

# CURRENT TOPICS

THE bitterness on the part of certain congressmen because of the Fourth Assistant Postmaster General Bristow's report seems recently to have been transferred to the First Assistant Postmaster General Wynne. The Washington correspondent for the Philadelphia North American says that responsibility for the recent report connecting congressmen with the post-office scandals has been fastened upon Mr. Wynne. Mr. Bristow in his testimony before the house committee said that portions of the document relative to excessive clerk hire allowances were prepared under Mr. Wynne's direction and this statement seems to have greatly aggravated those congressmen who appeared to be most deeply interested.

MR. WYNNE has made no denial of Mr. Bristow's statement and the North American correspondent says that he does not appear at all anxious to avoid responsibility, although he declines to talk. This correspondent adds: "Just now, while Postmaster General Payne is ill, Wynne is acting postmaster general. He occupied a similar position during a good portion of last summer, when the investigation of the post-office department was in progress, and he was chiefly instrumental in directing the attention of the president to the need for a complete examination of the bureaus directed by Machen and Beavers. These two men were the congressmen's friends. They prided themselves upon the fact and boasted of it. To investigate them, it was declared by their closest friends, meant that the wrath of congress would fall heavily upon the head of the man starting such an inquiry."

IT IS further explained by this same authority that similar arguments were made when Machen and Beavers virtually defied Wynne and insisted on conducting their bureaus in their own ranner, regardless of Mr. Wynne's authority. The North American correspondent adds: "An effort will be made to persuade the president to remove Wynne, but it should not succeed. More than any other man Wynne brought about the exposures which made possible a cleaning out of the postoffice department. Congressional displeasure was then concealed, because the results were of so startling a character as to silence all adverse criticism. Now the criticism is permissible, members feel, and seizing upon this circumstance they are desirous of making Wynne suffer, not for what he did in preparing the recent report, but for what he did last summer, when he induced the president to order an investigation of the entire postoffice department."

THE house committee on judiciary has voted to impeach Charles Swayne, federal judge for the district of Florida. Judge Swayne is charged with being habitually absent from his circuit and being a non-resident of the district for which he was appointed. He is also charged with irregularities in contempt proceedings and refusing to hear a certain witness in a proceeding before his court, alleging that he would not believe that witness under oath. Should the house vote to impeach Judge Swayne, the senate will be formally notified of the result and the trial will be had before the senate, sitting in a judicial capacity.

THERE have been no impeachment proceedings before congress since those against President Andrew Jackson. Concerning the impeachment of judges, the Washington correspondent for the Cincinnati Enquirer says: "Only three federal judges have been impeached. These were Judge Pickering of New Hampshire, who was impeached for giving up the bark Eliza to her owner without taking proper bond, after the bark had been seized for smuggling; being drunk and using profane language on the bench. Judge Chase of Pennsylvania was impeached for refusing to allow a lawyer to address the court or a jury on a question of law which he already had decided. Judge Peck of Missouri was charged with improperly striking the name of a lawyer from a roll of attorneys, for contempt. James Buchanan was one of the managers of the house in this trial. The proceeding against Judge Swayne, if carried to the senate, undoubtedly will delay for several

weeks the adjournment of the present session of congress. If the senate decides against Judge Swayne the penalty is the loss of his judgeship."

AN INTERESTING article on the crime of the modern newspaper—the forgetfulness of the moral responsibility that should be felt whenever it publishes, is written by Edward Bok and printed in a recent issue of the World's Work. Mr. Bok undertakes to show "why people disbelieve the newspapers, and it will be generally admitted that he presents an interesting answer to this question. For instance, Mr. Bok relates: "Several years ago it was reported that the queen of the Netherlands and her consort had quarreled. Domestic unhappiness was rife at The Hague; the prince had even beaten his young queen. It so happened that I had access to special facilities to learn the truth, which was, as is now well known, exactly opposite of the report. I was careful that my information should have unquestionable authority, and with it I sought the editor of one of the largest newspapers, who was making the most of the story in his paper. I proved to him that there was not the first semblance of truth in the report. He acknowledged this. 'But you know,' he said, 'first-page stuff is pretty scarce just now, and I'll have to keep this thing up a bit. It doesn't hurt Wilhelmina and makes good reading.' And he cabled his 'London man' to send 'more special' about the Wilhelmina matter.' 'No more. All false,' came back the response the next day. 'Keep Wilhelmina matter alive. Send daily special for first page,' was the message that went back. 'What was I to do?' this correspondent asked me some time afterward. 'Of course, I 'faked,' or it would have cost me my job.'"

A SIMILAR instance which this writer says occurred not in the office of a "yellow" paper, but in the editorial room of what is generally accepted as a reputable newspaper, is related: A report came over the cable that an English manufacturing concern had placed an order for 5,000 tons of steel with the English representative of the United States Steel corporation. The message went to the managing editor. Steel stock was low that day. The paper had "interests." "Work this up, Miller," said the editor, and with the order went a look. "The 'old man' tells me to work this up," said the man to the financial editor of the paper. "How far would you go?" "As far as your imagination will carry you, I should say," was the reply. When the story appeared the tonnage of the order had surprisingly changed, and when the correspondent in London read his dispatch in the paper a week later he could scarcely believe his eyes.

MR. BOK says that during the campaign of 1900 a reporter on a New York paper of standing was sent out by his editor to report a Bryan meeting. This reporter returned with a report that after Mr. Bryan had been speaking five minutes a number of people walked out. "I would change that," said the editor, as he looked over the report, and taking his pencil he scratched out "a number of people" and substituted for it "nearly half the audience." "But there wasn't a hundred," said the reporter. "Send this up," said the editor to the "copy" boy, and the report went to the composing-room. "What did you do?" I asked the reporter. "Do? I'd be hanged if I would stand for that sort of thing, and I gave up my job then and there." Another instance: "Did you 'cover' the new play at the Blank theatre this evening?" asked an editor of his dramatic critic not long ago. "I did, and it was pretty bad," was the reply. "Forget that it was bad," said the editor, "and let me see your story before you send it up."

SEVERAL other good stories are told along the same line, but perhaps the following will suffice: I attended in 1900 the Philadelphia republican convention that renominated McKinley for president and named Roosevelt for vice president. I was surprised at the lack of enthusiasm. I asked the "headwriter" on a leading newspaper how it compared with other conventions. "Stupor—the best convention I ever attended. You see, the nominations were cut-and-dried. The expected

happened. That accounts for the lack of 'go.'" This was the principal editor of one of the best-known newspapers in the country. The next day I could scarcely believe my eyes when I read of the "unprecedented enthusiasm" which made this convention "eclipse all previous conventions in spontaneity of outbursts of applause." The writer had seen many conventions, but this "far overshadowed all in the tumult of enthusiasm, which lasted fifteen minutes." But as I had been there I knew that it had lasted just three minutes. I saw the editor the next day. "Did you write that?" I asked. "Yes, Why?" "But I thought you told me—" "Oh, well," he answered, smiling, "it would never do to say that. Of course, the account was somewhat embellished. But we have to 'whoop it up' for the party, you know."

A MEMBER of the Ohio state senate has introduced a bill for the increase of the quota of the Ohio militia to its maximum of 108 companies. The real purpose of the bill is said to provide for the creation of a regiment composed of negroes. Ohio now has a battalion of colored troops with companies in Cleveland and Springfield and wants the opportunity of making new companies in other states so as to bring the strength of the battalion up to four companies. Considerable opposition is shown toward the plan and the fact cannot be concealed that the race question cuts something of a figure in this opposition. In connection with the proposed increase in the Ohio militia the Columbus correspondent for the Cincinnati Enquirer says: "The startling claim has been put forward that there is no legal authority for the enrollment of colored men in Ohio in the state militia. This claim is based upon section 1 of article IX. of the Ohio constitution, which says that 'all white citizens between the ages of 18 and 45 years shall be enrolled in the militia.' It is true that the same instrument contains the same qualification with regard to voters, but that part has been suspended by the amendments to the federal constitution. In all matters relating to the exercise of the elective franchise the qualification of color has been wiped out. It is held that the matter of membership in the militia is a far different thing, no civil rights being invaded by refusal to enroll the colored men."

GREAT interest has been manifested in the order recently issued by Pension Commissioner Ware, providing pensions for disabled veterans over sixty-two years of age. In response to numerous requests for information as to pension disbursements since the close of the war, the Chicago Tribune prints the following table which gives by fiscal years the amount paid for pensions between July 1, 1866, and June 30, 1903:

1866.....	\$ 15,605,000	1885.....	\$ 56,102,000
1867.....	20,936,000	1886.....	63,404,000
1868.....	23,782,000	1887.....	75,029,000
1869.....	28,476,000	1888.....	80,288,000
1870.....	28,340,000	1889.....	87,024,000
1871.....	34,443,000	1890.....	106,936,000
1872.....	28,533,000	1891.....	124,415,000
1873.....	29,359,000	1892.....	134,583,000
1874.....	29,038,000	1893.....	159,357,000
1875.....	29,456,000	1894.....	141,177,000
1876.....	28,257,000	1895.....	141,335,000
1877.....	27,963,000	1896.....	139,434,000
1878.....	27,137,000	1897.....	141,053,000
1879.....	35,121,000	1898.....	147,452,000
1880.....	56,777,000	1899.....	139,394,000
1881.....	50,059,000	1900.....	140,877,000
1882.....	61,345,000	1901.....	139,323,000
1883.....	66,012,000	1902.....	138,485,000
1884.....	55,429,000	1903.....	137,759,000

The Tribune adds: "It is estimated that Commissioner Ware's policy will add between \$15,000,000 and \$60,000,000 a year to the pension expenditure. It may then be expected that for the fiscal year 1905 pensions will reach high water mark, and that the pension expenditures will thereafter diminish for a few years until some still newer interpretation be put on the act of 1890, when, doubtless, a new high water mark of well over \$200,000,000 will be achieved."

WILLIAM T. STEAD, the great London editor, has been barred from South Africa by the British authorities. This caution has been