

CURRENT TOPICS

BUSINESS CONCERNS in New York which make the biggest profits and which, therefore, are enabled to pay the highest wages to employes, are the ones, according to a writer in the Pittsburg Dispatch, which apparently are continually striving to cut their pay rolls. This writer says: "The telephone, the gas and the street car companies pay enormous dividends, but they are continually trying to cut expenses in labor. The life insurance companies do the same. The officers at the top, who control the destinies of the concerns, get salaries all out of proportion to the value of the services. On the other hand, the clerical forces are suffering a constant reduction. Indeed, male clerks who a few years ago were paid \$100 a month are being forced out, and women are being hired in their places at salaries running between \$40 and \$50 a month. Whereas male clerks average from \$70 to \$80 a month, women are glad to do the work for \$45, or even for less. It will thus be seen that the change to women has been an economic one of decided importance."

W. H. GATTAN FLOOD, writing to London Truth, says: "Will you allow me to point out to you that the tune of 'Yankee Doodle' is an old Irish jig of the early eighteenth century, well known in Ireland still as 'All the Way to Galway?' Your statement that it was composed by Dr. Schuckburgh is a slip. You probably meant that he wrote the doggerel words, which is generally admitted, but he merely adapted his verses to the Irish jig, which was printed as 'Yankee Doodle' in 1782, and was subsequently introduced by Arnold into his 'Two to One.'"

THE GREAT NORTHERN railroad, of which James J. Hill is president, has been caught in a flagrant case of rebating. That does not necessarily mean that the Great Northern is to be called to account, because other railroads, among them the Santa Fe, were caught in flagrant cases and we all remember the Morton incident. Referring to the Great Northern's slip, the Washington Dispatch says: "So pronounced and definite was the case that the interstate commerce commission has brought it to the attention of the department of justice, with a request that there be immediate prosecution. There is ill-concealed satisfaction on the part of members of the commission at this development, because of the well known attitude of hostility toward the commission which Mr. Hill has assumed up to this time. There is no question but that the efforts of the commission will be directed to securing a conviction under the law of Mr. Hill's road and the mulcting of that company of the \$20,000 fine prescribed by the law. It is charged that during the months from October last to the end of April of this year the Great Northern, in conjunction with the Baltimore & Ohio and the Central Transit company and a lake steamship corporation, carried 18,000 tons of cast-iron pipe to Winnipeg, Manitoba, from Philadelphia and suburbs of that city. R. D. Wood & Co., of Philadelphia, were the shippers and the city of Winnipeg the consignee, and the Great Northern paid a rebate amounting to substantially \$1,800. It is alleged that the full rate of 49½ cents per 100 pounds was paid by the shipper, but when the transaction was closed the Great Northern paid the rebate indicated, the agreement being that the rebate should be 5 cents on each 100 pounds of freight. In that way R. D. Wood & Co., it is charged, beat their competitors. The commission, in referring the case to the department of justice, asserted that it was one of the most flagrant that has come to the attention of that body. The satisfaction of the commission over getting the Great Northern in its toils arises in large part over the position maintained by Mr. Hill toward that body and toward all of the laws which have been passed under the constitutional provision permitting the general government and charging it with the duty of regulating interstate commerce."

THIRTY YEARS ago Charles Sterling was hanged at Youngstown, Ohio, on the charge of murder. Recently Charles Herzig, living near Minot, North Dakota, left a statement to the effect

that Sterling was innocent and that he (Herzig) had been guilty of the crime for which Sterling was hanged. Herzig then disappeared. On September 13 Herzig's dead body was found hanging to a tree in a secluded ravine just over the line in the unorganized county of Wallace, North Dakota. Pinned to his breast was a piece of wrapping paper on which was written a confession of the crime and the statement that Sterling, an innocent man, was tried, convicted and hanged.

FEW PEOPLE know the real color of gold, because it is seldom seen except when heavily alloyed, which makes it much redder than when it is pure. The Philadelphia Inquirer says: "The purest coins ever made were the \$50 pieces which once were in common use in California. Their coinage was abandoned because the loss by abrasion was so great and because their interior could be bored out and filled with lead. They were octagonal in shape and were the most valuable coins ever minted and circulated. All gold is not alike when refined. Australian gold is distinctly redder than that taken in California. Moreover, placer gold is more yellow than that which is taken from quartz. This is one of the mysteries of metallurgy, because the gold in placers comes from that which is in quartz. The gold in the Ural mountains is the reddest in the world."

BEFORE LEAVING on his trip around the world Mr. Bryan went to Salem, Ill., and on September 8 in the presence of a large concourse of Marion county citizens broke ground for the Bryan-Bennett library, which is to be erected on the spot, until recently occupied by the house in which Mr. Bryan was born. The building will cost \$3,000, and will be an imitation of the second story of the court house at Salem—the building in which Silas L. Bryan presided for twelve years as circuit judge and in which the son made his first political speech. The library committee appointed by the city consists of Hon. Charles McMackin (the republican mayor), Hon. Thomas S. Marshall (a cousin on the Jennings side), Hon. Henry Feltman (a leading democrat of Salem), Mrs. Anna Torrence (a cousin on the Bryan side), and Mrs. L. M. Kagy (wife of Mr. Bryan's classmate and room-mate in the law school). If any of the readers of The Commoner desire to contribute to the library books can be sent to any member of the board. Colonel M. C. Wetmore, Hon. Emile Karst, Major George McCann and Dr. Dwight Jennings went out from St. Louis to attend the ceremonies, attending the breaking of ground. While there Mr. Bryan was the recipient of a cane which Jaff Jones, a pioneer citizen of Salem, carved from a piece of oak which the elder Bryan had helped to shape when the Bryan homestead was built, more than fifty years ago.

A STORY THE moral of which will not be difficult to discover is told by the Kenosha, Wisconsin, correspondent for the New York World, as follows: "Daisy B. Rogers was yesterday granted a divorce from Charles Rogers, son of the late Daniel G. Rogers, of Milwaukee. She sought the divorce on the grounds of desertion, it being, however, the general impression that she had sacrificed her love that her husband might enjoy the million-dollar estate supposed to have been left by his father, who disinherited Charles as long as he lived with Daisy Rogers. When today a settlement was about to be made of the estate it was learned that the estate is so much smaller than was supposed that the husband, who gave up his wife for a fortune, has been fooled. He will receive only \$2,500 a year."

JOHAN D. ROCKEFELLE: recently gave for the first time a newspaper interview in which he undertook to defend himself. Mr. Rockefeller said: "It takes infinite patience and courage to compel men to have confidence in you. I believe I have both these qualities and I also believe that they are the secrets of my success. I learned to cultivate these characteristics when I was 16 years of age. My first real test was when I was making out bills of lading for canal and lake boats here in Cleveland. There was much to try

the patience, and I had the first opportunity in my life to take the wrong course, to repel rather than compel confidence from my associates and employers. Often a captain would want me to put down the wrong figures. He would assure me that it would never be known, that it was the customary way of doing things and that it was the right thing for me to do. I reasoned with him: 'If this and this is so—then so and so is right.' I insisted upon what I thought was right, but had patience with all who opposed me. Soon my employers noticed my methods of doing business; other employers knew that I wanted to do the right thing; bankers then came to have confidence in me, and then success followed step by step. It has been imperative that I deny myself association with people whom I naturally enjoy. Nevertheless I have been much with people—in fact almost every day groups of them come to see me, and it is a bright spot in the lives of all of us, as we drive or walk about the grounds. I have never been a clubman and have not frequented places where people generally go for company. My friends during hours of recreation are many of them from my home church." Mr. Rockefeller expressed the opinion that the opportunities for a young man are better in Cleveland today than when he was a boy there.

THOMAS EDWARD BAWDEN died recently at his home in Detroit, Michigan. He was prominent as a single taxer, and the Detroit Tribune relates of him this story: "For a few days in May, 1901, Tom Bawden was the most-talked-of man in Detroit. It was his persistence in delivering single tax addresses on the campus that brought about the so-called 'campus riot' on the night of May 10. In defiance of the orders of Frank C. Andrews, then police commissioner, Bawden attempted to give a speech on the campus that night. When the police, acting under Andrews' orders, attempted to disperse the crowd, they were attacked by the enraged people and a riot ensued in which a number of persons were injured. Thousands of people paraded the streets, cheering for Bawden and shouting threats at Andrews and his policemen. Andrews succeeded in having an ordinance passed by the council, prohibiting gatherings on the campus, and for violating this ordinance Bawden was arrested and thrown in jail. He steadfastly refused to pay his fine, declaring that he would 'rot in jail first.' His friends finally paid it without his knowledge and he was released."

THE UNITED STATES bureau of labor has issued a report showing that in recent years the cost of food has risen faster than wages. In this report it is said: "In 1904, as compared with the average for the ten years from 1880 to 1899, 25.7 per cent more persons were employed, hours of labor per week had been reduced 4.1 per cent, wages per hour had increased 17 per cent, weekly earnings per employe had increased 12.2 per cent, weekly earnings of all persons employed had increased 41.0 per cent, retail prices of food had increased 11.7 per cent, the wages of one hour would purchase 4 per cent more food. In 1904, as compared with 1903, the total number of employes decreased 6 per cent, the hours of labor decreased 7 per cent; wages per hour increased 6 per cent; weekly earnings per employe decreased 1 per cent. The total weekly earnings of all employes decreased 8 per cent; retail prices of food increased 1.3 per cent, the wages of one hour would purchase 7 per cent less food and the earnings per employe in a week would purchase 1.4 per cent less food."

REFERRING TO THE high price of food this report, according to a summary made by the Washington correspondent for the Chicago Record-Herald, says the estimated yield of Irish potatoes in the United States was 247,127,880 in 1903, against 332,830,300 in 1904, but that the increased production did not prevent an increased price. In many localities the price was practically double the price of 1903. The articles that marked the greatest difference in price between 1903 and 1904 are flour and lard. The average price of flour in 1904 was 18.44 per cent higher than the average price in 1903. The average price of lard in 1904 was 7.39 per cent lower than the average in 1903. Of the thirty articles included in the