

CURRENT TOPICS

SERIOUS CHARGES RELATING TO IRREGULARITIES in the administration of the postal affairs have been formally preferred by Seymour W. Tulloch, formerly cashier of the Washington city postoffice. In a letter to the postmaster general, Mr. Tulloch says that in all instances of irregularities and favoritism, the proper allowances, records, vouchers, etc., were carefully executed and little information can be ascertained by their investigation. He says that the real facts behind these allowances and vouchers are known to few, "those interested who will not and others, clerks, who dare not talk." This was probably meant as a broad hint to the postmaster general to make it easy for the clerks "who dare not talk," to speak without fear of injury to themselves.

THE THING WHICH LED TO SUBSEQUENT irregularities, abuses, and extravagances and finally Mr. Tulloch's removal from office, related, according to the former cashier's statement, to the purchase of a piece of office furniture. The chief of the salary and allowance division of the postoffice department desired a file case, but his requisitions were rejected by his superior officer. Mr. Tulloch says that subsequently vouchers were presented to him for this file case accompanied by an allowance for its payment out of the funds of the Washington city postoffice. Mr. Tulloch says that he directed the contractor to obtain a certificate of delivery of the goods from the chief of the salary and allowance division, but that officer refused to accept the receipt fearing exposure during the audit of the vouchers and Tulloch says that he refused to pay for the case until some one was willing to sign the receipt. Mr. Tulloch further charges that on one occasion the first assistant postmaster general sent his clerk to Tulloch with a voucher for a lump sum for traveling expenses accompanied by an allowance for its payment from the funds of the Washington city postoffice. Knowing that such a demand was irregular, on its face, Tulloch protested. He says that official became very angry at the idea of a mere cashier attempting to make any suggestions to him and refused to amend and itemize his voucher. The Washington city postmaster sustained the position taken by the cashier, but finally the auditor of the postoffice department sent word to the cashier that if he would enclose the voucher in his next account, the informality would be overlooked. Mr. Tulloch says that an inspection of the Washington accounts will show many similar subsequent payments of traveling and other expenses on account of departmental officials without the usual departmental checks.

THAT POSTOFFICE EMPLOYEES WERE REQUIRED to furnish a bond, the same to be provided by a single recognized company, irrespective of the fact that such employes could furnish good personal bonds or might desire to avail themselves of the competition in premiums between other bonding companies, is another charge made by Mr. Tulloch. He says that the Washington city postmaster had a conference with George W. Beaver, then chief of the salary and allowance division, and reported that Mr. Beaver had said "Senator Platt of New York would appreciate the fact if he would select the senator's company." Mr. Tulloch admits that the original circular was subsequently modified by allowing employes to select their own bonds or bonding companies.

SEVERAL MYSTERIOUS TRANSACTIONS with relation to the purchase of high-priced furniture are referred to by Mr. Tulloch. In these the name of Perry S. Heath, formerly first assistant postmaster general, figures, and not entirely in a creditable way, if Mr. Tulloch's statements are to be relied upon. That a complimentary payroll was maintained in the postoffice department, is another charge made by Mr. Tulloch. In this it is claimed that certain men and women were paid money out of the public treasury without doing any work. It is also charged that a number of persons designated as finance clerks, auditors, etc., were paid from \$200 to \$300 each per annum more than their lawful salary. Mr. Tulloch says that with only one or two exceptions,

the positions as cleaners, char-women, laborers, etc., were evasions of the civil service law and the parties did not perform their duties implied in their official designations and often no service whatever. It is further charged that on one occasion, a Porto Rican official was called down sharply by the Washington office with reference to irregularities in his money order account. He wrote back, "Perhaps if you knew who my influence is, you would not write to me in such a manner." Mr. Tulloch says the postal accounts of this official became so confused and full of errors that he refused to pay his salary. Referring to this official, Tulloch says: "He surprised me one day by calling and demanding his back pay. This was refused until his accounts had been audited. He replied, 'Very well, at your convenience. I have been appointed to a \$1,400 position in the land office.'" Mr. Tulloch says that at the time of his removal most of the offices in Porto Rico were in arrears, some of them for a considerable amount, and that the accounts were very much confused. Mr. Tulloch goes into details, making many charges affecting the regularity and honesty of the postal service and among other things charges that during the last four years the members of the household of the postmaster at Washington city have drawn for their services \$40,000 from the local postal revenue.

IN RESPONSE TO THE CHARGES MADE BY Former Cashier Tulloch, Postmaster General Payne has sent a letter to the comptroller of the treasury, the auditor of the postoffice department, and other officials calling their attention to Mr. Tulloch's statements and asking for any explanation or further information that might throw light on the subject. Mr. Payne says that "if those officials allow improper accounts to be audited or suppressed, what might be called 'pay dirt' had been found in the charges impugning their good faith and integrity." Mr. Payne added that irregularities do not necessarily mean anything unlawful. The department may pay out of its own fund either by accident or design and that need not be unlawful. Mr. Payne says the charges will be thoroughly investigated and Senator Thomas C. Platt takes a hand in the discussion to enter a flat denial of Mr. Tulloch's statement relating to the bonding companies. Senator Platt says that he has no interest in any such company.

A BILL IS PENDING IN THE LEGISLATIVE assembly at Melbourne providing for a suppression of the strike. In this bill it is provided that an employe leaving his work without giving four nights' notice is to be assumed to have joined the strike and will incur the penalty of \$500 fine or a year's imprisonment with loss of pension and will be ineligible in the future for government employment. The bill also forbids interference with employes, the collection of strike funds or encouraging the strike in any manner. The bill further empowers the police to destroy documents encouraging the strike, makes printers thereof offenders against the law and declares meetings to be unlawful if four strikers are present. All persons refusing to disperse are liable to arrest without warrants and the police are empowered to forcibly enter meetings.

THE WORK OF RECONSTRUCTING THE Campanile at Venice is progressing and a Rome cablegram to the Chicago Tribune says that in the course of a lecture on various data provided by the examination of the remains of the fallen tower it was said that the shape of the bricks proved them to have been used for various purposes at a previous stage. Their use was for arches, fortifications, the tops of walls, etc. A most important fact is that they are not Venetian, but Roman bricks. Moreover, when they were manufactured they were not manipulated like modern bricks, but were formed from slices of clay as it was found, without the natural layers being disturbed. This process resulted in each individual brick being able to support a weight quite four times as great as the modern ones. The bricks examined are of the first century. One bore the impression of a horseshoe,

conclusively proving the debated point that horseshoes then were in use.

THE DESCENDANTS OF JAMES AND Henry Leonard, who were the first ironmasters in America, have undertaken to commemorate the establishment of the iron industry in the United States by the erection of a monument at Taunton, Mass. The sum of \$40,000 has already been pledged to this plan. The Taunton correspondent for the Chicago Inter-Ocean says: "A design has been completed by Mr. Charles Henry Niehaus of New York. It shows a shaft, which may be of marble or granite, intended to be seventy-five feet in height, resting on a granite pedestal. Around the base of the shaft are grouped twenty-one figures, representing iron workers and phases of the iron industry in early days. The first iron works in the United States were established at Saugus, Mass., in 1643. Three years later a furnace and forge were put in operation at Braintree, and in 1653 the industry was established on a more extensive scale at Taunton. A portion of the plant stood for more than 200 years."

DO DIAMONDS COME FROM THE SKIES? IS an interesting question dealt with by a writer in the Chicago Inter-Ocean. This writer says that the theory was first broached by Meydenhauer. According to this authority, the diamond can be of cosmic origin only, having fallen as a meteorite at a late period of the earth's formation. The localities where diamonds are found contain the residues of not very compact meteoric masses which may have fallen in historic ages and penetrated more or less deeply according to the more or less resistant character of the surface where they fell. The Inter-Ocean writer adds: "The most striking confirmation of the theory comes from Arizona. Here on a broad plain over an area about five miles in diameter were scattered 1,000 to 2,000 masses of metallic iron, the fragments weighing from half a ton to a fraction of an ounce. There is little doubt these masses formed part of meteoric shower, although no record exists as to when the fall took place. Curiously enough, near the center where most of the meteorites have been found is a crater with ragged edges, three-quarters of a mile in diameter and about 600 feet deep, bearing exactly the appearance which would be produced had a mighty mass of iron or falling star struck the ground, scattering in all directions, and buried itself under the surface. Dr. Foote in cutting a section of this meteorite, found the tools were injured by something vastly harder than metallic iron. He examined the specimen chemically and soon afterwards announced to the scientific world that the Arizona meteorite contained black and transparent diamonds. This discovery was verified by Professors Friedel and Nolissan, who found that it contained three varieties of carbon, diamond, graphite, and amorphous carbon."

A REPORT RECENTLY PUBLISHED BY THE London county council presents some interesting information concerning the city of London. According to this report, in the administrative county of London, there are 571,768 inhabited houses, which shelter 4,536,541 persons, or an average of 7.93 as compared with 7.74 ten years before. Industrial workers aggregate 1,013,177, less than three-fourths of whom are males. The mortality in London during that year was greater than that of Amsterdam, Brussels, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Berlin, but less than that of Paris, St. Petersburg, Vienna, and New York. By 1904 London—i. e., the county council—will own 108½ miles of tramways and light railways. In 1901 the gross profit on those then in operation was £147,797. In the last ten years there has been a general decrease in offenses against the law, save drunkenness, and arrests for these have increased from 537 per 100,000 population to 846, or over 50 per cent. The ratable value of the city increased from £19,963,285 in 1891 to £39,769,069 in 1901.

THE OFFICIAL FIGURES OF THE ITALIAN census shows 16,151,130 males and 16,320,123 females, or a total population of 32,475,253.