

CURRENT TOPICS

THE TAFT forces and the Hughes forces clashed in New York City on the evening of January 16. The Hughes men undertook to consider the resolution endorsing Hughes for the republican nomination for president, which resolution was tabled several weeks ago. The Associated Press report said that three hours was consumed in debate between the Taft and Hughes forces, and that this debate was characterized by "bitter invective and frequently by cheers, hisses and cat calls." Finally an adjournment was taken for thirty days, no vote having been reached. The supporters of Hughes insisted that the Taft men were afraid to allow the question to come to a vote.

A WASHINGTON dispatch to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat follows: "President Roosevelt was today credited with having expressed the opinion to a caller that William H. Taft, secretary of war, would be nominated for the presidency at the next republican national convention on the first ballot. The president is credited with having added that Mr. Taft would have about 600 votes on his first ballot. The information spread rapidly through political circles and was eagerly talked about at the capitol. There was general surprise that the present administration should so openly espouse the cause of Mr. Taft and make apparent its leanings in the direction of deciding who should succeed Mr. Roosevelt. At the White House when inquiry was made as to the correctness of the report of the president's utterance, it was neither confirmed nor denied. In an informal way, the statement was bolstered up. From the expressions of Mr. Loeb, secretary to the president, it would appear that the Taft people now claim to have practical assurance of 517 delegates. In making this estimate, practically all the states west of the Mississippi river are claimed, including Iowa and Minnesota. Half of the delegations from Kentucky and Tennessee are claimed, a goodly percentage of the delegations from the solid south, those from North Carolina and South Carolina, with absolute confidence. Most of the delegates from New England and all of Ohio are included in the Taft claims.

SENATOR ALDRICH claims to have the cooperation of Mr. Roosevelt on his financial measure. A Washington dispatch to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat says: "The republican members of the finance committee were today given definite assurances by Senator Aldrich that he had gone over the bill which bears his name with the president and had been assured by Mr. Roosevelt that it had his entire approval. It develops that a Chicago editor has busied himself in developing opposition to the Aldrich bill and told a number of senators that the president was opposed to the measure. Senator Aldrich, with his characteristic energetic manner, went at once to the president and secured his authority to assure his republican colleagues that the administration was heartily in favor of this measure. Local papers have been publishing a statement that because of the opposition of certain bankers of Chicago, Senator Hopkins of Illinois, a new member of the finance committee, would oppose the measure and had so notified Senator Aldrich. This was flatly denied by the Illinois senator this afternoon, who said that he stood directly on the interview which was carried in these dispatches Saturday in favor of the bill."

JUDGE HOUGH of the federal court in New York has ruled that E. H. Harriman must answer questions put to him by the interstate commerce committee relating to the purchase of Union Pacific or Southern Pacific stock. The questions which the commission desired Mr. Harriman to answer were described by United States Attorney Stimson in this way: "What the commission is endeavoring to learn is whether the enormous stock investments made with Union Pacific funds amounted to a waste of the assets and impairment of the facilities of an interstate common carrier, and whether the matter of such investments would be made subject to the reg-

ulation of congress." The questions to which Mr. Harriman objected related to the purchase of the stock of other railroads in the interest of the Union Pacific and the Union Pacific dividend. In regard to the \$28,000,000 of Illinois Central purchased at \$175 a share, the questions which Mr. Harriman declined to answer are as follows: "Were the 90,000 shares sold by yourself, Mr. Rogers and Mr. Stillman pooled?" "Was it acquired for the purpose of selling it to the Union Pacific?" "Was the stock purchased by you at a much lower price than \$150 with the intention of turning it over to the Union Pacific?" "Did you have any interest in the 100,000 shares sold at the time by Kuhn, Loeb & Co. to the Union Pacific?" "Was the 105,000 shares acquired by the same pool for the purpose of selling to the Union Pacific?" The grounds assigned by Messrs. Harriman and Kuhn for their refusal are thus summarized by Judge Hough: "First—The questions propounded are not pertinent, relevant or material to any inquiry stated or defined by the resolution of the interstate commerce commission. Second—Said resolution or order was an improper method of originating inquiry by the commission. * * * "Third—* * * The committee is not empowered either to pass the resolution or make the order or ask the questions by a statutory grant of power. "Fourth—If, however, congress has assumed to grant statutory power authorizing such procedure * * * then such congressional grant is unconstitutional, inasmuch as congress itself could not repress these questions, because they do not relate to commerce among the several states."

THE TARIFF question will not down. A New York dispatch to the Chicago Record-Herald follows: "More than one hundred members of the National Association of Boot and Shoe Manufacturers were present today at the opening session of the annual meeting of the association. In his report President John H. Hanan said the American shoe manufacturer was able and willing to compete with the world if the government would remove the handicap imposed by the heavy duty on hides. Governor Guild of Massachusetts, in a brief address at the banquet tonight, discussed the necessity for a revision of the tariff. 'A demand will be made after the next national election,' he said, 'for a special session of congress for the revision of the tariff in the interests of common sense rather than of special interests. I am a protectionist. I believe that policy more than any other one thing has built up the industrial domination of the United States. I believe that policy should be continued, but the time has come when illogical and needless duties should cease to hamper alike our industries and our people. Wool is a proper subject for protection. Sheep are carefully bred to produce a certain kind of wool, and the sheep that produce the finest wool give the poorest mutton. No one ever heard of a farmer raising cattle for their hides, or breeding cattle to produce a certain kind of hides. The duty on hides helps the big meat packers, I understand, to some extent, but it certainly is of no value to the cattle raiser.' Governor Guild advocated free admission of bituminous coal and beef and a reduction on wool. He thought that a revision would not cause a general upheaval of business."

A NEW YORK man, Henry E. Sullivan, left a will providing for the conversion of his body into buttons, pouches and fiddle-strings. Referring to this peculiar will a writer in the New York World says it is not unprecedented and gives a description of freak wills in history as follows: "In Morgan vs. Boys a will was upheld which directed that part of the bowels be made into fiddle-strings, the remainder sublimed into smelling-salts and the rest of the body vitrified into lenses. The court drew a distinction between insanity and eccentricity. Johann Ziska, blind chieftain of the Hussites, in 1424 directed that his skin be tanned and a drumhead made of it. Mr. S. Sanborn in 1871 bequeathed his corpse to Harvard university, and particularly to the two anatomical professors, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Louis Agassiz. The skin was to be

made into two drumheads for: 'Warren Simpson, drummer of Cohapel, on condition that he should on the 17th of June every year, at sunrise, beat on the said drum the tune of 'Yankee Doodle' on Bunker Hill. The drumheads to be respectively inscribed with Pope's 'Universal Prayer' and the Declaration of Independence. * * * The remainder of my body * * * to be composted for a fertilizer to contribute to the growth of an American elm to be planted in some rural thoroughfare, that the weary wayfarer may rest, and innocent children may play beneath its umbrageous branches rendered luxuriant by my remains.' Jeremy Bentham left his body to Dr. Southwood Smith for dissection. The skeleton was stuffed to fit Bentham's clothes, a model made of the head and the whole inclosed in a mahogany case with glass doors. In his arm-chair, with his walking-stick in his hand, all that was left of the great apostle of law reform remained for some years in the house of Dr. Smith, who ultimately presented it to the University college. In Neville vs. Geary, tried in Dublin in 1878, the testatrix left numerous articles of clothing, including trousers about five inches long and three inches wide, with jackets, swallow-tailed coats, etc., 'for the baby that should rise at the first resurrection.' While such testaments may shock the feelings of relatives, they do not leave the sting which more vindictive documents possess. A notable will contained handsome legacies for wife and sister with the provision that once a week each should spend an hour with the other at the grave. 'I do this,' was the conclusion, 'because they made my life miserable with their eternal squabbles, and I want to be certain that they will torture each other for a while after I am gone.'"

SUPERINTENDENT George E. Hunter of the watch factory of Elgin, Ill., explained recently to a writer in the American Food Journal the reason why forty loaves of fresh bread are required each day at the watch factory. Mr. Hunter said: "There is no secret regarding the use of bread in this factory, and I am willing to tell all I can concerning it. From the earliest times in the history of watchmaking it has been the custom of watchmakers to reduce fresh bread to the form of dough. This is done by steaming and kneading. They then use this dough for removing oil and chips that naturally adhere, in course of manufacture, to pieces as small as the parts of a watch. There are many parts of a watch, by the way, that are so small as to be barely visible to the naked eye. The oil is absorbed by this dough, and the chips stick to it, and there is no other known substance which can be used as a wiper without leaving some of its particles attached to the thing wiped. This accounts for the continued use of bread dough in the watchmaking industry. The Elgin National Watch company uses something over forty two-pound loaves per day, or about 24,000 pounds a year."

THE MILWAUKEE Daily News prints this editorial: The New York World, which lent itself to the work of foisting Alton B. Parker onto the democratic party as its candidate for president, now is devoting itself to an effort to vitalize a 'boom' for Governor Johnson of Minnesota. In 1904 conditions were propitious for the naming of a 'conservative' candidate. Twice the democratic party had suffered defeat under Mr. Bryan's leadership. He had declined to be a candidate and the field was open, with no man of radical tendencies of the prominence and strength to command the united support of the progressive members of the party. There was a disposition on the part of many progressive democrats to give the conservatives opportunity to show what merit there was in their contention that the successive defeats of the party were due to Bryan's candidacy and leadership. So, with the support of the 'anything to win element' that was dazzled by the promises that Parker could carry New York and New Jersey and that the campaign chest of the party would be filled to overflowing, the New York contingent had comparatively easy sailing. Parker was nominated. It is quite unnecessary to