

CURRENT TOPICS

THE ENORMOUS INCREASE IN THE NUMBER of immigrants will be better appreciated when it is known that in one day during the month of April, 1903, 12,784 people landed at Ellis island. The New York correspondent for the St. Louis Republic says that "so congested has the port of entry become with the pauper hordes of Europe that the facilities for examining each individual considered adequate one year ago have been so overtaxed that the unusual procedure of inspecting steerage passengers at the pier was resorted to." Ellis island's capacity for handling immigrants has been found to be 8,000 a day, but, according to the Republic correspondent, the island is now so thronged with immigrants that there is hardly room to move around. Officials of the immigration bureau say that the year 1903 will provide the high record mark, for statistics so far show almost double the influx of last year.

AN INTERESTING DESCRIPTION OF THE methods employed in handling immigrants is given by the Republic's New York correspondent. As each boatload arrives, the immigrants are directed up the main stairway in single file. Over the railing of the balcony high above the main floor, they see suspended before them, as they ascend, a large flag like design of which many of them behold for the first time—the stars and stripes of freedom. As the line moves up to the top of the stairway the passport of each immigrant are stamped with arrival date, and their first examination, that of the medical staff, takes place. Each immigrant is carefully scrutinized for the much-dreaded and contagious diseases—favus and trachoma—concealed arms or hands are uncovered, and any lameness is inquired into. Suspects are put aside into the detention cage and further examined in the private rooms of the hospital board, and if in need of medical attention they are sent over to the hospital, a large, new structure opposite the boat slip, and thoroughly equipped with the most modern and up-to-date appliances for the treatment of any medical or surgical cases. Those who pass the medical inspection file into the various compartments located on the large main floor, which are numbered. Each immigrant is ticketed, and there are thirty of each number, that being the list of names on each manifest. When the recorders are ready for a squad they are led out of the compartment and form a line leading to the recorders' desks, of which there are twelve, at the west end of the floor, and several lines of immigrants are being examined at the same time.

IF ALL QUESTIONS ARE PROPERLY ANSWERED and the money in hand is sufficient and if a good record has been shown, the immigrant passes down to the railroad floor and secures transportation to New York or the west. If, however, the immigrant cannot pass inspection, he is held for the board of special inquiry, which board further investigates and passes upon his case. This board rejects many applicants on the ground that they have a criminal record, are paupers or diseased, or have been brought in under a labor contract. The rejected ones are returned at the expense of the steamship company. During the year 1902 there were returned 4,479 paupers, 274 contract laborers, and 711 diseased persons. The Republic correspondent says: "The sorrow, anguish, and despair of some of the excluded are touching in the extreme, but why should we, a prosperous, young and God-fearing country, be loaded down with the scum, the pauper and the criminal classes of the older European and Asiatic countries, who are only too glad and eager to thrust on us the load—some burdens with which for centuries they have been afflicted?"

INVESTIGATIONS IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE postoffice department have already disclosed a vast amount of corruption and those who are in a position to know say that there are many sensations to come. John R. Proctor, president of the civil service commission, has made a report in which, among other things, he says: "The investigations seem to show clearly that most of the irregularities herein set forth were directed by the department on request or suggestion by high department officials and in other case came

to the postmaster with all the force of a direction." The name of Perry S. Heath, former first assistant postmaster general and now secretary of the republican national committee, figures conspicuously in these investigations. The Washington correspondent for the New York World, under date of June 13, said that if Mr. Heath "does not start on his suddenly arranged six months' trip to Japan pretty soon, it is quite likely he will be called to Washington to answer some embarrassing questions." The World's correspondent says that Mr. Proctor's report shows that Heath "conducted his office as first assistant postmaster general as a vast clearing house for the political obligations incurred by Mark Hanna prior to the first McKinley campaign and during that campaign. Heath paid the political debts of Hanna." According to the Proctor report, in Washington city alone four hundred persons were improperly appointed to office during one year.

NOT THE LEAST INTERESTING FEATURE of the postoffice scandals is that relating to the charge that the investigations have developed that among the politicians in control, there existed a plot to prevent Roosevelt's nomination. The Washington correspondent for the New York World says that he has secured from a government official who has been intimately associated with both the president and the postoffice department for nearly two years a statement "laying bare the inner history of an amazing network of postal irregularities." According to the World's informant there exists in the postal branch of the government a clique of officials who have used their official position for personal profit by levying blackmail upon all contractors for supplies. This clique has been supported and maintained by men powerful in the national republican organization, by at least one United States senator, several members of congress, and by prominent republican leaders in various parts of the country. It is further charged by this same informant that republican heads of the department postal service were cognizant of the evils and tolerated them at the direct instance of prominent republican leaders; that the members of this clique paid for their protection by expanding for the benefit of their protectors the rural free delivery service at the expense to the government of many millions of dollars.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF VAST POLITICAL power in the rural free delivery will be better understood by a glance at the appropriations to this branch of the postal service. The World's Washington correspondent points out that in 1897 the amount was \$1,000,000; 1898, \$50,000; 1899, \$150,000; 1900, \$450,000; 1901, \$1,750,000; 1902, \$3,993,740; 1903, \$5,000,000; with a deficiency appropriation of \$500,000 added; 1904, \$12,000,000. The estimated cost of the service when it is completed as now planned will be \$24,000,000 a year. This high government official is quoted by the World as authority for the charge that while the creation of the rural free delivery bureau found its inspiration in the demand of the farmers for increased mail facilities it was later transformed into a perfectly organized factitious machine representing nearly 100,000 votes and was intended to be used as a club by members of the national republican committee and their aids who were secretly working against Mr. Roosevelt's nomination. It seems also to be admitted that the investigation was originally made for the purpose of destroying this political conspiracy and the World's correspondent, speaking on the authority of the high government official, says that in the uncovering of this conspiracy "the present investigators incidentally disclosed a system of graft in several branches of the postal service."

A REPORT RECENTLY MADE BY THE BUREAU of forestry shows that on an average each year sixty lives are lost in forest fires and that \$25,000,000 worth of property is destroyed, more than 10,000,000 acres of timber land are burned over and young forest ground worth at the lowest estimate \$75,000,000 is killed.

ELIZABETH COOMBS ADAMS DIED JUNE 13 at Quincy, Mass., aged ninety-five years. She was the grand-daughter of President John

Adams and was the eldest daughter of Thomas B. Adams, son of the second president. Miss Adams was present at the meeting between Lafayette and John Adams in 1825, when the cornerstone of Bunker Hill monument was laid, and she attended the inauguration of every president from that of her uncle, John Quincy Adams, to that of Grover Cleveland.

A LONG PERIOD OF DROUTH HAS BEEN visited upon some of the eastern states. The weather bureau has referred to this season's eastern drouth as unprecedented, but a writer in the New York Evening Post takes issue on this point and says that the most serious devastation from this cause occurred in 1881. In April, 1881, a commercial review said: "The winter has been unusually severe and prolonged, coming on early and continuing late, and more lately the wheat-growing sections of the northwest have suffered from floods beyond all precedent. Winter came on so suddenly last year that farmers have had no time to plough to the extent desired, and the floods this spring have overflowed much land, so that it could not be sowed. In June, the agricultural bureau reported for winter wheat 'an average condition for the whole country of only 7,' with drouth not only in the eastern and central states, but in California. This drouth continued. Wheat sold on August 1 at \$1.25 per bushel; it reached \$1.53 on October 1. Every one will remember the stifling heat of that autumn; the burnt meadows, and the 'yellow days,' when smoke from the blazing woods of Maine overspread New England and New York. The government's September condition estimate on corn was only 60. Not until the opening of October was the long drouth broken. The year's full crop of wheat was 383,280,000 bushels, against 498,549,000 in 1880. Of corn only 1,194,916,000 bushels were produced, as against 1,717,434,000."

ANOTHER FAMOUS DROUTH YEAR WAS 1890, and the Post writer points out that the government's report of June made no reference to a drouth, winter wheat's poor condition resulting from an unfavorable start. Drouth in the Missouri valley began in July, however, and lasted until late in the summer. During July, the government's condition estimate on corn was cut down from 93.1 to 73.3, and on spring wheat from 94.4 to 83.2. Rain came at the close of August; but too late to save the full crop. The yield of wheat was cut down 91,000,000 bushels from 1889, and the yield of corn 622,000,000. The seasons just described were both unlike 1903, whose drouth not only came too late to impair the winter crop very seriously, but too early to interfere on any large scale with the spring wheat yield, and with a water-soaked western soil to help the future growth.

DOMESTIC SCIENCE IS TAUGHT IN A PRACTICAL way at Park College at Parkville, Mo. At that college the young women do the cooking for more than three hundred students, no servants being employed and a systematic rotation of work by which each one becomes acquainted with various lines of work. This plan is said to operate very successfully. Commenting upon it, a writer in the New York Tribune says: "At Mount Holyoke, in its seminary days, and at Wellesley College, which was modelled largely on Mount Holyoke, a system was at one time in vogue by which the light housework, such as dusting, chamberwork, serving in the dining room and lamp trimming, was done by the students, but the idea involved was less to teach housewifery than to save the wages of servants. There was, all the same, a notion that such duties in some way tended to counterbalance and mitigate the blue-stocking tendencies of Greek and Latin, and their influence was believed to be distinctly feminizing. One young woman would fill salt cellars for a year; another would spend her daily hour of housework trimming German student lamps; still another would be deputed to care for the Browning room, the holy of holies, the shrine, the penetralia, the arcanum of Wellesley College. As it emerged from its earlier traditions and gained in ambition and scope,