

CURRENT TOPICS

IN AN INTERVIEW recently printed in the Chicago Examiner, Mayor Dunne of Chicago, referring to his municipal ownership plan, said: "The plan was devised that we might get immediate action. The sole purpose of the building company is to bridge over the time that must necessarily elapse before the city can pay for the property and take over the operation. If we could buy the lines today, or even if we owned them, we could not operate, and some such plan as that I have proposed would have to be worked out to bridge us over the period required to get authority to operate. I believe in municipal operation and want to bring it about as soon as possible; whether we buy or build I shall press a referendum that will enable us to operate, but while we are working for municipal operation, let us either buy and rehabilitate or else build, so that we may have something to operate when the time comes."

LOUIS F. POST in his paper, "The Public," says that in the statement printed in The Examiner: "Mayor Dunne has removed all public excuse for supposing that in recommending his 'contract plan' for introducing municipal ownership and operation of the Chicago street car system he contemplated abandoning his original policy. That is the situation in a nutshell, and the newspaper agents of the traction ring knew it when, with false headlines, deceptive editorials and fraudulent news dispatches, they undertook to make the public believe otherwise." The St. Louis Mirror, referring to the same subject, says: "It looks as if Mayor Dunne has 'got 'em on the run,' no matter how the daily papers may try to befog the situation and conditions in Chicago, in the interests of the franchise oligarchies in all the cities of the union. * * * The traction companies are coming to time, even while playing for delay. Their only hope is, now, to stave things off until Dunne's term expires, but this they will hardly be able to do, for if they protract the difficulty, the people will re-elect Dunne."

THERE IS A noticeable silence on the part of the republican newspapers concerning the disclosures showing the absorption of policyholders' money by the republican campaign funds. Louis F. Post, writing in "The Public" says that this silence is "as grand in its way as the grand old party itself," adding: "There is an air of modesty about them which recalls the modesty of one of Cable's 'Cajan characters, who was 'so modest he was almost shy.' Nor are the managers of the party a bit more ostentatious. Observe, for example, Cornelius N. Bliss, the treasurer, who received and disbursed this boodle in behalf of the republican presidential candidates. He has 'nothing to say to anyone at any time on any matter in connection with this subject.' There you have the kind of silence that usually goes with addition and division. And Mr. Chairman Cortelyou, who succeeded to Hanna's place in the work of pointedly soliciting unlawful contributions of this character out of corporation treasurers, he, too, is silent. As to Mr. Roosevelt, he is by no means as loquacious as he was before this annoying thing got found out."

GEORGE W. PERKINS, testifying before New York's insurance committee, suggested that insurance companies should be empowered by law to "contribute 25, 50 or 75 cents from each policyholder" for campaign purposes. Writing in "The Public," Louis F. Post refers to Mr. Perkins as "a moral dullard, incapable of comprehending the turpitude of diverting trust funds of policyholders in life insurance companies." Referring to Mr. Perkins' statement Mr. Post says: "The former robberies of policyholders having been unearthed, he would have future larcenies of the same kind legalized. The policyholders of the 'Big Three' insurance companies number millions, and in New York state alone probably half a million of them are democrats. Think of the moral obliquity of a man who, caught redhanded in a theft of his clients' funds, coolly proposes that he and two or three others similarly situated shall hereafter be legally authorized to take the money of these half million voters to use it to defeat the candidates they intend to vote for. Following and confirming the Lawson disclosures of an utter lack of moral perception among

the kings of high finance, this incident ought still further to disillusionize the people of the nation of the notion that these men are one whit better disposed toward property rights than so many Captain Kidds."

CLARENCE H. VENNER, of New York, has written an open letter to John A. McCall, president of the New York Life Insurance company, demanding Mr. McCall's resignation. Mr. Venner carries a \$50,000 policy in the New York Life company, and he says that Mr. McCall's testimony shows that he claims "the right to use the funds of the New York Life Insurance company with as much freedom and as little accountability as if they belonged to his own private purse." Concerning Mr. McCall's testimony regarding the \$235,000 paid to Andrew Hamilton, Mr. Venner says: "The public and the policyholders of the New York Life are not credulous enough to believe that kind of a tale. But whether or not your testimony be true, you have convicted yourself of such gross incompetency, arrogance and recklessness in the management of the funds of the New York Life and of such unbusinesslike methods, that you no longer command the confidence of the policyholders, and should not have control of a corporation possessing over \$400,000,000 of assets."

A WASHINGTON DISPATCH to the Chicago Record-Herald says: "It is roughly estimated that the presents which Miss Roosevelt has received from the Empress of China, the Emperor of Japan, the Emperor of Korea, the Sultan of Jolo and others in the far east will reach a cash value not far short of \$100,000. Miss Roosevelt was placed in a position where she could not decline any of the presents without giving offense. The gifts came to her as the representative of the government, although she did not travel with any such credentials. As the daughter of the president, she was regarded by the Orientals as they regard the reigning families of European kingdoms. The gifts were tokens of friendship and good will for the United States and Miss Roosevelt could not have declined any, not even the pearl from the Sultan of Jolo, without placing this government in the attitude of rejecting friendly overtures."

SINCE MARCH, 1905, when filings were authorized for trial at the fall term of the circuit court, 910 divorce suits—according to a correspondent for the New York World—have been filed in Kansas City. This correspondent estimates the number will reach one thousand before the period for filing terminates, and says: "As there are about 40,000 families in Kansas City the filing of 1,000 divorce suits in six months means that legal separations are being sought at the rate of 5 per cent a year. These 1,000 divorce suits will be divided up among the five divisions of the circuit court, and will be sufficient to keep them all grinding at the rate of one case an hour, eight hours a day, during the entire month of October."

WASHINGTON DISPATCHES say that the dominating recommendation of the president's message to congress will be the railroad rate legislation, and the president will make an effort to focus the attention of the country upon the senate, in order to secure action on that subject. The Washington correspondent for the Baltimore Sun says: "The house passed the Townsend rate bill, with amendments, on February 9 last. On the following day the senate referred the bill to the committee on interstate commerce, where it was pigeonholed. On February 28 Senator Kean, of New Jersey, offered a resolution, which, when favorably reported from the committee on interstate commerce, was passed by the senate on March 2, directing the committee to hold hearings during the summer recess with a view to reporting a bill to the senate at the coming session. The avowed object of the Kean resolution was to allow further lapse of time for 'mature consideration of so grave a question,' but it is common knowledge that the senate did not care to enact railroad legislation such as was desired by the president. Since the matter is pending before the senate, house leaders will endeavor to hold the senate strictly responsible by endeavoring to concentrate public opinion upon that body and singling it

out as the obstacle in the path of railroad legislation."

THE SUN'S CORRESPONDENT thinks that this idea is not new in legislation. He explains: "It was observed during the extra session which was called in the fifty-third congress in August, 1893, for the passage of the Wilson bill to repeal the silver purchase clause of the Sherman law. The house passed that measure August 28, 1893—sixteen days after congress began its extraordinary session. It was recognized at the time that the senate would be the obstacle in the way of securing that legislation. Consequently the house did nothing after passing the bill. Sentiment throughout the country and the influence of Mr. Cleveland were concentrated on the senate, and the bill was finally passed in spite of tremendous opposition. Again, in the fifty-fifth congress, President McKinley convened an extra session for the passage of a tariff bill. The house was not organized further than the election of officers and the appointment of the ways and means committee. The house considered and formulated the Dingley tariff bill. At that time the republicans did not have a majority in the senate, lacking two, and because of this it was recognized that it would be almost next to impossible to pass a republican tariff bill, but the house, under the leadership of Speaker Reed, adjourned for three days at a time. There were no more committees appointed and no legislation was attempted by the house while the senate was considering the Dingley bill, which left the press and the executive free to exert all the influence at their command on the body that was considering the legislation. In a very much shorter time than would otherwise have been the case the bill became a law and was signed by President McKinley."

IT IS SAID that friends of the president believe the senate will not dare doom railroad legislation if the influence of the executive and public opinion can be focused upon the senate through the refusal of the house leaders to allow the introduction of rate legislation in the house, which would attract attention from the proceedings in the senate. The Sun's correspondent says: "Prominent house leaders are quietly at work in favor of this policy and are careful in explaining that their policy is not one of hostility, but in the interest of the enactment of railroad rate legislation. They desire it to be clearly understood that inaction by the house until the senate shall have acted must not be misinterpreted as opposition to railroad legislation. It is not believed it will be necessary to embody this policy in caucus action, but if there is party dissension or opposition house leaders may go into caucus to formulate their policy. One thing in the way of withholding consideration in the house while the measure is pending in the senate will be the individual ambition of members of the house to be credited with initiation of the legislation finally enacted. While it is laudable for members to have important legislation known under their names, it is believed such ambition should not interfere with securing the desired legislation in the most practical form at the earliest date."

ACCORDING TO THIS same authority "everything favors action in the senate first on the railway bill." This correspondent adds: "Senator Elkins, chairman of the senate committee on interstate commerce, which has been holding hearings on the question, has issued a call for a meeting of his committee on November 15—three weeks before congress meets in regular session—to frame a rate bill. The indications are that an attempt will be made in this committee to frame an entirely new bill instead of reporting the house bill in amended form to the senate. Either method would develop the attitude of the senate and leave the ultimate struggle to the house or to a compromise in conference. The object of the early meeting of the senate committee is to avoid an extra session. President Roosevelt last spring intended calling an extra session, but has been putting it off. Strong pressure has been brought to bear by members who have argued that little could be accomplished in advance of the regular session. He has not yet definitely made up his mind, but will probably not call an extra session if he can be assured