

which a big traction monopoly holds all the other streets of the city. That franchise comes up for revision next year, and its holders have even less cause than their recently defeated brethren to expect justice for them to be tempered with mercy.



The fact must not be lost sight of that the referendum has again been shown to be an excellent means of blocking betrayal of trust on the part of officials whose attitude toward popular rights is that of ignorance, indifference or contempt.

S. D.



Progressive Seattle.

Seattle gave its reactionaries a jolt at the recent election. There, as elsewhere, opponents of progress have unreasonably construed the election returns of last November as a blow at radicalism. Proceeding on that theory, plutocratic tools in the State legislature are deliberately trying to turn back the tide of progress. They are planning to undo what has been accomplished in the way of municipal ownership, to render useless the Initiative and Referendum law of the State and in other ways to place the people completely at the mercy of predatory interests. They confidently expected to elect on March 2 a complete reactionary city council in Seattle, but there they received their jolt. The city overwhelmingly chose a radical body in which the influence of men like Oliver T. Erickson will predominate. Seattle thus serves notice on the reactionaries of the State government of the great risks they are taking of committing political suicide. The warning may not be heeded. Reactionary legislators are not altogether their own masters, but frequently feel that they must obey orders from others than the voters, who have entrusted them with power. But their very efforts to continue blockading progress will only serve to further arouse public sentiment and to give greater force to the progressive movement.

S. D.



Railroad Regulation.

It is much to be regretted that our supervision and control of railroads has been weighted so much with politics, and leavened so little by understanding. Upon the one hand, railroads have secured unfair laws and court decisions by the use of favors and the influences that prevail in an unmoral state; and, on the other, politicians have used the anti-corporation sentiment to win favor of the people, until the actual relations of

the roads to the public are upon a wholly false basis. A belief on the part of the public that it was entitled to cheaper fares, resulted in an arbitrary cutting of rates. The roads, which were beginning to reap the inevitable results of their early mismanagement, are appealing now for an increase in rates; and there is a strong likelihood that the increase will be granted on the same irrational basis that sanctioned the reduction. The Interstate Commerce Commission finds that the average cost of carrying a passenger one mile in Illinois is 1.906 cents. The Illinois Railroad and Warehouse Commission finds that the railroads receive on an average of 1.326 cents for carrying one passenger one mile. And the roads ask permission to advance the rate a half cent per mile, in order to cover the deficit.



The surface indications favor the roads; but it is a question if this is not another case of two arguments that do not meet. In computing the cost of passenger carriage no account has been taken of the waste, of the needless duplication of trains on parallel roads, of the widely advertised de luxe trains that are run at enormous expense for small incomes, and of the multitudes of people who still travel on passes. The amount of free transportation granted under the provision that covers "employes and families" is sufficient to deprive the roads of a considerable revenue. None of these items has been given proper attention. The roads persist in doing business in a wrong way, the people ask for reasonable rates, and the Commission—unable, or unwilling, to enforce intelligent conduct of the business—is upon the point of compelling the public to pay for the mismanagement of the roads by adding the half cent to the fare. Thus is the country driven toward government ownership of railroads.

S. C.



The Plight of Chicago.

From present appearances either Robert Sweitzer or William Hale Thompson will be the next mayor of Chicago. Consequently that political party will be most fortunate which escapes responsibility for the acts of the next city administration. There may be a possibility that the successful candidate will act contrary to what his record indicates, and if so that will materially change the situation. But prospects for that are certainly not bright and consequently Democrats who wish to protect their party from the necessity of apologizing to the voters for the next four years, or who take pleasure in embarrassing the Repub-