

CURRENT ITEMS.

James J. Hill, president of the Great Northern Railway company, who has returned from St. Paul to New York, expressed the conviction that the tide of prosperity is turning and that there are indications of a significant recession in business.

General Loynaz del Castillo, of Cuba, is out with another statement calling for liberty or death. In a statement published in La Juch, he says: Independence or death is the only issue.

Unless the strictest economy is practiced, a timber famine will result in the United States within the next few years, is the opinion of R. S. Kellogg, United States forest inspector, who spoke before the Western Society of Engineers at Chicago.

In the postoffice appropriation line the controversy between newspapers and magazines which carry coupon advertisements was disposed of by the senate by the adoption of the following provision: "That hereafter newspapers and periodicals may carry blank or printed return coupons as part of advertisements or other blank space for writing concerning the subjects treated, not in excess of one-third of the superficial area occupied by the advertisements or article, without impairing their rights to the second class rates of postage."

The U. S. Senate, in committee of the whole, accepted the Beveridge amendment to the pure food law, requiring that the inspected meat not only must be marked "inspected and passed" in order that it may be admitted to interstate commerce, but the corporation offering the products for shipment shall also cause the label to be attached giving the date of inspection and packing.

Replying to a question regarding the size of John D. Rockefeller's fortune, Frederick T. Gates, Mr. Rockefeller's business representative, said: "There have been a great many amusing misstatements on this subject. Several years ago Senator Hoar in the senate credited Mr. Rockefeller with a fortune of 1000 million dollars. The facts are that Mr. Rockefeller has authorized a statement that his fortune cannot exceed 250 to 300 million dollars. Furthermore his income cannot in his most prosperous year have exceeded 15 to 20 millions. The public generally is under the impression that he owns a majority of the Standard Oil stock. The facts are he owns about 20 per cent."

The committee of policy-holders of the New York Mutual Life were defeated in the election for directors by a decisive vote. The official figures are as follows: Administration ticket, 199,182. United committee ticket, 69,161. Selected fusion ticket, 3,447. Although the complicated system adopted by the \$35 a day inspectors appointed by Insurance Superintendent Kelsey to canvass the New York vote have not made sufficient progress to announce the result of the preliminary count, there seems little doubt that the McCall-Morgan administration combination was equally successful.

ARMY OFFICERS IN CHARGE.

The Panama Canal to Be Constructed Under Government Engineers.

James F. Stevens, chief engineer of the Panama canal has resigned; the bid of W. J. Oliver for the contract to dig the canal has been rejected; the Senate committee on canals has failed to report the nominations of the canal commissioners, hence there will be no canal commission after March 4; army officers "who will not heed attacks in Congress and from the press and who will be content with small pay" are to take up the great task and Major George W. Goethals, energetic and young enough to complete the project before he comes of retiring age, is to head the organization.

An official statement from the White house officers announced that all the bids have been rejected. The form is declared, after investigation, to be defective. The purpose of the government to secure for building the canal the services of the best and most experienced contractors has failed. The canal probably will be dug by contract, but the future plans in that direction are indefinite.

The present force and organization on the isthmus, which Mr. Stevens leaves as the chief monument to his eighteen months of labor there, will be continued under new supervision. But there will be quite a change in the personnel. Second in command to Major Goethals will be Major David DuB. Gallard. Major Seibert will be third in command. The President intends to have a line of army engineers trained into the special work, so that if one drops out because of incapacity or for any other reason there will be another to take his place.

Furthermore, Joseph Clay Stiles Blackburn, Democrat, of Versailles, Ky., soon to become an ex-senator after thirty years in public life, probably will be made a member of the canal commission, and it is in the President's mind to make all three army engineers canal commissioners. He will raise their salaries beyond the compensation of military officers. Major Goethals will have \$15,000, half the salary paid to Mr. Stevens.

There is mystery behind the resignation of Stevens. It came as a surprise to the President about ten days ago. Apparently all the reasons for it have not been told. The chief engineer smarted under the attack upon the canal. He was unused to government ways of doing business and resented the constant scrutiny of details. When the Senate committee on interoceanic canals wanted to bring him back last spring to testify again he informed the President that he would resign if the committee insisted.

More than once Mr. Stevens asserted that he would build the canal in quick time if the government would permit him to build a board fence around it and exclude all except the workers. He was jealous, too, of those who preceded him and who left their places to accept more lucrative employment in private enterprises. Nothing seems to be known here of Mr. Stevens' plans. He is to give way to Major Goethals as soon as convenient.

Experience.

A certain member of the Pittsburg Stock Exchange has set his nephew up in business three times but the young man lacks something essential to success in the line selected for him, and has failed with each effort.

When he recently appeared before the uncle with his fourth request, the latter said: "You must learn to lean on yourself. I can't carry you all my life. I'll tell you what I'll do. You owe me a great deal as the result of your last failure. Pitch in on your own hook and go it alone till you pay off those debts. When you've done that, I'll give you a check for what they amount to. Such an experience will do you more good than all the money I could give you now."

Two months later the nephew walked in with every claim receipted, and the uncle was so delighted that he gave the promised check.

"How did you manage it, Howard?" he asked, after an expression of congratulation.

"I borrowed the money," replied Howard.—Harper's Weekly.

The Unquiet Stars.

In a recent suit in a Cincinnati court a lawyer was cross-examining a German, the point under inquiry being the relative position of the doors, windows, and so forth, in a house in which a certain transaction was alleged to have occurred.

"And now, my good man," the lawyer said, "will you be good enough to tell the court how the stairs run in your house?"

The German looked dazed for a moment. "How do they run?" he repeated.

"Yes; how do the stairs run?" "Vell," continued the witness, "ven I am oop-stairs dey run down, and ven I am down-stairs dey run oop."—Harper's Weekly.

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Municipal play-grounds were given a big boost by President Roosevelt and Representative Boutell at Chicago at a banquet given by the Washington Playgrounds' association. The President wrote a letter in which he asked that the inalienable right of boys and girls to frolic should not be denied them. Representative Boutell explained his bill to Congress for the establishment of playgrounds in Washington. The President advised all cities to make provisions at once for playgrounds, lest suitable sites be obtained only at immense cost. As an example of hindsight, he pointed to New York, where playgrounds recently cost 1 million dollars.

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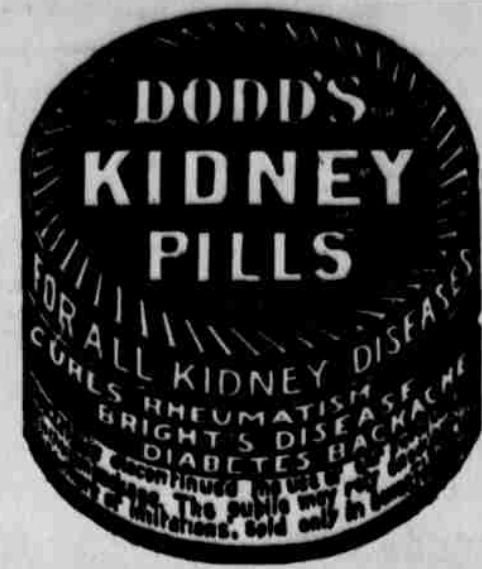
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The supreme court has decided that the State of Kansas has no right to intervene in behalf of the railroad in the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Indian territory land grant case. The railroad claims land along the right-of-way worth several million dollars, belonging to members of the Five Civilized tribes. The State of Kansas brought the suit as trustee for the railroad company last October. Solicitor General Hoyt filed with the court a motion that the case be dismissed on the ground that the State of Kansas had no right to bring the suit, as it was not a trustee for the railroad in the land grant. This motion the court granted. Its decision was announced by Chief Justice Fuller. A written opinion was not handed down. The court merely dismissed the case. This ends the suit in its present form. If the Missouri, Kansas & Texas renews its claim, it must be brought before the court directly by the railroad company.



The great sulphur-bottom whale of the Pacific ocean is, so far as known, the largest animal that ever lived on this planet. One specimen, which was measured, was 95 feet in length and 35 feet in girth. Its estimated weight was 294,000 pounds.

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