

## EVIL OF RING RULE

OLD OFFICE-HOLDERS CURSE TO EVERY COMMUNITY

They Establish a Mutual Benefit and Admiration Society and the Offices Rotate Among Only the Members of the Organization

The condition of public sentiment at the present time is more hopeful than it has been for years. Recent disclosures have impressed upon the public mind the necessity of looking into things. Heretofore there have been individuals in every community who have intimidated more or less strongly that certain well known conditions pointed to dishonesty and corruption in public life and in the management of great business corporations, but the individual who asserted his belief in the existence of fraud and corruption was always in danger of being called a "kicker" or a "pop." Now, however, it is different. The hitherto conservative individual finds that graft exists everywhere and that

it is his highest duty to probe into the dark corners and hunt out the germs of dishonesty and graft in order to check the epidemic which seems to have spread and become general throughout the entire country. People are realizing that the only way to prevent general bad conditions is to turn on the light, and to turn it on the local dark places, and clean up local conditions on the theory that if local conditions are made satisfactory, general conditions will become satisfactory as a logical consequence.

### Political Ring Rule

All over this country are towns, cities and counties which are dominated and controlled by a close political ring. The object of this ring is to control local politics. Its object is to keep the dominant party in power, not in the interest of the tax payers, nor yet in the interest of the ordinary members of the party, but in the interest of those who hold life-membership, in the ring known as the "Handshakers' Mutual Association of Perpetual Officeholders."

The people begin to realize what this means. It means rotation in office, but it does not mean the kind of rotation that passes the offices around to the ordinary members of the party, but passes them around among the life members of the "Mutual." An active member of the "Mutual" is entitled to an office. When he gets the office he is entitled to a second, third or fourth term, provided the directors of the "Mutual" feel that the public will stand it. If there are signs of a revolt on the part of the general public the plan is, not to dismiss the office holder from office entirely, but simply to change offices and let him run for something else. Or if he gets too rank maybe he will have to depend on being appointed, rather than take chances on election. It is one of the fundamental principles of the association that the members are entitled to hold office, either by election or appointment. When a "member" becomes too nauseating to be swallowed by the public they cease to ask for his election but take care of him by appointment. Let the readers of The Independent test the accuracy of these statements by comparing them to their own local conditions.

### A Local Illustration

Take Lancaster county, Neb., as an illustration. The Independent refers to this county because it is quite familiar with the conditions here. Conditions here are a fair sample of conditions elsewhere, where one party has been too long in power. Graft partisan. When a grafter takes a dollar which does not belong to him, or to which he is not entitled, the dollar is a non-partisan dollar. It is one that the partisan dollar. It is one that the people have to pay independently of party. In this county the same party has been in control continuously since the county was organized. The opposition has made an occasional breach, but the breach has not been large enough to admit much light on conditions in the court house. There are some dark places there which need lighting up. The members and directors of the "Mutual" assure us that everything is satisfactory, and we presume that conditions are satisfactory to them, but the people are commencing to worry a little bit. They remember how it used to be with the state house. For twenty-five years the public was assured by the members of the "Mutual" that everything was proper and satisfactory in the state house, but a change came and the people found that the state house was honey-combed with corruption and had been for years. The public also remembers how the "conservative" and so-called "respectable" element have been assuring us for years that the great business corporations of the country were perfect models of business integrity.

Recent disclosures, however, show

that for years these institutions have been festering places of corruption, and the people now understand that the only way to kill the germs of this wide spread epidemic of graft is to "turn on the light of publicity."

The Independent desires to remind its readers that we live under a representative form of government. The people are supposed to rule. There are plenty of good men to fill the offices and there is no need of an office-holders' trust. There is no need to keep the same men in office perpetually. Frequent changes will make officials careful of their records, because of the constant liability of exposure resulting from a change. The independent voter is the salvation of the country. Fortunately he is growing more numerous. Some day his tribe will be sufficiently increased to drive the members of the office-holder's "Mutual" out of existence. The "Mutual" is a trust. It is perhaps the oldest trust we have. It is the father of all trusts, because it stands between the people and relief from the rapacity of other trusts. If this trust is put out of business and the government restored to the hands of the people, and men elected on their merits rather than because of their membership in the "Mutual," the general trust problem will be solved. The reason the public make so little headway in the correction of the evils from which they are suffering is because they have not control of their government. They only think they have. The government is controlled by the corporations through the medium of the "Mutual."

Let the voters clean up local politics. Let them break up the local political rings no matter in what party they may be found. They are always bad things. They are never good. They are a menace to the government. When local conditions are made satisfactory, general conditions will become satisfactory, as a logical consequence. Let the voters think for themselves and then let them act. Let them do it now. The next time they have an opportunity to vote, let them vote as they think, and let each man interested in good government, take it upon himself, as a self-respecting citizen, to go to the poles upon his own motion. Let him not wait to be hauled. If he is hauled to the poles he will be hauled there by the members of the "Mutual" and will be under obligations to them. Let him go himself, and cast his vote as he thinks it ought to be cast, as a self-respecting free born American citizen.

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