

CURRENT TOPICS

A REPORT RECENTLY MADE BY THE CHIEF of the bureau of insular affairs shows that the immigration into the Philippines from the United States has greatly fallen off and that the bulk of the foreign commerce of the islands is carried under the British flag. The Washington correspondent for the New York World presents an extract from this report showing that during the fiscal year ending October 31 the total number of arrivals in the Philippines was 24,136 as compared with 30,094 in 1902. Of this year's total only 10,925 were Americans, 5,000 fewer than during the previous year. The American laborers who went to the islands this year numbered 8,074, a decrease of 2,303. There was a slight increase in the immigration of lawyers, clergymen, merchants, clerks and farmers. Nine per cent of the trade was carried in British ships, as compared with 67 per cent last year. The Philippine exports to the United States amounted to \$14,000,000, of which only 3 per cent came under the American flag, while 90 per cent was carried by British ships.

WHAT IS DESCRIBED AS A GREAT DEVICE for saving life at sea has been patented by a former lieutenant commander of the United States navy. A dispatch to the Cincinnati Enquirer from Cleveland, O., says that this device is so arranged that if the water flows through one compartment of a ship from one case or the other it can instantly be confined by the simple pressure of a button. The Enquirer dispatch explains: "All the captain will have to do will be to press the button on the bridge and every door and bulkhead on the boat will be as tight as a drum. In the event of a puncture in the bow or any other part of the ship the closing of the doors and bulkheads by electrical arrangement may save the boat from destruction and the lives of those on board. W. B. Cowles, manager of the Long Arm System company, at Lake and Wason streets, a former lieutenant commander of the United States navy, is the patentee of this arrangement. The government has adopted the device and has entered into a contract with the company to supply all new battleships, cruisers and other government boats with them."

CHARLES F. W. NEELY, CONVICTED IN Cuba of appropriating \$45,375 of its postal funds, while acting as director of the finances of the postoffice in Cuba, was defeated in his effort to recover the sum of \$25,000 cash bail which he deposited. Neely was relieved of the court proceedings by the act of amnesty passed by the Cuban congress in May, 1902, whereby all Americans convicted of crime in Cuba during the occupancy of the island were pardoned. Neely fled application in the United States court before Judge Lacombe petitioning for the return to him of the \$25,000 cash bail. The United States government filed attachment proceedings against the sum. On November 23, Judge Lacombe overruled Neely's motion, saying: "It is difficult to understand by what process of reasoning a provision as plain as this (the amnesty act) can be so construed as to transfer the title to property from the true owner to the thief who stole it."

A CABLEGRAM FROM NEW YORK UNDER date of November 24 and carried by the Associated press says: "Foreign Secretary Lansdowne has requested the council of the foreign bondholders to supply further details of the Colombian loan. When drawn up these will be forwarded to Ambassador Durand and presented to Washington to urge the rights of British bondholders in connection with the republic of Panama. The council says: 'When Panama declared its independence of Spain, it was stated in the solemn declaration of the revolutionary junta that the territory of the isthmus belonged to the state of Colombia, to the congresses whereof it should, in due course, send its deputy.' The war with Spain continued for some time thereafter, and in 1822 Colombia issued an external loan of \$10,000,000, the greater part of which was to be devoted to prosecuting the war of independence. In 1824 Colombia issued a further loan of \$23,750,000 for the same purpose. It would be surprising if Panama attempted to repudiate responsibility for the money which assisted her to be-

come part of a free state.' The foregoing is the gist of a lengthy statement which will be forwarded to the British embassy at Washington."

THE STATEMENT THAT SOME OF SENATOR Hanna's friends have been in Wall street sounding the financial interests with reference to Mr. Hanna's candidacy for the presidency, is vouched for by the New York Times. The Times declares that it is asserted by a person in the confidence of Senator Hanna that the senator will be a candidate for the republican presidential nomination next year to succeed Mr. Roosevelt. The Times adds: "It is said to be the hope of the Hanna leaders to enlist also the aid of Senator Quay, despite the part the Pennsylvania senator played in the nomination of Mr. Roosevelt for vice president in 1900 against the wishes of Senator Hanna. Local politicians pointed out last night that should Senator Platt commit himself to the support of Mr. Hanna, and should the president consequently seek the aid of Governor Odell, there would be a situation somewhat similar to that which preceded the factional fight between the 'stalwarts' and 'half breeds' after the quarrel between President Garfield and Senator Conkling in 1881. The Hanna leaders are said to believe that President Roosevelt is weak in some of the eastern states, and that he is losing strength in the south because of the race issue. They concede him strength in the far west."

ACCIDENT BULLETIN NO. 8 HAS BEEN issued by the interstate commerce commission and covers the railroad accidents in the United States for the three months ending on June 30, 1903, and also completing the statistics of accidents for the fiscal year. The Railway Age, referring to this bulletin, says: "As compared with the preceding quarter the accidents reported show a most gratifying decrease, the number of killed in train accidents being 230 and the number injured being 2,629, as against 300 and 2,834, respectively, in the preceding quarter. Other kinds of accidents to employes and passengers, not the result of collision or derailment, bring the total number of casualties up to 12,305, as against 12,308 in the preceding quarter, the total number of persons killed, however, being 83 less than in the preceding quarter. The total number of employes killed in coupling and uncoupling during the quarter was 62, being 14 less than in the preceding quarter. The total number of collisions and derailments was 2,605 (1,405 collisions and 1,202 derailments), of which 201 collisions and 126 derailments affected passenger trains. The damage to cars, engines and roadways by these accidents amounted to \$2,476,934."

AS COMPARED WITH THE PRECEDING year, this bulletin disclosed a large increase in the number of casualties. There were 3,554 persons killed and 49,977 injured during the year as against 2,819 killed and 39,800 injured in the preceding year. The Railway Age says: "This large increase is partially explained by the large increase in railroad traffic that has taken place during the past year, and the fact that there were therefore a much larger number of men at risk. The number of men employed in train service on June 30, 1903, was 12 per cent greater than on June 30, 1902. There is also a good explanation of the increase to be found in the fact that the interstate commerce commission has been persistent in its insistence on full reports of all accidents from all railroads during the past year, and as a consequence accidents are much more fully reported at the present time than they were a year ago, and previous to that time."

THE INTERESTING PROPHECY IS MADE by the London correspondent of the Chicago Inter-Ocean that within three months telegraphic communication without intermediate repeating stations will be established for the first time between New York and London and telegrams will be exchanged at a speed of more than four times the previous capacity of any cable. The same correspondent makes the assertion that within a year it will be as feasible to converse by telephone between New York and London as it is at present between New York and Brooklyn, for in-

stance. How these interesting results are to be accomplished the Inter-Ocean correspondent does not divulge, but says that when the permission of the inventors is obtained, the secret will be revealed.

ADMIRERS OF ROBERT BURNS WILL be interested in the statement that the Auld Brig O' Ayr, which bridge Burns immortalized in a poem, is in danger of collapsing. It will be remembered that in Burns' poem, the spirit of the Auld Brig when reviled by the spirit of the new Brig, made the remarkable prophecy: "I'll be a Brig when yere a shapeless cairn, said the Auld Brig to the new." A cablegram to the Chicago Tribune, under date of London, November 14, referring to the old structure, says: "The prophecy has turned out true now, twenty-five years after, and the Auld Brig is tottering on its old foundations, how old it is difficult to say. Cut deep into the wall are the figures 1252. There are people who say the date is mythical, but Architect James Norris, who is an expert archaeologist and who is interesting himself in stirring up the burgh council to spend the \$3,500 necessary to restore the Auld Brig, believes there is nothing improbable in the date. The Ayr council is beset by one difficulty in the matter, and that is why should they spend \$3,500 of the public funds if they can get the money required for nothing? It seems that about a quarter of a century ago a man named Templeton left \$50,000 at interest, which at the death of his two sisters was to be devoted to rebuilding the Auld Brig. But the will was a holograph, written on a small piece of paper, and other distant relations took proceedings disputing the will. Now the Ayr council will have to ascertain their legal status towards the money, but the wheels of the law revolve slowly and meanwhile the Auld Brig may fall."

OFFICIALS IN ST. PETERSBURG HAVE ADMITTED that the Russian policy leading to the occupation of Port Arthur and Manchuria was a mistaken one and there is little prospect that the results of that policy will compensate for the vast expenditure of money and blood entailed. This statement is made on the authority of the London correspondent for the Philadelphia Public Ledger, who explains: "M. Witte, author of the policy, has been removed to another sphere, and Admiral Alexieff is charged with the duty of repairing, as far as possible, the errors committed. The attempt to secure an ice-free port in the Pacific is believed to have failed. It was hoped that Dalny would meet all requirements, but it was found that the southwestern winds caused such high seas that a huge breakwater was constructed, costing 17,000,000 roubles. Since the breakwater was built it has been found that the water in the harbor freezes in winter. It became necessary, therefore, to seek a new port. There is an admirable ice-free port at Masanpho, Korea, but the Japanese thwarted the Russian attempt to secure this."

A RECORD-MAKING EXPERIMENT WAS RECENTLY carried to a successful conclusion in Brockley, Worcestershire, in England. The London Mail tells the story in this way: "At 8:30 o'clock one morning Messrs. Taylor & Sons, of the Sheaf House farm, Brockley, started to cut a field of wheat. As fast as the sheaves were cut they were carried to the granary, and there threshed and winnowed. These operations took six and a half minutes. Thence the wheat was taken to a mill of J. H. Painton, and there ground and dressed in five and a half minutes. At the adjacent bakehouse the flour was made into dough and molded into cakes and loaves. Seven small loaves were taken from the oven at 9 o'clock—thirty minutes from the time the wheat was standing uncut. The larger loaves were finished in forty minutes. One was sent to the king and others presented to Lady Northwich and Lord Redesdale."

A RUMOR HAS BEEN CURRENT FOR MANY years in Hungary that a son of the German emperor is learning the Hungarian language with a view to his accession to the Hungarian throne on the death of Francis Joseph. The Buda Pesth correspondent for the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, in