

CURRENT TOPICS

PUBLIC ATTENTION WAS RECENTLY ATTRACTED to an imposing incident that took place at Oyster Bay. The combined squadrons of the United States navy were assembled in order, as the Washington correspondent for the New York World puts it, "to make a holiday for President Roosevelt, his family, and a few invited friends." The World correspondent says that the bringing of the ships to the president's summer home involved the expenditure of a large amount of public money amounting almost to a quarter of a million dollars and all for the purpose of providing a holiday for the president, the members of his family and his guests. The World correspondent says: "Naval officers are especially critical and point out that the Oyster Bay meeting resulted not only in valuable loss of time to the squadron, which was interrupted for one whole week in the summer maneuvers, but also in serious damage to several of the ships and small craft. During the review 2,604 shots were fired from the six-pounders. The cost of the saluting charge of a six-pounder is 40 cents."

ON THE OCCASION OF THIS REMARKABLE exhibit at the president's summer home, an accident occurred to the Massachusetts. It is said that this great vessel was hurrying out of Bar Harbor in a fog to catch up with the other ships, and that it ran onto Egg Rock, and that had it not been for the captain's anxiety to reach Oyster Bay with the rest of the fleet, the Massachusetts would have stayed at anchor until the thick fog lifted. The Barry and Decatur collided and this the World's Washington correspondent attributes to "the enthusiasm of the president to call for a flying wedge." It is estimated that to repair the damage caused by this maneuver at least \$20,000 will be necessary. It is claimed that the cost of coal in this utterly useless holiday affair will amount to a very large sum and altogether it is said that the people of the United States expended very nearly one quarter of a million dollars in order to provide President Roosevelt and his guests with a day's entertainment.

GENERAL DISSATISFACTION HAS BEEN displayed with respect to the methods employed by the administration in "investigating" the alleged scandals in the postoffice department. It is pointed out that while Mr. Bristow has manifested very clearly a disposition to go thoroughly into these investigations he has been seriously handicapped and the results have been by no means satisfactory, although sufficient has been developed to show that in the postoffice department corruption and dishonesty prevail to an alarming extent. Many have insisted in the light of the disclosures that have been made in the postoffice department without serious effort on the part of the administration's representatives, that it is fair to presume that dishonesty and corruption might by rigid investigation be exposed in other federal departments, and yet it has not seemed that the administration is at all anxious to probe into other departments. On the contrary, in spite of the fact that many hints of a serious character have been thrown out relating to the integrity of the service in several other branches of the federal service, if the representatives of the administration have taken any notice whatever of the situation, it has been for the purpose of discrediting and discouraging investigations in that direction.

LONG AGO THE PEOPLE WERE TOLD that there were many instances of fraud and corruption in the interior department, but these charges were promptly confronted by denials on the part of republican organs who insisted that all was well with the interior department. But after many days, it seems that the situation in the interior department is so serious that it will no longer tolerate delays and therefore after republican newspapers have told us that there was nothing to investigate in the interior department, the Washington correspondent for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, a republican paper, under date of August 15, informs his publication that "one of the most sweeping investigations the government has ever undertaken will be started soon by the interior department in the Indian territory." According to the Globe-Democrat cor-

respondent, this investigation has been decided upon by the secretary of the interior, Mr. Hitchcock, as the result of sensational charges of irregularities involving the chairman and other members and employes of the Dawes commission and other officials of the government in the Indian territory.

THE SUBSTANCE OF THESE CHARGES, ACCORDING to this republican correspondent, are that republican officeholders have systematically robbed the Indians of their lands, and have in other ways victimized them. The situation, according to this correspondent, has become so serious that Secretary Hitchcock visited Oyster Bay for the purpose of consulting with the president and it is understood in Washington that the official conduct of every government official in the territory from the chairman of the Dawes commission down to the clerks and employes of the Indian agencies will be inquired into. The Globe-Democrat's correspondent explains: "For nearly a year the interior department has been receiving charges of official misconduct in the Indian territory. Some time ago the secretary decided that an investigation should be made, and he requested a Washington man, who is not in the government service, but who is interested in the welfare of the Indians, to take charge of it. Failing to enlist the services of this man, the secretary looked elsewhere for some one who was competent and not connected with the Indian service. Evidently he did not find the right man, as the investigation will be forced by the charges just filed at the interior department by S. M. Brosus, special agent of the Indian rights association, who returned to Washington last Tuesday from a tour of the country occupied by the five civilized tribes."

IN THIS SAME DISPATCH TO THE GLOBE-DEMOCRAT, it is admitted that "Secretary Hitchcock has known for months that officials in the Indian territory were stockholders in the land and trust companies and that he had notified at least one of these officials that he must sever his connection with the trust company in which he was a stockholder or resign his place. The official who received this notice was J. George Wright, inspector, who is a stockholder in the Muscogee title and trust company. Mr. Wright is still a stockholder in that concern and he has not resigned."

IT IS FURTHER EXPLAINED BY THIS SAME republican correspondent that for a long time Secretary Hitchcock has had a knowledge of the interests of Tams Bixby and other members of the Dawes commission in Indian territory trust companies. It is explained that Secretary Hitchcock has received letter heads of trust companies on which the officials named appeared as directors and officers. One of these letter heads emphasized the fact that Thomas B. Needles, "a member of the Dawes commission," is vice president and a director of the International Bank and Trust company. The Globe-Democrat's Washington correspondent says that recently the secretary learned that a resolution directing an investigation, by a congressional committee would be offered in the house when congress meets and this republican correspondent admits that this knowledge "may have influenced him (Secretary Hitchcock) in his decision to start an investigation." At the same time this republican correspondent expressed the opinion that "even if the investigation is pushed now with the utmost dispatch, it is possible that congress may insist in taking a hand in the proposed house-cleaning."

PETERBOROUGH, ENGLAND, ACCORDING TO a writer in the Philadelphia Public Ledger, makes enough bricks in the course of a year to put a girdle four times around the earth. This writer says that "it is estimated that the busy brickmaking yards, which have grown up in great number round the ancient city in the last twenty years, turn out 800,000,000 bricks annually. As the length of a brick is about eight inches, then, if Peterborough's annual output were laid out in a single line it would stretch over 100,000 miles. The brick industry has revolutionized the trade of Peterborough. Such is the wealth of clay and the profit to be drawn from it that one part of the

brickmaking district has been fitly named 'Klondike.' It lies in beds of enormous area and depth, and some of the experts say they could go on taking out the easily accessible clay for the next century without taking thought as to where the next supply of the material is to come from."

AN INTERESTING DISCOVERY WAS RECENTLY made during some excavating in Rome. The ancient Roman Forum was the scene of the digging and in the course of the excavation the base of a statue supposed to be the celebrated equestrian statue of the Roman emperor Domitian was found. A writer in the Chicago Chronicle, referring to this discovery, says: "The base stands five feet below the present level of the Forum. It is 40 feet long, 20 wide and over 10 feet high. On the top are three blocks of transverse stone, showing where the feet of the horse stood. The fourth block is lacking, indicating that the right forefoot of the horse was raised. The distance between the blocks is so great that it is calculated that the statue was six times life size."

A CONTEST IS ON FOOT IN REGARD TO THE right of the mayor of Butte, Mont., to the position he holds. Affidavits have been sent to Washington declaring that the mayor, Mullins by name, has no right to his office because he is not a citizen of Montana. A writer in the Kansas City Journal says that Mayor Mullins owns 300 acres of valuable land in Idaho, which he acquired under a desert land law. The affidavits cover a period of five years and Mullins states, under oath, that he was a resident of Boise, Idaho, and a farmer by occupation. As late as October 4, 1902, he made an affidavit on final proof, in which he set up Boise as his residence and all previous affidavits from the time of entry, September 19, 1898. These affidavits, it is contended by Mayor Mullins' political opponents, invalidate his election as mayor of Butte, where residence and citizenship are required by law as qualification of municipal officials.

THE USE OF STRAW AND STUBBLE IN THE making of ancient Egyptian bricks, as narrated in the fifth chapter of Exodus in the Bible, led E. G. Acheson of Niagara Falls, N. Y., to use this material in the making of crucibles. The Chicago Chronicle says that Mr. Acheson procured some straw, had it boiled and mixed the dark red liquid thus obtained with clay. He found that the plasticity was greatly increased. Investigation showed that tannin was the active agent and when he treated other clay with a solution of tannin in water he obtained surprising results. The strength and plasticity of the clay are increased and the tendency to shrink and warp is greatly reduced. In this process sun drying is far superior to burning, and in ten days the clay is better tempered than in months or even years by the old process.

CHINA HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN AS ONE of the most densely populated countries in the world, and this claim would seem to be substantiated by the official census recently published by the imperial treasury department of that far-off country. The Chicago Chronicle is authority for the statement that the celestial empire contains 426,000,000 inhabitants and that China proper—the eighteen provinces—contains 407,000,000 people. The Chronicle says: "The number of inhabitants per square kilometer varies from 201, in Honan, to 32 in Kansou, and is, on the average, 103 in the eighteen provinces. In Mongolia the number is 0.7; in Manchuria, 9; in Yibet, 5, and in Turkestan, 0.8. For comparison we may recall that Germany has 105 inhabitants per square kilometer; Belgium, 220, and the United Kingdom, 130."

SOME TIME AGO MENTION WAS MADE OF the great scarcity in cod-liver oil and that condition has now advanced until there is a famine in that product. The Philadelphia correspondent of the Chicago Inter-Ocean says: "Cod-liver oil is 500 per cent higher than a year ago. Norwegian oil is now quoted at \$135 a barrel. Last year's price was \$22.50. Even at this prevailing price it is almost impossible to get the