

# CURRENT TOPICS

ONE VIEW of the income tax proposition is given by a Connecticut reader of the New York World in this way: "You marvel at the democratic disregard of party pledges in favor of the income tax as manifested in several of the southern state legislatures. Is there really anything to marvel at? Who wants an income tax on top of a protective tariff tax such as prevails today? Certainly the people who understand the conditions do not, and more are coming to a clearer understanding every day. Income tax and low tariff, yes. Income tax and high tariff, no. That's the true doctrine!"

THE BUFFALO (N. Y.) Times, Norman E. Mack's newspaper, prints under prominent headlines the following Associated Press dispatch from New York City: "A boom to nominate Mayor William J. Gaynor of Greater New York for president in 1912 is shortly to be launched as the result of a conference of prominent democrats at Hot Springs, Ark., according to an Arkansas dispatch to the Sun today. The dispatch says: 'Under the guise of a complimentary dinner to Norman E. Mack of Buffalo, chairman of the national democratic committee, politicians of national repute representing almost every part of the country gathered here last night to launch a boom for Mayor Gaynor of New York City for the presidency. So quiet has the affair been kept and so reticent have been those behind the scheme in regard to their plans that only those directly invited to attend knew what the affair meant. In order to avoid undesired publicity the dinner was not given at a hotel, but was held at the house of Captain W. H. Martin, who has acted as host to William Jennings Bryan and President Taft. No details of the dinner were given out.'"

THEY ARE having another insurance investigation in New York and State Superintendent Hotchkiss is pushing it. Referring to one day's proceedings, the New York World says: "One thing was made clear at yesterday's session. It was this: The fire insurance companies have an elaborate nation-wide organization to choke and kill any legislation they don't like in every state of the union and in congress itself. In this state they work through the New York Board of Fire Underwriters and also the Underwriters' Association of the state of New York, with headquarters at Syracuse. In all other states and in Washington they work through the National Board of Fire Underwriters. Each of these organizations has its own laws and legislation committee, which can hire anybody it sees fit to kill or promote legislation, the expenses being defrayed by an assessment on the hundreds of companies based upon the premium income of each. The foreign companies belong to all of these, and in addition have an association of their own—the committee of foreign companies, which takes care of the special legislation affecting them."

JAMES E. WATSON, former member of the house of representatives and defeated as the republican nominee for governor of Indiana, is now in the lime-light. The Washington correspondent for the New York World says: "On all sides are heard stories of the superior generalship of the regular forces in the hour of their extremity. It was not generally known during the heat of the last day of conflict that 'Uncle Joe' had sought a strategist from the outside with whom to take counsel and upon whom he could depend for the sort of advice he then sadly needed. Back from his home in Indiana the speaker summoned former Representative Jim Watson, who used to be the republican whip. He got into the 'lame duck' class when Indiana turned her political somersault in 1908. Watson arrived in Washington Saturday morning and went straight to the capitol and to the speaker. 'Some of my best friends are urging me to resign after the certain passage of this resolution of this man Norris,' said the speaker to Watson. 'Not on your life,' said Watson. 'You tell the house you will entertain

a motion to declare the chair vacant. That will put the insurgents in a hole. They won't dare defeat you then.' Then Watson dictated that part of the speaker's statement to the house in which he told them he would welcome such a motion. Watson knew the result in advance. It was his political sagacity that made what, in the event of the speaker's resignation would have been his utter downfall, a personal triumph. All day Saturday Watson conducted the fight. He took the management out of the hands of Dwight and used the big New Yorker as a sort of glorified errand boy. Payne, Dalzell and even the unshakable Jim Mann gave way to the 'lame duck' leader and helped him to haul the speaker's chestnuts out of the fire."

PROFESSOR Herman V. Hilprecht, of the University of Pennsylvania, has offered to the world what he calls "proof of Abraham as a real historical personage." Prof. Hilprecht in one of his expeditions found a tablet at Nippur and, according to the professor, this tablet proves: "That Abraham was a real historic character; that when he went up from Ur of the Chaldees he took with him the story of the deluge as it appears in the Bible; that this story tallies in a remarkable degree with that of the ancient Nippur writings; that the Nippur story has been lost to the world for nearly 4,000 years, until restored by Professor Hilprecht; that later Babylonian stories of the deluge are radically different from this record of the time before Abraham; that the gap of several hundred years in the history of the Babylonians of Abraham's period was caused by an invasion of hill tribes, which were probably identical in race with the Goths, who, 2,500 years afterward buried the civilization of Europe."

AN ASSOCIATED Press dispatch from Boston, Mass., follows: "Banishment from the public schools of Boston of John Greenleaf Whittier's famous poem, 'Barbara Frietchie,' is asked of the school committee by Mrs. B. A. Keane of Roxbury. In a communication to the board Mrs. Keane complains of the unfairness to the 'noble and pure hearted men of the south,' which she infers is expressed in the lines: 'A shade of sadness, a blush of shame, Over the face of the leader came. The noble nature within him stirred,' etc. There was no need for a 'blush of shame' and the 'noble nature' was not reserved for emergencies, writes Mrs. Keane. She added that she is not a southern woman, but a good American and wants her children to be such."

GOVERNOR STUBBS, of Kansas, has issued a proclamation calling upon the men, women and children of Kansas to plant trees on Arbor Day. The following beautiful tribute to the tree is made in this proclamation: "The genial days of spring call to our memory again the duty we owe to that ancient and useful friend of man—the tree. In all ages of the world it has been true to our interest and loyal to our service. It has furnished the cradles and coffins of our ancestors, tables for the king and the cottager alike. It has given comfort and shelter to the peasant and the prince—to the pauper and the potentate. Trees are the royal family of the vegetable kingdom. Neither the quarry nor the mine has done more for civilization than the forest. Neither stone nor steel can outlive or outrival the usefulness of the tree. It is more useful to civilization than silver—more valuable to civilization than gold. It gives us food and fire and shelter; it gives us books and newspapers and a greater variety of the necessities and luxuries of life than any other article of ancient or modern commerce. Trees have always figured in our divine and patriotic relations. Among them the religion of man was born. Groves were the first cathedrals of our race. Birds singing in their boughs and branches gave us the first idea of sacred music and the choir. God planted them in Eden for the sustenance of our first parents. From their leaves were fashioned the first garments that covered

their nakedness. When God's displeasure threatened the extinction of our race Noah looked into the forest and found there the means of salvation. It was under the oak tree that Jehovah conversed with a great man in Israel. It was in the tree tops that David heard the voice of the Lord. It was among the palms of the Garden of Gethsemane that Jesus spent the last evening of his life. The battle for American freedom was consummated under the apple tree of Appomattox. For centuries, and until man came to profit by its use, nature denied the tree to the greater part of Kansas. We are now learning how it conserves the moisture in our soil, that it changes and modifies our climate, that it gives beauty and charm to our landscape, that it can solve the problems of slides and drifts and floods, that it influences our civilization and adds materially to the wealth and happiness of the people."

PRESIDENT TAFT has completed the first year of his administration. The Baltimore Sun, a paper that has always been friendly to Mr. Taft, says: "At the beginning of his term in the White House he was believed to be a man of broad views, with the courage of his convictions, but many of his best friends now admit that he has disappointed them. He began with an apparent intention of reforming the tariff downward, but when the standpatters had had everything their own way with the Payne bill he commended it, instead of denouncing it. In so acting he fell below the standard set up by a democratic predecessor. When unfaithful democratic senators failed to make the rates of the Wilson tariff bill accord with ante-election promises President Cleveland signified plainly his disapproval and refused to sign the bill. He accepted the responsibility of his position as a leader of his party and insisted upon the performance of its promises. President Taft preferred to follow and applaud where he could not approve. If, as he said in his speech at Newark, N. J., a few days ago, 'all the newspapers unite in hammering the administration,' it is because he has neglected a great opportunity. He is still personally popular. There is yet in the three remaining years of his term a chance to regain lost ground. This he can do by remembering that he is president of the whole country, not of a party—least of all of the greedy, selfish, ultra-protectionist section of his party. He knows, or should know, that the monopolistic 'trusts' he professes to wish to reform are built up by the tariff. If he does not know this, his party is in advance of him. For him to defend a tariff which strengthens the hold of the monopolies distresses his best friends. 'No amount of defense or explanation by the president or anyone else,' says the St. Paul Pioneer-Press, a republican journal, 'will convince the American people that the pledges of the republican platform have been kept. The tariff law, when all defense of it has been weighed, remains as a dishonorable deception.' Lawyerlike quibbles from the president as to the intent of the platform are unbecoming to his high office. His seeming insincerity in the tariff matter may throw doubt upon his directness in other measures which he is proposing to congress. He still has opportunity to regain public confidence if he will sink the partisan in the patriot, the politician in the statesman."

HERE IS A good Carnegie story: "Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy was being praised on the piazza of an Atlantic City hotel to a Baltimore Star man. 'Mr. Carnegie,' said an aged Pittsburg clergyman, 'is as profoundly religious as he is profoundly charitable. All the same—' He smiled. 'Mr. Carnegie attended some years ago one of my business men's week-day services. Seeing him in the congregation, and unaware that he was not used to praying extempore, I said, after the first hymn: 'We will now be led in prayer by Brother Carnegie.' Mr. Carnegie arose, very red and flustered. 'Let us engage, first of all,' he stammered, 'in a few minutes of silent prayer.' We all obediently bowed our heads and closed our eyes, and Mr. Carnegie, tip-toeing out, escaped."