

CURRENT TOPICS

THE CHARGES OF FRAUD AND CORRUPTION in the postoffice department continue to attract attention. Considerable impatience among the people has been shown because of the slowness of the authorities in pushing the investigation. The president seems to share some of this impatience. Washington dispatches announce that the president is determined not to make any arrangements for his summer vacation until these charges are sifted and a thorough investigation shall have been made. "Forty per cent." is an expression that has figured very conspicuously in these postoffice scandals. It is charged that August W. Machen, former superintendent of the free delivery division, received 40 per cent of the contracts for supplies in his department and the Washington correspondent for the New York World says: "Officials now believe that '40 per cent of all contracts for supplies' was the watchword of those in the postoffice department who sought to enrich themselves at the government's expense. The percentage of the bribes given in the Groff Bros. case and that of McGregor and Upton is exactly the same. In each instance 40 per cent of the proceeds was turned over to those who influenced the purchases. This fact or coincidence will be taken as a leading clue by the inspectors and redoubled exertions made to ascertain how far this system was carried in buying material for public use. It is understood that many instances of fraud have been discovered in limited contracts, which were not continuing, where the statute of limitations prevents prosecutions. The law only reaches continuing contracts, such as the patent letter box fasteners, for the purchase of which Mr. Machen is said to have accepted bribes."

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL WAS LOATH to push these investigations although he is now credited with unusual activity. Messrs. Wynne and Bristow of the postoffice department have figured conspicuously in these inquiries. Mr. Bristow has been the star investigator, while Mr. Wynne, who is the first assistant postmaster general, was among the first to declare that "widespread corruption" existed in the postoffice department and that a thorough investigation would sustain his charge. There has been considerable friction between Postmaster General Payne and his assistant, Mr. Wynne, and it is frequently predicted that in a short time either Mr. Payne must withdraw from the cabinet or Mr. Wynne must retire from the department. No one pretends to say how long the investigation will last. It is generally admitted that a large amount of work remains to be done and it is frequently predicted that the public is yet to be treated with some genuine sensations.

IMPORTANT RESULTS HAVE ALREADY been accomplished by these investigations. The Washington correspondent for the New York World says: "More than two months have elapsed since the present investigation began to bear fruit. It was on March 24 that George W. Beavers, superintendent of the division of salaries and allowances, suddenly and without warning tendered his resignation, which was promptly accepted. The retirement of Mr. Beavers under fire was the first intimation that the inquiry was effective and that corruption would certainly be discovered. Mr. Beavers' division was quickly reorganized; extravagance in expenditures was stopped; a reckless system of promotions, originated to pacify politicians and enable them to maintain their home prestige, discontinued, and many promotions cancelled in compliance with law. Nearly 3,000 promotions in the New York city postoffice alone were suspended pending the charge that they had been sold for a percentage on the dollar of increase. The methods by which a congressional appropriation aggregating millions of dollars had been exhausted four months before the expiration of the fiscal year were abandoned. On April 22 James N. Tyner, assistant attorney general for the postoffice department, was summarily removed because he authorized his wife to rifle an official safe and take away public papers. A recommendation that he be prosecuted is now pending in the district attorney's office. On April 25 George A. C. Christiancy, also an assistant attorney in the same office, was suspended at his own request, pending an investigation yet under way.

On May 25 Daniel V. Miller, an assistant attorney for the department, was arrested for accepting a bribe of \$2,500 in connection with a decision prepared to permit Ryan & Co., a get-rich-quick concern, to use the mails. Joseph M. Johns, the alleged accomplice of Miller, was also arrested. On May 27 August W. Machen, who had been suspended on May 8 as superintendent of the free delivery division, was arrested charged with having accepted bribes aggregating \$22,000 in connection with the purchase of a patent letter box fastener. On the same day Diller B. Groff and Samuel A. Groff were arrested charged with having offered bribes to Mr. Machen. On June 5 Thomas W. McGregor and C. Ellsworth Upton, clerks in Mr. Machen's division, were arrested charged with having accepted bribes amounting to \$8,000 in connection with the purchase of letter pouches for rural carriers. Up to date as a result of the investigation there have been seven arrests, one removal, one suspension and one resignation.

WHILE THE WEST AND SOUTH HAVE been suffering from too much water, New England has been going through a drouth period. The Springfield (Mass.) Republican says that few realize what the loss means. For instance, it is estimated that the value of the hay and forage, cereals and vegetables raised in New England states during the year 1899 amounted to \$136,000,000. The Republican says that the value of these products for this year will not reach more than one-half that amount. The live stock and dairy industry is a very important one in the New England states. In 1899 the value of these industries was placed at \$75,000,000. The Republican says: "Farmers in northern New England are already beginning to sacrifice live stock because of present lack of pasturage and in anticipation of a serious scarcity of winter feed. Hay is rising to unprecedentedly high prices in Vermont and elsewhere. There seems to be no possibility of escaping comparative scarcity and very high prices for feed of all kinds, which in turn will affect the prices of dairy products, increasing the cost of living in the cities and reducing the consumption of manufactured products among the farmers." The Republican says also that "what is true of New England is equally true of all eastern New York state and New Jersey, where farmers are selling off their live stock and preparing for a season of great scarcity."

SEVERAL INSTANCES IN WHICH OPERATIONS were performed on the human heart have recently been reported. The latest instance comes from London. A London dispatch to the New York Herald credits Surgeon Furnivall with this operation. In this dispatch it is said: "John Long, a laborer, was stabbed through the heart in a saloon row, and immediately after he was brought in Dr. Furnivall decided to make an effort to get at the very center of the wound. Long had lost a deal of blood, but his life was saved in the first instance by the blood becoming congealed and closing the wound. The surgeon had to temporarily displace the breast cartilage, the ribs and the lungs. At first he thought the heart itself would have to be removed, but on washing away the blood clots and raising it a little the puncture was found. With artery forceps he gripped the damaged part, and, first with catgut, then with silk, sewed up the small wound the knife had made. Almost immediately there was an improvement of the pulse, and after seventy minutes Long was wheeled out of the operating theatre to a bed, where he has continued to improve."

THE PHILIPPINE COMMISSION HAS ENACTED a bill providing for the government of the Moros. A Manila cablegram to the Associated press says that the measure practically makes the Moro province an autonomous colony of the Philippines, which the Philippine government controls, and creates an appointive legislative council to provide local laws, the commission reserving the right to amend or annul them. The council is to be composed of a governor, secretary, treasurer, engineer, attorney and superintendent of schools. Governor Taft will appoint the officials. The bill will extend the jurisdiction of the Philippine courts and constabulary to the

province and will recognize Moro laws which do not conflict with American laws. The measure also directs the abrogation of the tribal laws, creates Moro courts, provides that the Philippine courts shall try cases between Moro and Christians, gives the province its net customs and forestry collections and authorizes the council to abolish slavery. The province is divided into five districts, Sulu, Zamboanga, Lanao, Cotabato and Davao. The bill provides for partial military government and it is expected that General Leonard Wood will be the first governor of the Moro province.

SOME CURIOUS FACTS ABOUT EGGS ARE presented by a writer in the Chicago Journal. This writer says: "It is rather curious to know just how much pressure an egg will stand. The following tests, given in a scientific journal, may surprise readers. Eight ordinary hens' eggs were found only to give way under a pressure applied all round of between 400 pounds and 675 pounds on the square inch of surface. When the tests were applied internally to twelve eggs they yielded at pressures of thirty-two pounds to sixty-five pounds per square inch. The pressure required merely to crush the eggs was between forty pounds and seventy-five pounds per square inch. The average thickness of the shells was thirteen-thousandths of an inch."

A WELL AUTHENTICATED CASE WHEREIN hypnotism was successfully substituted for an anesthetic in an operation reported from London by the correspondent for the New York Sun. This is described as the first instance in England of hypnotic suggestion in a serious surgical operation. A woman, 28 years old, was suffering from a severely ulcerated leg, and it was decided that her life could be saved only by the amputation of the limb. She desired to be hypnotized for the operation, dreading the use of chloroform, which, it was believed, would have been dangerous in her case. Dr. Aldrich of Clapham, a suburb of London, hypnotized her experimentally on several successive days, the hypnotic trance lasting about half an hour on each occasion. All the tests applied proved satisfactory, and on Wednesday Dr. Aldrich operated upon her in the presence of two other surgeons and a nurse. All the doctors were somewhat doubtful of success and had provided chloroform in case of emergency. The operation began at 4:50 o'clock in the afternoon. While it was in progress the patient chatted with the nurse and drank wine. To an ordinary observer she would have appeared to have been conscious the whole time. Nevertheless, the operation was painless, and she was unaware of what was passing. While operating Dr. Aldrich said: "I am cutting off your leg below the knee." The patient laughed and said: "All right, hold my hand. One of the surgeons took hold of her hand, and when the nerves were severed the patient gripped the doctor's hand hard. The operation was completed at 5:10. The patient was awakened at 5:15, whereupon she said: "I have pins and needles." There were no symptoms of shock. Her pulse and temperature were normal, her spirits are high and she eats well.

ASSUMING THAT MR. ROOSEVELT WILL be nominated by acclamation by the republican party, a writer in the Chicago Record-Herald points out that that distinction has rarely been conferred upon candidates of any political party. "The convention system which began to take shape in the early '30's," says this writer, "left the field open for spirited preliminary struggles, but one of the exceptions to the rule that has since become common occurred in 1831, when Henry Clay was chosen as the standard-bearer of the national republicans by a unanimous vote. A little later, in 1832, Jackson was nominated by resolution at a national democratic convention after he had secured a number of state nominations under an older system. Van Buren received every vote at the democratic convention of 1835 and a nomination by resolution in 1840, and Clay was nominated by acclamation by the whig convention of 1844. The power and popularity of Jackson, which sustained Van Buren as well as himself, and the popularity of Clay explain these