

The Commoner.

sumes to represent the President conveys the idea that in the President's opinion the Philadelphia situation is merely "differences between local politicians."

It will be remembered that a syndicate of republican politicians obtained fourteen franchises through the favor of the republican city council without giving to the public recompense for those franchises. Before the mayor had approved that gift, John Wanamaker offered to the mayor to pay into the city treasury the sum of \$2,500,000 for the privileges which had been given away to this syndicate. In spite of this offer, the mayor approved the franchises. Subsequently Mr. Wanamaker offered to pay to the syndicate \$500,000 for the privilege which had been given it, and in addition to that sum, offered to pay to the city the sum of \$2,500,000, agreeing at the same time to establish during certain hours a 3-cent fare, and binding himself to sell to the city the street railway plants acquired under these franchises within a period of ten years, at the city's option, by the payment of the money expended with six per cent interest.

Because Mr. Wanamaker's offer was spurned and this valuable property deliberately given away to a syndicate of republican politicians, the people of Philadelphia have expressed their indignation and have organized a reform movement, having for its purpose the overthrow of a corrupt municipal machine. This machine on one side and the taxpayers, regardless of political prejudices, on the other, represents the situation in Philadelphia today. And this situation is what "a close friend of the administration" announces that Mr. McKinley regards as "local politics." This situation, this "close friend of the administration" announces, Mr. McKinley regards as only the "differences between local politicians."

It is to be hoped that Mr. McKinley will cause another announcement to be made. The American people would much prefer to have their president stand beside his postmaster general in an effort to uphold public interests in Philadelphia rather than to have him take a position which gives aid and countenance to an unscrupulous machine by dismissing a question of honesty as being merely a "difference between local politicians."

Making Progress.

Mr. Warner, of Illinois, a republican member of congress, expresses the opinion that there may be some important tariff legislation during the next session of congress. "If the tariff needs revising for the purpose of better controlling the trusts," said Mr. Warner, "you may depend on it the republicans will act accordingly. The tariff is not sacred. When it is made evident that the protection afforded by the tariff has served its purpose, then this protection will be removed. It would not surprise me in the least if the president should make such a recommendation in his message to congress. Other laws have been amended to meet changed conditions, and why not the tariff?"

Mr. Warner says "when it is made evident

that the protection afforded by the tariff has served its purpose, then this protection will be removed." What was its purpose? If the republican leaders of the past twenty years stated the truth, then the purpose was to protect infant industries in order that the owners of those industries might compete at home with foreign manufacturers, and thus be able to pay the employes of those infant industries living wages. For many years it has been a well known fact that all ground for pretense on this line has been removed. For many years it has been well known that American manufacturers are enabled to sell their products in Europe cheaper than European manufacturers can, while at the same time the American manufacturers enjoy the advantages of a high protective tariff in their own country. It is probable, however, that when the republican congress is asked to do away with this protection that it will be made "evident" to the members of that congress, by the trusts whose managers supplied the fat for the 1900 frying, that the protection afforded by the tariff has not "served its purpose." The purpose was to give to these great corporations enormous advantages at public expense. The purpose was to accommodate the trust managers, who have made liberal contributions to the republican campaign fund, and until the trust managers are willing to surrender these advantages, until they are willing to have their hands removed from the public pockets, it will not be "made evident that the protection afforded by the tariff has served its purpose."

It is interesting, however, to hear a republican congressman say that "the tariff is not sacred." This is so different from what republican congressmen have said in the past, that one is bound at least to recognize the progress that some republican congressmen are making on public questions.

Mr. Wanamaker's Second Offer.

The American people are indebted to John Wanamaker for the greatest practical demonstration of the enormous values obtained by corporations at the expense of the public. It will be remembered that the city council of Philadelphia gave to a syndicate of republican politicians a franchise for the operation of street railways. Before the mayor passed on the city council's action Mr. Wanamaker offered to pay to the city the sum of \$2,500,000 for the privileges which the coterie of politicians had obtained without a fair recompense. In spite of this offer the mayor approved the franchise.

In order to further show the immense values which the city council have given away Mr. Wanamaker has made a second offer. He proposes, first to pay to the syndicate to which the franchises were given the sum of \$500,000 by way of bonus. He then renews his offer to the mayor that he will pay into the city treasury the sum of \$2,500,000 in return for the street railway franchises. He also agrees that between the hours of 6 a. m. and 8 a. m., and

between the hours of 5 and 7 p. m., he will give to the people of Philadelphia 3 cent fares. He also agrees that he will sell the street railway plant and franchises to the city at any time the city may designate within ten years on payment of the entire cost of expenses with 6 per cent interest. The only conditions which Mr. Wanamaker makes is that of the \$2,500,000 he shall pay to the city, \$1,500,000 shall be used for the deepening of the Delaware river channel, a matter of great public necessity, and that \$1,000,000 be applied to the building of public schools and for the purposes of public education.

Mr. Wanamaker says that it is not his desire to enter upon the business of railroading or to make profit out of any municipal franchise. "I merely desire the people to see," says Mr. Wanamaker, how badly they have been wronged, and the magnitude of the value of the property of which they have been spoiled. If you should accept the offer of this letter, I will cheerfully put the franchises up at auction and give the city any sum bid for them in excess of that which I shall pay under this proposition. If the proposition I have made to you is not acceptable I should be glad to know what sum will tempt you and your associates to surrender the privileges you now own, and which were obtained by methods so unusual and defiant of the public weal as to have aroused the indignation of the people of the entire nation."

It would be difficult to devise a fairer proposition than that made by Mr. Wanamaker. From every standpoint it was the duty of the mayor in the presence of Mr. Wanamaker's offer to have vetoed the franchises which were given to this syndicate. From every standpoint it is to the interest of the people of Philadelphia that Mr. Wanamaker's offer be accepted. But in the face of these generous propositions, propositions which seek to protect the public interests of Philadelphia not only for the present but for the future, the republican politicians of that city adhere to their determination to give away public property and bestow public franchises upon favored individuals without recompense to the public.

Corporation magnates have been growing bolder and bolder in their impositions upon the public. It must be evident to every intelligent man that never in the history of our country has the corporation magnate been more arrogant in his demands, more unscrupulous as to his methods, more defiant in his attitude than he has been since the campaign of 1896 when the American people were first induced to agree that the national honor and the public welfare depended upon the assignment of the powers of government to the tender mercies of trust agencies.

It may be that the people of Philadelphia will yet awaken from their sleep. It is true that even the practical demonstration offered by Mr. Wanamaker has not thoroughly aroused that people to such an extent that no public official would dare to stand sponsor for the great imposition placed upon the Philadelphians by the powerful syndicate now in control.