

ican diplomats it is rumored that should the president be forced by public opinion or a resolution by congress to turn to the Nicaraguan route he would encounter as great difficulties as have occurred in dealing with Colombia. Costa Rica and Nicaragua have been thus far willing to grant anything and everything that could be asked toward getting the canal through their territory. But it is said that with the Panama route out of the way the attitude of these two republics would change, and they would begin to make demands. Nicaragua has a faction that is not friendly to the canal on the ground that if the United States should build on the Nicaraguan route it would result in the absorption of the whole state as a dependency of the United States, and the country would lose its autonomy and become a mere stopping place for the commerce of the world. With this sentiment at work there would arise a pretext for increased demands to appease it, and several years would be occupied in getting a suitable treaty made. This is the view taken by several disinterested Central Americans, who are convinced that the Panama route is physically the best one of all that have been studied or attempted."

ACCORDING TO A REPORT ON THE RETURNS OF PHILIPPINE COMMERCE, which report is about to be issued by the bureau of insular affairs of the war department at Washington, it is shown that the foreign trade of the islands for the month of May, 1903, aggregated \$6,872,382, exclusive of government supplies and gold and silver. This increase exceeds that reported for April of the present year, which month has heretofore been the banner month since American occupation of the islands. The importations amounted to \$3,391,655, and of this the importation of rice alone approximated nearly \$1,750,000. It is also shown that customs revenues to the value of \$8,500,000 were collected during eleven months of 1903, this being an increase amounting to over \$1,000,000 as compared with the previous year.

AN INTERESTING COMPARISON AS TO THE AMOUNT OF GOLD IN THE UNITED STATES TREASURY and that stored in the treasuries of other countries, was recently made by Ellis H. Roberts, treasurer of the United States, in a speech delivered before the joint convention of the Maryland and District of Columbia Bankers' association. According to the Washington correspondent for the New York American, Mr. Roberts declared that at present there is the largest sum of gold ever recorded in the treasury, \$653,000,000. Mr. Roberts added: "Our treasury holds three and nine-tenths times the amount of gold belonging to the Bank of England, more than three and eight-tenths times that of the Imperial German Bank, almost three times that of the Austro-Hungarian Bank, and lacks only \$8,000,000 of being equal to that of both the banks of England and France. It exceeds the amount of Russia, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands combined."

THE WARDEN OF THE UNITED STATES PENITENTIARY at Fort Leavenworth, Kas., recently made a report to the attorney general of the United States, and in this report it is shown that most of the 30 deaths in the prison during the year were of Indians. Two hundred prisoners are suffering from tuberculosis, the entire Indian population being infected. In his report, according to the Leavenworth, Kas., correspondent for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Warden R. W. McClaughry says: "The southern Indians who are sent here cannot stand the climate and the confinement, no matter in how good health he arrives here, and every one of them, without exception, either dies here or goes out with the disease ineradicably fastened upon him. With the lack of proper facilities for isolating and treating pulmonary tuberculosis, it is becoming a serious menace to this institution, practically destroying the health of all the prisoners confined here."

BY INTRUSTING TREASURE TO THE AMOUNT OF \$3,000,000 to a clerk recently, the United States government saved \$780 express charges. Under direction of the insular department, the mints in this country and the bureau of printing and engraving at Washington has been making money for use in the Philippines. \$3,000,000 in crisp \$1,000 bills was recently ready for shipment to New York, thence to be sent to the insular possessions. Inquiry of the express companies about transporting this treasure elicited the information that they would not undertake the risk for less than \$800, and this was considered so high a figure that Marion E. Beall, an unbonded clerk in the insular department, was sent to New York with the money packed in a

common suit case. Mr. Beall's trip cost \$20, and thus the government saved a considerable sum in express charges.

IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE AGITATION AND INVESTIGATION into the affairs of the Indian territory and the dealings of the commissioners stationed there with the Indians, Secretary of the Interior Hitchcock recently made a new rule requiring offers for Indian lands in the territory to be made by sealed bids, and this rule is resulting in marked advantage to the Indians. The Washington correspondent for the Philadelphia Public Ledger says that "in the first month after the rule was promulgated the department returned several hundred thousand dollars in checks and drafts to proposing purchasers, and it soon became well understood that the old game of swindling the Indians had come to an end. It is now necessary to have the land to be sold appraised by a government official, the tract advertised for public sale, and bids must be sent to the department sealed. In some cases several bids have been rejected before a sale was made."

IN CONNECTION WITH THE INVESTIGATION into the Indian affairs, a decision was rendered on September 23 by Judge Anderson of the supreme court of the District of Columbia, whereby the position taken by the interior department in several cases involving land in the territory is upheld. The case involved no less than 157,000 acres of land which it was claimed that the Dawes commission had set aside for the benefit of the Delaware Indians and could not be interfered with by any other authority. Judge Anderson, however, decided against this view of the case. The Washington correspondent for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, in discussing the case, says: "The department at Washington had not approved the action of the Dawes commission and claimed that until approved there had been no legal setting aside of the land for the Delawares. The court held that all the actions and proceedings of the Dawes commission were subject to the secretary's supervision and control. It refused to grant the injunction prayed, and, in effect, dismissed the suit."

THE POSTOFFICE DEPARTMENT OF THE national government is facing a new problem in the difficulty of securing postal clerks on the fast trains. This difficulty is due to the increasing number of railway wrecks caused by the greater number and higher speed of trains. It is the custom of railways to put mail cars next to the engine and the result is that in wrecks the postal clerks are exposed to great danger and rarely have any warning of their peril. A telegram to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch under date of Chicago, September 29, says: "So far this year more than forty railway postal clerks have been killed and over 500 injured, more or less seriously. In consequence the clerks are not attracted by the runs on the fast trains. Many of them have asked to be transferred from the trunk lines, where they get salaries of \$1,500 a year, to the branch lines, where the maximum yearly salary is \$1,000. Much trouble is experienced by the superintendents of railway mail service in securing men for the fastest mail trains."

THE ARMY AND NAVY AND EVENTUALLY the militia of the United States will be equipped with what the Washington correspondent for the New York Tribune calls "the most effective firearm in the world." According to the Tribune correspondent this is the result of exhaustive tests just completed with the new experimental twenty-four-inch magazine rifle, designed by the ordnance department, embodying the best features of the army and navy service weapons, with numerous improvements over their mechanism as well as over the best points of foreign ordnance. This rifle, which has just triumphed in the most ingenious tests that could be devised by a board of infantry and cavalry officers, uses a rimless cartridge. The weight of the bullet is 220 grains, and that of the powder charge is 44.5 grains. The powder pressure is 42,000 pounds to the square inch, and the muzzle velocity is 2,300 feet a second. The rifling in the barrel makes one turn in eight inches. The magazine can be charged from a clip by inserting either end of the clip in a seat in the rear of the receiver, and by forcing the cartridges from it directly into the magazine by pressure of the right thumb on the top of the cartridge. The clip is ejected by the forward motion of the bolt. The gun can be used as a single loader with the magazine empty, and if the magazine is partly empty it can be filled

by the insertion of single cartridges. The experimental rifle, with the 24-inch barrel and rod bayonet, weighs two pounds less than the United States magazine rifle, model of 1898, the present service arm, with its bayonet and bayonet scabbard. The penetration in pine of the former, up to and including 1,500 yards, is about 50 per cent greater than of the latter; and the accuracy of the former is 14 per cent greater at 500 yards, 4.6 per cent greater at 1,000 yards, and also greater at 1,500 yards than that of the latter. The use of the clip and the change in the cartridge increase the weight of 100 rounds three-quarters of a pound.

UNDER DATE OF DALLAS, TEX., SEPTEMBER 8, the Associated press carried the information that the Fort Worth Telegram prints "the most startling story that has ever come out out the Beaumont oil fields and states that the informant is one of the most prominent men of Fort Worth who recently returned from Beaumont." According to the Fort Worth Telegram, this Beaumont citizen declares that "the Standard Oil company has perpetrated a gigantic steal in the Beaumont fields and that positively established details are just coming to light." According to the Beaumont citizen, "the independent oil companies of Beaumont are the victims, many of which have been wrecked by the Standard's work. Recently some of the leading men of the wrecked or injured companies determined to investigate and in two days' time they raised \$27,000 with which to push the work."

IN THE STORY PRINTED BY THE FORT WORTH paper, it is explained that "the numerous oil wells that apparently were ruined by salt water were put in their bad condition by the Standard Oil company's conspirators. As fast as a company went to the well its property was brought in by the trust. By accident, it is said, the desperate work of the Standard company was discovered recently. The Standard Oil company long ago built a pipe line from Beaumont to the Gulf of Mexico. A pumping station was erected at Beaumont and another at the gulf. Oil was pumped through the pipe line to the gulf and thence shipped to various parts of the world. Suddenly many wells of independent companies had salt water in them. The ruin of the owners is part of the history of the field. One day not long ago one of the pumping stations got out of working order, and oil pumping to the gulf had to be suspended while repairs were being made. Wells that had been giving out fully one-half salt water began flowing nothing but oil, good fuel oil, it is declared. That put the investigation on foot. The investigators secretly plugged up the pipe line at the Beaumont end. They drove several miles into the country, dug into the ground over the pipe line, made a tapping into the line and salt water gushed into the air nearly 100 feet. It is claimed that the pressure was from the gulf pumping station and that salt water was being pumped to Beaumont into the wells that the Standard company's conspirators desired to wreck; that there was no pressure from the Beaumont end of the plugging of the pipe. The informant of the Telegram declares that a force of detectives is at work to develop who should be arrested in connection with the conspiracy."

DURING THE BOER WAR LORD ROBERTS wrote to Mr. Steyn of the Orange Free State, under date of March 11, 1900, complaining that explosive bullets had been found in Cronje's laager. In that communication Lord Roberts said: "Such breaches of the recognized usages of war and of the Geneva convention are a disgrace to any civilized power. A copy of this telegram has been sent to my government with a request that it be communicated to the neutral powers."

RECALLING THIS INCIDENT, A WRITER in the New York World says: "Mr. Steyn explained that the bullets in question had been taken from British troops. Now it turns out that this ammunition with expanding bullets had been manufactured in England before the war to the extent of 66,000,000 rounds; that there was every intention of making it the standard outfit of the British army all over the world, but that its production was stopped because it was found to be dangerous to the user in hot climates. It was condemned by The Hague convention on grounds of humanity, but it had to be supplied to the British troops in South Africa because at one time there were only two or three boxes of any other kind on hand. All that is needed now to make the story complete is an apology from Lord Roberts to Mr. Steyn, but the wire seems to be busy in that direction."