

## The Chicago Jefferson Club

The Jefferson club of Chicago celebrated the birthday of the club's patron saint on April 13. In a measure the banquet was a celebration of Judge Dunne's election as mayor. Judge Dunne is one of the club's directors and was one of the speakers at the celebration. All of the speakers in their discourses referred to municipal ownership and to Mayor Dunne's recent election on that platform. The toastmaster of the evening was Howard S. Taylor, city prosecuting attorney.

William J. Bryan and George Fred Williams of Massachusetts and Tom L. Johnson were the principal speakers. Mr. Bryan chose for his subject "Thomas Jefferson."

Mr. Williams took for his theme "Equal Rights to All and Special Privileges to None." The speaker was accorded a warm welcome by the banqueters. This was the first time many of those present had ever heard the Massachusetts orator and his words were listened to with interest. Mr. Williams said in part:

"I am here tonight with faith not shaken in the fundamental principles of democracy that there shall be 'equal rights to all and special privileges to none.' Were it merely to relieve those who suffer today, I plead for the enforcement of this doctrine. We have the breathing, pulsating body of man with which to deal, and it is no answer to him who suffers today that his death tomorrow will be the seed of a righteous revolution. For my part I cannot stand idly by to await a natural catachash while men, women and children are suffering today. Were the laws good, yet unavailing, it would be otherwise; for we should be powerless, but then we know that laws are monstrous and cruel, shall we wait for nature to bring order out of ruin?"

"Laws are made by man and can be unmade by man and the men who have made bad laws are bound to unmake them. These men are you and I. The laws are our guilt and all the suffering cry out to us who have offended. For myself I cannot wait for revolution. I am already too old I am eager to join in the kind of democracy which Judge Dunne leads in Chicago and which he will not fail to lead wherever the democracy may call him.

"Out of the enthusiasm and earnestness which you have displayed in your canvass we may look for a national uprising necessitated by the same abuses and inspired by the same principles. Nor am I satisfied to go forward upon a basis of sentiment. I want a platform and as soon as may be a candidate. 'Public ownership and direct legislation' are words enough for the banner which we shall carry hereafter. We must give notice to the politicians of the party that evasive platforms and elusive candidates can not more obtain suffrages in a democratic convention."

Mayor Dunne spoke on "Municipal Ownership." After a lengthy discussion of this subject, Mayor Dunne ended his remarks by appealing to the democratic party to incorporate a municipal ownership plank in the platform to be adopted at the next national convention of the party. His speech in part was as follows:

"The democratic party won in the spring election because its platform plainly, clearly and truthfully declared for principles which were for the best interests of the people. It lost last fall because its platform was a compromise and because the people believed that it dealt in platitudes rather than principles.

"The results of these two elections should teach the lesson to the men who stand high in the councils of the democratic party that evasion, insincerity and retrogression should have

no place in the platforms of the democratic party. The party must take and hold to an advanced position. It must keep pace with the march of events. It must declare against monopoly in any and all forms, against special privileges of every guise."

Thomas L. Johnson of Cleveland was the next speaker. He also spoke on municipal ownership from a traction expert's view. Mr. Johnson discussed first, the advisability of proceeding to negotiate for the purchase of existing street car lines in Chicago. On this point he spoke of the delay of negotiations which the companies would attempt to secure, during which they would not and could not give good service. But on the other hand, if these negotiations were supplemented with active proceedings to force a conclusion, a fair agreement for purchase might soon be made.

Following is an abstract of Mr. Bryan's remarks:

We are told that when Moses, the first great law-giver, had attained his majority, he looked upon the burdens of his countrymen and sympathized with them. Although he had been adopted by a princess and was heir to a throne, his heart led him from the palace and the society of princes to companionship with his oppressed brethren. When a leader was needed to break the bondage of the Israelites and guide them in the formation of a nation, this sympathy fitted him for his work. And no one, it may be added, does a great work whose heart does not beat in sympathy with the masses, ever struggling, ever in need of help.

Thomas Jefferson, although not reared in the environment of royalty, was born and educated among the people who least sympathized with the rights and interest of the common man. His heart, too, was touched by the struggles of his countrymen, and he early became their champion, although in so doing he alienated the landed aristocracy and the educated classes. In wealth he was the equal of the wealthy, and his learning brought him into association with scholars, but his heart kept him in touch with the plain people, and he earned the right to be called "the First Great Democrat."

It was not that he was the first to conceive of democratic principles or to preach the doctrine set forth in the Declaration of Independence. That doctrine was not a new one, but he gave fitting expression to the doctrine at the time of its greatest triumph. The aspiration for self-government was born with man. It has been the inspiring cause which has led people in all ages to struggle for freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, individual liberty and the recognition of the rights of man. Some in all ages have found a selfish reason for applauding monarchy, but at no time has there been universal acquiescence in arbitrary power. Sheridan in his speech against Warren Hastings, says:

"What motive? That which nature, the common parent, plants in the bosom of man, and which, though it may be less active in the Indian than in the Englishman, is still congenial with, and makes a part of his being. That feeling which tells him, that man was never made to be the property of man; but that, when in the pride and insolence of power, one human creature dares to tyrannize over another, it is a power usurped, and resistance is a duty. That principle which tells him that resistance to power usurped is not merely a duty which he owes to himself and to his neighbor, but a duty which he owes his God in asserting and maintaining the rank which He gave him in his creation."

Lincoln expressed the same sentiment when he declared that it was God

himself who placed in every human heart the love of liberty.

Jefferson also knew that the verdict of history was in favor of government by the people rather than government by the few. He knew that back in the days of Greece when the people had a chance to contrast the rule of the Thirty with the rule of the people, they learned how much more the people were to be trusted. Grote, in his history of Greece, declares that "a greater number of atrocities, both against person and against property, had been committed in a few months by the Thirty and abetted by the class of horsemen, all rich men—than the poor majority of the Demos had sanctioned during two generations of democracy." Jefferson knew, also, what the great historian Bancroft said some eighty years ago, that "the government by the people is in very truth the strongest government in the world," because "discarding implements of terror it dares to rule by moral force and has its citadel in the heart."

Bancroft, in his remarkable tribute to the intelligence, capacity and patriotism of the people, declares "Truth is not to be ascertained by the impulse of an individual, it emerges from the contradictions of present opinions; it raises itself in majestic serenity above the strifes of parties and the conflict of sects; it acknowledges neither the solitary mind nor the separate faction as its oracle, but owns as its only faithful interpreter the dictates of pure reason itself proclaimed by the general voice of mankind. The decrees of the universal conscience are the nearest approach to the presence of God in the soul of man."

Jefferson early adopted this philosophy, and he never varied from it to the day of his death. To him the people were supreme. He knew their weaknesses and their sources of strength, and without expecting perfection in man or in the works of man, he put confidence in the virtue of the masses.

Jefferson was so much a lover of peace and so ardent an advocate of it, that he has been accused of lacking physical courage. Six years before his election to the presidency he declared his love of peace and his anxiety that the United States "should give the world still another useful lesson by showing to them other modes of punishing injuries than by war." War, he said, was "as much a punishment to the punisher as to the sufferer." Fourteen years after he retired from the presidency and near the close of his life, in a letter to John Adams, he said, "I hope we shall prove how much happier for man the Quaker policy is, and that the life of the feeder is better than that of the fighter." His advocacy of peace does not prove a lack of physical bravery, but whatever may have been his physical courage there is no doubt that he possessed that higher quality, known as moral courage, to an extraordinary degree. His faith in popular government was sublime and his willingness to rely upon the people was one of his most distinguishing characteristics. How Jefferson differed in this respect from his great political antagonist, Alexander Hamilton! Hamilton fought a duel in spite of his conscientious objections to dueling because he believed, as he declared before going to the fatal field, that it was necessary to fight the duel in order that he might be useful in a crisis for which he was looking, and that crisis was the breaking down of free institutions. Jefferson not only promulgated the principles of free government, but in his writings he consistently applied those principles to every problem with which the government had to deal. And the principles which he applied were so fundamental that we find them useful today in the discussion of questions which have arisen since his death.

On the subject of acquiring territory

by conquest, now favored by an influential portion of our countrymen, he said "If there be one principle more deeply rooted than another in the mind of every American, it is that we should have nothing to do with conquest," and at another time he said: "Conquest is not in our principles; it is inconsistent with our government."

On the subject of taxation he ever insisted upon its limitation to the actual needs of government and upon its equitable distribution. He is on record in favor of the arbitration of disputes between nations, and no one who is familiar with his writings can doubt that he would favor arbitration today of disputes between labor and capital, and his views upon the encroachments of the judiciary and the value of trial by jury make it certain that he would, if living, oppose what we know as government by injunction.

All his arguments in favor of making the government responsive to the will of the people can be adduced in support of the movement that has for its object the election of senators by direct vote of the people. On the subject of finance he not only favored bi-metallicism, but he expressed his opposition to a bank currency and to the control of the national treasury by the financiers.

He lived before the invention of the railroad, and before the country had witnessed the colossal centralization of wealth, but viewing as he did every question from the standpoint of the people, and hating as he did every attempt to divert the profits of industry from the producers to the "idle holders of idle capital," we have a right to assume that he would today stand with the people for the regulation of railroads and the extermination of private monopolies.

No one can imagine Jefferson as tolerating the impudent claim of the railroad magnates that they have a right to determine arbitrarily and without appeal the rate to be charged for the transportation of passengers or freight. What an opportunity the present contest would give him for the arraignment of human greed and for the defense of human rights!

That Jefferson's utterances support legislation necessary for the complete regulation and control of transportation lines is certain, and he expressly declared against national incorporation—a thing now desired by the great corporations. Whether his arguments could be quoted in favor of the public ownership of railroads would depend somewhat upon the extent to which competition is possible under private ownership, and experience seems to show that effective competition between railroad lines is scarcely to be expected. While I have been quick to endorse the president's effort to secure railroad rate regulation, I believe that regulation will ultimately lead to public ownership and in order to avoid the danger of centralization I would prefer to see the trunk lines only owned by the federal government and the local lines owned by the several states.

On the subject of private monopoly Jefferson has spoken with no uncertain sound. So detestable to him was the thought of monopoly that it was with reluctance that he consented to a patent, for while he recognized the justice of allowing a temporary monopoly of the product as a reward for invention he so feared the evil effects of the establishment of the principle that he insisted upon the strictest limitation. His fears have been justified and we are beginning to understand the dangers that he so clearly foresaw.

There are three arguments made by him which are now being used by the advocates of monopoly to defeat the application to modern problems of the principles enunciated by him. "Legislate as little as possible and leave the rest to the energies of a free people," said Jefferson, and the bene-