

Current Comment on Leading Topics

JEROME AGAIN TALKING

District Attorney Jerome has severely criticized the judges of the New York supreme court on the ground that they are influenced in their decisions by corporations to whom they owe their election or from whom they have received favors. He suggests as a remedy that the judges be appointed for life. How this would cure the evil he does not explain. Our federal judges are appointed for life and only the ignorant or prejudiced would assert that the United States courts are free from the influences of corporate wealth. Mr. Jerome said in part:

With but a few exceptions I have very little reverence or respect for the judges of the supreme court in this department. * * * What we ought to have is the Massachusetts system, where judges are appointed for life. Go to Massachusetts and get into conversation with members of the bar, and they will say that this case should not be taken before this or that judge. Why? Because he has certain peculiar ideas as to the application of a certain law. Go over to the bar association in this city, and if you know the men you meet well enough and they are inclined to talk they will say that they dare not take this or that case before a certain judge because he was assessed so much for his nomination and borrowed it from this corporation or that, or that a certain judge is mixed up in this or another commercial transaction. It is known that certain members of the judiciary to which I have reference retain their interests in commercial and other business matters and transactions while they sit on the bench. Every day that passes over their heads is filled with imminent peril—peril of a scandal that seems about to break because of these affiliations.

Those who heard these words must have thought instantly of one of the supreme court judges now on the bench, whose name has been conspicuous in the testimony at one of the sessions of the insurance investigating committee. The elective system in recruiting the judiciary is democratic, but it can never produce the most exemplary judges, unless the political parties are elevated and pure in their management. On the other hand, of course, judges appointed by an executive who is the mere tool of bosses may fall far short of the ideal.—Springfield Republican.

Mr. Jerome should either name the judges whose practices make them unfit to sit upon the bench or he should retract his charges.—New York World.

If the judges are such as he describes they should be removed from the bench and our courts purified. If under the smooth surface of dignity and respectability our judiciary is rotten and given to the rendering of unjust decisions and the use of power to safeguard wrong, by all means let the truth be known. It is the time for a general judiciary house-cleaning. But unless he knows that of which he speaks and is prepared to follow up his charge Mr. Jerome has done a great wrong. He has not only weakened the people's faith in their tribunals, but he has subjected honorable men to suspicion.—New York Tribune.

District Attorney Jerome has said too much or done too little. If the justices of the supreme court in the First judicial department are so unworthy that he feels for them no reverence and not even ordinary everyday respect, then he has no time to waste on banquets and public speaking. He ought to be in the bar association every night making a prodigious fuss about these bad judges, and demanding that the association present them to the legislature for impeachment.—New York Times.

But it comes with mighty poor grace from William Travers Jerome when, having denounced "this elective office business" as "the great foundation of our difficulties," he goes on to say: "Worst of all it is an elective judiciary." If Jerome had an ounce of gratitude in his body; if he had even an

embryonic appreciation of, the loyal, wonderful and inspiring support just recently given him by the great common people of the metropolis, he would be thoroughly ashamed of himself for having indulged in any such attack as this upon those who even now are holding up his arm. Mr. Jerome means, of course, that the people are unfit to elect their judges; that they are unfit to elect the most of the officers who shall rule over them and administer their public business; that, in short, "this elective business is the great foundation of all our difficulties." And yet when this man stood alone, without the backing of any party or any organization, as a candidate for re-election, and pitted against him was the candidate of the most marvelous political organization on earth, the people, just because they believed in Jerome's common honesty, breaking over party lines rallied like a great army without captains or regiments to his standard and triumphantly elected him! Are the people fit to elect their district attorneys, Mr. Jerome?—Columbia World-Herald.

McCURDY'S RESIGNATION

President McCurdy and family surrendered their control of the Mutual Life Insurance company by resigning from the various high offices they held. McCall still controls the New York Life and the Equitable has not been mutualized, but public sentiment may yet force out McCall and place the Equitable under the control of the policyholders:

The announcement of the resignation of President Richard McCurdy, General Manager Robert H. McCurdy and General Agent Louis A. Thebaud of the Mutual Life Insurance company is welcome to the policyholders of the company, for it removes from the management those who are mainly responsible for the Mutual's troubles and makes an opening for a reorganization on better lines than have been followed in the past. Robert H. McCurdy is the son and Louis A. Thebaud the son-in-law of Richard McCurdy. Each of these three men have been drawing approximately \$150,000 a year in salaries and commissions from the company besides their indirect profits in financial transactions with the company's money. As they have had these soft snaps for many years they have grown immensely wealthy. A few days ago President McCurdy asked the trustees of the company to cut his salary of \$150,000 in half, but they refused because they were convinced that the welfare of the company demanded an end of the McCurdy regime. It is now the duty of the trustees to select honest and capable men, in whom the public can place the most implicit faith and confidence, to be the successors of the men who have resigned. This is vastly important and we trust is realized. President McCall of the New York Life and others who have profited with him at the expense of policyholders in the same manner that the McCurdys have should at once follow the lead of the Mutual's officers and make way for others better qualified for the positions they hold.—Buffalo Evening Times.

McCurdy's concept of that duty has been unmasked. It is to put his relatives and his relatives-in-law at the crib until this one family draws \$1,000 a day from the Mutual. It is to debauch legislators in the Mutual's "House of Mirth" in Albany. It is to waste trust money in "yellow-dog funds." It is to buy a "moral obligation" upon political parties by contributing to campaign funds. It is to give false testimony under oath. What a relief to know that this view of duty in a great public trust is to be rebuked! Justice Peckham and Eldridge Gerry, upon whom the World called to rid the Mutual of McCurdyism, are leading the honorable movement to that end among the trustees. It is most creditable to them and to those who are working with them. It is real trusteeship, not dummy trusteeship.—New York World.

Former Senator Charles P. McClelland is the second member of the legislature to appear on the witness stand. He comes from

Westchester county, which also sent Apgar to the legislature. It will be recalled that Apgar was unable to remember anything about \$1,000 which an Equitable voucher credited him with receiving. Senator McClelland's memory was still more faulty. Mr. Hughes asked him whether he had ever been employed by the Equitable. He positively denied that he ever had. He was asked whether he had received any money from the Equitable. He positively denied this. He was then confronted with a receipt in his own handwriting for \$3,500 paid him by the Equitable. Then he broke down and confessed. McClelland began politics in the Assembly twenty years ago, when Speaker Husted and Depew had him put on the insurance committee. On that committee he served both in the Assembly and in the senate, part of the time as chairman. He lived with Boodler Fields in McCurdy's "House of Mirth." Various vouchers amounting to tens of thousands of dollars were produced for moneys ostensibly paid him as a lawyer. He is now United States appraiser by President Roosevelt's appointment.—New York World.

Ellenbogen committed perjury only once, and that for money, not to rob widows and orphans, but to protect two of his tools from criminal prosecution. He is paying the penalty. McCurdy instead of going to Sing Sing proposes to retire to his magnificent country estate at Morristown and there pass his remaining years in luxury on the money of the policyholders. McCurdy committed perjury not once but many times. Now he does not even profess penitence. He merely admits that public opinion is too strong to permit his continuance in office and he steps out on the plea of ill-health. McCall is still more brazen. He and Perkins lie again and again. They toss off perjuries as the rain drops from a shaken maple bough. Unless men like McCurdy, McCall and Perkins wear the striped suits of convicts it will be of little avail to send the Ellenbogens to prison.—New York World.

PLAN TO PEOPLEIZE THE TRUSTS

The Columbus Press Post gives the following resume of Judge Grosscup's article in the American Illustrated Magazine for September on the "Peopleization of The Trusts:"

The remedy consists of bringing the people back into the ownership of the property of the country. There would be but two classes of securities issued, one which represents the cash paid in, or its equivalent in property, the other issued from time to time to cover the value of the increase in property. Labor would be given opportunity for participation in ownership, and all would be under the watchful eye of the government. Securities would be sold only under government supervision. Judge Grosscup decries municipal ownership, but his co-partnership relation in the ownership of the corporation is a very close approach to it, if, indeed, it does not amount to the same thing. The most cheerful bit of information which the article contains is that the people of the United States own a majority of the bank deposits, which shows that they own a controlling interest in the wealth of the country, but, again, the corporate interests are founded upon this wealth. They are nurtured by it. Without access to it they would of necessity find themselves unable to continue their enterprise of rendering the people poor by the use of the people's money. The methods of the insurance companies furnish a most telling example of the way in which the promulgators of the trust use the people's money to build up fortunes for a few choice speculators. "The good, old-fashioned notion that a thing to be possessed must first be earned," is forgotten by monopoly promoters, whose mad passion for money-getting causes them to lose all consciousness that there is such a force as the people, except as they may become tools or stepping stones for the up-building of their own fortunes. This reign of a few has produced a domain of robbery which is absolutely lawlessness governed by the caprices of men dominated by money madness. "Toil is capital; frugality is capi-