

parties will join with The Commoner in expressing the hope that Mr. Roosevelt's administration may be fraught with credit and honor to himself and with substantial benefits to the people.

Chicago's Progressive Democracy

The democrats of Chicago have nominated Judge E. F. Dunne for mayor on a municipal ownership platform. The issue presented by the democrats is one on which they can in time carry every one of the cities, and so much educational work has already been done in Chicago that Judge Dunne has an excellent chance of success this year. The platform declares the issue to be whether the expressed will of the citizens of Chicago or the interests of a Wall street syndicate shall control the city's policy in dealing with the street car question. It demands that the people now assert their rights and proceed to bring about municipal ownership and operation of street car lines, gas plants, electric light plants and telephone systems.

Here is an honest and straightforward platform and with an honest and straightforward candidate like Judge Dunne there ought to be no question about the result. Success to the democratic candidate and his platform!

That Baden Report

The Washington correspondent for the New York Evening Post says that there is just now "a disposition to emphasize the bulwark which the senate affords with its two-thirds republican majority against any form of radicalism." It has been complained that the president could not accomplish anything in the radical line so long as this bulwark stood, but the Post's correspondent says that this is an erroneous idea. He explains:

One thing which a radical president could do with abundant precedent, that is somewhat overlooked, is the setting into motion on his side of all the government agencies for educating public opinion, such as statistics and consular reports. Only a few days ago a consul in Baden sent a report on the government ownership of railroads there, which would make converts rapidly to that idea in this country. Were such a propaganda to be undertaken seriously there is no knowing how far it might go in affecting public sentiment, for it is a cardinal American theory that we can do what any other people on earth can do, when as a matter of fact, because of the political system which we have developed, we fail in many things where the older nations succeed.

But why should anyone object to the plan of "educating public opinion?" Are not the American people entitled to know the truth and to be informed of the experience other people have had with reforms that are now suggested in a serious way for our own government?

The American consul at Baden draws a very complimentary picture of government ownership in that country. Indeed, the picture is so attractive that the Post's correspondent admits that it "would make converts rapidly to that idea in this country."

If government ownership will not stand the test of study and investigation, then it will not commend itself to intelligent men. Why, then, do the opponents of that plan object to "educating public opinion" on that subject?

Should not even the most "conservative" of presidents set into motion all the government agencies for "educating public opinion"?

The report made by our consul in Baden seems to be a very important document, yet it will be observed that so far wide publicity has not been given that document.

Would it not be well for the administration to circulate this report very freely among the people, on the theory that they are entitled to all possible information on a subject concerning which public interest is now aroused?

The Post's correspondent seems to object to the dissemination of information such as is contained in the report made by our Baden consul and he bases his objection on the idea that "such a propaganda" undertaken seriously in this country might have a far-reaching effect so far as public sentiment is concerned. The Post correspondent admits that "it is a cardinal American theory that we can do what any other people on earth can do," yet this writer assumes to say that "as a matter of fact, because of the political

system which we have developed, we fail in many things where the older nations succeed." At least this writer will not undertake to seriously deny the correctness of the "cardinal American theory," that our government was established with the view of providing the greatest good to the greatest number and that with the people was reposed the power to protect the welfare of the many against the encroachments of the few.

If the people, in their anxiety to protect themselves, incline toward government ownership, have they not the right to obtain information concerning the experience of other people with that reform? Who shall deny them access to the truth on the theory that they have no reason to believe that in a great governmental enterprise, designed for the abolishment of evils and the alleviation of embarrassments, the people of a monarchy succeed where the people of a republic would fail?

Tom Watson's Magazine

The first number of Tom Watson's Magazine has appeared. Mr. Watson contributes several pages on political conditions. It is evidently his opinion that the democratic party must be destroyed and his comments will be acceptable to those who agree with him. To democrats his arguments will seem insufficient and his conclusion unsound. Dr. Girdner of New York contributes an instructive article on "Franchise Wealth and Municipal Ownership," and Mr. W. J. Ghent discusses the "Butcheries of Peace," giving some valuable statistics comparing deaths in battle with the number of deaths due to the methods of modern industrialism. The magazine will be useful as an educational force, and all reformers welcome, or should welcome, every publication which is educational in its purpose.

Time Limit Marriages

A Kansas legislator named Smith has introduced a bill in the Kansas legislature providing a time limit for marriages. Instead of being united "until death do us part" the husband and wife agree to live together for ten years, at which time the marriage relation ceases unless by mutual agreement it is extended for a further period of ten years. Without this mutual agreement for an extension, the parties become divorced, the property is divided, and the courts are authorized to make such arrangements as may be proper regarding the custody of the children.

The suggestion has received a great deal of newspaper attention, not because the measure is likely to pass, but because it is novel. The author of the bill says that he prepared it "at the request of a delegation of women, whose names he is not at liberty to divulge."

The mere suggestion of such a measure will serve a useful purpose in that it will call attention to the sacredness of the home and of the marriage ties. Certainly we shall have drifted far away from the ideal when marriage becomes a mere partnership, entered into by the contracting parties for a limited period, as two persons would engage in the conduct of a store or in the raising of corn or cattle. If it is said that each of the parties would be more considerate of the other in the hope of securing an extension of the marriage period, it may be replied that consideration due to such a motive is not to be compared with the consideration that is due to real affection. The basis of such a limited co-partnership would be selfishness; the basis of a genuine marriage is love. Selfishness begets selfishness, suspicion and discord, while love begets love, confidence and concord. Much as our loose divorce laws are to be condemned, they are infinitely better than a law which would make the residence a counting house or shop, rather than a home.

What we need just now is not an egoism that will regard marriage as an irksome restraint, but a spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice that will harmonize differences, smooth the rough places and weld together into closer and closer union the hearts of husband and wife, parent and child.

Aside from the interest that husband and wife have in this question, the child's interest alone would be an unanswerable argument against the proposed innovation. The filial relation that exists, or ought to exist, between parent and child would be materially changed if the child, from the time it was old enough to consider such things, lived in constant uncertainty as to which parent it would be called upon to desert for the other. It is likely to be sometime yet before the commandment "Honor thy father and thy mother" is amended by adding "until they separate, then

honor the one with whom you choose to go unless the court assigns you to the other."

At the risk of seeming old foggy, The Commoner begs to express its preference for the marriage that contemplates a life-long union of two congenial spirits with the hope that they will not be dissevered in the world beyond.

Rightly Called a Steal

In the house of representatives, February 24, the fight of many years waged against the appropriation of \$130,600 for rental of the old New York custom house resulted in the prevention of the steal—for no other word properly describes it.

Mr. Hemmenway of Indiana, republican, and chairman of the committee on appropriations, sought to carry the appropriation through. The Washington correspondent for the Detroit Free Press, referring to the contest on the floor of the house, said:

The opposition was led by Mr. Sulzer of New York, supported by Mr. Williams of Mississippi, the minority leader, both of whom denounced the expenditure as a public scandal and in the interest of the Standard Oil Co., which, it was alleged, was behind the National City bank, the purchaser of the building from the government.

Although the bank was alleged to have bought the property for \$3,000,000 and to have credited the amount to the government, it developed that no title had passed to it and that in consequence it was paying no taxes to the state of New York. The failure of the government to give a deed was ascribed to be due to the influence of the Standard Oil Co.

Replying to a question submitted by Mr. Williams of Mississippi, Mr. Hemmenway admitted that no deed was passed from the government to the bank and that the bank was not paying taxes for the building. While admitting that Secretary Gage made "a bad contract," Mr. Hemmenway insisted that it was the duty of the government to comply with its terms.

Mr. Williams declared that the whole transaction was stamped with "fraud and dishonor."

Mr. Sulzer, who made the motion to strike out the proposition for the appropriation, said:

It is a notorious scandal, a steal and a fraud, and I can not understand why the City National bank has not been compelled to pay to the government the three million dollars purchase money for the building, instead of the money being simply transferred on the bank's books, except that it was due to the influence behind the bank. Every one in this chamber knows what that influence is. It is the influence of the Great Standard Oil trust that owns that bank, and the influence that bank has had in governmental affairs of this country.

Mr. Sulzer's motion to strike out the appropriation prevailed by a vote of 93 to 77. That was a good day's work and Messrs. Sulzer and Williams and their associates are entitled to great credit.

The facts relating to this affair need not to be stated in order that Mr. Sulzer's charge that it is "a notorious scandal, a steal and a fraud" be established. In January, 1900, the New York World exposed the fact that the republican administration, having sold the old custom house to the City National bank, better known as the Standard Oil bank, instead of collecting the purchase price of \$3,265,000, and depositing it in the United States treasury according to law, had "directed" the Standard Oil bank to "credit" the United States with \$3,215,000. The World showed that this actually left the purchase price in the hands of the purchasers to loan out at the prevailing rate of 4 per cent, while the balance of the purchase price, \$50,000, was left unpaid, even by crediting it as a deposit and this was done in order to enable the Standard Oil bank to avoid paying taxes to the local authorities, on the theory that it did not own the property. It will be seen that by this arrangement, the bank obtained the use of all the money it was presumed to have paid for the purchase of the building and at the same time avoided paying taxes on the property while the bank further sought to compel the government to pay to the bank rent for the property, while the new custom house was being erected.

Congressman Hemmenway has but recently been elected to the United States senate. Nothing has ever been said affecting Mr. Hemmenway's personal integrity. No one has ever charged that in his individual transactions he is capable of a dishonorable act. In this view, is it not strange, that Mr. Hemmenway, as a public official, would