

CURRENT TOPICS

COLONEL John F. Finerty, editor of the Chicago Citizen, for many years prominent as a newspaper man, lecturer and Irish patriot, died at his residence in Chicago, June 10, aged sixty-two years. Colonel Finerty was taken ill six months ago with a serious ailment of the liver and with the exception of a few rallies, grew steadily worse. Mr. Finerty left a widow and two adult children—John F. Finerty, Jr., assistant attorney for the New York Central lines, and Miss Vera, a senior student in the University of Chicago.

REFERRING TO Colonel Finerty, the Chicago Record-Herald says: "An Irishman by birth, Colonel Finerty was an ardent American in political and social relations. In his early days he served as a war correspondent. Since 1882 he had been editor of the Chicago Citizen and as a lecturer he had appeared in every large American city. From 1883 to 1885 he was a member of congress. His greatest interest was in Irish-American affairs. He was an ardent advocate of Irish independence and held numerous positions in Irish-American organizations. Colonel Finerty was born in Galway, Ireland, in 1846. As a youth he espoused the cause of Irish independence, and in 1864 came to the United States. For a time he lived in New York and then joined a regiment and went to the front to fight for the cause of the union. In 1868 Colonel Finerty entered upon a journalistic career in Chicago. He was on the Republican, the Evening Post, the Tribune and the Times. In the spring of 1876 he reported the expedition of General Crook against the Sioux in Montana and Dakota, and was with Crook's command until the close of the campaign. He was highly praised by the general in official reports. Captain Charles King, the romantic writer and historian of frontier life, has recorded some of his experiences. On returning to Chicago, Colonel Finerty went to Mexico and then to New Mexico and Arizona to report campaigns, afterward joining expeditions in Canada and the Rocky mountains. In 1882 he established the Citizen. Under Mayor Dunne, Colonel Finerty was a member of the board of local improvements and retained that post when Mayor Busse came into office. He served several terms as president of the United Irish Land League. In Irish matters he was an extremist, frequently declaring that if Ireland was to be free she must purchase her liberty by the sword."

A POLITICAL precedent is pointed out by the Wall Street Journal in this way: "In regard to the movement to renominate Vice President Fairbanks as a running mate for Taft on the national ticket, the objection is raised that to take the two candidates on the same ticket from adjoining states would be a reversal of political tradition. There is, however, precedent for so doing, although the prevailing rule has been to take the candidates for president and vice president from different sections of the country. The one precedent was established in 1868, when Grant was nominated for president from the state of Illinois, and Colfax was nominated for vice president from the state of Indiana on the republican ticket."

DAVID B. HILL, former United States senator from New York, sailed June 11 for a European trip, intending to be gone all summer. Before leaving Mr. Hill gave to the Associated Press this statement: "There is no democratic party. When I met the late Governor Altgeld in a little room up a back stairs in a small Chicago hotel shortly before the first so-called Bryan convention, I told him that the policies which he represented would drive the democratic party to hell. Then he begged for another try. Four years later I said: 'You are most there; stop before you have absolutely ruined the party,' but Bryan was nominated, as I saw the futility of a minority report with only ten votes to back me. I admit that the republican party is badly disorganized at the present

time. Both parties are disorganized. There was an opportunity but I fear that it has been overlooked. The keynote of this present campaign should be 'Taft, the candidate of political patronage.' What else is he? He is put before the people as a candidate by the power of political patronage. Nothing else. Now, both sides in the coming political struggle will have to go to the masses for their votes. They must draw from the masses and what better man could stand against the candidate representing the power of patronage than John Johnson, who spent his boyhood days in a county poorhouse? Think of it, torchlight processions with banners reading 'John Johnson, the poorhouse candidate.' And from all I have been able to learn, Mr. Johnson is more than a mere near-to-the-people candidate. He is a well balanced man and an able man. Every time Bryan says 'I have kept the faith,' it makes me smile. He has kept the faith indeed. He kept it out in Nebraska, his own state, which is now republican to its political core. The democratic party never wanted Mr. Bryan. Mr. Bryan wanted the democratic party. He forced himself on the party in 1896 and again on what was left of the party in 1900 and now in 1908 he calls himself the democratic party and says: 'I have kept the faith.'"

OLIVER H. P. BELMONT died at his home in Hempstead, Long Island, June 10. Mr. Belmont was an ardent democrat and gave enthusiastic support to the democratic national ticket, particularly in 1896 and in 1900. A New York dispatch carried by the Associated Press says: "Mr. Belmont had been seriously ill less than two weeks. He had not been in the best of health for some time, but his condition was not such as to cause any alarm until appendicitis developed June 1. The previous Saturday, although the day was rainy and the air raw, he went down to Belmont Park to witness the running of the Belmont stakes. He appeared to have suffered no ill-effects from the exposure and enjoyed the sport thoroughly. When the physicians were called on Monday, however, and diagnosed his illness as appendicitis, they found his heart in such a condition that there was much hesitation before a decision to perform an operation was reached. On Thursday, however, it became apparent that the only hope for his recovery lay in an operation. He rallied nicely after the operation and it was believed that he would make a good recovery. Late that afternoon, however, there was a severe sinking spell, followed by unconsciousness. That night peritonitis developed and from that time until his death there was little hope that he would survive. Oliver H. P. Belmont was the son of the late August Belmont. The present August Belmont and Perry Belmont are his brothers."

GOVERNOR HUGHES of New York has affixed his signature to the two anti-gambling bills passed by the state senate June 11. An Associated Press dispatch tells an interesting story as follows: "A legislative battle which for intensity of feeling on both sides rarely, if ever, has been equalled in this state, came to an end today, when the heroism of Senator Foelker of Brooklyn made it possible to put upon the statute books two bills, repealing the legal discrimination which for thirteen years has protected public gambling within race track enclosures while it was a felony elsewhere in this state. The vote on each of the bills was 26 to 25. The line up was in general the same as that in the regular session when the bills failed of passage by a tie vote 25 to 25, but since Senator Wallace of Niagara Falls, has been elected to the seat made vacant by reason of the death of Senator Franchot and his vote made the necessary twenty-sixth. Senator Foelker, who underwent an operation May 10, for appendicitis and whose condition for much of the intervening time was critical, came up from Staatsburg last evening, the journey of fifty miles being a severe tax upon his strength. He was somewhat stronger this morning and was taken to the senate chamber just as the

roll call on a dilatory motion was being taken. He was plainly suffering from weakness, and his response when his name was repeated was scarcely audible. He was encouraged by his fellow senators sympathetically and on both of the roll calls on the final passage of the bills voted with the majority. Up to the last moment the opposition to the bills entertained hope that the measures would fail. Rumors flew thick and fast that Foelker had collapsed and that some other senator who had formerly voted for the bills had been induced to 'switch.' There was even the report of an attempt in some desperate way to prevent Senator Foelker's presence at the critical moment. Every step of his progress from his house to his seat in the senate chamber was guarded." This legislation will, it is said, put an end to all race track gambling.

A RADICAL CUT was made in the prices of steel at a conference held in New York City between the steel manufacturers. Chairman E. H. Gary of the steel trust, who acted as chairman of the New York conference, announced that the following price changes had been decided upon: Steel billets reduced \$3, from \$28 to \$25 per ton, Pittsburgh; structural steel and plates reduced \$2 per ton, from \$1.70 to \$1.60 per hundredweight, Pittsburgh; wire nails reduced \$2 per ton, from \$2.05 to \$1.95 per hundredweight, Pittsburgh; merchant pipe reduced \$4 per ton, Pittsburgh; Lake Superior iron ore, reduced 50 cents per ton; sheet bars reduced \$2 per ton, from \$29 to \$27, Pittsburgh. No change in the price of sheet steel or of tin plate was made, as those products were cut early in the year. The cut in steel bars from \$1.60 to \$1.40, Pittsburgh, or \$4 per ton, which was made last week and was the forerunner of today's action, is still fresh in the minds of the public. No mention was made as to the price of steel rails. These were maintained at \$28 during the depression of 1903-1904, and it is understood they will be held at that price now. It was pointed out, however, that acceptance of the new specifications as to quality and shape at the \$28 price will virtually mean a reduction of \$1 to \$4, as they provide for a higher cost rail. While the meeting was harmonious in a broad sense it is understood there was considerable difference of opinion as to the extent of reductions to be made. Not a few manufacturers favored a cut of \$4 per ton in billets, to \$24, Pittsburgh. The open market for billets has been around \$24 to \$25 for some time, so that today's concession by the big companies is simply an acknowledgement on their part that they are willing to meet the market. About a month ago sales of billets as low as \$25, delivered, with a 60 per cent freight rate (\$24.40, Pittsburgh) in lots as large as 2,000 tons were reported, and today sales of steel bars as low as \$1.34 per hundredweight or \$2 per ton under the recently established official price level, were made.

THE MONTHLY statement of the government receipts and expenditures shows a deficit for the month of May, 1908, of \$11,958,991, as against a surplus for May, 1907, of \$8,575,212. The receipts for May, 1908, show a decrease as compared with May, 1907, of \$14,789,960, and the disbursements an increase of \$5,744,242, making a difference of \$20,534,202. For the eleven months of the current fiscal year the receipts are shown to have aggregated \$546,407,150, and the disbursements \$610,010,755, leaving a deficit for the eleven months of \$63,603,605. The statement shows also that the receipts for the last eleven months were \$56,187,522 less than for the corresponding period last year and the expenditures \$72,467,046 greater, leaving a net difference in eleven months of \$128,654,568. The civil and miscellaneous expenditures during the last month show an increase of \$668,000; war shows an increase of \$2,300,000; navy an increase of \$175,000; pensions an increase of \$1,100,000, and public works an increase of \$714,000.