasonable to all parties concerned.

"Section 3. Any railway company or common carrier violating the provisions of this act shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof, shall forfeit and pay a fine of not less than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), nor more than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) for each offense.

"Section 4. That Chapter 95 of the Session Laws of Nebraska for 1907 is hereby repealed."