

CURRENT TOPICS

HENRY WATTERSON of the Louisville Courier-Journal has entered into a wager with Mr. Pulitzer of the New York World. Mr. Watterson bets a fine dinner at Washington that by the time he returns to America Theodore Roosevelt will be at war with William H. Taft. The World insists that Mr. Roosevelt will be found in the ranks of Mr. Taft's outspoken defenders. Walter Wellman, who is again Washington correspondent for the Chicago Record-Herald, says that "Roosevelt is the specter at the Washington capital." Mr. Wellman says: "Among the possible consequences of this struggle between two antagonistic forces within the republican party, these are much spoken of in well-informed circles: First—Failure of all important legislation this coming winter, and the end of the session coming in a cloud of inaction, bickering and discontent. Second—The Taft administration, which is still on trial before the country, falling into the slough of do-nothingism and dissatisfaction, and failing to achieve the success and popularity at which it aims, looking to 1912. Third—Popular disgust with an ineffective party organization and in consequence an opposition majority in the next house of representatives, which will continue the failure of the Taft administration so far as any constructive or remedial legislation is concerned. Fourth—A general turning of the dissatisfied people to that positive, aggressive, original, picturesque and interesting personality, the man in Africa."

THE BRITISH budget was beaten in the house of lords by a vote of 75 yeas to 350 nays. A London cablegram carried by the Associated Press says: "In the sedate, detached manner characteristic of the proceedings in the gilded chamber, and in direct disregard of the advice of some of the ablest and oldest members, such as Rosebery, Morley, Lord James of Hereford, Lord Cromer, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, the Earl of Lytton, Lord Courtney and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the house of lords today created a situation unprecedented in English history, at least in 300 years, by refusing formal assent to the budget bill and referring it to the country itself for judgment, thereby making it illegal to collect taxes and carry on the king's government. After six days' debate, notable for the high standard of the oratory, as well as for the able and convincing arguments arrayed on both sides for and against the budget, and placing in every possible light all the aspects of the great constitutional questions involved, the house of lords cleared for division at half past 11 o'clock tonight."

IN THE DEBATE in the house of lords, Morley made a sensational speech telling the lords that their vote on the budget would sound the note for an angry and prolonged battle. A London cablegram says: "Lord Morley's powerful speech was the absorbing event of the budget debate today in the house of lords. The secretary of state for India dilated on the importance of the struggle as viewed both at home and abroad, and he called attention to the fact that foreign nations were watching anxiously the outcome of the conflict to see whether there would be any change in England's fiscal policy. Morley quoted Burke to the effect that the house of lords had no right in any sense to the disposition of the public purse, and contended that if there was one thing that could not wisely be submitted to a referendum it was the budget with all its complexities. In addition, a referendum would weaken what was most important to maintain, a sense of responsibility in the house of commons. As to the lord's contention that their action would arrest the wave of socialism, he refused to believe that British artisans were predatory or socialistic, but even granting that the misery existing among some classes had produced a movement akin to socialism, was hardly wise for the lords to take up a position exposing them to the charge of straining the constitution as champions of the rich against the poor. 'The more triumphant the majority for Lord Lansdowne's amendment,' said Lord

Morley, 'the larger the disparity between the numbers of the government and the numbers of the opposition, the more flagrant will be the political scandal.' Lord Morley concluded his speech with an impressive warning that when, tomorrow, the curtain fell on an empty house they would know that the note had been sounded for an angry, and perhaps a prolonged battle. When the secretary resumed his seat, the small minority of liberal peers broke into enthusiastic cheers."

THE NATIONAL Liberal Federation at London has issued a manifesto. This manifesto concentrates attention entirely on the constitutional struggle between the house of lords and the house of commons. It says: "If the present action of the peers is not repudiated swiftly by the people, the rights and privileges won so dearly by our forefathers in the great struggles for freedom are all surrendered." The manifesto declares the peers power of veto must be restricted so that the last word on legislation and finance will rest with the house of commons. Otherwise no liberal ministry again can assume the responsibilities of office. "In the fight forced upon us," the manifesto continues, "the electors will have to decide whether they wish to govern themselves or be governed at second hand by a few hundred hereditary peers, who have thrown the constitution into the melting pot, in order to shift the burden of the taxation from wealth, land and liquor, to food and the necessities of life." Lord Rosebery, in a letter to the press repudiates the charge made by Lord Curzon that he led an army to the walls of a fortress and then abandoned it. Lord Rosebery reiterates that throughout he has opposed and warned against the course the lords have taken as one calculated unjustly to affect the house of lords itself and enhance what popularity the budget may possess.

BY A MAJORITY of 215 the house of commons adopted the resolution introduced by Premier Asquith which declared that the house of Lords, in rejecting the budget, had usurped the right of the house of commons. Balfour, in a weak speech, defended the house of lords. Asquith's speech, which was repeatedly cheered, concluded in this way: "We are living under a system of false balances and loaded dice. When democracy voted for a liberal government the dormant second chamber woke from its slumbering and nullified the work of the house of commons. We shall ask the house by this vote and we shall ask the constituencies at the earliest possible moment to declare that the organ, the choice of the free people of this country, is to be found in the accredited representatives of the nation." The government's resolution was presented in the words in which notice of it was given and in substance as follows: "Resolved, That the action of the house of lords in refusing to pass into law the financial provisions made by this chamber for the expenses of the year was a breach of the constitution and a usurpation of the rights of the house of commons."

AN INTERESTING story from the national capital is vouched for by the Washington correspondent for the Omaha World-Herald and is as follows: "It became known today that Speaker Cannon is informing his close political associates and friends that the next house will be controlled by the democrats. The speaker's declaration that the republicans would lose control of the house was made to a close newspaper friend who went to Pittsburg to meet him. Political conditions throughout the country generally and the complexion of the next house in particular formed the topic of conversation during the journey to Washington. Seated in a chair opposite the speaker was the wife of a member of the house who is an insurgent. The woman's attention was first attracted to the conversation between the speaker and the newspaper correspondent by the frequent mention of her husband's name, and the abusive language used by the speaker in discussing the insurgent movement. The speaker was most

positive in his declaration that the present split in the republican party in the house and dissatisfaction with the tariff bill could have but one result, namely, a democratic house at the next congressional election. The speaker was an early visitor at the White House today, and it is believed that he took occasion to warn the president that the insurgent movement would surely lead the house republicans onto the rocks. It is known that he is determined to make the fight against his enemies without a thought of compromise. 'These gentlemen,' Mr. Cannon says, referring to the insurgents, 'can have all the fight they want. Indeed they may get more. Senator Bristow admits that I am now to be fought by him and his ilk. When in Sam Hill in the last three or four years haven't I been fought by them? And I am to be annihilated. Well that has been going on for a long time, and still, here I am.' Asked as to a possibility of compromising with the insurgents, the speaker said: 'How can there be any compromise? What true republican, who believes in his party's solidarity, would for an instant compromise with this minority element which, because it could not control, joined hands with the democrats to prevent us having any tariff reductions at all, and is now joining with William J. Bryan in seeking to overthrow those who enacted the Payne law of 1909?' Asked as to the legislative program for the coming session, the speaker said that the president would find a majority of republicans in the house and senate standing for republican policies. He also expressed the opinion that an investigation of the sugar trust would be ordered, 'if a resolution were introduced and it was shown that the active department of justice and the active treasury department felt that the investigation would not hamper the work of prosecuting.'

ON MR. TAFT'S "big six" paramount issues the New York World has taken a poll of congressmen. The World explains: "In his recent speeches President Taft outlined the six dominating subjects of discussion for congress and for people interested in national politics during the next three months. Some of these he favors; others are left open for consideration and debate. Congress will devote much time to them, and legislation embodying in some form part of them is fairly certain of being enacted. The six paramount national questions are as follows: One—A central bank of issue. Two—Amend the anti-trust law by narrowing its purpose and confining it to combinations and conspiracies to suppress competition and establish monopolies. Such amendment would relieve labor unions of liability in cases of boycotts. Three—Postal savings banks. Four—Amendment of the interstate commerce law, creating an interstate commission court to hear appeals, empowering the commission to fix rates and make classifications, regulating stock and bond issues and legalizing pools. Five—Modification of the use of injunctions to carry out the pledge of the republican national platform. Six—Ship subsidies. Many bills on these topics will be introduced in congress. None of them is a party question, for both democrats and republicans are divided in opinion regarding them."

CONCERNING THE results of this poll the World says: "The nearest to political solidity is the very strong democratic opposition to a central bank and to ship subsidies. These are party principles, inherited through successive generations. On all other topics there is wide variance that is not to be definitely classified either along political or geographical lines. In order to obtain an expression of public opinion the World submitted the questions to a certain selected number of members of congress representing both the senate and the house. The first division was by party, an equal number of democrats and republicans being included. The next division was geographical, the country being divided into four sections, namely, the eastern states, north central states, southern states and western states. Senator