

**"ALGERISM" ANOTHER NAME FOR THE "SPOILS SYSTEM."**

[Written for THE CONSERVATIVE.]

It occurs to me that perhaps great injustice is done to Secretary Alger by those who are now so loudly and, withal, so justly denouncing the war department's manner of caring for the soldiers. What they call "Algerism" is merely the recognized and—so far as the American people have as yet pronounced—authorized method of dealing out public offices to those who can show greatest efficiency in producing political results without regard to means employed. In the practical application of this method the executive abdicates his constitutional right of appointment and simply confirms the choice of the senator or representative or boss to whom courtesy demands that he defer. Under this system it results naturally that special fitness for efficient service becomes a good reason for exclusion from office. The standard of appointment is efficiency in work which necessarily tends to disqualify for efficient service after appointment.

Probably, if the facts were laid bare, it would be seen that the new appointments, rendered necessary by the sudden expansion of the war department's operations, were made under this system. If this be true—and its probability is great—then we need look no further for an explanation of the inefficiency, incompetency, and seeming indifference to suffering which have so incensed the country. It is not necessary to look for grounds for special censure of the head of the war department. The carrying out of the system of appointments which is general throughout the country, which is upheld by President McKinley himself when he turns over the federal patronage to Quay in Pennsylvania and to Platt in New York, is more than sufficient to account for all the horrors which have been rehearsed to us. It is not likely that the inefficiency in the war department has been greater than ordinarily results from a wholesale selection of new officials through "practical politicians." The difference is that here they had to do with the health and the lives of men, and while they were learning how to do their work, the men sickened and died.

The mournful lesson which should be learned from this public calamity will be lost to the American people if they shall be permitted to visit condemnation on a single individual and to lose sight of the fact that it is the American people themselves who are responsible because of their toleration of the spoils system.

The cry that the president should dismiss Secretary Alger seems to me most unjust and misleading. If all the cabinet officers who have practised "Algerism" should resign, how many should

we have left? If resignations for this reason were to become the order, where would they stop? Was not the appointment of Alger himself a part of "Algerism?"

For humanity's sake, the American people should take to heart this sad object-lesson of the fruits of the system of politics, which, by their acquiescence, they have endorsed and by their support they have upheld.

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**THE NORTH DAKOTA DECISION.**

The case recently decided by Judge Amidon in North Dakota follows closely the lines of the Nebraska Decision made some time ago. The pith of the decision is in the declaration that the power of the state in making rates is limited to the business done within the boundaries of the state and, in determining the reasonableness of rates, the court cannot take into consideration the carriers' whole business, domestic and interstate. The case has been before the courts for more than a year.

During the hearing the railroads presented some interesting tables of traffic for the four years from 1894 to 1897 inclusive. For this period the Great Northern road's average ton-miles of traffic strictly local to the state was 3,848,578, against 122,476,839 ton-miles originating or terminating in the state, and 128,096,400 ton-miles of traffic passing entirely across the state. These figures show that the local traffic averages less than  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent of that which either begins in the state and passes to points outside of it or begins outside of the state and passes to points within it, and is less than  $1\frac{1}{3}$  per cent of the total inter-state traffic moved in the state.

The roads were able to show that of all the traffic carried in North Dakota during these four years less than 3 per cent began and ended in the state, so as to subject it to state regulation, while more than 97 per cent was inter-state, and thereby subject to the exclusive control of congress. In Minnesota, on the other hand, which has its terminals within its own limits, the average of ton-miles of local traffic for the same period was  $46\frac{2}{3}$  per cent of the total inter-state travel.

After showing that more than four-fifths of the companies' freight revenue from domestic business is derived from less than car-load lots, and that the average haul of such business is between eighty and ninety miles, while the average haul of the general business of the roads is from 350 to 500 miles, the court goes on to say that it is a self-evident proposition that these railroads cannot maintain lower rates for local business in North Dakota than in Minnesota; much less can they maintain for the strictly domestic commerce of that state, which moves in light volume for short distances and in small shipments, lower rates than

are charged for inter-state traffic, which has more than fifty times its volume, is moved more than four times its distance, and is hauled chiefly by car-loads and train-loads.

The railroads presented figures for the four years to 1897, inclusive, showing the cost of local business and the earnings as reduced by the schedule prepared by the state railroad commission. From these it appeared that the Great Northern paid out in operating expenses, \$88.19 for every \$100 received from local business, and that on the rates fixed by the commission the road would only have received \$87 in place of every \$100, or \$1.19 less than the expense of doing business. Similarly the Northern Pacific would have conducted its local business at a loss of \$13.25 on every \$100 of traffic.

**DO NOT FORGET THE RECORD.**

In 1893 the greatest industrial combination ever formed precipitated the strike at the Pullman Car Works in the state of Illinois. It evolved a great riot in Chicago. That riot and an angry mob of misinformed and mal-directed citizens which had burned cars, destroyed other property, and threatened with flames and utter annihilation the greatest mart for farmers' products on the globe was put down by the patriotic action of Grover Cleveland, president of the United States, who, acting in accord with the construction of the laws of the United States as interpreted to him by his able and fearless attorney general, Richard Olney of Massachusetts, brought the regular army into active service to quell the insurrection and squelch its promoters and leaders.

President Cleveland for that prompt and timely discharge of his duty to the republic was thus complimented:

"Resolved, That the senate endorses the prompt and vigorous measures adopted by the president of the United States and the members of his administration to repulse and repress by military force the interference of lawless men with the due process of the laws of the United States, and with the commerce among the states. It is within the plain constitutional authority of the congress of the United States 'to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several states and with the Indian tribes,' 'to establish postoffices and post-roads,' and to ordain and to establish inferior courts; and the judicial power extends to all cases in law and equity arising under the constitution and laws of the United States. It is the duty of the president, under the constitution, to 'take care that the laws be faithfully executed,' and to this end it is provided that he shall be 'commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States, and of all the militia of the several states, when called into the actual service of the United States.'

"It is treason against the United States for a citizen to levy war against