

## Current Topics

**R** E P O R T S FROM PARIS ANNOUNCE THAT Attorney General Knox made a brief stay in that city, where he went for the purpose of investigating the title to the Panama canal property offered to the United States by the French company. It is stated that the attorney general has found the title to be valid and that the organization for the canal work will be promptly pushed.

**I** N RECENT YEARS MANY DISCOVERIES have been made concerning the uses to which paper may be put. It is now announced that artificial teeth and "uppers" for boots and shoes may be made of paper. It is also announced that a business firm in Boston has under consideration the proposition to begin the work of manufacturing hats from paper.

**T** H E G O O D W O R K U N D E R T A K E N B Y CIRCUIT Attorney Folk in unearthing the corruption in public office at St. Louis is progressing in a way eminently satisfactory to good citizens everywhere. Indictments have already been returned against eighteen members of the municipal assembly and Mr. Folk has been placed in possession of the methods of the combine by its "business agent," J. K. Murrell. The purpose of this combine as stated by Murrell was "to sell legislation" and in one instance the sum of \$75,000 was placed in a safety vault, to which vault the "business agent" of these public officials was given the key. According to Murrell's confession this combine received \$47,500 for one measure in which a great corporation was interested. Mr. Folk is now seeking to bring the bribe givers as well as the bribe takers to justice and it is to be hoped that he will succeed in his patriotic effort.

**E** V E N T H E C H I L D R E N A R E T O B E C O M E the victims of the trust system. The candy trust has been organized in New Jersey with a capital stock of nine million dollars, which it is announced will soon be increased to twenty-five million dollars, probably after undergoing the water cure treatment. The charter of this new concern states that the object of the company is to manufacture sugar, glucose, candy, chocolate, licorice, chewing gum, popcorn, or any other variety of confection.

**A** S T R A N G E I N S T A N C E O F P R E C O C I T Y A N D its unhappy results is reported from Indianapolis, Ind. Carl Linn, a child three years of age, recently became famous because he had learned to ride a bicycle, which was built especially for him. The child had not yet learned to talk and had but commenced to walk. The little one was attacked with brain fever and meningitis and after an illness of several weeks died. Physicians attribute the child's death to bicycle riding.

**T** H E L E G A L P R O F E S S I O N H A S F O R S E V E R A L years felt the effect of the trust system. H. Gerald Chapan, editor of the American Lawyer, says that "within twenty years the individual or general practice lawyer will be extinct except only in the remoter country districts. As a calling the law is fast becoming obsolete." Mr. Chapan says that all law business may be divided into ten parts, as follows: Real estate 3, corporations 2, commercial cases and collections 2, wills and estates 1, accident and negligent suits 1, defense of criminals 1. In all these parts, according to Mr. Chapan, except perhaps the last one, the lawyer is beginning to be superseded by other agencies.

**T** H E C O N F E S S I O N O F J. K. MURRELL WITH relation to corruption in the St. Louis municipal assembly, revealed the fact that the councilmen who had combined for the purpose of selling legislation had each been required to subscribe to a blood curdling oath, in words as follows: "I do solemnly swear before the Almighty God that in associating myself and in becoming a member of this combine I will vote and act with the combine whenever and wherever I may be so ordered to do so. And I further solemnly swear that I will not, at any place or time, reveal the fact that there is a combine, and that I will not communicate to any person or persons anything that may take place at any meeting of the combine. And I do solemnly agree that in case I should reveal the fact that any person in this combine has

received money, I hereby permit and authorize other members of this combine to take the forfeit of my life in such manner as they may deem proper, and that my throat may be cut, my tongue torn out and my body cast into the Mississippi river. And all of this I do solemnly swear, so help me God." It is strange that men who would enter into a conspiracy for the purpose of "selling legislation" would imagine that an oath pretended to be taken in the presence of the Creator would have binding effect. The oath taken by the St. Louis conspirators is the worst bit of blasphemy that has been brought to public attention in recent years.

**T** H E C H A R A C T E R O F T H E R E C E P T I O N S accorded the Boer generals by the English people may be better understood when one reads an editorial protest made by the Sheffield Telegraph, referring to the ovations accorded Botha, Delarey and De Wet. The Telegraph says: "No one is churlish enough to wish to withhold a courteous greeting to our old foes who fought so stubbornly. Far less will anyone refuse to accept them as friends if they are honestly done with the past and at heart loyal to the peace of Vereeniging. But what need is there for British crowds gathering round these men, literally besieging their hotel and following them with tumultuous cheering whenever they appear in public? Why should we make heroes of them, and of the three why should we single out DeWet as the greatest hero? Popular imagination, we know, was fired by the daring and resourcefulness of the wily Boer who so frequently escaped by the skin of his teeth from positions in which he seemed hopelessly pinned, but is DeWet the sort of man around whom should gather the glamour of romance? The war is but of yesterday. There are thousands of homes saddened with vacant chairs, homes hallowed by memories of brave men who have found soldiers' graves on the veldt some seven thousand miles away. Let us remember our own people first. How must these cheers and shouts of 'Good old De Wet!' sound in the ears of widows bereft of their husbands, of fathers and mothers mourning over their sons?"

**N** O T A L L O F T H E F O R E I G N P A P E R S U N D E R S T A N D political situations in the United States, but the Vienna Neues Wiener Tageblatt is an exception to the rule. This paper, commenting upon Mr. Roosevelt's "campaign against the trusts," says: "Messrs. Morgan, Carnegie, and Rockefeller can rest content that the president does not mean mischief, but quite the contrary. That military imperialist sees in trusts a national source of power and a medium for American economic imperialism. Accordingly, he takes them under his powerful protection. Europe knows what it has to expect from President Roosevelt, the once-reputed opponent of trusts, who is now transformed into a reckless economic imperialist."

**W** H E N I N F O R M E D T H A T S P E A K E R H E N D E R S O N had withdrawn from the congressional race, Postmaster General Payne declared: "This is the most extraordinary thing that ever occurred in American politics." One of the interesting features of Mr. Henderson's sensational retirement is the general amazement occasioned by his action even among his political associates. It is reported from Dubuque that Mr. Henderson consulted only with three friends before he made his announcement, and that even in these instances, he did not ask their advice, but simply announced to them his determination to withdraw.

**I** F A N Y O N E D O U B T S T H A T T H E H E N D E R S O N retirement occasioned general surprise among even the political associates of the speaker the doubt may be removed by observing the manner in which the news was received by the republican party leaders. The New York correspondent to the Chicago Record-Herald says that Speaker Henderson tossed a dynamite shell into the midst of a quiet conference between President Roosevelt and his quintet of senatorial advisers late this afternoon. If a foreign battle ship had hove to in Oyster Bay and thrown a thirteen-inch steel shot into the cottage at Sagamore Hill it could not have caused more consternation than did the news of Speaker Henderson's withdrawal from the congressional race.

**M** R. R O O S E V E L T W A S S E A T E D U P O N T H E piazza of his home in company with a number of friends when he was called to the telephone for a talk with Mr. Babcock, chairman of the republican congressional campaign committee. Mr. Babcock had received Speaker Henderson's telegram and it is reported that "his agitation trembled over the wires to Oyster Bay." Returning to

the porch it is said that the president "fairly shouted the news at his visitors." Senator Allison was one of the president's guests. He promptly declared: "I don't believe it. There must be some mistake. Henderson could not make such a fool of himself." It is said that at the very time this news was announced to the president, he was discussing with his friends the embarrassing position in which the republican party was placed with relation to the trusts and tariff. The New York correspondent of the Chicago-Record-Herald says: "And at that moment there descended upon the president and his council of wise men word from the speaker of the house that in one of the banner republican districts of a banner republican state he would not stand for re-election, because he was not in sympathy with a large share of his party who wanted something like free trade. This was dramatic, indeed. It was almost tragic. The news from Iowa had cast a heavy shadow over the president's policy party."

**S** O M E O F T H E S T A T E M E N T S M A D E B Y T H E president's guests on this occasion with respect to Mr. Henderson's withdrawal will be of interest. One of the number exclaimed: "Well, we have just decided that we don't want a tariff question to bother us this year, and here is Dave Henderson coming at us like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky, making it absolutely certain that we've got to have a tariff question whether we like it or not." Senator Allison sighed and declared: "It is incomprehensible, absolutely incomprehensible." One member of the republican congressional committee declared: "It will cost the Dubuque district," and another said: "That isn't the worst of it; it will cost the next house. This is an earthquake and it means that the republican party is going to split in two on the tariff question. This explosion will reverberate throughout the country. In twenty-four hours the people of the United States will be talking revision. The thing has been smoldering for a long time, and now Henderson has suddenly blown it into a blaze. If we save the house of representatives after this we shall be in great luck."

**T** H E Q U E S T I O N W I T H R E L A T I O N T O M R. Henderson's withdrawal that is uppermost in republican gatherings is, "Why did he do it?" Republican leaders are seeking to devise all manner of excuses in order to avoid the one presented by Mr. Henderson himself and the one which will have perhaps the most disastrous effect upon the fortunes of the republican party. No attempt is made to conceal the fact that republicans are sorely grieved because of the speaker's action. They think that his retirement under fire is a poor return for all the honors which the republican party has bestowed upon him, and some correspondents for republican papers even go so far as to assert that the tariff question had, in fact, nothing to do with Mr. Henderson's retirement, but that the real reason was that he had heard that his enemies intended to make a "scandal campaign" against him. While, these correspondents say, Mr. Henderson was perfectly innocent of the thing to be charged, yet they declare he was adverse to facing the fire.

**O** N E O F T H E D U T I E S O F T H E C E N S U S B U R E A U is to ascertain the number of persons who are able to read and write in any language. Investigation on this line indicates the conditions of illiteracy. The bureau has recently issued its statement on this point and it shows that Nebraska occupies the place of honor. The following statement shows the percentage of persons in the several states between the ages of 10 and 14 who are able to read and write, the states being arranged in the order of increasing literacy: Nebraska 99.66, Iowa 99.63, Oregon 99.58, Ohio 99.51, Kansas 99.48, Indiana 99.45, Connecticut 99.43, Utah 99.34, Massachusetts 99.33, Michigan 99.30, Washington 99.30, Minnesota 99.29, Wisconsin 99.27, New York 99.26, Illinois 99.18, Wyoming 99.08, Vermont 99.05, South Dakota 99.00, California 98.99, Pennsylvania 98.99, New Jersey 98.81, Idaho 98.77, Colorado 98.48, New Hampshire 98.31, District of Columbia 98.25, Rhode Island 98.12, Montana 98.07, Maine 97.92, North Dakota 97.65, Oklahoma 97.26, Missouri 96.64, Delaware 95.40, Maryland 95.36, West Virginia 94.74, Nevada 91.88, Kentucky 91.56, Texas 90.74, Florida 86.24, Tennessee 85.08, Virginia 84.33, Arkansas 83.80, New Mexico 80.07, North Carolina 78.25, Arizona 77.79, Mississippi 77.62, Georgia 77.21, Indian Territory 75.61, Alabama 71.11, South Carolina 70.44, Louisiana 67.12. The improvement in the efficiency of educational systems is shown by the fact that while in 1890 there were only thirteen states in which the percentage of children from 10 to 14 able to read and write was over 98, that percentage in the report for 1900 prevails in