

# CURRENT TOPICS

PRESIDENT WILSON presented to a boys' club of California a handsome United States flag which had been purchased for the club by the members of congress in California. The club consisting of forty-seven boys who have made high averages in the public schools is making a trip around the world. Lead by their band, the club marched to the front portico of the White House. The president addressed them from the porch. He said: "I am very glad to officiate on this occasion and to address a club that bears this name. I dare say you think that schoolmasters are often a bit hard on you in requiring you to do things in order that you may pass the tests of the school, but I want to warn you that after you get out of school you are going to have harder schoolmasters than you ever had before. For the world requires that you make good, no matter what happens, and the man who does things amounts to a great deal more than the man who wishes he might have done things and who promises that he will do things. So that as you have begun as an achievement club, you must finish as an achievement club, and in no other way. The men I am sorry for are the men who stop and think that they have accomplished something before they stop at the grave itself. You have got to have your second wind in this world and keep it up until the last minute. Now, if this flag means anything, it means achievement not only, but it means that achievement that does not center in ourselves. It is nothing to be proud of that we have done a lot for ourselves, but it is something to be proud of that we have done it for other people—that we have imagination in us, we have size in us, to hold in us the image of our country such as this great flag stands for. And there is nothing which we can not achieve, and there is nothing which we do achieve, that will not leave the sweetest memories in our minds. Therefore, it is with the greatest sense of privilege that I present to your representative this emblem of honor and achievement."

THE effects of the Titanic disaster are shown by a writer in the New York World in this way: Near the first anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic are two events strongly effective of the influence of that memorable disaster for greater safety in ocean travel. The huge Vaterland, launched recently at Hamburg, will carry eighty-three lifeboats, and seventy of these can be launched from either side of the ship and can accommodate the whole capacity of the vessel in human freight. No list of the ship can put out of commission half the boats. The reconstructed Olympic starts on its first voyage with an outershell to take the force and damage of such a glancing blow as wrecked the Titanic and leave an inner shell to keep it afloat. It was held unsinkable before this reconstruction. It is now called unsinkable, but carries more than double its old number of lifeboats in deference to the truth of bitter experience as against the claims of marine architects. So passes the modern myth of the sea. There is no such thing as an unsinkable ship. But at what cost to human life has the illusion been shattered!

THE famous Winstead, Conn., correspondent is the subject of an interesting story written to the Cincinnati Times-Star by its New York correspondent: The New York Tribune has a correspondent at Winstead, Conn., who is "there" every Monday morning with a story of the type which is a never falling delight to the oldtime newspaper man. It is always a perfectly inconsequential item about an animal of extraordinary intelligence—nothing of any great news value, but something ingenious which is likely to be believed in and remarked upon by anyone who doesn't know, ex-cathedra, that it's simply a good lie. On a recent Monday the story told of the marvelous actions of a collie. It ran like this: "Major was taken out for exercise, this morning by his master, on the boulevard which encircles the lake. Running ahead, the dog discovered, just beyond a sharp bend, a giant boulder, which had been dislodged

by the frost and had rolled down into the road. Quickly retracing his steps the dog got directly in the track of an approaching automobile and barked until the driver brought the machine to a stop, within two feet of the boulder, which would either have wrecked the machine or hurled it into the lake, which at this point is seventy feet deep." The Tribune telegraph editor, having a sense of humor, printed the story and wired the correspondent as follows: "Dog story very good. Follow up with interesting details about Major's other feats of intelligence." The correspondent was game. He sent a story, the following day, saying that Major had long been known for his achievements as a hunter. "If his master carries a rifle," the correspondent wrote, "Major will tree a squirrel. If the weapon is a shotgun, he will, without suggestion or word of command, chase a rabbit. On one occasion, which is vouched for by three reputable citizens, when his master took down a fishing pole Major ran out in the back yard and began scratching with his fore paws, presumably in the effort to dig worms." The editor went downstairs and took three drinks. He came back and telegraphed the correspondent: "Bring Major and his owner to New York office tomorrow. All expenses allowed. Sunday feature wanted." After this the editor smiled and muttered profanity to himself. The correspondent replied: "Sorry can not follow instructions. Major is dead. Master prostrated. He trained dog to kill snakes, and major picked up blacksnake whip, dropped in front of master's home yesterday, and shook it until he whipped himself to death."

CONCERNING canals, the Albany (N. Y.) correspondent for the Philadelphia Public Ledger, says: We hear so much about the Panama canal, but do not realize that there is another canal being built in New York state, nine times larger than the one in Panama. The enlargement of the Erie canal exceeds the Panama canal and is really the greatest project of this kind in the world. The Panama canal covers only a district of fifty miles, while the Erie canal extends over 530 miles. It has to cross railroads, skirt cities, make junctions, follow river beds, climb over mountains and drop down through valleys. Fifty-seven locks are being built or are completed in the canal. Then there are ten smaller ones. On the Panama canal there are but six pairs of locks. At Little Falls there is a lock which is the highest one in the world—40 feet higher than the lock at the Gatun section of the Panama. At Medina, this canal goes through a gorge 90 feet deep and 500 feet wide. Across this there is an aqueduct built of concrete with a span of 285 feet and width of 129 feet. The Erie canal has 30 dams, while the Panama canal has only three. There are twice as many men building the Panama canal as the Erie. The drop of the Erie canal to the sea level is 563 feet. The drop of the Panama canal is 120 feet. The depth of the Erie canal is 12 feet; that of the Panama 36 feet. The locks of the Erie canal are worked by electric and hydraulic powers, and it will cost \$140,000,000 when completed. The Erie will enable goods to be transported from the middle of the continent to New York city by water. Work on this canal can be seen all along the route. The great dams on the Mohawk, and the locks holding the water back, and the great excavations at Cohoes, where the canal terminates in the Hudson river, do not attract much attention, and yet they are of greater importance and involve engineering problems far beyond those at Panama.

REFERRING to James Bryce's successor as British ambassador to the United States, the New York Tribune says: "Sir Cecil Spring Rice comes to us with a very different official record from that of his predecessor, which he himself has unintentionally suggested in the remark that he is 'a diplomat and not a statesman.'" Bryce might similarly have described himself as "a statesman and not a diplomat." For Sir Cecil comes hither with a long and diversified record in almost purely diplomatic

work, while Mr. Bryce, with a distinguished career in statesmanship and scholarship, came as a novice in direct diplomacy. Nevertheless, the statesman who was no diplomat proved to be a highly successful diplomat after all and there is reason for confident expectation that the diplomat who is no statesman will display practical statesmanship of a high order. Between the two there is another contrast in respect to their knowledge of this country. Mr. Bryce is known as a scholar and a student of constitutional affairs, while Sir Cecil knows it socially as well as diplomatically. Both kinds of knowledge are of much utility and commend their possessors to sympathetic esteem.

THE New York American, William R. Hearst's paper, prints the following: "I am very strongly of the opinion that California or any other state has the right to regulate the ownership of property within its borders," was the answer of Champ Clark to a request from the New York American for a statement upon the Japanese situation. Mr. Clark, who was the guest of William Randolph Hearst, was emphatic in defining his attitude. While unwilling to discuss Secretary Bryan's mission to California; he put himself clearly on record as a believer in the right of the state to work out its own problems. It is a question whether the national government has a right to negotiate treaties which interfere with the undeniable right of the state to regulate ownership of its land. That point depends on the interpretation of the constitution, but to my mind California is within her rights in fixing whatever reasonable restrictions she deems necessary upon the ownership of land by aliens."

THE story of a noted negro officeholder is told in the Washington Post by R. A. Jones of Beaufort, S. C. Mr. Jones says: "After longer service under the federal government than perhaps any other negro, Robert Smalls, collector of customs at Beaufort, S. C., is slated to be separated from the national pay roll. Smalls has been in federal employ ever since the war. He may have been out during the Cleveland administrations, but it was only for a short time. He has served continuously in the customs service since the McKinley administration. Because he played a prominent part in the siege of Fort Sumter at the beginning of the civil war, having piloted the federal fleet into the harbor, Smalls was rewarded with a government position, and he liked it so well that he has succeeded in keeping himself attached to the service ever since. Now that the democrats have come into power they are determined that Smalls shall be retired, and though the Beaufort office is to be merged with the customs office at Charleston, Smalls will be relieved in order that he may be out of the service and not eligible for transfer. The passing of Smalls as a federal employe removes one of the most noted negroes in southern republican politics."

## GOMPERS CONTEMPT CASE

Following is an Associated Press dispatch: Washington, May 5.—Contempt of court judgments against Samuel Gompers, John Mitchell and Frank Morrison, the labor leaders, for their violation of a court's injunction in the noted Bucks stove and range case, was affirmed today by the district court of appeals, but the jail sentences imposed were held to have been too severe, so the court reduced Gompers' sentence from one year to thirty days and decreed that Mitchell and Morrison merely should be fined \$500 each.

The lower court sentenced Mitchell to nine months and Morrison to six. The supreme court of the United States undoubtedly will be asked to again review the decision. Unlike previous decisions in this case, which have been unanimously against the labor leaders, the court of appeals was divided. Chief Justice Sheppard dissented and held that the whole decision should be reversed; that contempt of a federal court was a criminal offense and that the statute of limitations had run in the case.