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GEORGE W. BERGE, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

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Staunch Defender of the National Honor Destroyed by His Kind

Is it not possible, in the light of recent events, to conclude, with a fair chance of being correct, that Providence is wroth with the professional defenders of the national honor? "Thick as the leaves in Vallambrosa," they are falling. Read the roll call of dishonor: Hyde, McCall, McCurdy, Bliss, Platt, Depew, Harriman, Odell, Paul Morton, Banker Biglow, Perkins, Morgan, Corey, Frick, Rogers, Rockefeller, and many of lesser fame. And now the name of John R. Walsh has been affixed to the list—John R. Walsh, staunchest of all the western defenders, he who mightily cast many a shining lance at Bryan and Altgeld, and other "socialists," "anarchists," "repudiators" and "spawn of Satan."

John R. Walsh was not a politician by profession. He was a politician only inasmuch as he found the occupations of politician and financier inseparable under modern conditions. He struck all his blows from behind the scenes, but his arm was a power in the cause of "national honor." The Chicago Chronicle was his megaphone. It always upheld the sanctity of the money power. It wore the mask of democracy, but when the necessity arose, it threw off the mask. Roosevelt was about to be elected. The Walsh banks were shaking and so the Chronicle became republican. Founded in 1895 to combat the "financial heresies" that frightened Walsh and the money kings he worshipped, it was never popular and was always run at a financial loss. In two things, however, it was consistent. It was a defender of every financial scheme designed to enrich the bankers, and was a rabid and nagging opponent of trades unions. Behind every position it took, consistent or inconsistent, was John R. Walsh and his greed.

And now, behold the irony of fate. The wolves that he ran with have devoured him. He who fought their battles while he was fighting his own, has been pulled down by the crying pack at his first sign of faltering in the chase.

The particular offense which brought ruin to Banker Walsh was

loaning money to himself. It was not his money; it was money belonging to the people. But he handled the money, amounting to many millions, and he loaned it to himself and spent it on private enterprises of a speculative character.

This was a great crime, but what Walsh did others did. Some of them are now in the penitentiary, but many of them still preside over great banking institutions in Chicago and New York. Let not the people be deluded by the comforting hallucination that all the thieves have been smoked out because a few bankers have been sent to jail. The temptation that proved too strong for Walsh, has caused other bankers to fall. They have not yet been found out because bank examinations are defective. Bank examinations, it is true, are better than insurance examinations, but there are many loopholes through which the bankers wriggle to prey upon depositors. The banking laws should be amended so as to define exactly what kinds of loans can be made. The law should be so extended that it will be impossible for a banker to loan money to himself by round-about methods as at present.

Poor John R. Walsh did not last long enough to take advantage of Shaw's asset currency scheme. Doubtless he looked forward longingly to the day when he would be able to issue money unsecured by bonds deposited with the government. What a killing he might have made. Say that he issued \$5,000,000 in asset currency. Then he might have failed as fortunately as the man who burns his store to get the insurance. The honest bankers would be compelled to bear his losses, for, according to the Shaw plan, each banker would pay six per cent on the asset currency issued so as to provide a fund to secure the notes of failed banks. It would place a premium on dishonesty. The bankers are practically all in favor of the plan. Do all of them intend to fail after inflating the currency according to the Shaw system?

Another Campaign of Education

Chicago needs an awakening such as shook the sleepy Quakers from their beds and moved them to take drastic action against grafting councilmen. In Chicago's councilmanic body there is an impudent, high-handed majority of grafters opposing Mayor Dunne's every step toward municipal ownership. This opposition has now taken the form of petty persecution. For the first time in Chicago's history the council has refused to confirm a mayoral appointment. The only newspaper which has consistently denounced the misconduct of the councilmen, who are defying the expressed will of the people obtained by a referendum vote, is the Chicago Examiner, owned by Mr. Hearst. The other newspapers openly support the public service corporations which are demanding extensions of their franchises.

The Hamilton club, an aristocratic organization recruited from the republican party, has just declared in favor of extending the franchises. The Chicago Tribune, as though recording a judicial act, solemnly states that the club took this step after hearing the question fully explained by three councilmen belonging to the majority faction.

The Chicago councilmen are more cautious than their corrupt

brethren of Philadelphia. They are, it is true, preparing to sell out the city to private interests as did the Philadelphia grafters, but they are moving toward their object with less arrogance. The great danger is that the people of Chicago will be misled into believing that municipal ownership is not worth obtaining after all. The subsidized newspapers are pounding at this idea with ruthless persistence. They point triumphantly to the fact that the democrats, who promised the people immediate municipal ownership, have failed to achieve their object, and that the republicans, who promised municipal ownership as soon as it could be obtained fairly and legally, adopted the correct position. In this way they seek to discredit Mayor Dunne, who has been unable to accomplish as much as his optimism before election led him to believe he could accomplish.

Having scored this point, the newspapers strive to convince the public that municipal ownership is undesirable. They make the startling, because untrue, statement that municipal ownership is not so much of a success as has been asserted by its defenders in this country. In contradiction to the "new light" on the subject is the government pamphlet giving the reports of our consuls abroad regarding municipal ownership in England and on the continent. One