

# CURRENT TOPICS

**T**OM L. JOHNSON'S majority in Cleveland exceeded 9,000. Columbus and Cincinnati each elected a republican mayor. In the Delaware fight where prohibition was the issue license prevailed in two districts and prohibition in two districts. The Associated Press says: "The license districts are the city of Wilmington, with a population of about 90,000 and about 250 bars; rural Newcastle county, with a population of about 40,000 and about thirty drinking places. The prohibition districts are Kent county, with a population of 35,000 and about twenty drinking bars, and Sussex county, 40,000 population and about twenty-five drinking bars."

**I**N SALT LAKE CITY John F. Bransford, the anti-Mormon candidate for mayor was elected by a large majority. In Massachusetts Governor Guild, republican, was re-elected by a plurality approximating 100,000. In Rhode Island Governor Higgins, democrat, was re-elected. The Rhode Island legislature will be republican thus assuring the election of Wetmore to the senate. In Maryland the democrats won, electing Austin L. Crothers governor and the entire state ticket by substantial pluralities, the legislature also being democratic. This means the election to the senate of former Governor John W. Smith and the reelection of Senator William Pickney Whyte. In New Jersey the republican candidate won by 7,000 plurality. The legislature will be republican in both branches. In San Francisco Mayor Taylor, reform candidate, was elected by a plurality of 11,000. In Kentucky Augustus Wilson, republican, was elected by about 14,000. The legislature will be democratic.

**A**T THE recent session of the American Newspapers' Association resolutions were adopted declaring: "First—That the authority of existing statutes for repression of trade combinations may be invoked. Second—That the defiance of recent judicial action prohibiting participation in such combination by certain western mills may be punished. Third—That the president may be put into possession of information which shall equip him to advise congress of the abuse of tariff favors by papermakers." The resolutions also declared that the duty on printing paper, wood pulp and all material entering the manufacture of printing paper should be immediately repealed.

**I**N PURSUANCE of these resolutions a committee called upon the president, the committee including John Morris of the New York Times, Medill McCormick of the Chicago Tribune, George Thompson of the St. Paul Dispatch, Delevan Smith of the Indianapolis News, John Eastman of the Chicago Journal, Walter Page of World's Work, Dr. Albert Shaw of the Review of Reviews, E. J. Ridgeway and the presidents of the national organizations of the allied printing trades. The president's attention was called to the alleged conspiracy whereby the makers of news print papers have arranged for an advance of \$12 per ton upon the supply of that article for the current year and for an additional advance next year averaging \$10 per ton.

**T**HE PUBLISHERS who called upon the president explained that the proposed advances mean a burden imposed on the printing industry of the country of \$10,000,000 for the present year and \$19,000,000 for the coming year. The excuse for these advances on the part of the paper makers is that cost of wood and labor has increased. This excuse was met in the argument to the president by the statement that the published report of the largest manufacturer of news print paper gives the increased cost of material and manufacture, including the expense of administration and sales, as about sixty-four cents per ton. The president was told that the present plan of increasing the price of paper had its inception twelve years ago, in a

proposition to unite the paper mills into one pool or corporation. The first step in the program was, it was stated, accomplished when the promoters induced congress to fix a tariff duty of \$6 per ton for news print paper. It is this tariff, it is understood, the president has promised to urge congress to repeal. The next step, which has encountered many delays, the president was told, was consummated by the creation of a combination to exhaust the surplus paper, to cause a paper famine and to raise prices.

**T**HE SAD plight in which newspaper publishers find themselves is told by the Associated Press in this way: "Publishers who apply for quotations realize that in some intangible way their supply has been predetermined, and the price they are to pay also arranged for them. In each case, the statement stated, the publishers all made bids, but the paper was held at a prohibitory price. He also finds that he has no remedy against the supply of inferior paper. Publishers who make inquiry of one mill find that others have been advised of the inquiry. It was represented that Canadian mills can and do pay a \$6 per ton duty, and still find it profitable to sell in the United States. At the same time the American mills are selling abroad in competition with Canada, Great Britain, Germany and Norway. It was stated to the president that paper makers operating fairly equipped mills have made long profits during the past ten years at prices averaging less than \$40 per ton, and that a selling price of between \$55 and \$60 per ton as now proposed would mean a daily tribute of \$45,000 paid by the paper consumers to the alleged combination. Evidence is obtainable in government records, it was claimed, that paper mills in the United States and Canada are making paper at a cost of less than \$28 per ton. Mystification has been used, it was asserted, to show that the cost of labor had greatly increased, but this was refuted by the statement that the entire cost of labor in the manufacture of a ton of paper amounted to less than \$2.40. Not one-twentieth of the advance in news print, it was stated, would go to labor. Because of the export of 60,000 tons of print paper during the past season, and the claim of the manufacturers that the domestic stock is practically exhausted, coupled with the shutting down of the mills on various pretexts, leads the publishers to the belief that an attempt is being made to create a paper famine. Many newspaper proprietors, it was claimed, are unable to obtain any quotations for paper for next year, and do not know where to obtain a supply."

**A** WRITER IN the Nashville Tennessean says: "These are the things which are telling today in the financial situation and which it is well to keep in mind when panic talk is heard: Enormous demand for American staples abroad, signal development of financial situation. Products of fields and mines of the west and south being rushed to European markets, to bring millions of gold into the country. Wheat, cotton, copper, tobacco and meats now being exported. Tobacco exports to bring \$100,000,000. Copper sales abroad for one day aggregate \$14,000,000. Gold imports of \$2,000,000 make total engagements of \$30,000,000. Fifty ships in harbor of New Orleans loading cargoes for foreign ports. Demand for wheat on continent will prevent foreign bankers from retaining gold."

**I**N HIS MESSAGE to the special session of the Alabama legislature, Governor Comer declared that the control and regulation of the railroads by the state is a question of more importance than the making of rates or any other matter since it involves the question of right of the state to control its internal affairs. The message goes on to say that President Smith of the Louisville & Nashville railroad has held out against Alabama laws while other have put them in effect; has defied the state and its people by conducting a lobby at the capitol and openly

admitting that his company has influenced legislation in the past; has called the governors of Alabama and Georgia populist; has raised rates over night in defiance of state laws, and has generally refused to recognize the right of the state to make laws applying to transportation companies. That the Alabama rate laws are not confiscatory is evidenced, the governor says, by the fact that they prevail in other nearby states and provide profit. Financial troubles have not grown out of the laws made to control corporations, but out of the rascality of the high financiers, and the producer of the cotton of the south is now coming to save the country from panic. The Louisville & Nashville railroad is charged with manipulating to prevent use of waterways, to make rules handling coal, demurrage and freight that are arbitrary and generally to control the state to the detriment of the people.

**T**HE WASHINGTON correspondent for the Chicago Record-Herald says: "While President Roosevelt does not admit that he has in any way contributed to the present financial situation, he has become convinced that he is a very important factor in it so far as it may be improved, and the cause for irritation and excitement removed. That he is deeply concerned that the tendency to unsettle values does not go on is impressed on all who have discussed any of the phases of the matter with him. One of the most hopeful signs is that there has been created already a much better feeling and a fuller understanding between Mr. Roosevelt and the great financiers of the country. This is regarded here as the most substantial progress that has been made toward bettering things financially. Undeniably the president had deep resentment because of the whirlwind of denunciations which greeted his Provincetown speech, and there were lingering evidences of it when he spoke at Nashville, less than two weeks ago, saying that he was not responsible for the situation in New York, and even if he had contributed to it he would continue his policies without change 'throughout the remaining eighteen months of his term.' But in the face of the great danger which was threatened week before last much of the president's resentment has died out and there are evidences that he will yield to the counsels of all his friends and do nothing to keep alive the turmoil and excitement which follow every speech on the problems involved in his policies for correcting evils, bringing corporations within federal law and punishing 'wealthy malefactors.' This does not mean that the course of justice in suits and proceedings now under way will be stayed, perhaps, but it is the understanding here that many of the things of which capitalists have have complained will be stopped or mitigated. In other words, the country is likely to have a much greater 'rest' because of the sensitive tendency of credit than it otherwise would have had at the next session of congress. From the best information obtainable here as to the probabilities of presidential action, it is quite certain that there will be not nearly so many sticks of giant powder in the annual message as were foreshadowed a few months ago. If those near the president and relied on him in times of great stress have their way there will not even be one dynamite stick. The president seems to realize that the injection anew of all these questions into the arena of discussion at a time when credit is thinly expanded and the whole country is frightened might produce very serious results. He has been advised to go for one thing at a time rather than a half-dozen, any one of which would be sufficient to keep congress reasonably busy when not occupied with preparing and passing appropriation bills."

## FROM ACROSS THE SEA

The New York World prints in display type this statement by the London Telegraph: "The New York World . . . holds an unassailable position in America as an independent newspaper, unbought and unbuyable."

Has any one entertained a suspicion, or spoken a word to call forth this certificate of character from across the sea?