

unfit men upon the tail end of the ticket for office, trusting that the head of the ticket will pull them through, has become so universal that when a national and a municipal election occur at the same time, it has become generally known as "yellow dog" year.

Ring Perpetuation Controls Appointments.

When the men who are members of the ring, or who are willing to do the bidding of the ring, are elected to office, the first thing that is done is to distribute the appointive offices among the members of the ring, and place such appointments where they will do it the most good. No regard is paid to the best interests of the public. The only thing kept in mind is the interest of the ring. It is customary to appoint, as nearly as possible, one man in each precinct to a position, where the pay greatly exceeds the value of the work. Of course, he must keep himself in readiness to obey every command of the ring; he must be willing to do anything that is necessary to keep control of the precinct organization.

Why persons, who have any self respect, will accept such a position at the hands of the gang, I have never been able to understand. For the discipline that they are compelled to submit to is as rigid as that of the regular army, and the indignities that they are compelled to bear, are beyond the endurance of a self-respecting man.

Ring "Incomes."

The ring does not depend alone upon the salaries and emoluments from office. It sells all the legislation for which it can find a market, and when there is no market for legislation it holds up and sand-bags legitimate concerns with threatened disastrous legislation. The members of its legislative bodies do not always receive the profit to be derived from the giving away of franchises and legislation. A valuable franchise was voted away by a city council a few years ago without any return therefor to the city. Public mass meetings were held, and the members of the council denounced for having been bribed. I have been informed by a gentleman in a position to know, and whom I believe does know, that no money was paid to the members of the council for the passing of the ordinance; because the men who were interested in the corporation that received the franchise, were the members of the ring who had placed the members of the council in their seats.

Another method by which the ring profits, is the furnishing of public supplies. There are but very few instances where public supplies are purchased from any person who does not stand in with, or who is not a member of the ring. The outsider cannot successfully compete. If he obtains a contract, he must perform it to the letter, and be annoyed in a hundred different ways

before he gets his money. It is not expected that supplies purchased from the ring will conform to the contract.

Another ingenious method of keeping in political power was discovered in one of our cities a few years ago, where a ring controlled the assessor's office in a township. A majority of the property owners were assessed less than they should have been assessed, and a minority of the property owners were assessed a great deal more than they should have been assessed, and by this means the majority in the township were induced to vote with the ring, by which means it managed to keep in political power for ten years.

So much for that element of the ring, which profits financially.

"Practical Politics."

It often happens that persons who have no interest in politics, excepting the betterment of political conditions, are able to make what might be a successful fight upon the gang; but because the majority of the persons engaged in such a fight do not desire an office, it becomes comparatively easy for some man with an abnormal thirst for political honor, to ally himself with the party making the fight, and have himself championed as a candidate, and when the fight has been almost won against the ring, the candidate, thinking to make his election sure, sells his friends and associates, goes over to his enemies, and offers as an excuse therefor that he is playing practical politics. It is, by some, thought to be a mark of shrewdness to play practical politics; whereas, any man, if he is small, mean and contemptible, has no regard for his word, and is willing to betray his friends, can be a practical politician. Practical politics, means directly the opposite from honest politics, or honest conduct.

Ring Rule Demoralizing.

Ring rule and domination do not pay. Not only is the public plundered, but so far as those who are members of the ring are concerned, it does not pay them. Money obtained in such way will not last. Those who are engaged in it may be able to smoke good cigars and drink good whisky for a time, but when they are dropped from power they are in a worse position than when they started. Their reputation, and often their morals, are gone.

If a person applies to a commercial house for a position, and states that he has been holding a political job for five years, and some other person from a rival commercial house also makes application for the position, it is very safe to say that the politician will be told to stand aside, and the man with the business experience will be employed.

It does not pay the small man to use a machine to obtain for himself a political office. The holding of office does not, of itself confer honor upon any man:

the honor comes from being worthy to hold the office. It is more honorable to deserve an office, and never get it, than it is to get an office and not deserve it. The greatest honor that can come to a man in this country is to do his duty and to deserve the esteem and confidence of his fellow man. It is a greater honor to stand upon a platform and discuss public questions and public events, and be free to express an unbiased opinion and conviction upon a subject, than to speak a piece in the halls of congress, containing ninety per cent. of desire to keep a party in power and the speaker in office, and ten per cent. of sentiment really beneficial to the community.

The greatest hope we have for a betterment of these conditions, is in the universal application of civil service. And also the encouragement of the salutary idea that a political party should be supported only when it deserves it.

FRANCIS MARION LOWES.
Chicago, Ill., May 28, 1901.

ROCK ISLAND DINING CAR SERVICE.

Commencing June 1st, the Rock Island Route will establish a through Pullman car service between St. Louis, Mo., and Denver, Colo., running in connection with the fast Colorado flyer. These sleeping cars will be of Pullman's latest design, with large retiring rooms for ladies, and such other modern conveniences as are found in up-to-date cars.

Dining car service will also be inaugurated on June 1st, on the Rock Island, Colorado flyer, both east and westbound between Kansas City and Topeka, under supervision of Frank Stewart, superintendent of dining cars. The usual high standard of dining car service will be maintained on the a la carte plan, patrons thus paying only for what they order.

A STORM ALARM CLOCK.

A novel method of predicting the weather has been discovered by Prof. A. Tommasina, a French scientist. He uses for this purpose an instrument, which he has just perfected and which he calls an "electrical radiophone." By means of it he can ascertain the exact nature of the electrical currents in the air at any moment, since the instrument is fitted with a clock-work arrangement, which registers the precise quality of each current. There are also several bells in the instrument, each of which is bound to ring whenever it is affected by a particular current. If the current is strong, a loud bell rings; if it is weak, only a slight tinkling is heard. Prof. Tommasina claims that this instrument will be found of great service, especially on vessels at sea, since it will prove much more reliable than the present method of ascertaining weather conditions, which is of hardly any use except near a coast.