

Current Comment on Leading Topics

THE WAVE OF REFORM

While all commentators on the recent elections are willing to admit that the results show a revolt against bossism, they are careful to point out that bossism is a result of the domination exercised by corporations in political affairs. The boss is merely a field general for the money power:

The time was ripe for this uprising in New York. The scandals and exposures of corruption in high places had aroused the just wrath of an outraged people. Jerome stood for reforms and for prosecution of boodlers.—Kansas City Journal.

This is one of the most extraordinary upheavals in recent American politics. Nor is the significance of it hard to find. There is little of the personal in this demonstration; it represents rather a great popular uprising over an issue, and that issue is the plundering of our American cities through the bosses, by corrupting and aggrandizing corporations engaged in exploiting for private profit monopoly franchises of untold value. What has now happened in New York is a repetition essentially of what has been happening in Chicago—a demonstration of strong popular favor, whenever it has had a chance to express itself, for the policy of public ownership of public service enterprises, as against the policy of giving over these privileges to private monopoly working in league with the dominant political machine.—Springfield Republican.

The magnificent triumph is enkindling because it shows organized power and staying strength. Last spring we fought under a quick, hot impulse. Yesterday we marched like an army with banners in serried ranks and fixed purpose. Then we flamed under an immediate and daring assault. Now we are massed in solid and lasting phalanx against a continued and abhorrent thralldom. That was symptomatic—this is deep-seated. The victory, is inestimable in its value not merely for Philadelphia, but for the entire land. It will exhilarate Philadelphians and it will encourage all true Americans. Its broad and far-reaching significance cannot easily be overestimated. What Saratoga was to the war of the Revolution, what Gettysburg was to the war of the union, this the battle of Philadelphia is to the war of municipal redemption. It is the turning point in the struggle of civic purity.—Philadelphia Press.

The time is past when the people can be fooled by loud-sounding promises behind which they can see nothing to warrant belief in them. They are looking into things for themselves. They demand platforms and men upon them in whom they can place confidence.—Buffalo Evening Times.

The supporters of Hearst in New York and of Weaver in Philadelphia, should join with other reformers in a call for a national conference to take the same independent political action in the nation that has been taken in the two cities named. The time to act is now while things are hot. The nation needs reform as badly as do those cities, and the reform movements in the cities need the backing of a great national organization—a great party of the people.—Missouri World.

The people have found that there are grave abuses, and while casting about for remedies they are putting on record their condemnation of the abuses. What policies they will ultimately favor—whether they will plunge the country from the frying pan of corporate graft and tyranny into the fire of socialism—will probably depend mainly on the vigor and success with which the men who are responsible for present conditions oppose the adoption of reasonable reforms. The most potent promoters of socialism in this country are not and will not be the Hearsts and the Debses but the Morgans, the Rockefellers, the Depews, the Hydes,

the McCurdys, and the McCalls. That there will be remedies for present conditions is certain. Whether they will be worse than the disease remains to be seen.—Chicago Tribune.

William Randolph Hearst has been elected mayor of New York. Never before in the history of New York were such unblushing frauds carried out in every one of the polling places. The scoundrels in control of the present city administration did not spare money or criminal designs to defeat the will of the people. Notwithstanding every species of trickery and chicanery and frauds that should carry their perpetrators into state prison, the vote, even on the face of the returns, has amounted to over 220,000 for Mr. Hearst. When the defective ballots have been recounted and the false and fraudulent ballots have been thrown out, it will be shown that his vote is at least 235,000 or 240,000. Affidavits have already been sworn to, documents have been procured and lawyers are at work on cases of unblushing deception, on the most impudent-trickery, on criminal miscouunts, on the voting of repeaters in nearly every district. The manifest intent of the voter has been ignored in every case where the Tammany officials succeeded in getting the republican inspectors to consent to their view of the meaning of the vote. The crime of 1876, when Samuel J. Tilden was cheated out of the presidency of the United States, cannot be repeated in New York. This is not Florida, nor is it Louisiana. Returning boards here cannot be packed. The battle will be fought out in every detail to the most bitter finish. Every vote that was meant to be cast for W. R. Hearst and the municipal ownership ticket will be inspected. The criminals will be sent to Sing Sing. Already there is an exodus of men from the city. The repeaters have fled. But the men who hired the repeaters and the men who led election officials to betray their trust can yet be reached. When they are reached, justice will be done with a swift and unerring hand. William Randolph Hearst will yet be sworn in as mayor of New York.—New York American.

There is one thread running through all of the elections of yesterday. The color may be different in spots, but it is the same thread—the thread of Rooseveltism; the thread of a square deal, of higher ideals and anti-machine, not so much on account of the machine itself, but because of what the machine represents. So far as party issues are concerned, it has no significance.—Governor Hoch of Kansas.

If William Randolph Hearst received in Tuesday's election one single vote more than Mayor McClellan; if enough Hearst voters to have changed the result were driven from the voting-booths by bulldozing and browbeating; if hired repeaters and floaters expressed at the polls what passed for the will of the people; if unexampled frauds availed to taint the reckonings of the ballots after they were cast; if for any one of these reasons, or if for all these reasons combined, the election figures do falsely record the will of the voters, then law should intervene, then justice should be done, then Mr. Hearst should be seated.—New York World.

GROWTH OF RADICALISM

The New York World is greatly agitated by the growth of radicalism and believes that socialism will be the next step unless the corporations are controlled. After dwelling upon the significance of the election of Tom L. Johnson in Cleveland, Brand Whitlock in Toledo and Schmitz in San Francisco, the World says:

Governor Hoch is not exaggerating the facts. They are so plain that no human being of ordinary intelligence should mistake their meaning. A great wave of discontent is sweeping over the country which is manifesting itself in the form of socialistic remedies for political and economic evils. The

great corporations are largely responsible for the radicalism that is rampant everywhere. The real leaders in this movement are not the Bryans and the Hearsts and the Dunnes and the Johnsons and the Schmitzes, but the Rockefellers, the Armours, the Morgans, the Swifts, the Ryans, the Yerkeses, the McCurdys, the McCalls, the Hydes, the Perkinses and the Harrimans, with their Muryhys, McCarrens, Coxes, Durhams and Penroses. Ten years ago Pingree was denounced as an anarchist. Today Pingree's program would be regarded as mild and conservative. Where is the thing going to end?

MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP

The Springfield Republican holds that the great vote in favor of Hearst in New York shows that municipal ownership is gaining ground rapidly:

There plainly exists among the people, even in this time of unexampled prosperity, great unrest over the concentration of wealth which is still going on apparently as never before, and the misuse of it as shown in the insurance exposures. There prevails a feeling that this grossly unequal distribution of the industrial product of the country is related in no small degree to the private ownership of monopoly privileges granted by law or assumed in spite of law; and the municipal ownership movement represents one direction in which the popular protest is organizing for the preventive action. This is not surprising. It was bound to come some time, but that it should be able at this time to make so great a demonstration in the first city of the country will amaze and confound the interests identified with the private exploitation of public privileges. The country is unquestionably face to face with a general extension of this movement, whose practical and successful application in a kindred country supposed to be far more conservative than our own, is being known and read by all our people.

MALTHUSIAN IDIOCY AGAIN

Among economists there are some who still cling to the Malthusian theory that population increases faster than subsistence and that the world will soon be so crowded that "race suicide" will be the only solution of the problem. The latest advocate of the theory is an English alarmist, who believes that in a few hundred years there will be 6,000,000 human beings to every square mile in England. The Omaha World-Herald shows the absurdity of the theory:

Henry George never performed a greater service than when he demonstrated the utter and absolute falsehood of this method of reasoning and the conclusion it deduces. He showed that, according to this theory, the descendants of Confucius, in 2,150 years after his death, should have numbered 869,559,193,106,709,670,198,710,528 souls, whereas their actual number was only about 22,000 souls. Nothing in nature bears out the theory. After thousands of years of human life the earth is still thinly populated. "Many of the hives of human life are now deserted; once cultivated fields are rank with jungle and the wild beast licks her cubs where once were busy haunts of men." It would not be far amiss to argue that for centuries upon centuries the population of the earth has been practically stationary, decreasing in one place as fast as it increases in another. Henry George further adduced, in disproof of the theory, the generally recognized fact that wealth tends to increase, and does increase, relatively faster than population, and that it is in the countries most populous that the wealth necessary to sustain life is relatively as well as actually most abundant. Not only, he showed, is this true of inanimate wealth, but of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, which reproduce much more rapidly than man, furnishing constantly increasing store for his subsistence. The trouble, as the World-