

CURRENT TOPICS

SPEAKER CHAMP CLARK expressed the opinion that it is time the United States government ought to concern itself about the emigration of its citizens to Canada and other countries. These emigrants, farmers generally, are among our best citizens, he says, and the reason they are expatriating themselves is the lure of cheaper lands and less stringent land laws as to homesteading. Commenting upon the speaker's statements, the *Houston (Tex.) Post* says: It is difficult to see how the United States can do anything to restrain such emigration. These movements of population are as old as the human race. They are in response to natural laws, to human impulse and caprice, and they will continue so long as the race endures. Our own country has been settled as a result of the nomadic instinct accentuated by the ambition for home and fortune. Europe has emptied millions of her sons and daughters into our country and continues to do so, and our own countrymen are going to manifest their adventurous propensities, which, perhaps, we might better call pioneer spirit, so long as there are unsettled fertile regions which offer opportunities for home and wealth. The emigration question, it seems to us, is one that will have to be left to settle itself. Of course, congress may find it feasible to ameliorate homestead conditions so far as the public lands are concerned, and may, by providing irrigation and drainage, open large bodies of land within our own borders to settlement. In any event, it is certain that the vast area of British America is to be settled thickly in time, and it is inevitable that citizens of the United States are going to furnish the vast majority of the settlers. These movements among our own people in the past have resulted in greatly expanding our boundaries, and it is within the bounds of possibility that the movement so much deprecated by the speaker will in due time tend to bring about what so many have dreamed of—the continental republic of the United States of America. The land itself is what is important to the man who has to make a living. National boundaries change with time, but the people must get to the soil regardless of national boundaries. There is little more reason to be alarmed because of the emigration of our American fellow citizens to Canada than there is to fear the strong tide of European immigration that still pours in upon us.

HARRY J. Cantwell, of St. Louis, has written to Speaker Clark the following interesting letter: I notice in the *Republic* a statement by you on the migration to Canada. There are, between the Frisco and the Iron Mountain railroads, more than 6,000,000 acres of unutilized hill lands, as good grass lands, all things considered, as there are in the world, that can yet be bought for from \$8 to \$15 per acre; and, considering difference in freights to market, are cheaper at that price than West Canada are if given away. Wales and England, on no better soils, raise millions of sheep and tenants there pay a minimum annual rental of \$10 per acre for sheep lands. Southern Missouri is near the markets, has an average rainfall of 40 inches, excellent grass soils, a mild climate and is an ideal sheep country, except for the timber, which may now be cut at a profit. I am glad to see you are taking up the consideration of means to stop this exodus of Americans, and I believe that, in your position, you may do much good by calling attention to the fact that while government lands are all gone, yet land in Missouri, in the hands of private individuals and corporations, is still attractively cheap; and I hope you will use your influence to have the agricultural department give wide and authoritative publicity to this fact and induce the department to get out a special bulletin on the value of the Missouri Ozarks for sheep and cattle raising. The few people who try to raise sheep in that region turn the sheep out without a shepherd to graze upon the range—at the mercy of the dogs and wolves and of every pest. In England pasture is planted for the sheep, attention is paid to breeding and the sheep are guarded. England thus raises mutton and wool in competition with the free ranges of Australia and the Argentine, and Missouri may do the same. At

a time when mutton is 300 per cent higher than it was a generation ago the neglect to utilize these lands seems almost criminal folly. It is strange indeed that while much attention has been given to agricultural education, this primitive and highly profitable industry should be so neglected in this large southern area of our state.

RUDOLPH SPRECKLES, visiting in Paris, made an interesting statement to the correspondent for the *New York World*. Mr. Spreckles said: The present appearance of unfavorable symptoms in the American business world are artificial. They are the result of the large interests putting out pessimistic rumors in an attempt to discredit President Wilson's administration with the people by a hard times bluff. I regard Secretary McAdoo's recent announcement as absolute assurance that no unfavorable business situation of any importance can possibly arise in the United States. The selfish large interests are desperately against Wilson. They are doing everything in their power, by no matter what means, to create a wide impression that the popular new administration will ruin business. Aside from the scares created by these artificial stimuli there is in the country no feeling worth mentioning that the new reform government threatens prosperity in any fashion. I am convinced that Bryan will make a record as the greatest secretary of state in the nation's history. Wilson's withdrawal of government support from the American bankers in the Chinese loan was a wise and just action, in no way endangering our diplomatic prestige or weakening the defense of our legitimate foreign property interests. It merely called a halt to government backing of bankers' extortions.

AN officer in the army below the rank of brigadier general, who ranks highest may be superseded by those below him whenever his record is such as to disqualify him. This opinion, given to President Wilson by Attorney General McReynolds, opens the way for promotions over the head of Major Beecher B. Ray, whom the administration considers disqualified by the report of the committee on expenditures in the war department made last August. An *Associated Press* dispatch says: This report was made the day after President Taft had nominated Major Ray to be deputy paymaster general with the rank of lieutenant colonel and the nomination failed of confirmation. The house committee findings were that Ray had been engaged in political activities in the interest of the republican party and particularly in the interest of President Taft, and "that Major Ray had been shown personal consideration in assignments and was stationed in Chicago during every presidential campaign." Inasmuch as Ray stood senior in his grade and directly in line for promotion to an existing vacancy in the ranks of lieutenant colonel in the quartermaster's department, Secretary of War Garrison formally requested the attorney general to inform him whether the act of 1890 governing promotions in the army below the rank of brigadier general "should be construed as mandatory upon the president to appoint the senior officer in the grade of major to the vacancy, if in his opinion the record of the officer has been such as to indicate that he was disqualified for promotion, but under the law can not be eliminated either through the agency of a retiring board or a courtmartial."

"WILL THE IMPERATOR PAY?" is the question often asked. The *New York World* expresses it in this way: How can a great steamship like the *Imperator*, costing approximately \$7,500,000 all told, in which size and luxurious appointments rather than the highest speed are prime considerations, be made to pay as a commercial investment? Assuming the highest gross earnings of one voyage from passage money, mails and freight to be \$350,000, and the lowest \$150,000, with the cost of running the ship at \$160,000, it is estimated there would be a handsome return on the capital.

With net earnings of only \$125,000 per voyage during the season and \$50,000 during the non-season, the average would be \$87,500. A three-week itinerary and the allowance of one month a year for overhauling the ship would give a margin of over \$1,250,000 to meet interest on capital at 5 per cent, \$375,000; depreciation at 6 per cent, \$450,000, and annual overhaul \$150,000, with \$275,000 to spare. This is a better return than most railroads can show. But, obviously, the Germans, from their practical knowledge of the Atlantic shipping business, worked out the problem to their own satisfaction long before they laid the keel of the *Imperator*, for two more steamships of even slightly greater tonnage are to follow.

PENNSYLVANIA has substituted electrocution for hanging and the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* says: By the new law providing that electrocution shall be the penalty for the crime of murder in the first degree, Pennsylvania's legislation is brought into line with the enlightened enactments of other commonwealths. New York, in 1888, was the first state to adopt the modern method. The opposition to the measure was strong, on the ground that it provided a "cruel and unusual punishment," forbidden in the constitution. Twenty-five years ago the development of electrical science was barely under way, and the deliberate barbarity of hanging was actually deemed more merciful than the instantaneous termination of life by a force misunderstood and mysterious. Ohio followed suit in 1896, Massachusetts two years later, New Jersey in 1906, Virginia in 1908. Today the state that still adheres to the former brutally primitive system is at least uneasily conscious of its legislative shortcoming. Electrical engineers, in some cases, were opposed to what they considered a perversion of a force not destined to such ignoble uses. But by the time New Jersey adopted her law in 1906 there had been 115 successful electrocutions in New York, and it had been established by scientific observation that death by this means is "painless and instantaneous." Pennsylvania has seen the last of an abhorrent anomaly and has strengthened an established precedent for other states to follow.

DR. WILLIAM J. MAYO, the famous surgeon, startled the medical fraternity by issuing the following statement: After eighteen years of special investigation of cancer of the stomach we are assured that it is a curable disease. Nearly one-third of all cancers occur in the stomach, so our investigation proves that cancer is a curable disease. Of course cancer of the stomach can not be cured in all cases. Out of 1,000 cases operated on from 1894 to Dec. 31 last, 378 resulted in cures, 246 patients were improved and their lives prolonged and 376 were given up as hopeless after exploratory operations. Perhaps all of these cases could have been cured if the disease had been diagnosed in time.

ALAW that is "illuminating in effect" is what the *Nashville Tennessean* calls the newspaper publicity law. The *Tennessean* says: There are some newspapers that very vigorously object to the federal law affording the readers of newspapers official information as to who own, or hold mortgages on, the newspapers that come into their families and teach many things to them, some wholesome and some unwholesome. The supreme court has held that the law is not an invasion of the liberty of the press, but on the contrary it is an official label setting forth to the public in plain terms the real character of the publication that is either serving the people or promoting some selfish interest. Large interests have been known to buy newspapers and publish them to carry out certain designs that could not be done without an organ. These newspapers have pretended to be one thing when they were really another thing. They have pretended to be giving wholesome service when really what they have been doing has been unwholesome and sometimes venal and corrupt, and now such newspapers may be