

CURRENT TOPICS

THE contest for the republican presidential nomination in 1908 is on and the contestants seem to lose no opportunity to add to the gaiety of the situation. The Washington correspondent for the Sioux City Journal under date of May 30, says: "Yesterday newspaper men and officials were good naturedly bantering Secretary Taft because Secretary Shaw had stolen a march on him and had the newspaper correspondents on the string for an evening down the Potomac. Today Secretary Shaw is the victim of the joshing and Secretary Taft is declared to have won out in the diplomatic game, the presidency being the ultimate stake. It is charged that when Secretary Taft learned that Secretary Shaw was to do the honors with a hundred newspaper men as guests, he was wroth, and declared vengeance must be his. At 8 o'clock last night, when the revenue cutter Windom sought to get past Fort Hunt, searchlights were flashed in the pilot's eyes so that he could not see, and he ran the government boat with it journalistic crew aground. The newspaper men were wild. No wire within sixteen miles. Finally the quartermaster's bureau of the war department sent a tug to pull the Windom off, and falling, took the newspaper men off, after several trials, and finally at a very late hour landed them in Washington. Secretary Taft is now making it appear that Secretary Shaw got the newspaper men in a hole and that he pulled them out."

MAYOR WEAVER'S victory in Philadelphia seems to be complete. The mayor is receiving congratulations from all sections of the country. A telegram from Governor Folk of Missouri was as follows: "Keep up the fight to the end, no matter how strong the forces of corruption opposing you may be. In every sincere effort for the public good, remember that you have behind you the strongest machine in the world, the hearts and consciences of the people of America."

THE plans of the railroad managers for the campaign against rate legislation are told in a dispatch to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, under date of Chicago, May 25, in this way: "Alarmed at the agitation in favor of government control of rates, the railroad interests have embarked upon a campaign of education which is national in scope and which will cost them a very large sum annually. The educational work, as they are pleased to call it, will be conducted through the medium of two large bureaus in New York and Chicago, with branches in other big cities. The New York and Chicago bureaus' agents are touring the country in search of information regarding conditions, and they are already engaged in sending forth tons of literature and in preparing more. The enterprise, which as yet is not known by any definite name, but which some call an industrial and statistical bureau, has the direct backing of the railway presidents of practically all of the railroads in the United States. It is the purpose to send men into every state in the union and keep them traveling and talking with every one who comes in contact with railroads. Incidentally they are presumed to assure the people that any abuses shown to exist will be corrected."

THE United States supreme court has upheld the constitutionality of the New York state franchise tax law. According to the New York World, the city of New York will benefit to the extent of \$24,000,000 now due and about \$6,000,000 a year in the future. Many other municipalities have been awaiting the final judgment of the law and as a result of this decision, it is believed that many towns throughout the country will be able to increase their income.

THE New York franchise tax law case has been in court for the past five years. The bill for this law was passed at a special session of the legislature several years ago and in 1900 a tax was first levied. Corporations fought the law through the state courts, finally appealing the case to the United States supreme court. The

law provides for the taxation of franchises and prior to its passage, franchises were not taxable either as real estate or as personal property. According to the World, in this law franchises are real property and taxable as such precisely the same as land and houses are taxed. The assessments are made by the state tax commission and not by local assessors.

IN ITS opinion of the New York franchise tax law, the United States supreme court was unanimous. The court holds that the intangible assets of a company are subject to taxation and that corporations holding franchises must contribute their share to the expense for government. The opinion was delivered by Justice Brewer. He held that, presumptively, all property within the territorial limits of the state is subject to its taxing power, and whoever insists that any particular property is not so subject, has the burden of proof and must make it entirely clear that by contract or otherwise, the property is beyond its reach.

JUSTICE BREWER said: "We had occasion to review this subject in the Adams Express case versus Ohio, where we said: 'In the complex civilization of today a large proportion of the wealth of a community consists in intangible property, and there is nothing in the nature of things or in the limitations of the federal constitution which restrains the state from taxing at its real value such intangible property. It matters not in what the tangible property consists—whether privileges, corporate franchises, contracts or obligations. It is enough that it is property which, though intangible, exists, which has value, produces income, and passes current in the markets of the world. To ignore this intangible property or to hold that it is not subject to taxation at its accepted value is to eliminate from the reach of the taxing power a large portion of the wealth of the country.'"

THE committee of seventy representing Philadelphia citizens have engaged Joseph C. Auerbach of New York as its special counsel to probe corruption in Philadelphia. Joseph C. Winston, chairman of the committee, speaking to the representative of the New York World, said: "We are after big game and it will be strange if somebody does not go to the penitentiary." Mr. Winston's experience as chairman of the committee of seventy has opened his eyes to the great evils flourishing in Philadelphia.

ADDRESSING President Robbins of the Armour private car line, Senator Elkins said: "It seems that you have all the advantages and none of the responsibilities of common carriers." President Robbins gave his testimony before the senate committee and said that his company has about thirty exclusive contracts and that by these contracts the purchasers and shippers of fruit must accept the rates imposed by the private car line. But the managers of the private car line claim that they are not engaged in interstate commerce and are not therefore subject to law. The Chicago Record-Herald says that Senator Elkins' statement to President Robbins presents "the private car line in a nutshell" and that paper declares that this monopoly is doomed and that "new legislation and control as to them must come."

A STRANGE story was recently cabled to the Chicago Tribune from its London correspondent, as follows: "Sir Gilbert Parker, who claims to have seen the astral body of Sir Carne Rasch in the house of commons while the latter was ill in his home, is receiving corroboration of his extraordinary hallucination. Sir Arthur Haytor writes as follows: 'I beg to say that I not only saw Sir Carne Rasch, myself, sitting below the gangway, but called him to the attention of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, with whom I was talking on the front opposition bench. I said I wondered why all the papers inserted notices of Sir Carne's illness while he was sitting opposite

apparently quite well. Sir Henry replied that he hoped the illness was not catching.' It seems that this is not the first instance of the sort that occurred in the house. In 1897 Mr. O'Connor, an Irish member, went to Ireland to be present at the deathbed of one of his parents. Swift McNeill saw his wraith in his usual seat on the third opposition bench. It also was seen from the press gallery. Thirty years ago a member who went abroad, suffering from an acute malady, received an urgent five line whip. He replied that he would attend the house at whatever cost to his health. The house was divided on the matter at issue, and on division the lobby tellers saw the member and counted his vote. The next day it was found that the number of votes recorded by the division clerks was one less than that given by the lobby clerks, and on the list of the former this particular name did not appear, as it did on the list of the latter. At the time the division was taken the member was dead."

WHETHER the disastrous defeat encountered by Russia will speedily bring about peace, seems, in the general view, to depend upon the character of the demands which Japan may make. It is clear that Japan will pursue the war until Russia asks for peace and some authorities believe that Japan's terms will be sufficiently harsh to destroy Russia's prestige in the east. The Washington correspondent for the Chicago Tribune says that Japan has made this position known to President Roosevelt and farther that she will not consent to intervention of other powers, but will insist upon dealing with Russia alone. President Roosevelt is strongly suggested as a mediator and this suggestion appears to have the special endorsement of the German emperor.

AN INTERESTING fact in connection with Japan's great sea victory is pointed out by the Washington correspondent for the Chicago Tribune. This correspondent says: "Japan, which on Saturday was a nation of some 48,000,000, is today a nation of about 66,000,000, for Corea belongs to her as certainly as the Philippines belong to the United States, and tomorrow, with Russian territory she will have a greater population even than the United States. The empire of the Rising Sun is indeed the empire of the risen sun." The opinion is also expressed that Japan will insist upon a large cash indemnity because she has made immense expenditures. The interest she pays upon loans negotiated since the war began amount annually to \$44,000,000.

THAT "the naval battle in the straits of Corea will rank among the decisive events of all time" is the opinion expressed by a writer in the Chicago Tribune. This writer says: "There have been many naval contests which were decisive as to their immediate results, but which had no definitive effect. Don John of Austria, in the bay of Lepanto, Nelson at Aboukir, Dewey in Manila bay won glorious victories, but these fights did not decide anything of the first importance. The fight in the Corean straits, like the battle of Salamis, the battle of Actium, the destruction of the Spanish armada, the British triumph at Trafalgar, was not only decisive in its immediate results but it will also exert a powerful influence upon the entire future history of mankind."

THE east is to be Mongol, not Slav; yellow, not white. That, according to the Tribune writer, is the decree. That writer says: "If Togo had been beaten by Rojestvensky Russia would now be master of the eastern seas. Marshal Oyama's great army would be irretrievably cut off, the Russian fleet would be harassing the Japanese coast at will, and the issue of the war would be doubtful. The Japanese victory settles both the result of the war and the future of the east. The east is to be Mongol, not Slav; yellow, not white. It is to be free, not bond. It is to work out its salvation under the sympathetic leadership of the intelligent and progressive Japanese, not under the dictation of the despotic and reactionary Russian bureaucracy. The Japanese victory will have important effects in Russia as well as in the east. It can not fail to hasten the downfall of the