

abstract theories of governmental functions when the question was whether important work should be done or neglected. Many facts supported this view. Some states even, as in the matter of interstate liquor shipments, insisted that their own laws were being nullified unless the federal government lent a helping hand in their enforcement. But the past months have shown that, even as a practical question purely, there are two sides to this issue of state functions. The states differ in their ideas to a greater extent, we imagine, than most of us supposed. With the "Jim Crow car" movement we have little enough sympathy, yet it must be reckoned with as a powerful force against a thoroughly centralized railway policy, still more against government ownership.

Nor is it necessary to take extreme cases like Delaware's whipping post, South Dakota's divorce courts, and New Jersey's corporation offices for evidence of the fact that the states do have minds of their own, even though, like the minds of individuals, not always entitled to admiration. There is hardly a department of public activity in which there is not some movement to secure uniformity of legislation. Influential men attend conventions devoted to these objects. A complete outfit of "model laws" is at the disposal of every state legislature free of charge. Justice, neighborliness, convenience and efficiency are all to be promoted by uniform laws. They do make considerable progress in certain departments, yet at some point they come to grief on local crochets or convictions. The passage of an imaginary line can change the status of a man or thing in ways that are magical. Yet not all of the local differences that excite so much mirth in their critics are mere products of chance or indifference. Like so many human beings, the states go on liking their own ways best.

Already some federal policies impinge on local prejudices. Though the powers exercised under the Interstate commerce clause may carry their own mitigation, since a state may indulge its own whims in respect to local traffic and products consumed at home, clashes between the two are appearing. The disputes over the jurisdiction of inferior federal courts have attracted most attention, but other questions point to the same condition. Most of the opposition to the government's regulations for the use of its grazing lands have doubtless been made by men with scant regard for the large public interests. We reprinted the other day, however, an argument from a Montana newspaper making the point that Montana had worked out for herself a system of cattle-control based on the registration of brands, and that the government seeks to wipe this out entirely. The system may not have been better, but the claim is made that it suited local conditions. As federal activity spreads still further it is bound to supplant in the same way other solutions of local problems.

The states' rights sentiment of today has little in common with its ante-bellum namesake. That it can take first, or even second place, as a campaign issue next year, is very much to be doubted. But the states are sensitive in a peculiar way. Interference with their local affairs is irritating. And from the democratic point of view the issue has a peculiar piquancy from the fact that most of the state officials who have resented the friction are themselves republicans.



#### THE RALLYING RAILROADS

The railroad presidents and railroad magnates, just as the World-Herald predicted, are falling over themselves to support President Roosevelt in his demand for complete and exclusive federal control of the railroad business. In his historic St. Louis speech, in which the president made definite announcement of his doctrine, he said:

"The railroads themselves have been exceedingly shortsighted in the rancorous bitterness which they have shown against the resumption by the nation of this long-neglected power. \* \* \* The control must exist somewhere; and unless it is by thorough going and radical law placed upon the statute books of the nation, it will be exercised in ever-increasing measure, by the several states."

The warning and the invitation were all-sufficient. The railroads, without hesitation, have cast their lot with the president in favor of control by the federal government alone, and against control in which both the federal government and the states shall share. They fear the states far more than the nation. The states respond quickly to popular sentiment; the na-

tional government responds slowly. The states, in two or three years, have done much in the way of railroad control; the national government, in almost twenty years, has done nothing that is of any real consequence.

And so the railroads are falling into line with the president. Says President Mather of the Rock Island:

"A wise and just regulation is only possible under a single and centralized authority. The day is passed for unyielding opposition to all policies of federal control of our carrier corporations. Nay, more, the day has dawned in which to welcome that control."

Says President Ripley of the Santa Fe:

"We have too many masters. Wouldn't it be better for us if we had a single, central source of regulation instead of so many?"

Says President Harahan of the Illinois Central:

"Mr. Mather's statement, in my opinion, pretty well expressed the feeling of railroad presidents and managers. The trouble is and has been that the states have various laws which conflict with the interstate laws."

Says President McDoel of the Monon:

"The point Mr. Mather made as to federal regulation and control struck me as a sensible and sane one. I think that most railroad officials will approve it as I do. The trouble is that when a road runs through ten or fifteen states it must operate under a variety of laws that make obedience well-nigh impossible."

And President Felton of the Alton said he "thought well" of "federal control and regulation as a substitute for the existing system of varied laws and regulation as imposed by the various states."

And there you have it. "Exclusive federal control will be better for us," say the railroads. They welcome the prospect. They want it so bad they will fight for it. Why? Simply because they know the states have on their fighting clothes and mean business.

The people of the central, southern and western states will revolt against this program. Their position is correctly stated in the platform adopted by the democrats of Nebraska, which favors giving the federal government all the power that may be necessary for the regulation of interstate commerce without in any way interfering with or diminishing the power of the states over traffic within their own borders.—Omaha World-Herald.



#### MR. TAFT ON IMMIGRATION

Two years ago—about June, 1905, Secretary Taft gave an interview relating to Chinese immigration. A Commoner reader asks that this interview be reproduced, together with the Commoner's comments on the same. In the interview referred to Mr. Taft said:

"Is it just that for the purpose of excluding or preventing perhaps 100 Chinese coolies from slipping into this country against the law, we should subject an equal number of Chinese merchants and students of high character to an examination of such an inquisitorial, humiliating, insulting and physically uncomfortable character as to discourage altogether the coming of merchants and students?"

"One of the great commercial prizes of the world is the trade with the 400,000,000 Chinese. Ought we to throw away the advantage which we have by reason of Chinese natural friendship for us, and continue to enforce an unjustly severe law, and thus create in the Chinese mind a disposition to boycott the American trade and to drive our merchants from Chinese shores, simply because we are afraid that we may for the time lose the approval of certain unreasonable and extreme popular leaders of California and other coast states?"

"Does the question not answer itself? Is it not the duty of members of congress and of the executive to disregard the unreasonable demands of a part of the community deeply prejudiced upon this subject in the far west, and insist on extending justice and courtesy to a people from whom we are deriving and are likely to derive such immense benefit in the way of international trade?"

It will be seen that "the \$400,000,000 commercial prize" is the thing that fills the secre-

tary's eyes, and anything is regarded as unreasonable that stands in the way. He underestimates the number of Chinese who would come in as laborers and denounces as unreasonable the demands made by the laboring men of the country that they be protected from a horde of Chinese coolies who are not assimilated or brought to the American level of living, but simply displace American workmen. It is fortunate for the country that thus early in his presidential campaign Secretary Taft so clearly aligns himself with the capitalistic side. For forty years the manufacturers have taxed the whole country for the ostensible purpose of giving good wages to labor; but now when they begin to reach out for the markets of the world they are willing to sacrifice the wage earner to commercial advantages. They insist that the goods made by coolies shall be shut out, but they are willing that the coolies themselves shall come in. If the Chinese could come with a love for our institutions and for the purpose of identifying themselves with our future it would be a different question, but they preserve their Orientalism and form a permanently distinct class among us. Their presence is sure to breed race troubles that will be more hurtful to trade than any exclusion act can be.

Many of the republican leaders will be in sympathy with the policy that will flood the country with cheap Chinese labor, and an imperial policy tends to give encouragement to the cheap labor proposition.

The Chinese question is one that affects the entire country, not the Pacific coast alone or the laboring men alone. It is true that the Pacific coast would feel the evil effects of Chinese immigration first, and it is also true that the laboring men would come into immediate contact with Oriental labor, but in its ultimate influence the subject touches all parts of the country and reaches all classes. The question is whether we are going to build up a strong, independent, upright and patriotic people and develop a civilization that will exert a helpful influence on all the world, or whether we are going to be a greedy, grasping nation, forgetful of high ideals and concerned only in the making of money.

Chinese immigration is defended by two classes of people. First, by those, comparatively few in number, who believe that universal brotherhood requires us to welcome to our shores all people of all lands. This is the sentimental argument advanced in favor of Chinese immigration. There is no more reason why we should construe brotherhood to require the admission of all people to our country than there is that we should construe brotherhood to require the dissolution of family ties. The family is a unit; it is the place where character and virtue and usefulness are developed, and from the family a good or evil influence emanates. It is not necessary nor even wise that the family environment should be broken up or that all who desire entrance should be admitted to the family circle. In a larger sense a nation is a family. It is the center for the cultivation of national character, national virtue and national usefulness. A nation is under no obligation to the outside world to admit anybody or anything that would injuriously affect the national family; in fact it is under obligation to itself not to do so. The influence of the United States will be much more potent for good if we remain a homogeneous nation with all citizens in full sympathy with all other citizens. No distinct race like the Chinese can come into this country without exciting a friction and a race prejudice which will make it more difficult for us to exercise a wholesome influence upon the Chinese in China, not to speak of our influence on other nations.

The second, and by far the larger class, embraces those who advocate Chinese immigration on the ground that it will furnish cheap labor for household and factory work. There is no force in the argument that is made by some that it is difficult to secure girls to do housework. If domestic service is not popular as compared with other work, it is because the pay is not sufficient to make it attractive and the remedy lies in better wages. Labor can be secured for any and every honorable position when the price is sufficient to attract it, and the demand for Chinese servants comes with poor grace from those who often spend on a single social entertainment as much as a servant's wages would amount to in an entire year. At this time when skilled and intelligent American labor is able to compete in foreign markets with the cheapest labor in the world, it is absurd to talk about the necessity for cheap factory hands.